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CASE STUDY OF EDO STATE**

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## The Old and New Dimension of Political Public Relation in Political Campaign: Case Study of Edo State<sup>☆</sup>

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### ABSTRACT

This study examines the use of a new dimension of political public relations (PPR) in political campaigns, specifically focusing on the impact of PPR in the 2020 governorship election in Edo State, Nigeria. The study explores the strategies employed by political parties in the state and their utilization of various communication channels, including mass media and social media, to disseminate their manifestos and attract voters. The research adopts a survey research method to assess the level of awareness and perception of PPR among voters, utilizing theoretical frameworks such as the Agenda-setting theory, social marketing theory, Two-step-flow theory of mass communication, and Excellence theory of public relations practitioners. The study also reviews relevant literature to identify similarities, differences, and gaps in existing research. The findings reveal that the new dimension of PPR in political campaigns can yield positive results for politicians, emphasizing the importance of image management, media management, and communication in PPR. The study underscores the significant role of PPR in establishing effective communication channels between political actors, political parties, the media, and the electorate. It suggests that political actors should prioritize the needs and well-being of the people, actively engage with the media, and strategically build positive relationships to influence voting choices. Effective communication is identified as a crucial factor in establishing and sustaining a favorable relationship with voters, allowing political parties to inform the public about their programs and manifestos and persuade the electorate based on the qualities of their candidates..

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Background of the Study

Political Public Relations is a comparatively new concept in conventional political science literature. According to Scammell (2012), there is no universally acceptable definition of political public relations. However, she posits that political public relations contribute to the knowledge of other fields of study. Hence, it helps to explain political science as a field and the behavior of political leaders. It also motivates and gives a better understanding of political processes. In the past two decades, there has been an overwhelming increase in the use of public relations strategies in political campaigns world over. Political parties employ the services of professional public relations practitioners

wider reach of their target audience. According to Okudero (2008), political public relations provide effective strategies capable of resolving the above-mentioned problems. To reinforce this perspective, Andrew (2009) opined that public relations provide a coherent and reliable communication and strategies in promoting the image of individual political actors or political party, to the public, in the hope that the image and impression projected are accepted. According to Bullick (2014), politicians are now more organized in their electioneering activities. In fact, in many advance democracies, political parties are warming up to public relations concept and increasingly adopting strategies of public relations in their election campaign. According to Strömbäck and Kiousis (2011) political public relations is a communication medium through which politicians and political parties influence, build good relations, and reputations with the target public for the sake of achieving their political goal. Julius (2003) asserts that political public relations work within the confines of a political party as the facilitator responsible for creating a beneficial relationship between the party, and the people in order to foster common trust, understanding and to form a good impression in the minds of the people for political gains. In light of this role, when political public relations strategies are properly adopted and executed by a political party, the party becomes accommodating and inspirational to the community through purposeful communications, actions, and maintaining good reputations with the public (Kiousis & Strömbäck, 2011). In general, political public relations is aimed at gaining political support from internal and external members, and most importantly to gain trust, and confidence of the voters as the external factor the

party may have to face during an election campaigns. Furthermore, political public relations remain an indispensable tool in the hands of political parties and candidates. In Nigeria, different political parties and candidates often adopt public relations strategies to win voters' support during elections (Chibuike, 2015). Public relations entail establishing and maintaining a good relationship between an organization and its publics. According to the British Institute of Public Relations (IPR) cited in Hasan (2010, p. 309), public relations "is a deliberate act, planned and sustained effort to establish and maintain mutual understanding between an organization and its publics". Holtz-Bacha (2008) sees political public relations as intentional array of communication activities of political actors in a political process designed and disseminated to realize set political objectives. The implication of this is that political parties usually use communication through different channels to inform and persuade voters in favor of a particular party's candidate. According to Kelley (1956), Political public relations play a specific role in a political process. It is a vital tool adopted by politicians to gain publicity and have more supporters during a political campaign. The modern political campaign now involves campaign organization. In a modern political campaign, the campaign organization has a coherent structure and staff like any other large business, which now allows political actors greater access to reach target groups faster and its seen as more effective in both the impact it has on people and the resources compared to the old traditional methods of campaigning. In describing activities of political public relations, McNair to craft persuasive messages to influence the electorate by emphasizing on what the public would enjoy if they

vote for the party. According to Opeibi (2004), in the past, political parties utilized rallies, personal contacts, and speeches to canvass for votes and inform electorates. However, the emergence of sophisticated public relations practice, as well as expansion of the mass media, has made political parties to now rely on public relations practitioners to attain a (2011) pointed out four core activities, which includes management of image, press management, management of internal communication, and information management. Firstly, image management involves of the building of an image of a candidate(s) or party in a bid to achieve predetermined political goals. This can involve a range of activities from carefully crafting a symbolic logo for the political party to reflect its mission, to the manner of communication adopted by a political candidate during press briefing, and political rallies. Secondly, press management aims to establish and sustain a good candidate-press relationship to enable to candidate gain unhindered access to the press or media. Thirdly, internal communication deals with communication channels through which information is transmitted internally, as well as the organization of activities and management of feedback. Finally, information management includes selecting the appropriate information to publicize. This abundantly projects political public relations as a means of managing various aspects of activities on the side of political actors, who initiates political communication, and the effort toward communication management as well the relationship between politicians and the press in order to have a good coverage of politicians.

Also, the importance of political public relations in politics has been ubiquitous throughout history; as early as classical Greece, and Rome, PPR became

the staple realm in politics; although, it may not have been called political public relations was at that time. However, some early political actors utilized the concept by strategically applying the theory to their campaign processes. Furthermore, great leaders like Napoleon Bonaparte, Alexander the Great, and many other conquerors use rhetoric, inspiring, and encouraging words to win over their opponents during electoral campaigns. In fact, Julius Ceaser, use PPR strategies in his campaigns as far back 50 B.C., when he published a political biography as part of his political campaign strategy to become the Head of State., and the French Revolution of 1789 as a result of PPR strategic plans which later lead to the liberation of French citizens from the hands of the aristocrats and the eradication of the monarchy in 1799. Also, in 64 B.C., an election was about to be conducted for the office of the consul - the highest office in the Rome Republic. However, the two most outstanding and influential candidates were Catiline and Antonius running for the consul's office, and their opponent Marcus Tullius Cicero was from a small town outside Rome and not only that, he was not part of the blue-blooded families who were then the powerhouse of Rome. In the same vein, his critics and some political actors viewed him as less man for the office because of his background (Freeman & Cicero, 2012). Despite all of that, Marcus never relents in pursuance of his dream, and he was a viable candidate despite being an outsider. He was considered by many as a great orator. In fact, Quintus Cicero Marcus brother wrote him a pamphlet in the form of a letter in Latin called (the Commentatriolim Petitions) Quintus message to his brother emphasized the importance of political campaign strategy in the electoral process and the support of families and friends as the most top

priority in winning the support of the general public which will eventually guarantee votes during the election. Furthermore, the historical and conceptual foundation of Political Public Relations has shown that its use in getting the public to admire and relate well with organizations can as well be useful in getting the voters to act in a particular way during elections. Overall, the main purpose of a political campaign is to create attention, awareness, and promote parties and their candidates during elections. The 2020 gubernatorial elections in Edo State witnessed political parties and candidates utilize different strategies of PPR in their respective political campaigns all in a bid to win the hearts of electorates. In the end Godwin Obaseki, who was the candidate of the People Democratic Party (PDP), emerged as the governor of Edo State. It is based on this premise that this study sought to investigate the impacts of PPR strategy in Edo State political campaign, and how electioneering campaign methods were utilized by political parties to promote themselves and their parties during the governorship electoral campaign.

### 1.5 Research Questions

To guide this study, the questions below were developed.

1. How do political public relations strategies influence political campaigns?
2. What is the difference between the old and new dimensions in a political campaign?
3. What is the respondents' perception of the use of political public relations by parties in the 2020 Edo state gubernatorial election?
4. What is the respondents' level of awareness of the use of political public relations tools in the 2020 Edo

gubernatorial election?

### 2.1 Conceptualizing Political Public Relations

Political Public relations is a comparatively new concept in conventional political science literature. According to Scammell (2012), there is no universally acceptable definition of political public relations. However, she posits that political public relations contribute to the knowledge of other fields of study. Hence, it helps to explain political science as a field and the behavior of political leaders. It also motivates and gives a better understanding of political processes. Basically, there are two schools of thoughts on defining political public relations. The first school holds that political public relations are about communication and the second view emphasizes that it is about both communication management and the building of relationships (Grunig & Hunt, 1984). However, McNair (2011) points towards the first view as he defines political public relations as communication management strategies that ensure that an individual political actor or political party receives optimum favorable publicity and adverse publicity. Moloney (2006) corroborates this definition as he asserts that public relations practitioners do not only help candidates' construct and publish information but are also provide guidance on public attitudes, expectations, concerns, and needs.

Maarek (1995) conceptualizes political public relations as "an intricate process, the result of a more global effort involving all the aspects of the politician's political communication" and emphasizes that "political public relations is the universal method of 'political communication', one of its means". He describes the introduction of

public relations in politics as an outcome of expansion of a principal of political communication, transmission of contemporary political communication. It is essential to mention that Maarek acknowledges that the keys areas of application of political public relations are image-building, lobbying, and election campaigns. Furthermore, Lock and Harris (1996) opined that political public relations are concerned with communicating with party supporters, press, sponsors, and voters. According to Mancin (1999), political public relations denotes strategic communication activities of actors participating in the political process that aim at information dissemination and persuasion as a goal in a bid to actualize political interests. The second view is that public relations are about communication and relationship building, mostly championed by Strömbäck and Kioussis.

According to Strömbäck and Kioussis (2011), the definitions offered by Maarek and other scholars mentioned above are narrow and do not accommodate the intricacies and understanding of modern political public relations. However, they demonstrate how political communication scientists often view public relations. To have the meaning of political public relations embody a contemporary understanding of public relations, Strömbäck and Kioussis (2011) defines it as:

the management process by which an organization or individual actor for political purposes, through purposeful communication and action, seeks to influence and to establish, build, and maintain beneficial relationships and reputations with its key publics to help support its mission and achieve its goals (p.8).

Strömbäck and Kioussis further explain that the

definition provides a better insight into the impact of public relations in politics and political communication. Nevertheless, this definition can be incorporated in research and theories in other fields such as electoral campaigning, political science, political communication, political management, etc. In line with Strömbäck and Kioussis's definition of political public relations, Hutton et al. (2012) opined that political public relation is concerned with efforts to influence, institute, and sustain favorable relationships, and reputations. In reviewing the thoughts of Gregson (2010), political public relations are significant to all phases of stakeholder engagement. From the moment a teenager first identifies with a party's philosophy, he joins the part up to his lifelong service to the party. Thus, political public relation is not confined to mere information dissemination as a means of gaining public interest, neither is it restricted to the engagement of stakeholders. It is difficult to tell between reputation and relationship, which is most important because the superiority of one over the other is dependent on the level of stakeholder engagement. Therefore, the idea of reputation and relationship building is essential to appreciating the short and long-term impressions regarding the engagement of political organizations and their public diversity (Edes, 2000). In this context, Iyengar (2001) asserts that as a specialized function of public relations, political public relations are concerned with establishing and maintaining the relationship between political leaders and the masses to promote democratic tenets, the rule of law, and respect for constituted authority. Its core role is to create mutual understanding between governments, parties, political leaders, and the voters. Furthermore, PPR is limited to the dissemination of information and

exchange for peripherally involved in public and the cultivation of relationships for short- and long-term goals. Besides, the past two decades have witnessed a surge in political public relations strategies in political campaigns. According to Froehlich and Rüdiger (2006), Political public relations advisors play an important role in the effective leadership activities of a modern democratic system of government.

## **2.2 Understanding Election and Political Campaign**

In its simplest form, an election could be defined as a decision making processing by members of a group operating as a entity in periodically selecting their leaders (Abonyi, 2010, p.209). In the arena of domestic politics, periods of elections are characterized by excitement, anxiety and uncertainty. Obviously due to the fact that the election periods are typical very competitive or in some places, a period of battle and contest. There are prospects of victory as well as that for defeats, hopes as well as fears. In fact, an election period is one characterized by uncertainty, curiosity, speculation, the possibility of continuity and change, Nnoli in Abonyi (2010).

The term political campaign is often interchangeably used as political campaign. According to Charlie (2017), it refers to the set of activities done by political parties or politicians prior to an election in order to persuade people to vote for them. Nathan (2018) supports this view as he describes political campaign as a series of efforts to convince or discourage electorates in an attempt to gain partisan advantage in the electoral process. While tracing the history of political campaign, Nelson (2014) asserts that political

campaigns have long been in existence since the emergence of democracy. According to Victor (2017), the first political campaign, often referred to as William McKinley Presidential Campaign, which occurred in the 19th century, laid the groundwork for modern political campaigns. Besides this, there are other earlier recognized modern examples like William Ewart Gladstone Midlothian campaign in the year 1878-80. In buttressing the concept of political campaign and its indispensability in democratic governance, Druckman (2001) asserts that an election period in any democratic system of government begins with political campaigns by different political parties and their representatives. According to Helma (2013), during an election period, political parties and individual political actors set agenda on how to canvass votes and win the election. Hence, there is a constant interaction between political actors, campaign organizers, and the electorates. The forms of interactions significantly influence voters' decision and the level of political participation. In conceptualizing political campaign, Strömbäck, Kioussis (2011) stress that political campaign is a means through which political actors influence and build good reputations with the target audience before Election Day.

According to Roosevelt. Lazarsfeld, et al (1948), political campaign is an essential ingredient in politics, which can activate preferences, and bring a substantial fraction of voters who begin a campaign undecided or unsure and later come to a vote choice with their predispositions, such as occupational status, sociological facts, and religious preferences. Most recently, scholars have shown from numerous literature how political campaigns educate electorates about candidates, and particularly their stands on certain issues that

concern the constituency they want to represent. Political campaign messages are powerful in influencing voter's perception and eventual election choice.

According to Anthony (2016), campaign messages are often about ideologies, policies of political party shared with voters for to gain political support. To have lasting impact on voters, campaign messages tend to be frequently repeated. Modern political campaigns are mostly strategic and organized, with a structure of professional campaign staff and a manager in charge of coordinating the team. However, a campaign team may be as small as one inspired individual. Whether the team is big or small, what is important is how the campaign message is communicate to the public. Aside this, another important factor is media management. According to James (2014), media management is the key factor in a political campaign as it is linked to fundraising, campaign advertisements, and the recruitment of volunteers who are political activists.

### **2.3 Objectives of Political Public Relations**

Like other aspects of marketing promotion, political public relations addresses several broad objectives. According to Christopher (2015), the fundamental goal of political public relations is to raise public awareness of a political candidate(s) or political organization; to identify relevant audience and persuade them to have a positive impression of the candidate or organization; to dissolve suspicions and build suitable external and internal environments for the organization. In Scammell's (1995) view, political public relation is aimed at making politics more democratic as it channels information from the voters to political party and candidates, hence making them more responsive to

the concerns of the people. Anthony (2013) observes that a major objective of political public relations is to assist in establishing effective channels of communication for accurate exchange of ideas between a candidate or political party and the public, on planned programmes and policy designed for the community at large. He explained that the secondary goals of political public relations includes the following:

- a. To help a political party effectively communicate its image, manifesto and challenges to the people, including workers of the party and party members, whose commitment will hugely determine both the success of the party at the polls and the implementation of those policies and programmes contained in the manifesto.
- b. To help party or candidate understand the intricacies of public perceptions and assist in identifying and addressing any changes in public perceptions which might become an hindrance to the goal of creating a close relationship with the electorates. This is essentially important during election period where the media inundated with various forms of propaganda capable of swaying public opinion and perception that ultimately determine voters' decision.
- c. To aid the party or candidate in creating suitable strategies for effective information dissemination in order to gain a wider reach and to ensure the right information published at the appropriate moment with the right means. Public relations strategies is used to provide the public with more in-depth information about planned policies and programmes a

party or candidate intends to executive if successful at the polls. This is done through articles, newsletters, and websites, Public relations delivers information to provide information and keep the electorate abreast with the activities and plans of the party.

- d. To help a party establish a strong relationship with the electorate, that would ensure maximum public support during and after election, which would go on to facilitate execution of programmes postelection.
- e. To help a candidate build gain the trust and confidence of the public.

In summarizing the goals of political public relations, Charleston (2005) itemized the following; assessing perception and opinion of the public, repackaging the manifestos of political parties in a way that it would attract the attention and interest of the public, and lastly, implementing policies to obtain understanding and acceptance from the people.

#### **2.4 The Role of Political Public Relations in Political Campaigns**

According to Scheffer (2003), the idea of political campaign is not new. It has been ubiquitous throughout history, from Ancient Greece and Rome to the American Revolution. However, today, political parties and candidates communicate to electorates with strategies and means that are more systematic, sophisticated, penetrative and persuasive than what were obtainable in the past. While scholars have long recognized and appreciated this new dimension in politics, so far, the role of political public relations in electoral campaign has not received enough attention hence

this study.

Public relations plays important roles in politics particularly political campaign. According to Butler (2017) political public relations is a feature of public relations used in facilitating a political process. It involves several parts of political processes, which include party creation, image building, registration members, electoral campaign, and internal and external political communications. Significantly, it also involves persuasion, awareness raising, and government relations and lobbying. Odigbo (2013), asserts that political public relations being a specialized type of public relations involves image management, attitudes, opinion and behavioural problems, issues and crises that impinge upon the enthronement of existence preservation sustenance, development or growth of government, constituted political principles, democratic orders and the rule of law. Osuji in Sorkaa (2007), corroborated this statement by defining political public relations, "*as sustained efforts to enhance or advance the cause of political actions or those involved in furtherance of political processes in a society whether elected or appointed*" (p.7)

The above definitions, no doubt, are a revelation about what constitutes political public relations. Thus, if politics is to be played with civility, there is very need to establish and maintain cordial relationships among politicians and the various political parties in the world. Having seen the definitions of political public relations, let us now focus on the roles. Cutting and Centre in Sambe (2007), justifies the impact of PR in politics for two reasons. First, political parties and individual politicians to be successful in any democratic process, must seek support from the public.

Secondly, to sustain political party prices citizen's participation and voter support are required to win for the party. The author finally concluded by identifying the objectives for planned and continuing public relations programs in partisan politics thus:

- a. To overcome apathy and speculation towards party policies and activities and the functions of the political party in the polity.
- b. To provide reliable information for the voters seeking to make an intelligent decision at the polls.
- c. To crystallize public sentiment and pave way for seamless compliance. This requires informing the citizen to enable them understand the direction and programmes of the party.

Sambe (2007)'s research on the role public relations in party policies, suggests that public relation supports political parties in numerous ways which includes, design and execution of party policies, media relations management, and enhancing party-public relationship. Furthermore, Amajili (1990), asserts that the tools and techniques of public relations have long been an critical part of the arsenal of political warfare. Any party ignorant to this fact would be unable to achieve success in politics. The public relations roles in political campaign must not create any room for suspicion in any of the political party or candidate's dealing with the public. All issues must be handled with a high level of professionalism and to ensure this, Osuji speculates further that timely engaging with the targeted audience at the location, with the appropriate message is a part of public relations game plan in political activities.

This can at the same time serve as an "antidote in vanquishing and restraining rumor". And other problems that may place the party or candidate at a disadvantage.

Osuji (2000), "also sees the credibility of public relations in political setting. Public relations being a management activity then has the responsibility to evolve strategic planning for the conduct of the democratic process to ensure its successful entrance and exit". Planning badly by those seeking election and indeed the whole democratic process leads to chaos, conflict, failure, distrust, secrecy and corruption, public relations strategies ensure that with every difficulty notwithstanding planners must understand plan and strategically take steps towards its execution. Mohammed (2007), supports the view that vocation specializing in public relations grew out of the need for communication through mass media. In a large and complex society when political actors and Administrators, desire to communicate with the public, they discover that, they could not easily achieve their goals. They were often busy to meet the press or inept to pass on the right message to win over influential groups, the politicians find that they must hire specialists. Those specialists are public relations professionals. Similarly, Odigbo (2007), suggests that the key role PR in campaign includes the development of mutual understanding, collaboration and strong relationships between a political party or a political actor and the public. PR strives to gain the goodwill, and support of the electorates for the party's programmes and projects. Odigbo suggests the following as some functions of PR in political campaign.

- Issues monitoring and analyzing of trends of everything likely to influence either

positively or negatively on the client(s) and developing plans to leverage on the positive ones, while resolving negative ones..

- Conducting strategic public education and sensitization programmes, to inform the public about a political party's manifestos and projects and philosophies.
- Correcting misunderstandings, propaganda, disinformation, and prejudices against political party or politicians.
- Auditing mass media daily in order to ascertain any negative media coverage and fashion out public relations initiatives to correct them, while strengthening or consolidating on favourable media reviews.
- Creating and maintaining a good public image, and reputation for the political party or politician.
- Making sure that there is open lines of communication between the political party or politician and the public.
- Gaining the support, acceptance, collaboration of the public for the political party.
- Influencing and ensuring mutual understanding and good relationship between the party or politician and the public.
- To make sure that political party or politician remains alive to his social obligations to the public, in order to be positioned in public mind as a good 'father', 'brother', 'servant' or 'political citizen'.

Moreover, Ugbaja (2004) views the role of public relations in election campaign as building up and maintaining open lines of communication between the political party, candidates, and the electorates while strengthening public confidence in the candidates. Thus, it is imperative for political parties to perceive public relations as a social philosophy, which according to Okafor (2003) prioritizes the needs of the public with the understanding that when this is done, the party's interest will ultimately and satisfactorily be served. According to Igweobi (2006), to control political power and form a government, the political party must win the general election. To win the general election, the political party and its candidates depend on the electorate for support and votes. This underlies the essence of effective public relations between the political parties, candidates and the electorate. It is therefore essential that the political parties and their candidates maintain mutual understanding and goodwill with the electorate. In agreement with this opinion, Okafor (2003) states that effective communication is a sure-fire way politicians can establish and sustain a good relationship with the public. Effective communication helps in keeping the public informed about policies and programs the party or politician has for the people. In addition, Edeani in Igweobi (2006), states PR influences public opinion formation about political parties or political actor. He therefore suggests that public relations programmes should be designed and implemented in a way that they would contribute to the development of positive opinions toward the political party or candidate. Odetoyinbo (2009), it is expected therefore, that political parties should always seize the opportunities avail them by their statutory function of political education to identify,

study and create avenues for goodwill and mutual understanding with the electorates.

## **2.5 Public Relations Strategies in Political Campaign**

In the past, political campaign revolves fundamentally around strengthening partisanship and rallying the committed. Nevertheless, today, that is no longer the reality; a vast majority of people is now politically conscious and aware of their rights and ability to determine who ascends political positions, hence now need to be engaged, persuaded and influenced to give their support. It is partly for this reason, political public relations was developed. To this extent, for a political party to gain the collaboration and supports of the public, it must executive a strategy that take cognizance of the peculiarity of the society. As one of the first scholars to apply the principles of marketing to politics, Achumba (2004), views electorates are like clients looking for the best products in the market to purchase, while politicians canvassing for support are businesspeople who are marketing their product and looking to sell their product to as many customers they can get.

### **2.5.1. The STPP Strategy in Political Campaign**

According to Currley (2014), STP strategy is a three-step method to building and managing a targeted political campaign programme, issues and activities. The "S" refers to segmentation, the "T" stands for targeting, while the "P" for positioning. Together, these help political public relations practitioners design a campaigning strategy for a political party or politician by segmenting the public, targeting segments by their preferences, race, religion, interest, needs, attitudes and

opinions, and positioning their party or candidate as the better choice. The STP strategy is valuable when designing political communications plans as it enable PR practitioners to prioritize propositions and then create and disseminate personalized and important messages to engage with different public segments.

Jackson (2013) stresses that segmentation requires careful division of people into manageable subgroups. The criteria could be based on psychographic, socio-cultural, religion, or behavioral patterns. When the public is divided into segments and focus is placed on canvassing and mobilizing a specific segment driven by the information gathered about that segment, the electioneering is much more likely to be successful than if simply created a one size fits all generic campaign. After segmenting the public, the next step is the Targeting stage, which involves deciding which of the identified segments are the most attractive. Here a closer focus is placed on factors that are more specific and relevant to the political campaign like age, gender, needs, wants, views, and interests (Nwosu, 2003). The next phase is positioning which refers how the political party's manifestoes and programs are presented to the different segments of the target population. The aim of effective positioning is to offer something that is better and more valuable than what competitor parties are offering. According to Jeklins (2013), it is a strategic attempt to make a lasting impression on the minds of the targeted public in a campaign, by consisting putting a campaign message in their minds such they sleep and wake up with and consistently remember in a way the party want them to.

### 2.5.2. The SWOT Analysis Strategy

According to Adirika et al (1996), SWOT analysis in public relations is practically the same thing as a regular SWOT analysis. In this case, the analysis is carried out as a campaign strategy. This strategy helps to determine the right campaign tools to get the best result. This strategy involves situation analysis of the strategic position of the political party particularly its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats related to the election. The strategy enables a political party to capitalize on opportunities available to them using all their strengths. It will also help to avoid the threats and minimize their weaknesses. Adirika et al (1996), states that PR practitioners must recognize that opportunities and threats are external, and mostly irrepressible factors to the political party. What is key here is that knowledge of the external environment and its potential influence on party activities and efforts is critical to the success of the party. He further identifies the following as key opportunities of a political party;

1. Unpopular candidates from other contending political parties
2. Leadership crisis and division in other political parties
3. Failure by the ruling party to fulfil electoral promises
4. Electoral malpractices by other political parties.
5. Death or resignation of an elected officer

#### Threats

1. Stringent electoral laws
2. Propaganda based on religious, racial or ethnic orientation by opposition parties.
3. Military takeover of government

4. Economic upheaval and paucity of funds
5. Natural disaster

Furthermore, strengths and weaknesses originate from within the organization. They are controllable factors and internal.

#### Strengths

1. Support from big companies and reputable individuals
2. Projecting an intelligent and articulate candidate with laudable antecedents
3. High membership strength
4. High level of representation of a political party in the National Assembly.
5. Having an array of political pundits.
6. Internal democracy in party's activities.

#### Weaknesses

1. Uninspiring and poorly researched manifesto.
2. Bad corporate image
3. Inability to hire experienced PR practitioners
4. Low membership strength
5. Paucity of fund

It is therefore important for political party to employ a strategy capable of harnessing the party's strength to leverage on environmental opportunities while managing its weaknesses relative to environmental threats.

### 2.5.3 Integrated Marketing Communication Strategy

According to Michelle (2012), having great candidates as a political party is useless if the

electorates do not know about them. That is where promotion and other PR activities come into the picture. They do the job of connecting the target publics and communicating the benefits of voting for the candidate. In today's political campaign, promotion involves Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC). In a nutshell, this strategy involves bringing together an array of different communication tools to disseminate a common message in order to make the desired impact on the public's attitudes and perceptions.

In his view, Colby (2014) states that IMC aims to communicate a particular message to a target public with the strategic purpose of influencing behavior and impressions. IMC makes campaign activities more efficient and effective as it depends on multiple communication methods and places where the public can be easily reached, to communicate a consistent campaign message in more compelling ways. Moreover, the rise of channels for a political campaign, ranging from print media, broadcast advertising, and social media to direct mail, makes it even more imperative to pursue an IMC strategy. More channels of communication can increase the chances of an inconsistent campaign message going out to the public if a central guiding plan is not in place. In explaining the pitfalls of not adopting the IMC Strategy,

Colby (2014) opined that not pursuing the IMC strategy can bring about inconsistent messages, which in turn lead to public confusion. It can also make the party's or candidate's image fragmented. Further, it is important to mention that, PR as the "ethical compass" of any organization serves as the foundation on which the IMC features are

established. In other words, PR creates an organization's key communication, and then manages and directs the other IMC elements to make sure that the message disseminated is consistent, authentic, and truthful across all communication channels.

#### **2.5.4 The Transfer Process Strategy**

Following Nwosu, (1996), the transfer process model explains how public relations strategies can be used to diffuse or change hostility behavior to a friendly and calm environment or behavior. Also, public relations personnel use this concept to share knowledgeable information of political candidates with the people who are sometimes ignorant of misinformation that can lead to war and crisis especially during an electoral campaign where different cultures, religions, and ethnicity come together. According to some earlier research carried out, some academic scholars see public relations as a philosophy of management that thrives on mutual understanding and openness to create awareness to the misinformed of any particular subject either in politics or in a marketing forum.

#### **2.5.5 The Social Marketing Strategy**

The 5ps Marketing Model is a social marketing tool which portrays an organization ideas, wants and interest of its target markets to bring the desired satisfaction of his customers by beating all its competitors and staying on top of the game. (Kotler, 2003). This model is better described as place or distribution, price, product and promotions, and politics.

Hence, place refers to the strategy that will be suitable to disseminate information to the target audience. On the other hand, price revolves around

the risk people have to take when their interest in a particular product they are acquainted with.

While product deals with habits, ideas the target public has to accept or reject. The promotional trade concept is used by public relations practitioners to ensure the ideas sold out by the organization have an impact on the target audience. So, therefore, in politics, political campaign organizers always consider the political implication of his effort to bring victory for the party's candidate (s).

#### **2.5.6 The RICEE Model Strategy**

The RICEE model is an effective tool used by political public relations to secure victory during electoral campaign. Additionally, public relations practitioners use this model as a touch light to look into what the voters want and need in order to win their support. This model helps the party organizers to investigate the party past failure in an elections and how to avoid the same mistake. Furthermore, this model creates awareness and also teaches the organizers on how to navigate the interest of the target audience in a positive way.

#### **2.5.7 Corporate Identity Management Strategy**

The theme of corporate identity management is a concept which organizations use to strategize business ideas in other to get the upper hand in negotiation terms. (Obeta, 2008). Hence, political actors operationalized corporate identity management as a strategic tool in gaining publicity during a political campaign. In addition, as a precursor to corporate image, corporate identity management as a concept bring the uniqueness of symbols or things an organization does or says that tend to separate it from others. According to Tench and Yermans (2006), every organization has an

identity that can be used to differentiate them from the rest organization. However, the main purpose why political campaign organizers use corporate identity management in a political campaign is as follows;

1. To give the parties unique features that will make it stand out.
2. To make the party more assessable and reachable by a larger society before the election.
3. To create a lasting image on the audience before Election Day.
4. To reposition the party and its representative more competitive images.
5. To bring the party and its members together in other to create mutual benefits of the party growth.
6. To standardized the party identity
7. To make all party candidates more competitive and dynamic.
8. To make the political party actualize its desired goals.

#### **2.6. Media of Public Relations in Political Campaign**

According to McNair (2011) political public relations is not only about image management but also involves media management, and communication management. PR Practitioners bring together an array of different communication tools to disseminate a common message in order to make a desired impact on the public's attitudes and perceptions. At the core of PR communication management is the mass media.

Besides, public relations practitioners use different mass media technologies to spread political messages to the general public. Also, political campaign organizers utilize media technologies to

disseminate messages to voters about political party and their representatives. In a democratic society, citizens often get political information via the media that will motivate them to vote during an election.

### **2.6.1 Radio**

According to Nkwazenna (2001), radio is an effective medium used by politicians to disseminate the political message that will persuade and motivates voters. On the other hand, radio is inexpensive, easy to access either at home, car, market, even in the woods. Also, radio reaches a variety of audiences compared to other mass media like magazines, television, and many more. For this reason, politicians share most of their political advertisements, ideologies, political jingles that can spread among people both in the urban area and rural areas. It also serves as a medium for political parties to share information faster to rural areas where the internet or electricity is not stable.

### **2.6.2 Television**

Television is a traditional media, TV is an electronic device used to receive sound and images that makes it different from other traditional media like Radio. Also, television is more effective and in carrying out political adverts, political rallies, and many more. Additionally, it an important tool used by political public relations organizers to showcase their clients during an election period and after.

### **2.6.3**

A Newspaper is a series of publication which contain news on current events. According to Nwosu, (2008), the theory of newspaper superiority in a political campaign is unambiguous

compared to other traditional media. Also, the uniqueness of a newspaper advert is that it can be used to target a demographic that is a bit challenging to reach through other mediums. Hence, newspapers are considered trustworthy by erudite for conveying information to the masses compared to other mass media. Therefore, the Newspaper advertisement medium is highly utilized by political public relations practitioners to create awareness for politicians and their parties

### **2.6. 4 Magazines**

Magazines are another important medium of sharing political information. It is an essential media print used by political public relations practitioners to distribute messages and catching images of politicians. Traditionally magazine's pictures are high quality that t allows most political actors to showcase different images of their representatives and even their political logos. Additionally, a magazine's pictures are high in quality than of a newspaper hence party organizers use magazines more often to disseminate information about a political party and its representatives.

### **2.6.5 Internet**

In accordance with Jefferson (2018), the internet has allowed voters to participate in electoral campaigns on a scale. However, the internet is a tool used by political public relations during a political campaign to canvass for votes. Furthermore, via the internet to connect with people globally without leaving your home or even your office. Hence, politicians and political actors use different social media platforms to network and share their political messages. Nowadays, the number of people using the internet both in urban and rural areas has increased. Consequently,

because of the increase in the number of internet users political public relations practitioners has to include internet campaign in their campaign programs.

Also, coupled with targeting capabilities of the internet, and it less expensive compared to radio, print, and television campaign; politicians and public relations practitioners now working closely with candidates to use the internet to build a good relationship between electorates and their representatives. ( Ginsberg, 2008). On the other hand, the internet is a medium use by political parties and their candidates to empower donors, volunteers to participate in campaign rallies and another important related campaign forum

#### **2.6.6 Billboard**

According to Ehikwe (2005), billboard is an effective and affordable medium utilized by PR to deliver high impact information to a great, diverse people for a political party and its candidate(s). Billboards remains a fast way to brand a political candidate and motivate electorates to learn more about the candidate's political views and positions, engage audiences and trigger campaign issue discussions. It usually has a large size and this makes a solid statement that establishes confidence in its message. This gets the attention of electorates and creates amiability and trust.

### **2.7 Public Relations Tools Employed In Political Campaign**

Public relations campaign program of a party involves many decisions, which includes creating objectives of public relations in a campaign, selecting message and tools, effecting the campaign plan, and evaluating the plan. Consequently, selecting suitable tools is one of the key decisions of PR. Various media are used for

political campaign. Selection of appropriate tool is contingent on many factors which include type of message to be delivered, time, objective, cost, the demography of people for which is campaign is designed, etc. After analyzing various relevant factors, appropriate tools is chosen. Most common and generally used PR tools in political campaign are as follows;

#### **2.7.1 Press Release**

According to Edeani (2003), press release is an important tool used by public relations practitioners in delivering a strategic message from a political party or candidate to the public through outlets such as social media, broadcast stations, newspapers, and magazines. According to Eze (2015), the message delivered must be attention getting, interesting, timely and well written in line with press media needs. To get more favorable coverage, PR maintains good relations with reporters and editors.

#### **2.7.2 Feature/Articles**

The public relations practitioner can also inform, educate and entertain the target audience during electioneering campaign by writing features or articles to the press for onward dissemination to the public. Additionally, it is the responsibility of the editor to determine the size and number of words that are appropriate and necessary that can create a lasting impact on the audience

#### **2.7.3 Press Conference/Briefing**

According to (Edeani 2003), press conference is an effective tool used by PR practitioners to advance the cause of a candidate and gain coverage in Television broadcasts, social media, newspapers, blogs and magazines. Instead of sending out press

releases or organizing interviews with individual reporters, press-briefing enable a candidate to interact with a roomful of reporters all at once and hence is an good way to swiftly deliver political messages. To get tremendous amount of publicity, journalist from various print and electronic media outlets are invited. It is common for invited journalist to be given press kits, which commonly contains souvenir, background information and fact sheet. Press kit are very useful in helping the candidate register his message in the minds of the reporters and give them necessary tools to write authoritatively on the issue and publicize the message.

#### **2.7.4 Political Rallies**

According to Buckens (2012), political rally involves gathering different groups of people with mutual political orientation and values to listen to speeches by the candidates and other eminent party members supporting the candidate, in a bid to gain support from the public. The key goals of a political rally is to inform, raise funds, educate, motivate and embolden supporters, establish coalition, and serve notice to opposition parties, while generating publicity through the press. More so, rallies play a significant role as they draw attention to certain important issues and occasionally change public perception about those issues Gordon (2017). According to Buckens (2012), as a key feature of modern political campaigns communication, aids quick spreading of information to the public, this in turn enables the establishing of positive relationship between the candidates and the voters.

#### **2.7.5 Gifts and donations**

These are special tools used by political public relations personnel to control and monitor political

campaign success. Thus, political actors and their candidates are encouraged to generate goodwill to win the hearts of the electorates during the political campaign by donating gift items, especially to the less privileged. Like bags of rice, beverages, notebooks, and other valuable and essential needs of the people. During electioneering, candidates appear in the public during special occasions like launching of funds for community projects, charitable organizations, women organizations, and pledge financial and or material assistance to the organizers (Ejiogun, 2003).

#### **2.8 Old Ways of Political Campaign**

Political campaigns have strategic tool used to study public opinion during an election campaign, to develop the language, to present their political ideology, and bringing the people closer to the language and the experiences of everyday people (Scammell 1995). According to Blumler, and Kavanagh, (1999), in the past, the old method of campaigning limits political parties' messages to a few people rather than reaching multitudes. However, the first political campaign, often referred to as William McKinley presidential campaign, which occurred in the 19th Century, set the stage for contemporary political campaigns. Besides, there are other earlier recognized modern examples like William Ewart Gladstone Midlothian campaign in the year 1878-80. Victor (2017), opined that the earliest days of a political campaign in politics experienced some major challenges, because the methods were regarded as not having the potential to contribute to a more informed, inclusive, and nonpartisan democracy. However, the old ways of political campaign had its own unique strategy of communicating to the people through town hall meeting fora and

especially the Nigeria Village Square populary known as a market place of sharing ideas. Also, political elders and those in higher authority usually convened at the village square to address matters that concerns the community, state and even the country. Furthermore, traditional ground campaigning and electorates contacts remain one of the most effective strategies of the old method of a political campaign.

According to Lasswell (1948), the traditional instrument used in political communication, such as canvassing door-to-door meetings, leafletting, bell ringing, campaign trails, concerts, town-crier, and philanthropic gesture, and many more were the most important tool used in the early political campaign process. Research carried out by earlier political scholars established that the knocking on doors tactics during the electoral campaign have exerted effects on the recipients, and was mostly used by political actors to canvass votes. According to Newman (2017), the old method of campaigning has lesser effects in shaping public opinion. Although in the late twentieth-century political campaign shifted into television and radio broadcast. Thus, political campaigns strategy is changing and evolving with the growth of technology. According to Chadwick (2013), the traditional methods of campaigning are still important at the local level in politics because in the aspect of voting, youths do not make up a large amount of the population, the votes of the older people count. This means that in lesser-developed countries where the new media has not diffused, it is inevitable that the old media system has to be used. The fact remains that, the new dimension of political campaign allows for innovative communication patterns and methods while

avoiding the pitfalls of the old and new system.

### 2.8.1 Images of old method of political campaign



**Picture 1.** Old ways of political campaign 1

**Source:** [Mountvernon.org](http://Mountvernon.org)



**Picture 2:** Old ways of political campaign 2

**Source:** [Mountvernon.org](http://Mountvernon.org)



**Picture 3:** Old ways of political campaign 3

**Source:** [Rock-cafe.net](http://Rock-cafe.net)



**Picture 4:** Old ways of political campaign 4  
*Source:* | Visual.ly



**Picture 6:** Old ways of political campaign 6  
*Source:* [Thebrooklyninstitute.com](http://Thebrooklyninstitute.com)



**Picture 5:** Old ways of political campaign 5  
*Source:* Stock Photos... | Shutterstock



**Picture 7** Old ways of political campaign 7  
*Source:* [81 Vintage Political Campaigns ideas - Pinterest](https://www.pinterest.com/pin/81-vintage-political-campaigns-ideas/)



**Picture 8:** Old ways of political campaign 8

**Source:** [Thebrooklyninstitute.com](http://Thebrooklyninstitute.com)



**Picture 9:** Old ways of political campaign 9

**Source:** [81 Vintage Political Campaigns ideas - Pinterest](https://www.pinterest.com/81VintagePoliticalCampaignsIdeas/)



**Picture 10:** Old ways of political campaign 10

**Source:**

[http://www.roosevelthouse.hunter.cuny.edu > portfolios](http://www.roosevelthouse.hunter.cuny.edu/portfolios)

### 2.8.2 New Dimension of Political Campaign

The dimension of political campaign revolves around political marketing tool, which is one of the major PR techniques in a modern political campaign. In addition, the concept has gradually created strategies and tactics for communication between the public and political actors. On the other hand, political marketing in electoral campaigns has been part of politics for decades; however Buckens (2012), posited that the sources the modern political campaign now involves campaign organization with a coherent structure and staff like any other large business which now gives political actors a greater access to reach target groups faster. Also the new dimension is more effective, in both the impact it has on people and

the resources compared to the old traditional methods of campaigning. No doubt, the emergence of the new dimension of PPR in political campaign has broadened the social media landscape. Additionally, the modern strategy helps to improve traditional methods such as, blogs, Facebook, LinkedIn, twitter, Instagram, YouTube, pinterest, Tik Tok, Billboard, magazine, flyers and many more.

These modern methods enable campaign organizers to disseminate information to the target audience more effectively (Bateson, 1972,). Overall, the main purpose of a political campaign is to create attention, awareness, and promote parties and their candidates during elections. Furthermore, political actors from different organizations support their cause with assistance from P.R. experts to help them achieve their desired goals by marketing them in the eyes of the public via a political campaign. (Jefferson, 2018). On the other hand, the past two decades have witnessed a surge in the use of political campaign in politics. The new dimension of political campaign enables political campaign organizers to package persuasive messages that will create awareness of the party they represent. Also, the emerged of the new dimension in political campaign in a modern democratic countries, has enabled citizens to exercise their civic responsibility by voting for the candidate of their choice, vying for different political offices. However, the new dimension of political campaign enables political campaign organizers to package persuasive messages that will create awareness of the party they represent. According to Opeibi (2004), before now, political parties employed the use of political rallies, personal contacts, and speeches to sensitize electorates. Nevertheless, the

emergence of sophisticated marketing tools, as well as diversification of the mass media, politicians now rely on experts with a better idea of what the grassroots want, and what will get their best response. However, the focal position of the new dimension in the construction and reconstruction of political campaign strategy is still been questioned among political scientist scholar. Also, their critique were basically on the very fact that the new dimension of political campaign are mostly made up messages of empty promises of political party and their representatives to win the majority of the masses in order to urge their votes during election.

### 2.8.3 Images of new dimension of political campaign



**Picture 11** New dimension of political campaign 1

**Source :** [Election Campaign High Res Stock Images | Shutterstock](#)



**Picture 12** New dimension of political campaign 2  
 Source: [Election Campaign High Res Stock Images | Shutterstock](https://www.shutterstock.com/search/election-campaign-high-res-stock-images)



**Picture 13:** New dimension of political campaign 3

Source: <https://www.gettyimages.com/photos/political-campaign>



**Picture 14:** New dimension of political campaign 4

Source: <https://www.dreamstime.com/photos-images/political-campaign.html>



**Picture 15:** : New dimension of political campaign 5

Source: [Campaign stock images, Royalty Free political campaign](https://www.royaltyfree.com/campaign-stock-images) .



**Picture 17:** New dimension of political campaign

7

*Source:*

<https://www.shutterstock.com/search/political+campaign>



**Picture 16:** : New dimension of political campaign

*Source:*

<https://www.shutterstock.com/search/political+campaign>



**Picture 18:** New dimension of political campaign

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*Source*<https://www.shutterstock.com/search/political+campaign>



**Picture 19:** New dimension of political campaign  
9

**Source:** [...https://www.shutterstock.com > search > political+camp...](https://www.shutterstock.com/search/political+campaign)



**Picture 20:** New dimension of political campaign  
10

**Source:**

<https://www.shutterstock.com/search/political+campaign>

#### **2.8.4 Edo State Political Landscape**

Nigeria is located in West Africa, with 36 states and one federal capital territory, and is a federal democratic republic with a government's presidential system. Nigeria is a former British colony, which gained its independence in 1960 from Great Britain. Besides, Nigeria is Africa most populous country, with a population of 200 million people. Furthermore, the Social and economic-political interests and events to proceeds from them in Nigeria, contributed to the development of cyber societies and virtual dialogue groups among the electorates during election campaigns. According to Chilwa (2012) this is a tremendous progress in Nigeria political system, considering that during military regime, the people were prohibited from freely having political discussions and there was at a time, an absolute ban on political activities. fortunately, in the year 1999 precisely May 29<sup>th</sup>, Nigeria returned to democratic system of government. According to Ifukor (2011), the returned of democracy in Nigeria provided an enabling environment for political organizations and the media to strive in the country. Also,

Nigeria's social-political and religious groups can now openly discuss their opinion, engage with the government to keep their end of the social-contract and vigorously promote reforms in different facets of the country in order to ensure a working Nigeria.

According to Akinola, (1976), Nigeria has so many natural resources. Crude oil being the major natural resources the country has is mainly located in the states that constitute Niger Delta Region. Edo state is among the oil-producing states in Nigeria, and it holds a governorship election every 4 years. The state has three senatorial districts, 9 Federal House of Representative slots, 18 Local government areas urban and rural, and 22 political wards. According to Akinola, (1976), he opined that Benin was called The Great Benin Kingdom before the coming of the colonial masters in the 11th Century. However, Bradbury and Robert (1957), claim that Benin early political history started as hierarchical, with a sophisticated bureaucracy under the rulership of Ogiso (King of the Sky) and was assisted by seven powerful nobles and that the nobles were the ones who helped the king to establish the city which is now known as Benin City in 1180 A.D.

According to Ifuko (2010), the Benin Kingdom's political history, now Edo state, was dated far back in the early 11th Century, which flourished from the 13th Century to the 17th century. Interestingly, Nigerian politicians, both on the national, state, and local government are now social media active. On the other hand, it has also helped eligible voters to connect with their representatives through various platforms of social media, such as Tik Tok, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and many more

### 2.8.5 Edo state governorship election 2020

#### political campaign images



**Picture 21-** Edo State 2020 political campaign images 1

**Source:** : <https://www.alamy.com/pdp-women-campaign-in-edo>



**Picture 22:** Edo State 2020 political campaign images 2

**Source:** <https://www.alamy.com/pdp-women-campaign-in-edo>

[campaign-in-edo...](#)



**Picture 23:** : Edo State 2020 political campaign images 3

**Source:**

<https://www.channelstv.com/2020/09/21/edo-state-governorship-election-apc>



**Picture 24:** Edo State 2020 political campaign images 4

**Source:** <https://www.alamy.com/pdp-women-campaign-in-edo>



**Picture 25:** Edo State 2020 political campaign images 5

**Source:**

<https://www.channelstv.com/2020/09/21/edo-state-governorship-electi>

## 2.9 Theoretical Framework

### 2.9.1 Agenda-Setting Theory\Gatekeeping

Agenda-Setting theory or gatekeeping is one of the most important elements in shaping public opinion. It's a concept used by the media in shaping the view

of the public, and to control the information received, According to Cobb and Elder (1972), the media use this concept, to focus their attention on selected issues on which the public will form an opinion on which they believe are important to the public, by directing the focus and attention of the public towards those issues. Furthermore, this theory holds that the media set agenda for public dialogue on matters of public interest. However, the influence of public opinion is the primary goal of every politician during electoral campaign and the media are the main source of information, therefore the media play a key role in a political campaign (Comb, 2004).

On the other hand, Agenda-setting theory has its own special effects to attract, and influences our views of certain issues or ideas of what we hear or receive via the media. Nevertheless, the connection between political actors and the media is much evident during an election period when all attention is focused on political parties, candidates, and the political office they are vying for. Earlier media researchers proclaim that media messages exert effects on the recipients. According to Hallan seven model of theory framing is an essential concept used by the media through Agenda-setting to convey information to the public. Therefore, the concept of framing and priming are essential tools the media use to shape our own opinion. For example, news, advertisement of political jingles during campaigns, and many others, are ways media can influence the opinion of the public through the angle, which the message is being framed (Opeibi, 2004), Hence, Agenda-Setting theory has become a central process by which political actors use to construct and exercise influence over their opponents, government

policies, and the target audience during an electoral campaign.

McQuail (2010) explains gatekeeping as a process in which selection is made by media as to what news should be broadcasted in the media. The Agenda-setting or gatekeeping theory has a much wider application as it applies to several events that can be understood by people in society. According to Baun & Groeling (2008). most recently, some political scientist researcher's claimed that, the agenda-setting theory is an essential tool employed by political party and their representative to shape the minds of the society. In general, the way the media shape news report can affect our perceptions on certain issues for example during political campaigns advertisements the way the party ideology is portrayed can dissolve boundaries separating facts and can even move people to vote against their best interests

According to Schudson, (2011) the controlling idea of the agenda setting role in mass media is to share related contents from time to time that will influence the masses most especially during an election period. However, the sharing of media content by political actors brings the correlation between the politicians and the electorates. Drawing from the above reason, political party and their representatives are most times motivated with the concept of agenda-setting theory (Druckman, 2007).

### **2.9.2 Social Marketing Theory**

This theory explains how marketing principles can be adopted in political campaigns to win the support of the public. Philip Kotler and Gerald Zaltman developed the theory in the early 1970s,

when marketing strategies were discovered to be useful in educating, entertaining, influencing people's beliefs, behavior, and selling ideas. Iyengar, (1991), believe that social marketing theory is a concept that integrates marketing ideas tools, in other to promote communication that will benefit society. According to McQuail,(1994), social marketing is focused on preventing issues in effective communication of public messages and develops system to circumvent them. On the other hand, in politics there is a shared difference experience between the people who are in power and those who are being governed; and sometimes it difficult for the leaders to connect with the people, as a result of this, politicians now rely on experts with a better idea of what the grassroots want, and what will get their best response Also, marketing theory concept intergrates ideas that will promote political adverts which will benefits the society. In today's world, the media environment is no longer dominated by the views of leaders as it was in 21st century, they would now have to compete with other programs and activities being broadcasted (Ellion 2013).

Furthermore, political actors from different organizations support their cause with assistance from PPR experts to help them achieve their desired goals by marketing them in the eyes of the public via a political campaign (Vreese, 2016). Recent studies has demonstrated the usefulness of marketing theory strategy in political campaign. Hence, political campaign managers are more conversant with the use social marketing methods to induce audience awareness on subject matter during a political campaign. Besides, campaign managers have the power to shape media content as desired - they are able to give craft persuasive

messages to be published in the media to their target public or draw the attention of the press to issues or a content that promotes their political interests and public image.

Gitlin (2003), explains that aside developing awareness and capturing interest, social marketing theory involves motivating the audience to take action; moving them from the level of being informed, to making the decision to take action. Andresen (1997), the definition of social marketing theory was more on intent than method. He further explains how marketing strategies can be used to influence target public. The practice of this theory are pronounced among political actors who are determined to change the behaviour or perception of the electorates during electoral campaign.

### **2.9.3 Two-Step Flow of Communication Theory**

Hazel Gaudet, Bernard Berelson, and Paul Lazarsfeld, and developed this theory in 1944 in a book titled *The People's Choice*. The focus of these scholars was on the decision-making of electorates during the Presidential or Parliamentary election campaign which is ultimately the most popular event in a political campaign. McCombs, 1992; Roberts and McCombs, (1994) posited that the sources of information set agendas for political parties during electoral campaign. Most importantly, In describing the concept of political campaign and its indispensability in democratic governance, Druckman (2001) asserts that an election period in any democratic system of government begins with political campaigns by different political parties and their representatives. According to Helma (2013), during an election period, political parties and political actors set an agenda on how to canvass votes and win the

election. Hence, there is a constant interaction between political actors, campaign organizers, and the electorates. On the other hand, the Two-Step Flow of Communication Theory describes how individuals are influenced to adopt or modify their attitudes and beliefs.

According to Lazarsfeld, people rarely make decisions based on their own beliefs but rather also included by other persons in their lives, such as family members, friends and colleagues, physicians, media, religious and traditional leaders, and public leaders. The two-step flow of communication theory denotes information that transit from the source to the opinion leader and then goes to the public whether or not it was planned to take that trajectory. McQuail (1994) specifically explained that messages from political leaders during electoral campaign could influence electorates, most times with their opinions, behavior, speeches, or religion background. In addition, political contestant's characteristics can be review in several diverse ways during campaign. Hence, political public relations professionals adopt this theory in electoral campaigns by first determining target audiences for their messages, and then identifying whom those groups consider their opinion leader and consequently, reaching out to these leaders to win their support, as doing so would somewhat guarantee the support of electorates under their influence, and some of these leaders may even include clergy, newspaper columnists, captain of industries, popular authors, eminent politicians, professors, television personalities, traditional leaders, and many others. Schudson (2011) claims that the Two-Step Flow of Communication Theory makes it easier for political parties to align the ideologies of their party

through political messages.

#### **2.9.4 The Excellence Theory**

This first widely recognized theory of public relations that came through 15-year research work on communication management sponsored by the International Association of Business Communicators (Grunig, 2000). The theory suggests the best ways public relations can practice for it to achieve a predetermined goal and explores value of public relations in politics. The theory explains how significant Public relations are to any organization. Its importance is determined by the nature of relationships an organization has with the public (Grunig, 2002). The theory stresses that for Public relations to make any form of positive impact in any organization it must be part of leadership in charge of making critical decision making (Neille, 2006).

The theory suggests that it is important for every organization to recognize their different publics influenced by their decision or those who are expecting the organization to address a problem essential to them. To recognize these people, the organization must thoroughly examine the environment (Grunig & Grunig, 2011). Furthermore, the excellent theory does not only provide a broad explanation of public relations' role in electoral campaign but also suggests ways of ensuring that PR activities are effectively conducted. As previously noted, political public relations as the management process by which political parties or political actors aim to actualize their political goals by influencing, building, and sustaining beneficial relationships with the electorates, through communication and action. According to the excellent theory, organizations

including political parties must carry out symmetrical communication with their publics to develop cordial and beneficial relationships with them. Also, this explains the importance of symmetrical communication by a candidate's public relations unit and the electorates.

According to Ellion (2013), every candidate must as a matter of necessity, voraciously seek to build a relationship with voters through systematic and regular communication with the people. He also emphasized how communication should not only be restricted to the election period but should be consistent from the beginning of building the thought of running for a political office to the post-election period. Besides, a good relationship is essential and crucial to the victory of a political party and their candidates. Grunig and Grunig (2011) explained that a good relationship reduces the cost incurred in unfavorable circumstances like litigation, regulation, legislation, and negative publicity. It also reduces the risk of drafting a manifesto, which does not reflect the people's interest and increases the chances of the party developing policy, and programs that directly address the peculiar problems of the society.

According to Downs (2014), in the past, electioneering was mainly about strengthening partisanship and marshaling the committed. However, today, this strategy has changed; the public is now more politically and socially aware and has recognized their significance and value in democratic dispensation hence, to be successful in any election, there is a need for the public to be influenced and encouraged to part with their votes. This has in no small measure motivated the growth of political public relations. It stands to reason that

for a political party to win the confidence of the electorates, by adopting the multidimensional strategies of public relations. One of the first scholars to apply the marketing technique to politics was. He opined that electorates and political actors are market rationalists. This suggests that while electorates are looking out for the best products, the political actors canvassing for support are businesspersons looking to sell their products and services. Against this background, these theories was considered appropriate for the this study because of their intermediary between media, political institutions and the society. The fact remain that, the media mirror the society and supply information based on the events in the societies,

### **3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Method of Study**

This study used quantitative research design approach of content analysis, and a survey method to secure data from the participants. Also, the adopted survey research method was used in examining Political Public Relations new dimension of political campaign in Edo state. Thus, survey was considered more appropriate because it focuses on people, explores the vital facts from them, their beliefs, opinions, attitudes, perceptions and motivations about the advertising practice understudy (Osuala, 2005). Specifically, Nwodu (2017, p. 178) explains that survey research serves the purpose of scientifically examining socio psychological variables or phenomena in their natural settings; describing objectively, the relationships that exist among the examined variables or phenomena within their actual environment at a defined time frame; probing directly or indirectly, attitudes, feelings, and

dispositions of the samples towards a given phenomenon and by extension, use the outcome to generalize on the entire population; and offering researchers the opportunity to communicate with the respondents directly or indirectly.

Furthermore, the researcher considered questionnaires method for the data collection; and the questionnaire was divided into two sections. The essence of dividing the questionnaires into two sections was to ensure that any lapses created in one part is taken care of in the other part. McCroskey,(2008), the researcher use this method in order to secure viable and reliable information concerning the use of Political public relations in Edo state gubernatorial election and the effects of the new dimension of PPR in political campaign, and the peoples perception. Drawing from the above scholarly position, the researcher considered the survey research method very appropriate for this study.

**3.2 Area of Study**

This study is on the recent 2020, governorship election which took place on the 19th of Septemeber in Edo State, Nigeria, However, the researcher's target is on respondents who are conversant with the state politics. The reason for this kind of selection was to ensure that the respondents are acquainted with the state political parties ideologies and their campaign strategies. In this regard, the researcher's main focus is on the participants' awareness of Political Public Relations new dimension in political campaign.

**3.3 Population of Study**

In accordance with (Nwodu, 2006, p.49) population of study is the total number of elements within a given environment which researcher set out to study. Therefore, this study's population is all the voters in Edo who participated in the 2020

governorship election, which according to Premium times 2020) is 1,735,910. The reason for premising this study on this set of people was to ensure that the participants in the study are conversant with the phenomenon under study the population of the voters in Edo state.

**3.4 Sample Size**

Considering the fact that, the number of users who met with political advertisement on social media channels, television and radio channels cannot be easily investigated during this study period. Therefore, the researcher adopted Topman's sample size technique determination formula to select the sample for the study. According to McCroskey (2008) purposive sampling allows the researcher to ensure that the all of respondents selected for the research are knowledgeable in the matter or area of study. A total of 400 respondents were for the study.

The formula is stated thus: thus  $n = \frac{N}{1+N(e)^2}$

Where

n= Sample size

N= total population

(e)<sup>2</sup> = error margin

l = constant

$$n = \frac{1,735,910}{1+16,000 \times (0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{1,735,910}{1+1,735,910 \times 0.0025}$$

$$n = \frac{1,735,910}{1+4339.775}$$

$$n = \frac{1,735,910}{1,735,911}$$

n=400

**3.5 Sampling Technique**

The purposive sampling technique was used in this study to ensure that only respondents exposed to the use of PPR in the electioneering campaign were sampled for the study. According to (Mahin,

Hamideh, and Fereshteh, 2017).purposive sampling method is a convenience sampling method applied to access subjects with the target characteristics. Hence, the method enabled the researcher to effectively communicate with the respondents. In this regards, selection was made to ensure that the samples chosen was in line with almost all the information that political parties and their representaive posted on different social media platforms at any particular time, as well as television and radio jingles.

Furthermore, the technique was also expedient as the researcher was unable to be physically present in Nigeria to conduct the research. She relied on important contacts in Nigeria in identifying and selecting the right respondents for the study. These contacts also provided email address of the research participants, which cut-across the different levels of electorates across socio-political and economic strata. Respondents were pulled from the senatorial district of the states including Edo Central, Edo North and Edo South. This was supported by Lindlof (1995)'s assertions, "variety of respondents can offer different and rich insights due to the fact that they have had distinctive experiences of the situation". The participants were individuals who are 18 years and above, had internet access and understood the English language. Involvement in this research was voluntary, consensual and anonymous with informed consent provided by all prospective participants. The questionnaire was sent to participants through e-mail. Respondents were required to fill out and email the completed forms back to the researcher.

### **3.6 Instrument of Data Collection**

The study questionnaire is the key instrument utilized in the study for data collection. Also, the study used well-structured open and closed ended pattern questionnaire which was distributed online mainly by email among the sample size. In addition, the questionnaire contains questions, which were structured into section A,B and C. Section A contains respondents' background information, while section B and C contain questions directed at eliciting information regarding the statements of problem and the questions put forward in this work. In constructing the questionnaire, the close-ended approach, which gives respondents alternative answers to choose from, was adopted. This made coding easier and subsequently made organization and analysis of data less cumbersome. The method reduces bias, which promotes reliability and high response rate. The questionnaire also gave room for standardisation of questions which facilitates comparisons of answers since all respondents were asked the same questions.

### **3.7 Validity and Reliability of Instrument**

In order to ensure the validity of the instrument used in this study, the instrument (questionnaire) was subjected to the scrutiny of the supervisor for constructive criticisms, corrections and suggestions on the structure and content of the instrument used in the study. A pilot study was also conducted. According to Akpohgiran and Okoro (2014), the essence of this was to elicit reactions, observations, views and perhaps criticism about the instrument before going into the main study. The study used the Guttman Scale of coefficient of reproducibility to measure the reliability of the instrument. In the course of the exercise, 3 errors were observed. The working was:

$$\begin{aligned} &\text{Total error} \\ &\frac{1 - \text{total responses}}{3} \\ &\frac{1 - 20}{3} \\ &3/20 = 0.15 \\ &1 - 0.15 = 0.85. \end{aligned}$$

The instrument yielded a reliability coefficient value of 85%, confirming its internal consistency and validity.

### 3.8 Technique of Data Presentation and Analysis

The quantitative data presentation and analysis method were adopted in this work. The study used the explanation building method in data presentation and analysis. Data were analyzed quantitatively based on study objectives set in chapter one above. In line with Shien (2014), data analysis is the processing of studying, cleansing modeling, examining, and transforming data to find valuable information. A poor analysis leads to erroneous results that hinder the study's authenticity and make the findings unusable. Therefore, the content analysis method was adopted, and SPSS program was used to give accurate answers to ensure that the results are

insightful and actionable. The method was also effective in analyzing the data collected in order to provide answers to the research questions, research objective, and findings. Furthermore, 400 copies questionnaire was distributed. However, 345 copies were recovered at the time of collection of the questionnaire. This shows that there was a casualty of 55 copies. The study, therefore, was based on the 345 copies recovered from the respondents.

## 4.0 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### 4.1 Findings

#### 4.1.1 Data presentation of old and new dimension of political campaign

This study is significant because it shows the groundwork for understanding the visibility of the old and new dimension of political public relation in political campaign. However, the seven model of framing by Hallahan was part of the frame used to analyze both the old and the new dimension of political campaign with the use of SPSS program.

**Phase One Table 1a:** Presents the transcripts analysis of the old dimension of political campaign.

#### Political Campaign

	Mean
• Media	37.55%
• Availability of technologies	17%
• Accuracy	54.35%
• Attributes	33.75%
• Action	42.35%
• Purpose	46.25%
• Financial Evaluation	55.35%
• Efficient	20.65%

**Phase one Table 1b:** Presents the frequency result of the old dimension of political campaign

Political Campaign	Mean
Media	37.55%
Availability of technologies	17%
Accuracy	54.35%
Attributes	33.75%
Action	42.35%
Purpose	46.25%
Financial Evaluation	55.35%
Efficient	20.65%

55.27%

**Phase one Table 2a:** Present the transcript analysis of the new dimension of political campaign

**Phase one Table 2b:** Present the frequency result of the new dimension of political campaign

#### Political Campaign

#### Mean

- Media  
56.3%
- Availability of technologies  
56.25%
- Accuracy  
46.9%
- Attributes  
57.35%
- Action  
34.4%
- Purpose  
54.75 %
- Financial Evaluation  
25%
- Efficient

Political Campaign	Mean
Media	56.3%
Availability of technologies	56.25%
Accuracy	46.9%
Attributes	57.35%
Action	34.4%
Purpose	54.75 %
Financial Evaluation	25%
Efficient	55.27%

#### 4.1.2 Data presentation political public relations as a tool in edo state 2020 gubernatorial election

The four tables displayed the influence of PPR strategies on a political campaign. Besides that, respondents' level of awareness of the use of political public relations in the 2020 Edo state

gubernatorial election was high. The majority of the respondents admitted that they have a very high level of awareness of the use of political public relations strategy in the campaign in Edo governorship election of 2020. It could be acknowledged that 86 and 40 respondents accounting for 24.9% and 11.5% of the population under study admitted that having low and very low level of awareness of the use of political public relations in the 2020 Edo governorship election.

### 1. How do political public relations strategies influence political campaigns?

The media has led professionals to build a social marketing strategy to publicize goods and services. And politicians have adopted different political marketing strategies to achieve their desired goal. Besides, political public relations personnel use

different social media platforms to connect with their audience. Such as Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, Tik Tok, Blogs, live streaming of political adverts, and many more. . In the past, electioneering was mainly about strengthening partisanship and marshaling the committed. However, today, this strategy has changed; the public is now more politically and socially aware and has recognized their significance and value in democratic dispensation; hence, to be successful in any election, there is a need for the public to be influenced and encouraged to part with their votes. This has in no small measure motivated the growth of political public relations. It stands to reason that for a political party to win the electorates' confidence, it must adopt the multidimensional strategies of public relations.

**Table 1.** The influence of political public relations in political campaign

Response category	Freq.	%
Political public relations strategies has a positive influence on voters	146	42.3
Political public relation strategies has no influence on electorates	121	27
Political public relations strategies has a positive influence on voters choice	78	56.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>345</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source:* Researchers' field survey, 2021

This table shows how the strategies of political public relations in politics as positive and the influence it has on voter's perception in choosing their candidate (s). The table shows that 4238% of the respondents affirmed that public relations had positive influences on 2020 Edo gubernatorial election. 35% perceived the use of political public relations as having influences on 2020 Edo gubernatorial election while only 22.6% made bold to admit that political public relations use has negative influences on 2020 Edo gubernatorial election. The import of this data shows that political public relations strategies significantly influenced political campaign.

## 2 What is the difference between the old and new dimensions in a political campaign?

A political campaign is the most crucial factor of every political institution. Thus, a political campaign program involves many decisions, including creating objectives of public opinion in a campaign, selecting message and tools that will positively affect the campaign. Furthermore, various media are used for the success of the campaigns. According to Victor (2017), opinion the earliest days of a political campaign in politics experienced some major challenges because of the old methods of campaigning. These methods limited their messages to a few people, and it was also time-consuming. However, the availability of technologies was also a hindrance to the campaign organizers because they did not have the potential to contribute to a more informed, inclusive, and nonpartisan democracy. In recent years, communication and information technologies such as the internet have become an integral way to remain in contact globally. A plethora of research has highlighted the powerful role of the media in a political institution. Druckman (2001) explained more on the power of media technologies stating that during electoral campaign politicians use different platforms to showcase themselves and their party in order to reach the target audience. On the other hand, the old methods only involves Radio, canvassing door to door meetings, leafleting, bell ringing, campaign trails, newspapers, television town-crier, etc. Also, not too many politicians could afford to pay for political advert on newspapers, Radio or television as many of them depend on their family members, friends of friends to create awareness of their political party. Furthermore, the new dimension is assessable and faster. For example, social networking sites like Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, snapchat, Youtube, and Instagram have become a great channel of opportunity for political actors to campaign and construct their profile information that will attract supporters that will eventually cast their vote them. Nowadays, citizens in the diaspora can now participate in an election of their country via the internet wherever they are in the world all these happen because of the new dimension of political campaign. The new dimension enhances campaign organizers the ability to create, share information of political parties from one platform to another without spending much. Tables below show the difference between the old and new dimension;

**Table 2.** The result between the old and new dimension of political public relation in political campaign

Response category	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	190	55
No	68	19.7
Can't say	87	25.2
Total	345	100

Researchers' field survey, 2021

Table 2. shows the impact of the new dimension on respondents, and how they are motivated into participating in

the election by the use of political public relations new dimension of campaigning in the 2020 Edo state governorship election. From the field data, 190 respondents accounting for 55% of the population admitted that they are motivated to participate in the election by using political public relations in the State by the political parties and their candidates. Only 25.2% of the respondents admitted that they are not motivated to participate in the election by the use of political public relations among parties in the contest. The implication of this data shows that the new dimension of political campaign adopted by politicians in Edo state has positive impact on the voters compare to the old method of campaigning.

### **3. What is the respondents' perception of the use of political public relations by parties in the 2020 Edo state gubernatorial election?**

**Table 3** Results is on the respondent perception of the use of political public relations by political parties in Edo state election

Response category	Freq.	%
Political public relations was a special tool for political parties campaigns in Edo state 2020 governorship election	146	52.
Political public relations has an influence on the 2020 Edo gubernatorial election	121	30
Political public relations use has a negative influence on the 2020 Edo gubernatorial election	78	18.
<b>Total</b>	<b>345</b>	<b>100</b>

Researchers' field survey, 2021

This table shows how the respondents' perception of the use of political public relations in the 2020 Edo state Governorship election. The table shows that 435% of the respondents affirmed that public relations had positive influences on 2020 Edo gubernatorial election. According to the data analyzed high numbers of respondents have a good perception of the use of political public relations as having influences on 2020 Edo gubernatorial election while only 18.6% claimed that political public relations use has negative influences on 2020 Edo gubernatorial election. Additionally, some of the respondents were highly motivated into participating in the just concluded election due to the election via different platforms of social media.

Also, some the respondents admitted that the political campaign in the national level has changed significantly which has also affects the state election functions especially during electoral campaigning in a positive way. Hence, majority of political party representative are now active on several social media platforms to educate the voters also for their voice to be heard during the electoral campaign especially the youths who were allowed to ask questions during the

governorship debates weeks before the elections. According to the respondents political parties and their candidates utilized the several medium to reach the citizens both in the rural and urban area thereby creating a lasting awareness that motivated the electorates to turn out in numbers to vote of their candidate on Election Day.

#### **1. What is the respondents' level of awareness of the use of political public relations tools in the**

### 2020 Edo gubernatorial election?

**Table 4** Respondent awareness of the use of political public relation tools in the state election

High	99	29.
Very high	130	43.
Low	76	18
Very low	40	10
Total	345	100

*Source:* Researchers' field survey, 2021

This table show that the displayed the respondents' level of awareness of the use of political public relations in the 2020 Edo state gubernatorial election. From the table, most of the respondents admitted that they have a very high level of awareness of the use of political public relations in Edo's governorship election of 2020. The Internet is another powerful tool used by PPR. in a political campaign.

According to Jefferson (2018), the introduction of the internet has allowed the public to participate in the campaign process on a scale never done before. The internet provides users with different tools to share links, videos, and live broadcasts. Besides, this site or links can bring several people of the same ideology and mutual interest together.

Hence, political public relations practitioners utilize these sites to campaign for their clients during the electoral campaign programs, coupled with the internet targeting capabilities and that it is usually inexpensive compared to Television or print campaigns. Political public relation practitioners working closely with candidates use the internet to build a meaningful relationship with electorates, converting everyday people into empowered participants, advocates, volunteers, and donors through emails, social networks, and internet videos. Many candidates run websites that provide information about them particularly their positions on issues, biographical data, endorsements from important supporters, and related campaign information.

### 4.2 Discussion

From the data obtained through the field survey, it has been established that the majority of the respondents are aware that political public relations are used in the 2020 Edo gubernatorial election. The respondents have interactive sessions with the politicians and receive philanthropic support from different political parties and their candidates. Drawing from the number of respondents who choose different response categories, majority of the respondents confirmed that public relations activities were applied by the political parties and their candidates in the just concluded 2020 Edo state gubernatorial election. The above finding corroborates the finding in Udeze and Akpan, (2013, p.54) where the application of political advertising messages on the electorates influence the respondents' political behaviors. The implication of this finding is that candidates' public relations strategies greatly determine the public image portrayed before the electorates and invariably the extent of favor they will get during electoral campaign. The respondents' level of awareness on the use of political public relations in Edo 2020 governorship election is a perfect demonstration of the fact that the Nigerian political parties and candidates have acknowledged the advantage of its use in elections (see Ayozie, 2013). Furthermore, the finding is in tandem with Costas and Francia (2008) who conclude that an unprecedented number of Americans admitted being contacted by a major party in 2008. Costas and Francia further revealed that the use of PPR in the voter's mobilization efforts in 2008 accounted for increased voter turnout by 14.5 million votes. This finding is also in tandem with the provision of the social marketing theory of communication, which states that effective public relations communication promotes socially treasured information that commands socially accepted behaviours (Andresen, 1997).

It is this acceptance that transforms into massive participation in the election. The implication of this

finding is that voters are significantly influenced by packages and all other kinds of incentives from political candidates, which influences the outcome of votes a candidate will get from them. The idea of the piper and the payer applies in this finding, which is more of vote buying in Nigeria than ordinary political public relations practice. In this regard, one of the best political public relations used in Edo 2020 gubernatorial election was opinion leaders, clergy men, and public figures who command the respect of the common man. This technique helped the parties in the contest to use the community leaders and all these set of people who are closer to the voters to disseminate their goodwill messages to earn more support. This was in line with the provision of the two-step-media theory, which argues that the media messages passed through influential middlemen get to the people and influence them based on their social relationship with the poor masses. However, there were mixed feelings among the respondents in using political public relation technique in the just concluded governorship election in Edo state.

Nevertheless, some of the participants maintained that they were moved by the new dimension of political campaign use by PPR in election, the practice in the Edo state 2020 governorship election has been concluded to encourage voter turnout in the State. Furthermore, in compliance with Michelle (2012), having a great candidate as a political party, will not produce a successful result if the electorates do not know him/her. That is where promotion and other PPR activities come into the picture. The PPR job is to connect the target publics by communicating the benefits of voting for the candidate (s) they represent. Nowadays, political campaigns, promotion involve integrated marketing Communication (IMC). In a nutshell, this strategy involves bringing together an array of different communication tools to disseminate a common message to make the desired impact on the public's attitudes and perceptions. Colby (2014) views

states that IMC aims to communicate a particular message to a target public with the strategic purpose of influencing behavior and impressions. IMC makes campaign activities more efficient and effective as it depends on multiple communication methods and places where the public can be easily reached, to communicate a consistent campaign message in more compelling ways.

## **5.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **5.1 Conclusion**

This study centers on the use of political public relations new dimension in political campaign. Also, the study shows the impact of PPR new dimension of political campaign in Edo state 2020, governorship election and the strategies used by political parties in the state. Consequently, electioneering campaigns are promotional efforts by political parties and candidates to win political support, mostly in votes. On the other hand, this strategies allow parties and political actors to determine the best ways to allocate resources and develop a good understanding of voters' behavior. Also these political parties publicized their manifestoes through the mass media. By so doing, the political parties used banners, flyers, and leaflets during political campaigns. In addition, social media were also employed to advertise candidates and parties, inviting community members to the town hall to receive gift items from the party candidates and hopefuls. The 2020 governorship election had its own peculiarities as Nigeria witnessed various campaign methods. According to Daily Wikipedia, (2020), only 14 political parties participated in the governorship election. These parties included: Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), All Progressives Congress (APC), ADC, NRM, SDP, L.P., NNPP, APGA, YPP, ZLP, A.A., and APP which all adopted the use of one kind of political public relations in inducing their voters to vote for them. The APC for example, used what the presidency called the traders' money to see if they get the businessmen and market women to vote for the party

three days to the election. In other words, the study looked at political public relations use in the 2020 Edo state governorship election. The study adopted the survey research method in examining the voters' level of awareness and perception of the use of PPR in elections. The Agenda-setting theory, social marketing theory, the Two-step-flow theory of mass communication, and Excellence theory of public relation practitioners were adopted as the theoretical framework. The study examined different of Political public relations as the subject matter paying special attention to the influence of the practice to political participation among the people of Edo state. Other relevant literature was explored regarding the topic while paying attention to the similarities, differences, and gap in literature that this study stands to fill once concluded. From the study, it has been established that the new dimension of PPR in political campaigns definitely pays off to politicians. According to McNair (2011), Political Public relations is about image management and media management and communication management. PPR Practitioners bring together various communication tools to disseminate a common message to make the desired impact on the public's attitudes and perceptions. At the core of PPR, communication management is the mass media. Mass media is various technologies used to disseminate information to the public through mass communication. Political Public relations practitioners utilize media technologies to deliver messages to the Electorate about a political party and its candidate(s).

In many democratic countries, the citizens get their information through the media, and this information determines their voting choices. This fact is well known to political public relations experts. They strive to develop a good relationship with the press to receive positive and possibly free press coverage of their campaign activities. Negrine (2014) opined that political public relations' essential role in a political campaign is to create and sustain effective

communication channels between the media, political actors, political parties, and the Electorate. This suggests that political actors and parties should vigorously pursue the image management concept and strategically thrive on winning electorates' hearts. Hence, political actors need to recognize political public relations professionals as a social philosophy that places a priority on the needs and well-being of the people. Acknowledging that if political parties identify with and show genuine concern for the people's needs and interest and thrive towards providing a feasible solution to their challenges, the party's interest in winning an election and promoting their programs will be served ultimately. In line with this view, Duncan (2012) asserts that effective communication is one surefire way a political party can establish and sustain a cordial relationship, support, and mutual understating with the voters. He further stressed that the essence of communication is to ensure that the public is properly informed about the programs and manifestos of the political party. Through communication, the party highlights the qualities of the political actor to persuade the Electorate.

## **5.2 Recommendations**

An election campaign is conceived as the process of soliciting support or votes for a certain political party or candidate during election therefore, for any political party or political actor to have a chance at winning an election, there is a need for them to find a strategic way not only to effectively communicate proposed programs and policies to the people but to also develop a sustainable cordial relationship with the Electorate with the help of professional campaign team, in other to achieve its goals. Drawing from the data obtained and analyzed from the field, this study concludes that the people in Edo are highly aware of the use of political public relations in the 2020 gubernatorial election in the State. The peoples' high level of awareness of its use shows that Nigerian politicians have discovered that the use of PPR technique is

significant to electoral victory. Therefore, for any political party or individual political actor to have a chance at winning an election, there is a need for them to find a strategic way to effectively communicate proposed programs and policies to the people and develop a sustainable cordial relationship with the Electorate. According to Murray (2018), P.R. practitioners play a significant role in political campaigns, particularly in marketing political parties, their candidates, and manifestos. Gordon (2010) justifies the use of PPR Strategies in a political campaign for two reasons. First, political parties and individual politicians in any democratic setting must solicit public support as a matter of necessity. Secondly, to ensure the effective execution of party programs and sustained voters support is necessary. In conclusion, the Scholar identifies the role of public relations in politics as follows;

- To reduced assumptions and indifference towards party programs and the role of the party in society.
- To enable to electorates make an informed decision at the polls
- To clarify the people's sentiment and enable them to willingly comply, this involves encouraging the people to understand and appreciate the party's policy and activities.

In addition, the study also concludes that political public relations strictly influenced voters' decision making in the 2020 Edo state governorship election in Nigeria. Importantly, the technique has been confirmed based on the field data from the Edo 2020 governorship election.

It was recommended that:

1. Effective use of political public relations should be adopted by parties to help them improve people's lives by engaging in

developmental efforts that can change the lives of the people for the better.

2. The use of the techniques should be carefully managed among politicians to avoid turning it into vote buying which is a time bomb to democracy.
3. That the public should know the difference between political public relations and vote buying so they won't mortgage their future to the detriment of their future generations.

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☆ The old and new dimension of political public relation in political campaign:  
Case Study of Edo State