



Effects of political slogans on brand acceptance: A review of the 'Obi-dient' slogan and the Peter Obi Brand

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Abstract

All over the world, politicians fancy up their language in a special way to give extract effect and force their message on the electorate to achieve their objective of winning more votes. This language can be embodied in rhetoric, propaganda, promise, colloquialism, word coinages, *pidginised*, and figurative expressions. Attractive political slogans are used by political leaders to inspire and set the mood of the public about a particular issue. It is argued that a specific characteristic of political slogans makes them the prime instrument for government communication, but at the same time, the same characteristic makes them the most vulnerable instrument as well. The political campaign slogan has continued to play important role in voter education and enlightenment in Nigeria. Ahead of the 2023 general elections, the electorate have witnessed many political campaign slogans such as 'Ati-culated' for Atiku Abubakar, 'BATified' for Bola Tinubu, and 'Obi-dient' for Peter Obi, among others. However, none of these political slogans have been more pervasive and have had more effect in capturing the mood of the electorate as the "Obi-dient" for Peter Obi. Thus, this paper utilised secondary sources of data to interrogate the effect of political campaign slogan in Nigeria to know if it is capable of influencing acceptance of the Peter Obi brand. It was observed that man as a political and social animal engages in the practice of politics as a social and noble activity to express his political agenda either positively or negatively. Therefore, the paper concluded with some recommendations that if a political campaign slogan is well-structured, it is capable of being an effective tool for driving mass participation of the citizenry in political activities, the electioneering process, and aiding political acceptance and perception of a political candidate.

Keywords: Political slogan, brand acceptance, electorate, slogan, campaign

Introduction

As part of the democratic life, electoral campaign slogans are implemented to communicate, convey political messages to large numbers of voters, and publicise the views of a candidate contesting an election. They aim at persuading voters and making them aware of the candidate's basic ideology and views that might be highly needed at the time of elections. In other words, slogans allow candidates to express their

opinions and thoughts concerning the change which they wish to achieve in their society (Herman et al., 2022). Electoral slogans can be socially effective for different reasons. They can express the character or aims of the candidate and can be catchy phrases for voters at the polling time to remember. Moreover, slogans are virtually the key entrance to exhibitors' mentality and orientations. Stimulatingly, they can strongly attract people's attention regardless of their backgrounds, being different socially, economically, educationally, and more importantly, politically. A vast power can be wielded by the device known as a slogan (Gounari, 2018; Kohli, Suri & Leuthesser, 2007).

Persuading people to vote for a candidate is vital in the political process as it is the art of what is possible; politics often share a vocabulary with military activity, and this is especially the case with elections: both winning elections and winning wars involve running successful campaigns (Adrian, 2000; Nwamara & Etumnu, 2022). Words, phrases, other parts of speech, and photos, are main components of slogans and may have different connotations to effectively arrive at the persuasive-central purpose. In most ways, parties use the techniques of selling a product to sell themselves to voters (Heeg, 2019). Texts as political billboards enjoy certain elements to be successful. For example, they must catch people's attention and "hold it long enough for the message to be taken in." This means that they must be visually eye-catching and must be brief to easily read, as they are often placed strategically along busy roads. The length of the verbal text is deemed to be limited (Adrian, 2000), but its impact, if phrased deeply and thoroughly is tremendous. Therefore, and as a way of advertising, the slogan must seek a discourse that engages the audience and attract their attention to persuade them with the message (Hartig, 2019).

In modern democracies, most political figures use political campaign slogans as enticing and alluring aphorisms to articulate ideological stand prints, convince their audience, deepen ideology in the public consciousness, and drive political action. A political campaign slogan has certain characteristics and features which differentiate it from other varieties of language used in our day-to-day interaction. They remain very unique with politicians and Politic. Political campaign slogan embodied in propaganda and rhetoric is persuasive and politicians adopt these slogans as a device to cajole the electorate to vote for them and their parties by presenting themselves as the only credible and capable for the position. Man by creation is a social and political animal. This suggests that man is both sociable and solitary. Peck (1955), explained that a higher standard of a man depends partly on philosophical contemplation which can be demonstrated or expressed through the employment of social virtues exercised in the company or association of others (Burroughs, 2020). Politics is premised on 'who gets what, when, and how.

The ultimate end of politics is to capture/get power by facilitating the acceptance of a political brand. Therefore, one of the ways to gain political acceptance and get power through politics is to design a political campaign slogan as a means to effectively capture the mood of the public into buying into their manifesto and agenda. Political campaign slogans are organised efforts that seek to influence the decision-making process within a specific group or environment (Maksymenko, 2019). It can be viewed as the mobilisation of forces either by political parties or individuals to influence and capture the mood of others to effect an identified and desired political change. It shows people and particularly, political candidates' ability to sensitise the electorate concerning making the electorate see them as potential and better representatives of the people.

In Nigeria, political campaign slogans are not necessarily meant to deceive the average Nigerian or destroy political opponents entirely but to sway electorates to their side and to win political acceptance and ultimately the votes of the electorate. To what extent is it true with the

Methodology

This paper made use of desktop/library research method. This method allows researcher to make use of secondary data in analysing issues of importance as it relates the study. It is a good source of secondary data collection where research by other scholars can be accessed, analysed and evaluated (Okoye, et al, 2022). Secondary sources make information easily accessible. This method allows for easy use of secondary data that can be accessed from journals, books, newspapers, magazines, the internet etc. And then used for discussing the issue at stake by the researcher from which a conclusion is usually drawn (Anyanwu, et al, 2022).

Political slogans

A campaign slogan is a short, memorable phrase used in politics and advertising. In politics, where people get elected to office, slogans are used as a short idea. Slogans can be for or against any particular political issue. They are a clever way to advertise and promote your political ideas. A memorable one-line statement used in political campaign advertising.

Slogans are an essential part of corporate advertising and political campaigning. As attention-getting phrases, they are often invoked by political groups or other social groups to champion a cause. Sharkansky (2002), posited that political campaign slogans when used in political communication, "they simply the task of communication and audiences in a situation where many ideas are competing for a place in the political agenda and a great deal of noise from competing messages."

Every political campaign slogan is unique, and the ultimate goal of every political party or campaign slogan is to win the election. Lynn (2009), opined that although there is no single 'best' campaign slogan/strategy the right slogan/strategy may differ from one candidate to another and for each election. What seems to be very important in any political campaign's slogan is the 'message' that is sent to the electorate. A political campaign slogan is an important and potent tool in Nigeria that politicians use to express views and feelings to the public with an intention of remoulding and redirecting the electorate opinions to align with them. The message therein in slogans is a simple statement that is easily repeated severally throughout the campaign period to persuade the target audience or influence voters to act in the candidate's favour. Political campaign slogan contains salient ingredients that candidates wish to share with the voters and these are repeated often to create a lasting impression on the voters.

The ability of a politician to use a campaign slogan as a language to interact with the electorate is one of the unique characteristics a man possesses, which by extension makes him distinctively higher than other animals. Sociologically, without language, man (*Homo sapiens*) will find it difficult, if not impossible, to exist as one may have it easy to communicate with another person in the absence of language (Vaes et al., 2011). Therefore, the concept of a political slogan as a language is a critical resource, especially in a political campaign. The slogan of a political campaign is a variety of language used intended to pass the needed information to the electorate with a view to convincing or appealing to them. It is usually laden with emotion and has the effect of causing the electorate to have a change of mind on an important issue or about a particular party or candidate. Szanto (1998) argues that the language of politics is a lexicon of conflict and drama, ridicules, and reproach, pleading and persuasion, colour and bit permeated. As language designed to valour men, destroy some, and change the mind of others.

Political Campaign Slogan in Nigeria

Nigerians have been bamboozled often with political campaign slogans and new grammatical coinages. Often, political campaign slogans were not necessarily meant to deceive the average electorate but they are

being used to sway the masses away from the unjustifiable and condemnable actions of those in power. Such slogans and coinages are unique, eye-catching, mindboggling, and strongly persuasive (Onoja & Ogwuche, 2020).

In the 1950s and early 1960s, political campaign slogans played an effective role in mobilising average Nigerians to partake greatly in politics. Zikism then meant a mass movement of people of similar ideological inclinations and persuasions integrated to form a formidable political front. Zikism was characterised by five principles for African liberation: spiritual balance, social regeneration, economic determinism, mental emancipation, and political resurgence (Mayer, 2021).

In Northern Nigeria, the two dominant parties, the Northern people's congress (NPC) and Northern Elements Progressive Union (NEPU) were known for their strong political campaign slogans of "Salama" and "Sabawa" respectively. While Salama stood for freedom. The Emirs and chiefs as well as the emerging ruling elites in the North preferred Northern People's Congress (NPC) with its appeal to peace and continuity, and the Talakawa (the poor and the downtrodden) preferred the sabawa slogan of the Northern Elements Progressive Union (NEPU) because of their desire for freedom from colonial and local oppression.

At another stage in our national life, Nigeria was fed with 'one Nation, one destiny' political slogan by the then, ruling party in the second republic; the National party of Nigeria (NPN) led by late Alhaji Shehu Shagari. The party's political campaign slogan of 'one nation, one Destiny' was seen as the rally point of Nigeria's diversity but in reality, the slogan was realm rhetoric because all federal government contracts only went into the hands of NPN members and federal allocations to opposition state like Bendel State (now Edo and Delta states) under the late Mr. Ambrose Ali were withheld even after a court judgment. Take-off funds for the then Ondo State (now Ekiti and Ondo State) were similarly withheld by the NPN-controlled federal government, despite the ringing of the slogan 'one nation, one Destiny'.

In the build-up to the General election of 1993 organised by the Military junta of General Ibrahim Babangida, the Social Democratic Party (SDP) fielded the Late Business Mogul, Chief MKO Abiola who campaigned on the political slogan of Hope'93. Smarting from the Structural Adjustment Policy, SAP of the Ibrahim Babangida military junta which had snapped many Nigerians economically, and the memorable jingle of "Hope'93" was generally accepted by Nigerians, leading to the resounding vote for the Social Democratic Party (SDP) candidates

The People's Democratic Party (PDP) campaign slogan of 'power to the people' captured the mood of the average Nigerians who had been calling for the return of government to the civilian/politicians. The aftermath of the chaos that followed the annulment of June 12, 1993, Presidential Election and the subsequent brutal reign of the Late General Sanni Abacha, propelled people to connect with the campaign slogan of "power to the people" of the People's Democratic Party (PDP) in 1999, leading to the resounding vote for the party's candidates. Following the disagreement and failure of the leading political opposition on the modalities to be adopted in their merger proposal to challenge the ruling People's Democratic Party (PDP) in the 2011 general election, the merger was eventually actualised in 2015 and the All Progressive Congress (APC) party was formed with the merger of Action Congress of Nigeria (CAN), Congress for Progressives Change (CPC), All Nigerians Peoples Party (ANPP) and a faction of All Progressive Grand Alliance (APGA). The party adopted "change" as its political campaign slogan. The gospel of change swept across the country and the perfect oneliner captured the yearnings of the populace who were against the wide-scale deeply entranced corruption under the sixteen (16) years of the administration of the People's Democratic Party (PDP). For some parts of the North, the political slogan of "change" of the All Progressive Congress (APC), the progressing cult-hero status of the Presidential Candidates of the party Muhammadu Buhari, the slow and ineffective fight against the Boko Haram insurgents ravaging the North-east part of

the country were spellbinding enough to defeat the People's Democratic Party (PDP). The "change" slogan effectively produced the first democratic election in Nigeria where the incumbent lost (Alfred, 2019; Raufu, 2020)

The 2019 general elections in Nigeria were characterised by a lot of intrigues, name-calling, propaganda, networking, and alliance formation across party lines. Politicians on their part adopted different slogans, street lingo, and campaign slogans to connect with the people and canvass support. These electioneering activities have informed as much as they have entertained Nigerians. Oladeinde (2019) highlighted some of the dominant campaign slogans during the 2019 general election which include; 4 plus 4- "Next level" sign of a non-verbal use of sign language. It's essentially meant to convey the desire to support president Muhammadu Buhari's re-election bid in 2019. The sign is done by spreading one's two hands apart, with all of one's fingers but the thumb raised while displaying both hands. The two separate four fingers displayed conspicuously are representative of each of the four-year periods of the two terms the Nigerian constitution stipulates for the president. "Take it back" was popularised by the publisher of Sahara Reporters, Omoyele Sowore and it was extremely popular, especially among the younger generation (Adeola & Muhyideen, 2020)

"Atikulated" was projected to campaign for the People's Democratic Party (PDP) flagbearer in the 2019 general election, Atiku Abubakar the former vice president of Nigeria, and a subtle campaign message was also launched to show that Mr. Abubakar was more articulate and has a better grasp of the issues plaguing Nigerian than his major challengers, especially Mr. Buhari of the All Progressive Congress (APC). It was not surprising to hear average Nigerians say that they are Atiku-later, about throwing their support for Mr. Abubakar, widely known among Nigerians as "Atiku". Another catchy political campaign slogan used during the build-up to the 2019 general election in Nigeria was *Obi-diently*. Mr. Peter Obi was a former governor of Anambra state and the running mate of Mr. Atiku Abubakar *Obi-diently* was a campaign catchphrase coined from his name; Peter Obi used alongside the atikulated slogan. When paired together, it was said as "Obidiently Atikulated" to encourage voters to come out and cast their votes (Dalamu, 2020)

Ortomatic was popularised by the supporters of Benue State Governor, Samuel Ortom. Mr. Ortom defected from the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) to the People's Democratic Party (PDP) in 2018. This was at the height of the herdsman-farmers clash that claimed numerous lives in Benue and other parts of the country. Upon his defection, some old-time PDP members ruled out the possibility of the party granting the governor an automatic ticket. His supporters promptly adopted the ortomatic mantra, perhaps to affirm that the governor's re-election bid would be seamless. The All Progressives Congress (APC) flagbearer in Lagos state, Mr. Sanwo-Olu adopted a political slogan coined from his name Sanwo-Olu to Sanwo-Eko (Pay Lagos) to popularise his messages to Lagosian.

Ahead of the 2023 general elections, the electorate have witnessed many political campaign slogans such as 'Ati-culated' for Atiku Abubakar, 'BATified' for Bola Tinubu, and 'Obi-dient' for Peter Obi, among others. However, none of these political slogans has been more pervasive and has had more effect in capturing the mood of the electorate as the "'Obi-dient' for Peter Obi.

Peter Obi's 'Obi-dient' brand

Peter Obi, the People's Democratic Party (PDP) vice presidential candidate in 2019 and Labour Party's 2023 presidential aspirant, has widened the frontiers of political communication and slogans in Nigeria with his viral 'Obi-dient' slogan. The slogan originated in 2019 when he contested as the PDP deputy president candidate. Obi is carving for himself a unique political brand that exudes competence, confidence, a novel disposition in politics that is devoid of acrimony and pettiness; a mind that sees leadership as serious business and the need for committed and serious-minded leadership as the only way for Nigeria to get at

out of its present piteous situation. Peter Obi is inspiring a powerful, social media-enabled, youth-led political tidal wave that will radically change the contours of the 2023 election. With Obi, however, the 2023 elections pan out, there is something fundamentally novel is happening. There's an unstoppably growing corps of fire-up young (and not-so-young) people who are investing their time, energy, and emotions in Peter Obi. The country has seen spectacular spikes in PVC registration and an increase in offline political mobilisation because of the Obi-dient wave that is spreading across the country (Chidi & Anikelechi, 2022).

Three factors appear to be driving the Obi-dient brand. One, there is mass disillusionment with the quality and character of the presidential candidates of the two major parties. They are the same woefully familiar, recycled, unimaginative, self-interested, careerist politicians who are deeply invested in sustaining the dysfunctions that keep Nigeria in the twilight zone between life and death. They mouth the same flyblown clichés, cannot articulate any grand visions, are indistinguishable from past politicians, have no commitment to any grand ideals, and are in politics to steal and dispense favours to cronies. But Peter Obi seems to be different. He comes across as down-to-earth, self-aware, committed to transparency and the demystification of governance, and as someone who invests considerable intellectual energies into thinking about and offering solutions to Nigeria's problems. For Nigerians, compared to Atiku Abubakar and Bola Tinubu, Peter Obi is a breath of fresh air (Onebunne, 2021).

The second impetus for the dramatic surge in Obi's political profile is religion. Many Christians in both the South and the North feel excluded from the presidential tickets of the APC and the PDP. Churches all across Nigeria are drumming up support for him. This seems to be legitimate in the interest of representational justice, particularly because Obi is not some pastor with a predetermined agenda to advance narrow religious or sectarian causes. Although Obi is a devout Catholic, he is thoroughly secular and, based on some of his speeches, has a deep understanding of the imperative of separating the sacred and the profane in the business of governance (Amaechi, 2022).

The third driver of his popularity is Igbo resentment at systemic political exclusion. The Igbo are almost in the same spot that the Yoruba were in 1998. There is mass resentment among them. Several of them feel emotionally disconnected from Nigeria. Apart from the fact that they have never produced a president or vice president since 1999, Muhammadu Buhari has done an extremely poor job of husbanding Nigeria's intricate diversity. The sense of alienation that a vast swath of Igbo people feel now has made several of them, particularly their youth, susceptible to the murderous wiles of the mentally and emotionally disturbed mountebank called Nnamdi Kanu.

Nigerians are noted for the use of slogans and coinages to communicate, show support, or express disapproval in the political space. Since the bells of the forthcoming 2023 presidential elections began ringing, some new and reinvented slogans have become popular, especially online, to promote and ridicule candidates by supporters and critics respectively. The 'Obidient' slogan has been spreading so wide across the country, especially among the young ones.

The effect of the 'Obi-dient' slogan on Acceptance of the Peter Obi Brand

The Obi-dient slogan has driven Peter Obi to every corner of the country and driven acceptance of the Peter Obi brand. With several youths rooting for him across social media, the slogan "Obidient" which was coined from the politician's surname has become a term the former governor's supporters use to identify with him and to promote his candidature. The Obi-dient army comprises many good-sized platoons with a loosely-bound command structure, yet each group has committed to sustaining the war effort. There is the religious platoon that believes that the country's power structure, having been under the control of a Muslim president for the past seven years, should now go to a Christian for the sake of equity. Then, you have those coming from the geo-political angle and making the case for a Nigerian president of South-East extraction. Although soldiers in those two platoons stated above mean well, any attempt, however, to paint Obi's

campaign in ethnic, religious, or sectional colours diminishes his status, dims his prospects, and hurts every one of us yearning for a better Nigeria. The central theme of their campaign distracts from what the candidate is about.

A nationwide mass movement is underway among young Nigerians across the country to mobilise grassroots awareness and support for Peter Obi as their preferred choice for President of Nigeria. In what is shaping to be the most intensely contested election in the history of Nigeria, strategies are being implemented across the country to ensure either Abubakar Atiku or Bola Ahmed Tinubu or Peter Obi emerges the winner of the February 2023 general election.

Most young Nigerians, who now see Peter Obi as a “*third force*” and a candidate for the youth and for anyone who is against the current establishment in the country, are however stepping up strategies to seize a budding social media momentum for his candidacy.

A cross-section of young Nigerians unhappy that the two major political parties, PDP and APC, chose former Vice President Abubakar Atiku and a prominent political godfather, APC Leader and former Governor of Lagos State, Bola Ahmed Tinubu as respective flag bearers, are mounting a strategic offensive to galvanise Nigerians to take to the poll and vote Peter Obi as their choice. They believe this is the only way to defeat an establishment with solid political structures that have won countless elections especially when there is political apathy.

In the meanwhile, opponents of the mass movement have accused some of Peter Obi’s supporters as “rude and arrogant” even as the same accusations have been labelled against supporters of any of the major political parties.

Like all political campaign slogans that seek to influence the decision-making process within a specific group or environment, the Obi brand has been influenced by the Obi-dient slogan. It can also be viewed as the mobilisation of forces by an organisation or individuals to influence others to effect an identified and desired political charge. It shows people and particularly, political candidates, the ability to sensitise the political community about making the community see them as potential and better representatives of the people. This slogan is unique and looks set to capture the mood of the electorate to win their votes and ultimately win the election.

What seems to be very important in any political campaign slogan is the 'message' that is sent to the electorate. A political campaign slogan is an important and potent tool that politicians use to express views and feelings to the public to reshape and re-directing the electorate opinions to align with theirs. The slogan should be a simple word that can be repeated severally throughout the campaign period to persuade the target audience or influence voters to act in the candidates' favour. A political campaign slogan should be a simple catchy phrase accompanying a logo or brand that encapsulates the aim and objectives of a political candidate

The rise of political ad campaign slogans and their impact on society can be seen. It can be categorised in different ways, so you can easily find what interests you the most. There will also be links to other posts that have been written about this topic, which may provide additional information or insight (Isanova & Samad, 2020).

Most of the time, when people are faced with a tough decision, they tend to lean towards the most popular opinion. In politics, parties will focus on creating catchphrases about their party or policies to sway voters. A slogan is a memorable term that captures the essence of a political candidate or cause. Slogans can be used to create public awareness or make people take action. Creating a slogan is one of the essential parts of running an election campaign. A personal touch can make all the difference when trying to connect with voters. Well, you can have a catchy slogan that will stick with people and help make your campaign memorable. That is what the 'Obidient' slogan has done to the Peter Obi brand.

Conclusion

The power of a political slogan can be immense. Slogans have been used to create memorable phrases that are still in use today. Whether you are running for office or want to make your message more effective and engaging, it is essential to know how people react when hearing these five types of campaign slogans. Contact us if you need help creating catchy political campaign slogans. A good slogan is a key to a successful political campaign. It can be used as an effective branding technique or to establish the party's values and goals for voters.

Slogans should convey concisely what you are trying to communicate with your base voter group while simultaneously appealing to undecided voters who may not have strong feelings either way about your candidate but would like some clarity before they cast their vote. Contact us today if you need help creating a memorable and impactful slogan for your next election cycle.

This paper reveals that political campaign slogans are viewed as a capable tool for mobilizing forces by political parties to effect an identified and desired political change. If political campaign slogans are well structured, it is capable of being an effective tool for driving government policies and brand acceptance. The political campaign slogan is capable of aiding the election of a candidate with an attractive and sellable manifesto at the poll if it is properly coined and the message therein is persuasive. Nigerian politicians, like their counterparts in other parts of the world, use political campaign slogans during the political campaign to give extra effect and force to their message. This is aimed at achieving their main objectives of persuading the electorates and winning more votes.

The paper concluded that political campaign slogans are an essential tool for mobilizing electorates to participate in electioneering processes., thus political parties and politicians should strive to coin a slogan that could inform or persuade electorates to vote for credible candidates rather than deceive them with enticing and inciting words.

Recommendations

Political parties should strive to coin a campaign slogan that will encourage electorates to participate in politics without violence by making frantic efforts to inform or persuade them rather can devise them with enticing and inciting words. They should adopt simple expressions to communicate their political agenda without the use of force, violence, and unhealthy rivalry. As much as possible, politicians should avoid negative expressions that can promote conflict during a political campaign.

This study is by no means exhaustive, as it is a literature review. It is expected that further studies based on the effectiveness of the 'Obidient' slogans during the main elections so that Nigerians/electorates will better appreciate the importance of the use of a campaign slogan in politicking.

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