

# Political Branding/Brand Personality and Voters' Choice of Candidate: An Empirical Inquiry into 2015 Presidential Election in Nigeria

Achor Princewell Nwanganga PhD\*<sup>1</sup> Nwachukwu Chima Peter<sup>2</sup> Udensi Mirian I<sup>2</sup>

1. Department of Marketing, Faculty of Business Administration, University of Nigeria, Enugu Campus

2. Department of Marketing, Abia State Polytechnic, Aba, Abia State, Nigeria

## Abstract

This article examined political branding and brand personality traits or dimensions that influence voters' choice of candidate before and during an election. Brand personalities of the two most prominent candidates (Goodluck of PDP and Buhari of the APC) in the Nigeria 2015 presidential election were examined. A synthesis of Aaker's five-dimension model and other brand personality models distilled from other works were used as basis for the investigation. Findings show that brand personality dimensions such as competence, credibility/sincerity, sophistication, audacity etc. are attributes that influence voters' choice of a political candidate prior to /during election. Findings also show strong correlation between the two candidates' brand personality dimensions but with different ratings of the scales that describe their brand dimensions. The brand personality dimensions shape the perceptual map of voters about a candidate's suitability for electoral office or post. They are not a standalone variable in the voter choice priorities, but contribute very significantly to the choice mix of an enlightened voting public. The implication of these findings to a political marketer is to leverage on both party brand equity (PBE) and candidates' valued personality traits in crafting result-oriented campaign strategies for candidate marketing.

**Keywords:** Political branding, Brand, Voters Choice, Election, Political Candidate

## 1. Introduction

In constitutional democracies, all over the world, election into the office of the president is held periodically. During this period, the voting public is given the impression and illusion that they run their country by making a choice among the men who want to run their country for them (Kotler, 1975). Voters choice of candidate is hinged on a multidimensional factors which have been scholarly explored in both political marketing and political science literature (Downs 1957, Andrew, 2013; Gorbaniuk, Kusak,kogut, & Kustos, 2014; Guzmán et al, 2014 ; Cwalina & Falkowski, 2014; Opkara, Anuforo and Achor, 2016; Nwachukwu, Achor, Nkwocha and Okwara, 2016).

The political candidates and their parties adopt political campaign as an obligation and strategy to canvass support, and for marketing their manifestos. Political campaigns can be compared to marketing campaigns in which "the candidates put themselves in the vote market and uses modern marketing techniques, particularly marketing research and commercial advertising, to maximize voter "purchase" (Kotler, 1975, p. 761). This marketing analogy is argued here, to be the very essence of a candidate's interface with the voters, and a dominant practice in the contemporary political marketing scene and scholarships (Achor and Mogoluwa, 2012; Savigny, 2008; Lees-Marshment, 2007; Strömbäck, 2008; Wring, 2010; Andrew, 2013; Okpara et al, 2016). However, candidates seeking to win elections cannot avoid marketing themselves; and through the marketing campaign, those factors that influence voter choice of candidate are brought to bear.

One aspect of mainstream marketing which has been conceptually introduced and x-rayed in political marketing literature is branding and personality branding but has not been extensively examined empirically in party politics, particularly in elections, as a key factor influencing voter choice of candidate, in Africa. Currently, most of the literature that surveyed this aspect is dominated by both American and British perspectives (Akhmad and Azhar, 2015); hence, this makes it uncertain as to whether these concepts should be empirically viewed as general concepts, or as concepts relevant primarily to countries that share some specific set of political ideologies, political institutions and settings. The present study intend to fill this gap in knowledge by studying the influence of political branding and brand personality on voters' choice of candidate with emphasis on 2015 Nigeria presidential election.

Introductorily, a brand is not just a name but a personality that exude aura of total quality in all aspects of social judgment. Political parties and their candidates are modelled as brand through their names and ideological postures which supposedly communicate a message to voters, party supporters and other stakeholders. The past and present behaviour of a party affects it as a brand. The personalities that make up the leadership structure of the party also accounts for whether such a party will be seen as a brand worthy of being patronised or not (Akhmad and Azhar, 2015). Personality is defined here as "the set of meanings constructed by an observer to describe the inner characteristics of another person" (Allen and Olson, 1995, p.392), while brand personality encapsulates "set of human characteristics associated with a brand" (Aaker, 1997, p.347). In the mainstream

marketing literature, brand personality has direct influence on consumers buying intention because of its ability to create favourable associations in consumer memory (Keller, 1993; 2003; Phau, 2000). This has made it imperative to study their effect or influence on voters' choice of political candidate given the consumer-oriented paradigm recent scholarships in political marketing have taken.

### 1.3 Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

RQ1a. What are the brand personality dimensions/ factors that influence voters' choice of candidate in an election?

RQ1c. To what extent did the factors influenced voters' choice of presidential candidate in the 2015 presidential election in Nigeria?

RQ2a. What are the brand image factors that influenced voters' choice of political party at the 2015 presidential election?

RQ2b. To what extent do a party's brand identity representations influence voters' choice of a political party in an election?

RQ3. To what extent does positive party's brand personality can influence the outcome of an election.

## 2.0 Literature Review

### 2.1 Political Branding /Brand Personality, Party and Candidate Marketing

The concepts of branding and brand marketing appear dominant in extant commercially-oriented marketing literature but in the recent decades have gained a foothold in political marketing literature as documented by (Lock and Harris 1996; Schweiger and Adami, 1999; Smith, 2001; Schneider, 2004; Needham, 2005 Needham, 2006; Smith, 2009; Scammell, 2007; Cwalina & Falkowski, 2014; Speed, Butler & Collins, 2015). These scholars explored the role, function, and use of brands and branding in politics.

Political branding provides another avenue in understanding various assumptions in the literature concerning the relationship between party manifesto and electoral successes (Smith, 2009). Political branding captures "how a political organization or individual is perceived by the public; it is broader than the product, whereas a product has distinct functional parts such as a politician and policy; a brand is intangible and psychological" (Nwachukwu, et al. 2016 p.555-556); while "a political branding is the overarching feeling, impression, association or image the public has towards a politician, political organization or nation" (Smith, 2009 p.213; Nwachukwu et al 2016, p.556). For, Smith and French (2011) only political parties can be considered as brand while other scholars (Andrew, 2013; Lees-Marshment, 2009) have included the concept to candidates, politicians, and policies. We have, also in this study extended political branding to the candidates and their campaigns, particularly as it relates to presidential candidates in the 2015 presidential election in Nigeria.

Branding and brand also to an extent have been adopted by political parties in building relationship with voters. A party that has successfully done that is the liberal German FDP (Freie Demokratische Partei); it deemed its brand the basis of its entire marketing strategy (Metzner, 2010). Brands are meant to affect how consumers (voters) evaluate products and service offering of a political party or any commercially oriented organization. A holistic overview of political branding/brand has been provided by Andrew (2013) by arguing that "political brands have also been framed as heuristic devices for voters, which is an important consideration to studying candidates in an election" (p.17). He described "heuristics" as mental shortcuts and associations that form in people's minds that allow them to make judgments or decisions. A political brand is defined as "an associative network of interconnected political information and attitudes, held in memory and accessible when stimulated from the memory of a voter" (Smith and French, 2011, p. 4).

Research into branding and brand management in political marketing have given birth to various conceptualizations and models of brand. For example, Smith (2009), Kapferer (2008), Schneider (2004), Speed, Butler, Collins (2015), Schneider & Frederik (2015); Speed, Butler & Collins (2015); O'Cass & Voala (2010) made an in-road in exploring brand personality, brand image, brand identity, human branding in relation to political parties, politicians, and political leadership; and political brand orientation. Before engaging in discussion on these related concepts, it is apposite to put our subject matter into its proper perspective, that is, justifying the use of brand in party politics and while its philosophies should be ingrained in the promotion of political candidates and their parties.

As alluded, the concept of brand enjoys wider exposition in the mainstream marketing literature and has been generally accepted as "one of the main assets of an organization" (Aaker, 1996; Kapferer, 2004; Achor et al, 2015). The broadening of marketing concept into social markets (Kotler & Levy, 1969) has facilitated discussions on and adoption of the concept in explaining some emerging phenomena in the social and political environments. Emerging from this broadening of the marketing concept is the extension or adaption of branding principles to "virtually every setting where consumer choice of some kind is involved" including party candidates, political parties and party politics".

Exploring the above assertion further, political parties have been described, as “organizations in which politicians seek to exchange ideas and promises for electoral support” (Smith, 2009, p.211), thereby lending credence to earlier studies that portray political parties and politicians as brands (Kotler and Kotler, 1999, White and deChernatony, 2002; Needham, 2005). Inasmuch as brand concept is nested in commercial marketing, some scholars are contentious about the appropriate use of the concept in political market, because both markets differ in structure and needs (Lock and Harris, 1996; Newman, 2001). The contention arises from complexity of parties’ product offerings such as electoral promises on a number of salient issues which differ from other brands. To Lock and Harris, a political party offering is a brand and may affect ‘partisan allegiance’ (Lock and Harris, 1996). In electoral setting, the voter is expected to vote in response to all or none of a party’s policies. This operates in sharp contrast with commercial brands given that in political sphere, parties have been found compromising on the policies they promised when they get to office due to political conditions (Butler and Collins, 1999). Some of the criticisms may hold water while others may not as a result of the position a party finds itself. Other criticisms of branding and its effects on democratic process are well documented in the literature (Scammell, 1999; Needham, 2005; Lilleker and Negrine, 2003; Schneider & Frederik, 2015).

Besides these criticisms, there exist two approaches to party branding: the product-oriented approach which focuses on “what the organization (party) does to the consumer (voter) with its brand” and the consumer-oriented approach that focuses on ‘how and why’ consumers learn about brands (Smith, 2009). The consumer-oriented paradigm to party branding reveals the inherent factors that motivate voters (consumers) to choose a particular brand (party) and why they cast their vote for the party (Smith, 2009). It is on this (consumer-oriented branding) approach that we evaluate brand, brand personality, brand identity and image as they affect voters’ choice and candidate marketing.

A brand is not just a name but a personality that exude aura of total quality in all aspects of social judgment. Political parties are modelled as brand through their names and ideological postures which supposedly communicate a message to voters, party faithful/ supporters and sponsors. The past and present behaviour of a party affects it as a brand or brand image. The personalities that make up the leadership structure of the party also accounts for whether such a party will be seen as a brand worthy of being patronised or not. Allen and Olson (1995, p.392) defined personality as “the set of meanings constructed by an observer to describe the inner characteristics of another person”, while brand personality encapsulates “set of human characteristics associated with a brand” (Aaker, 1997, p.347). Rather than creating a new framework for politics, Ruther, Hanretty & Lettice (2015) adopted “Aaker’s existing framework for brand personalities to explore brand positions in the political marketing. They found out that “the two main dimensions on which parties’ brand personalities differ relate to the trade-offs between communicating competence and communicating sincerity and between communicating sophistication and communicating ruggedness”. According to Ruther et al (2015) brand personalities are distinctive, buttressing their claim with United Kingdom Independence Party that have tried over the years to maintain a distinct personality in all her communication efforts aimed at influencing the voter to support her policies and ideological posture. The brand personality and other brand related concepts also have direct bearing on brand image, which also impacts voter choice or behaviour. “Brand image is the set of beliefs that consumers hold about a particular brand”. This brings to focus the questions: how do voters perceive parties and candidates as political brands (products)? What are the beliefs an average voter hold about a political party or a candidate, even an elected leader/government? Answers to these posers go a long way in determining if that (political brand) party or candidate have positive or negative brand image.

The political brand equity model (PBEM) by Mirza, Suleman & Zahoor (2015) (2015) adds another dimension to the understanding of political branding and its interface with the voters’ choice of candidate. Mirza Ashfaq et al (2015) developed a brand equity model that integrates political brands with voter choice. They adopted the commercial orientation approach/framework of brand equity in explaining their conceptual construct of political brand equity model (PBEM). A brand in their model could be a political party, a candidate, even an elected office holder. Voter choice depicts preference for one party or a candidate over others or alternatives. Brand equity in commercial oriented marketing denotes the value of a brand based on the extent to which it has high brand loyalty, name awareness, perceived quality, strong associations, and other assets such as patents, trademarks and channel relationship (Kotler, Armstrong, Saunders & Wong (2005). Brand equity in the context of political marketing is the value of political party, candidate has which makes voters (consumers) prefer her/him over others based on the awareness of their name and feelings of quality performance and other associated factors that make a party or candidate successful in the political arena (Authors’ view). All of those have implication for voter preference for a manifesto. “A voter segment that perceives a particular party to have high brand equity tends to associate that perception to the party’s leadership and perhaps its manifesto”. This invariably mobilizes a whole lot of voters for an informed electoral decision (Nwachukwu et al, 2016; Speed, Butler & Collins 2015).

## 2.2 Candidate Marketing, Branding and Voters' Choice

A candidate that has decided to enter politics has the ultimate goal to occupy an elective office. Depending on the social or political antecedents of the candidate, he/she may be an unknown product; for this reason, he/she, as an office seeker (Achor and Moguluwa, 2012) puts himself/herself on a market—the voters' market. The office seeker is expected to go 'through many of the steps that are similar to product marketing. For example, he/she develops a 'personality (brand image), gets the approval of an organization (company image), enters a primary election (market test), carries out a vigorous campaign (advertising and distribution), gets elected (market share) and stay in office (repeat sales)' Kotler, 1975, P.765). The marketable candidate is selected on the basis of his brand name, his capacity to trigger an emotional response from the electorate, his skill in using mass media, and his ability to "project his candidature to targeted voter segments. The position a candidate takes on certain issues whether positive or negative shapes and projects its image and brand personality to the voting public. Thus, 'the candidate must not only develop a marketing strategy calculated to win the support of voters but also of the party, contributors, and interest groups,'"

Lending his voice to the scenarios above, one of the leading exponents of political marketing, Philip Kotler(1975) suggests four successive problems an office seeker must solve to achieve a successful political career. First, 'he must join a political organization and become known; develop a political style that will earn respect and leadership in his party'. Such a task demands finding out what the members of the political organization appear to want from the political process and the extent that he can appear to be instrumental in their desires.

The next thing he must eventually do is to exhibit an interest in becoming his party's candidate in an upcoming election and must fraternize with the leaders and attempt to get their backing; he must enter a primary election and win the support of the party's voters. The third thing he must do is to win the primary and will have to go before the voters in the general election. He must make important decisions on campaign strategy, including issues, advertising, appearances, and funding. He will face a problem in voter analysis, choosing targets, allocating resources, and timing them for maximum impact. The fourth task is that 'if he is elected, he must do the kind of job in office that will get him reelected. This will be a function of the organization he builds, the positions he takes, and the rhetoric he uses'. More importantly, at each stage, the political aspirant must have a good understanding of his market's needs, perceptions, and preferences. He must be guided by reliable and valid models of consumer behaviour.

Assessed from the consumer perspective, the personality of a political party mirrors 'associative network of human characteristics relating to that party, held in memory and accessible when stimulated from the memory of a voter'. Meanwhile, it's assumed that parties that evaluated their brand personality ratings will align their offerings to their brand image. These facts, made Smith (2009, p.214) to comment that 'the personality of a party and its politicians are not separate but amalgamated to form an associative network in memory of the overall brand'. However, Smith posits that 'the electorate usually associate the party's observed image as an integral part of its brand personality, adding that a party with a bad image may face resentment of its policies by the electorate'. This perhaps extends to its voters' choice because a party's image problem is a disservice to its offerings or policies. In marketing-oriented parties, party/candidate's character positioning and offerings should aid voter's 'psychological purchase' or casting of votes.

Speed, Butler, & Collins (2015) introduction of human branding into politics offers a unique way of evaluating the relationship between brand personality and voters electoral decisions. Human branding in politics is associated with personality of party leadership and how such translates to a better interaction/relationship with target voter groups, supporters and party positioning. It is expected that the relationship between leaders and parties brings to bear some unique brand associations, which voters or party supporters attach to party programmes and policies.

Based on the above observations, Schneider & Frederik (2015) suggest that 'strategic branding decisions have an impact not only on voting probabilities but also on their internal conflict potential, such as when a branding decision conflicts with the internal image a party maintains among its members. It thus can be highly beneficial for a political party to encourage its members to communicate their image of the party to other voters' (, p.64). This is because 'personality of candidates in an election plays a prominent role in voter choice of candidate and voting decisions' (Smith and French, 2011, p. 6).

## 2.3 Voter (Consumer) Choice and Decision Making

It is the assumption of the authors of this article that a voter's voting map anchors on a tripod of 'core, symbolic and psychological values' packaged to offer the electorate 'total product' offering. It is on this tripod that a voter assesses the benefits party brand name and personality brings to bear before an election. This, now, brings us to voter choice and decision making. Voter choice and decision making has received quite a considerable attention in the extant political marketing and political science literature (Downs, 1957; Dean & Croft, 2009; Nwachukwu et al, 2016; Achor et al, 2016). These scholars have extensively x-rayed aspects of the concepts which critically

underpin voter or consumer behaviour. Voter choice and decision making with regard to political branding/brand personality draws much force from the traditional consumer behaviour widely discussed in the mainstream consumer marketing literature (Kotler et al, 2005; Anyanwu, 2005).

Consumer behaviour is the process whereby individuals decide whether, *what, when, where, how and from whom* to purchase goods and services (Anyanwu, 2005, p.210). This explanation indicates two fundamental factors: consumer (voter) behaviour involves both mental and physical activity necessary for decision making in the market place or market space. Also, voter behaviour is goal-oriented in the sense that voters (consumers) seek to solve a particular problem by buying political products and services, which includes responding to the content of a manifesto when making psychological purchase or casting a vote in an election. More importantly, consumer (voter) behaviour is rational. Rationality has been fundamentally expressed by some scholars as the pivot on which electoral choices revolve (Dean & Croft, 2009; Nwachukwu et al 2016). Rationality here is defined from the point of view of making decisions on the basis of cost-benefit analysis (Dean & Croft, 2009). It has also been defined as a mode of understanding and making decisions based upon an ‘intelligent pursuit of appropriate objectives’ (Rescher, 1988.p.2). However, a broader view of rationality suggests that ‘a rational choice is based on reason, irrespective of what these reasons may be’ (Lupia et al, 2001 p.7). If the benefit to be derived exceeds the cost in a given situation, then that behaviour is considered rational. Situating this scenario in practical terms, indicates that whatever process the voter adopts to arrive at this analysis whether it involves careful consideration of all relevant facts or impulse purchase, is irrelevant to the behavioural notion of rationality (Anyanwu, 2005). Subtly put, ‘in political marketing domain, voter choice refers to act of choosing between two or more political candidates or political parties’ (Nwachukwu et al, 2016). It can also refer to that thing, political party/ candidate or government policy which a voter has identified with, voted for or will vote for during election (Okparal, Anuforo and Achor, 2016).

Two extremes can be noted in voter choice and decision towards a party or its candidate. One extreme holds an idealistic view that voters ought to vote for a political party based on what they rationally assumed that the party will offer to the electorate as contained in the party’s manifesto or electoral promises. The other extreme holds realistic view that manifesto or no manifesto, voters vote on the basis of so many factors such as affiliation, ethnicity, immediate monetary reward, emotion, nationalism and class pressure, among others (Achor et al, 2016; Okpara et al, 2016; Bartle and Griffiths, 2002). This latter extreme has been found to characterise to an extent election decision in some part of Nigeria and Africa (Nwachukwu, Achor, Nkwocha and Okwara, 2016). It is our submission in this article that element of rationality can be found in this latter extreme. Rationality within this context is relative because some voters may not manifest systematic process of decision making when choosing a political candidate let alone voting a party. Perhaps, due to consistent exposure to a political candidate or party brand, a voter may prior to the marketing or promotion of a party’s candidate or policy thrust, decide to voter another party. Further, one could be on point to choose or adopt a political party/candidate because of its outspokenness on critical ethnicity issues or vote a party whose ideological stand speaks volume about ‘restructuring of Nigeria into a true Federation or other issues that unite the country.’

Beyond the facet of personality profiling and branding, rational voter choice and decision making is a function of a party’s electoral stand on key issues that at least an average voter feels government should address for the good of the generality of the citizenry.

#### **2.4 Framing Political Brand and Brand Personality Dimensions/ Attributes of Political Candidate**

The dilemma of whether branding/concept of brand can be applied to politics has been resolved by many scholarly inquiries into the epistemological and ontological aspects of the concept in the mainstream consumer marketing research which has been widely adopted in political marketing literature (Scammell, 2007; Butler, Harris, 2009; Needham, 2005; Schneider, 2004; Henneberg, 2008; Lees-Marshment, 2007; Andrew, 2013). In trying to frame branding/brand personality in both consumer marketing and political/electoral marketing, some intervening variables have been employed by some scholars (Schneider, 2004; Kotler et al, 2005; French and Smith, 2008; Kapferer, 2008; Aaker 1997) to either draw attention to the semantic proximity branding share with other related concepts or to assert their opinions on the intellectual knowledge repository. This article leverages on both perspectives in constructing, construing and presenting the ideological bearings of the study. These intervening variables cum concepts include brand image, brand equity, brand identity, brand awareness and brand management. The intention of this article is not to offer a detail explanation of these concepts but to tangentially identify them as variables/concepts that drive any attempt to frame associative elements of political branding and brand personality.

Stripped of technicalities, traditionally, brand refers to a name, term, sign, symbol or design, or a combination of these, intended to identify the goods or service of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competitors. Brand image is seen as the set of beliefs that consumers (voters) hold about a particular brand. Brand equity denotes the value of a brand, based on the extent to which it has high brand loyalty, name awareness, perceived quality, strong brand associations, and other assets (Kotler, Armstrong

Saunders and Wong, 2005). Brand identity invokes either symbolic or psychological feelings or distinct representation attributable to a brand (e.g. object, product, organisation or an individual), while brand awareness measures/depicts the extent to which a brand is known among a target market. The brand identity construct as applied in this article underpins brand image and brand awareness and helps to assign meaning to crucial component of brand equity (Keller, 1993). For Kapferer (2008), brand identity recognizes the commonalities and differences between the brand image that external audiences have and the image that internal audiences hold. In the context of political marketing, these points of view “reflect party members on one side and voters on the other; whereas the identity concept is particularly suitable for analyzing brands and brand management in politics. This is because the internal group in a democratically organized party can shape the brand, e.g., through its voting behaviour during party conferences”

Since “the character of political marketing is more comparable to that of service marketing than to the marketing of physical goods” (Henneberg, 2004), therefore, political branding within the context of this study anchors on the services branding literature and the concepts which O’Cass and Grace (2003), and Schneider (2004) have examined. Aaker (1997) identified the big five brand personality dimensions which other scholars (Schneider, 2004; Muniz & Marchetti, 2012) have expanded in varying contexts. The dimensions of personality as noted by Aaker (1997) include sincerity, excitement, competence, sophistication, and ruggedness. Based on preceding insights, a synthesis of Keller’s (1993) original brand image model, Aaker’s (1997) brand personality, and Schneider’s (2004) conceptual model of the identity construct together with Allen and Olson’s (1995) personality construct is used to frame or describe the brand personality traits or characteristics that influenced voter choice of candidate in the 2015 presidential election in Nigeria. Given the socio-cultural setting of Nigeria, different scale of items for measuring the dimensions of brand personality have been included (see the methodology and analysis of data sections) in the study.

Other dimensions of brand personality distilled from the above models include charisma, respectability, popularity, consistency in ideological stand, past and present antecedents of party candidates, leadership style, religious tolerance, prudence in managing state resources, among others. Elements that may influence voters’ perception of party’s brand image and identity may include party ideology, behaviour of party leaders/leadership, name popularity, quality of party manifesto, party affiliation (in terms of attachment to socio-cultural groupings or ethnic nationalities) among others. Needham’s (2005) six criteria for a successful political brand add to holistic description of the concept, which the study has adopted. These include (i) brands act as simplifiers, so voters do not need such detailed product information; (ii) brands are unique and clearly differentiated from the competition; (iii) brands are reassuring and make voting for them less risky; (iv) brands are aspirational and evoke a positive vision of a better way of life; (v) brands symbolize better internal values of the product or organization compared with the competitors; and (vi) brands are perceived as credible, delivering on their promises. (pp. 347-348).

## 2.5 Theoretical Framework

Political marketing concepts and theories depend on borrowing and adaptation of existing theories of both marketing and political science (Scammell, 1999; Newman, 2002a). This article leverages on that trend since such “an integration of theory and concept development from different disciplines remains an important aspect of contemporary research” (Collins and Butler, 2002). For this reason, the rational choice theory (Downs, 1957) is adopted as the theoretical framework because of its utilitarian value in analysing and demonstrating voters’ perceptions, attitude or behaviour towards electoral choices and decisions in a multi-party democracies within the context of consumer-oriented marketing paradigm (Nwachukwu et al (2016)). The main argument of this theory is that voters are expected to make rational decisions in their choices based on cost-benefit analysis of an issue or product. Downs argues that “rationality is measured by how the electorate strives for what they desire, or at least act as if they were pursuing some end”. According to him, “there is no room for emotion or other variables that could affect the instrumental processing of the information”. In spite of the criticisms trailing Down’s rational choice theory, its assumptions impact this study in very significant ways. First, “given the past/prevaling political atmosphere in Nigeria and the consistent hunger for a change in the way politics is conducted in country, an average voter needed to be rational in their choices to vote for a party or candidate.

Voters needed to evaluate party offerings and see if they really address their needs and expectations. Such evaluation is meant to ascertain which political party offers the best electoral offerings or policies and based on the outcome of the evaluation voters make rational choices. Though, observation has shown that some voter segments do not vote based on rational decision, but on the immediate gain they can derive from a party or its candidate; others vote along party affiliations and ethnic interest. Party leadership and campaign planners could raise mixed ideological stand that voters will rely on to make their choices and preferences when seeking issues that motivate them in choosing a party to support during election.

## 3. Methodology

The quantitative research method was used because of the nature of the research that anchored on identifying key

branding /brand personality variables that influence voters' choice of candidates in an election. Data was collected through structured questionnaire worded in 5-point Likert Scale and few open-ended questions. Three categories of brand components (brand personality, brand identity, and party brand image/identity) were operationalized, identified and used in structuring the instrument.

Both open-ended and closed-ended structure of the instrument complemented each other, particularly, the unguarded and unabridged responses of the respondents on the influence of brand personality which added to support or corroborate the analysis of quantitative data sourced from the questionnaire. The population of the study (INEC, 2015) comprised eligible voters in 2015 Nigeria presidential election selected from one state from each of six geo-political zones in Nigeria. The states include Kano State(4,975,701);Lagos State(5,822,207); Imo State(1,803,030); Rivers State(2,537,590); Bauchi State(2,054,125), and Niger State(2,014,317).Total population equals to (19,206,970). A sample of 400 was selected using Taro Yamane's (1964) sample size determination model for finite or known population size.

The purposive sampling technique was used to identify and select participants from the selected states based on the statutory voting age limit as enshrined in the 1999 Nigeria Constitution as amended; while stratified sampling technique was used in the allocation of questionnaire based on the population of the strata (states) that make up the entire population of the study. Questionnaire was distributed and collected through face-to-face and social media methods. Prior to the administration of instrument, the researchers set up special facebook and whatsapp accounts where potential respondents were invited to participate in the survey. The questionnaire was uploaded on those social media platforms and two weeks given to respondents to study and access before completion. Reminders were also sent to them via those platforms.

#### **4. Data Presentation and Analysis**

All the 400 copies of questionnaire distributed to electorate in (Kano State 174; Lagos State zone 158; Imo State 68; Rivers State; Bauchi State, and Niger State ) were completed and returned, accounting for 100 per cent response rate and zero percent( 0%) mortality rate. The analysis of the demographic data of the respondents showed that more than two-third or 284 (71%) respondents were male while 116 representing 29 percent were female. Distribution of educational qualification showed that a total of 163 or 41 percent respondents are first degree/or its equivalent holders; 85 (21.2%) hold masters degree, 38(9.5%) possessed postgraduate Diploma or its equivalent while an insignificant 62 or 15.5 percent hold doctorate degree. 52 or 13 percent have post-primary certificates(SSCE/WASCE/GCE or their equivalents). Respondents' distribution on occupation showed that out of 400 respondents, 134(34%) were civil servants; 20 (5%) were students, 59 or 14.8 percent engage in teaching; 89(22.3%) were traders/business people. 74 or 18.5 percent work as professionals while 24 or 6% work as artisans. Other analyses are shown in the tables below.

**Table 1 Confirmatory Factor Analysis (Validation Sample)**

	PDP Candidate (n=200)		All Progressives Congress Candidate (APC) (n=200)			
Brand Personality Dimensions	Loading	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted	Loading	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted
	<b>*Competence</b>					
Intelligence	<b>0.856*</b>	<b>0.871</b>	<b>54%</b>	<b>0.671*</b>	<b>0.865</b>	<b>48%</b>
Success	<b>0.847*</b>			<b>0.867*</b>		
Reliability	<b>0.861*</b>			<b>0.814*</b>		
Expertise	<b>0.412*</b>			<b>0.102 *</b>		
Committed	<b>0.716**</b>			<b>0.732 **</b>		
	<b>*Credibility/Sincerity</b>					
Honesty	<b>0.712 *</b>			<b>0.743*</b>		
Wholesomeness	<b>0.421*</b>			<b>0.401 *</b>		
Respectability	<b>0.572*</b>	<b>0.813</b>	<b>62%</b>	<b>0.861*</b>	<b>0.892</b>	<b>76%</b>
Consistent	<b>0.619*</b>			<b>0.715 *</b>		
Responsible	<b>0.528*</b>			<b>0.438*</b>		
Confident	<b>0.431*</b>			<b>0.476*</b>		
	<b>* Toughness</b>					
Tough	<b>0.251*</b>			<b>0.754*</b>		
Powerful	<b>0.530*</b>	<b>0.573</b>	<b>52%</b>	<b>0.532 *</b>	<b>0.764</b>	<b>63%</b>
Forceful	<b>0.536*</b>			<b>0.552 *</b>		
Potent	<b>0.437*</b>			<b>0.410*</b>		
	<b>*Sophisticated</b>					
Refined	<b>0.672*</b>			<b>0.485*</b>		
Charming	<b>0.471*</b>	<b>0.612</b>	<b>59%</b>	<b>0.410*</b>	<b>0.314</b>	<b>56%</b>
Elegant/poise	<b>0.521*</b>			<b>0.501 *</b>		
Imaginative	<b>0.612*</b>					
	<b>* Excitement</b>					
Friendly	<b>0.576*</b>			<b>0.457*</b>		
Outgoing	<b>0.642*</b>	<b>0.961</b>	<b>64%</b>	<b>0.472 *</b>	<b>0.831</b>	<b>42%</b>
Peaceful	<b>0.671**</b>			<b>0.601**</b>		

**CFA Model Indicator**  $\chi^2 = 1201.643; df=208; \chi^2/df = 4.131$   $\chi^2 = 1200.543; df=208; \chi^2/df = 3.315$   
 CFI = 0.813, NFI = 0.876; TLI = 0.764 CFI = 0.914, NFI = 0.866; TLI = 0.713  
 GFI = 0.763; RMSEA = 0.075 GFI = 0.768; RMSEA = 0.076

Note. Key: \* P<0.05; \*\* Significance not calculated because the coefficient is set at 5 for model identification.

**Source:** SPSS Computation based on Research Data

A comparison was made using confirmatory factor analysis of the adjustment indexes of the two political brands or presidential candidates (Goodluck Jonathan and Buhari) models originating from the exploratory procedures. For this purpose one set of data from the validations sample was used (in this case, the evaluation of Buhari). In this factor analysis, the five-brand dimensions version with 22 scales was perceived to have much higher adjustments indexes  $\chi^2 = 1201, df = 0.18, p < 0.001, \chi^2/df = 4.131, TLI = 0.872$ . The first brand dimension (competence) shows that there is great difference between composite variability (0.871) and average variance extracted (54%) of the political brand Goodluck as against 0.865 and 45% for Presidential candidate Buhari. Loadings and composite variability for each of the scales show a great difference in both political brands indicating different voters' perception of the candidate. The composite variability for each of the five brand dimensions for Goodluck brand (competence = 0.871, credibility/sincerity = **0.813**, toughness = 0.573, sophistication = 0.612, and excitement = 0.961), and for Buhari brand (competence = 0.865,



credibility/sincerity=0.892, toughness= 0.764, sophistication=0.314, and excitement= 0.831 show a consistent model (of over 50) except sophistication dimension for Buhari brand. This result shows that Aaker's five-brand dimension model influenced voters' choice of presidential brands (candidates) in the electorate voting pattern and acceptability of both political candidates during the 2015 presidential elections. Other tables below give more credence to this assertion.

**Table2 : Correlation between the Dimensions of the Model**

Correlated Dimension (analysis in pairs) (validation sample)		BrandGoodluck (validation sample)	Correlation for Brand Buhari	Correlation for
Credibility	<> Competence		0.405*	0.554*
Credibility	<> Ruggedness		0.467*	0.581*
Sophistication	<> Ruggedness		0.576*	0.641*
Competence	<-> Excitement		0.434*	0.387*
Ruggedness	<-> Credibility		0.502*	0.541*
Excitement	<-> Sincerity		0.689*	0.762*
Audacity	<-> Competence		0.451*	0.518*
Audacity	<-> Sophistication		0.185*	0.212*
Sincerity	<-> competence		0.626*	0.418*
Ruggedness	<-> Excitement		0.462*	0.413*
Sophistication	<-> Excitement		0.624*	0.521*
Credibility	<-> Sophistication		0.522*	0.452*
Respectability	<> Trustworthiness		0.812**	0.537*

**Source:** SPSS computation of Field Research Data

Table 2 provides a confirmation of the discriminant validity given through correlation between the adopted Aaker's five brand dimension model and those distilled from a synthesis of other models. The correlations were low thereby corroborating the discriminant validity between Aaker's brand dimensions and the ones distilled. Respectability and trustworthiness correlation( $r=0.812$ ) for brand Goodluck is higher than that of brand Buhari( $r=0.537$ ) indicating that voters (respondents) had trust in the then incumbent president, Goodluck Jonathan than Buhari. The correlation for both candidates on sophistication and Ruggedness shows a higher ( $r=0.674$ ) for Buhari and ( $r=0.576$ ) indicating that Buhari is presumed to have rugged approach to issues than his counterpart.

**Table 3 Perception on Brand Identity elements that Influence Voters' choice of a Political Party**

Statement	Large Extent	Some Extent	Moderate Extent	Little Extent	Not at all	mean
To what extent does the party slogan influence your choice of a party?	187(46.8%)	85(21.3%)	45(11.3%)	64(16%)	19(4.8)	3.89
To what extent does the party logo influence your choice of a party?	134(33.5%)	31(7.8%)	52(13%)	73(18.3%)	110(27.5%)	3.01
To what extent does the rally sign influence your choice of a party?	107(27%)	27(6.8%)	12(3%)	156(39%)	98(24.5%)	2.72

**Source:** Research Data

Of the three visual brand markers, the party slogan (mean=3.89) had the highest levels of influence on voters choice of party during the 2015 presidential election. This was followed by party logo (mean 3.89) while rally sign had the least (mean=2.72) influence on voters choice of party and candidates prior to/ or during presidential election.

**Table 4 Perception on Party’s brand image (representations) that Influence Voters’ choice of a Party**

Statement	Large Extent	Some Extent	Moderate Extent	Little Extent	Not at all	mean
To what extent do the following party’s brand image(representations) dimensions influence your choice of party?						
Rugged	142(35.5%)	89(22.3%)	78(19.5%)	42(10.5)	49(12.3%)	3.58
Powerful	187(46.8%)	85(21.3%)	45(11.3%)	64(16%)	19(4.8%)	3.89
Strong leadership	131(32.8%)	79(19.8%)	91(22.8%)	45(11.3 %)	46(11.5%)	3.45
Bold	117(29.3%)	30(7.5%)	26(6.5%)	154(38.5%)	73(18.35%)	2.91
Iconic	134 (33.5%)	78(19.5%)	79(19.8%)	86(21.5%)	23(5.8%)	3.54
<b>Grand mean =</b>						<b>3.47</b>

**Note:**400;  $\chi^2 \leq .05$

**Source:** Field survey Data.

Data show that overall party’s brand image recognition is a strong predictor of voter choice of party and candidate during general election like the presidential election (grand mean 3.47); this is above 3.05 significant level. The party brand image representation, of ‘powerful’ had the highest mean (3.89), followed by rugged’ (3.58), Iconic (3.54), and strong leadership (3.45). Bold had the least mean score of 2.91. The data also show that participants generally agreed with positive psychological representations of these brand party image about the two prominent political parties (PDP and APC) represented by presidential candidates Goodluck Jonathan and General Buhari in the 2015 presidential election. However, controlling for political party identification provides greater support for these positive and negative perceptions of the candidates.

**Table 5 Overall Perception of brand personality Influence on outcome of an Election (n =400)**

Statement	Large Extent	Some Extent	Moderate Extent	Little Extent	Not at all	mean
To what extent do the following party's brand dimensions influence outcome of an election?						
Competence	157(35.5%)	87(22.3%)	75(19.5%)	52(10.5)	29(12.3%)	3.56
Credibility	185(46.3%)	85(21.3%)	35(8.5%)	74(18.5%)	19(4.8%)	3.83
Audacity	131(32.8%)	79(19.8%)	91(22.8%)	45(11.3 %)	46(11.5%)	3.45
Ruggedness	117(29.3%)	30(7.5%)	26(6.5%)	154(38.5%)	73(18.35%)	2.91
Sophistication	134 (33.5%)	78(19.5%)	79(19.8%)	86(21.5%)	23(5.8%)	3.54
<b>Grand mean =</b>						<b>3.46</b>

**Source:** Field survey, 2017.

Data on table5 show that credibility brand dimension had a higher mean score(3.85) indicating that credibility of a candidate, all things being equal, can positively influence the outcome of an election; A candidate's perceived competence(3.56) also ranks second as a personality dimension that can positively influence election outcome followed by a candidate's sophistication(3.54). This is also followed by audacity with a mean score value of 3.45, while ruggedness ranks last (2.91). This result is supported by number of respondents that answered in 'to large extent' (244 or 61%) and those that answered 'not at all' (29 or 12.3%) for competence dimension. Those that answered 'to a large extent' (n=270) and not at all(19 or 4.8% for credibility and the rest of the brand dimensions support the result.

## 5. Discussion of Findings

This study identified and evaluated political branding and brand personality dimensions using principally Aaker's(1997) five-dimension brand personality model and others(Scammell, 2007; Cwalina &Falkowski, 2014) distilled from literature review. The results show a confirmation of the Aaker's brand dimensions as part of key elements that help to market political candidates. The study revealed that competence, credibility/sincerity, ruggedness ,and excitement(Aaker's brand dimensions) audacity with over twenty-two scales of the personality dimensions heavily influenced voters choice of presidential candidates in the Nigeria 2015 presidential election. In Table1, personality dimensions of the two leading presidential candidates in that election were identified and compared using factor analysis and correlation analysis. In that confirmatory factor analysis table, the five-brand dimensions version with 22 scales was perceived to have much higher adjustments indexes  $\chi^2 = 1201$ ,  $df = 0.18$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ,  $\chi^2/df = 4.131$ ,  $TLI = 0.872$ . As shown in the table 1, there is great difference between composite variability (0.871) and average variance extracted (54%) on competence dimension of the political brand Goodluck as against 0.865 and 45% for presidential candidate Buhari. Other loadings and composite variability for each of the scales show a great difference in both political brands indicating different voters' perception of the candidates. The composite variability for each of the five brand dimensions for Goodluck brand (competence =0.871, credibility/sincerity= **0.813**, toughness= 0.573, sophistication= 0.612, and excitement= 0.961), and for Buhari brand (competence= 0.865, credibility/sincerity=0.892, toughness= 0.764, sophistication=0.314, and excitement= 0.831 shows a consistent model (of over 50%) except sophistication dimension for Buhari brand. This result shows that Aaker's five-brand dimension model influenced voters' choice of presidential brands (candidates) in the electorate voting pattern and acceptability of both political candidates during the 2015 presidential elections.

Table 2 indicates the correlation between the Aaker's brand personality model and those distilled from the works of other researchers as it relates to the two political brands discussed. The results show positive correlations, indicating that whatever side of the arguments one appears to support; the two political brands or candidates are influenced by their personality dimensions in their marketing campaigns.

The result of this study corroborates that of Andrew's (2013) that found somewhat similar results in the study of Obama brand and Romney brand in the 2012 USA presidential election, which was eventually won by Barack Obama. Both candidates were rated in different political branding/brand dimensions, such as importance, warm/cold personality traits, boldness and experience, etc. The findings of this article has erased the doubt or dilemma on whether brand personality dimensions found in Western and European climes are present in other climes(Akhmad and Azhar,2015). Our findings aligns with Muniz and Marchetti(2012) findings in their study of brand personality dimensions in the Brazilian context. Though, that study was basically on renowned consumer brands in the Brazilian consumer market, its findings showed that Aaker's five brand personality dimensions with over twenty-eight scales were perceived by consumers to characterize some renowned brands in Brazil. They discovered five brand dimensions in Brazil to include credibility, joy, audacity, sophistication and sensitivity. In very many aspects, the findings of the current study show some differences in comparison with similar studies that had been carried out elsewhere. While evaluations of brand personality suited the contest of our discussion here, very many studies on this were based on theoretical or conceptual analogy. Furthermore, our findings share similar bearing with that of JoAndrea and Michael (2011). In their work which builds on previous research of others, they discovered that "candidates with an appearance conveying a high level of overall competence enjoy greater success" Interestingly, competence has been revealed here as the most brand personality trait voters would like a candidate to possess (see tables 1 and 2).

Andrew's (2013) study bears some practical findings that are statistically correlated with major findings here, particularly in the aspects of brand recognition, brand visual marks. However findings of Andrew's study showed that "there is a statistically significant relationship of moderate strength between political brand recognition and political participation, suggesting that strong political branding may encourage participation". Findings show that overall party's brand image recognition is a strong predictor of voter choice of party and candidate prior to/during general election like the presidential election. From the findings of the study, party slogan attracts more voters' attention among the brand' vocalized visual marks. This findings holds water when compared with All Progressives Congress (APC) party slogan of '*Change Begins With Me*'. This 'slogan of Change mantra' in itself is positioned as a brand offering, the desired change in the political landscape of Nigeria.

## 6. Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to identify the political branding /brand personality attributes that influence voter's choice of political candidates. Two prominent presidential candidates in the 2015 presidential election in Nigeria were used as case analysis. Anchoring on the mixture of Aaker's (1997) five- personality dimension model and a synthesis of other brand personality models (Needham, 2005; Smith,2009; Mirza, et al,2015), the article discovers that political branding is key to effective candidate marketing and profiling. Voters, like the consumers, in the mainstream marketing literature, are on the lookout for some attributes that a product offers that match their expectations, particularly a new product in the market. Brand personality dimensions or attributes such as competence, credibility, audacity, trustworthiness and ruggedness are personality traits voters use to measure a candidate's suitability to occupy an elective position, particularly, the office of president of a country. Though, the results of the study show that both candidates scored different points in a few of the scales used. However, irrespective of how the average voter perceives each of the personality dimensions, there are other factors which combine to influence voters' choices of either a candidate or political party. Voters' evaluations of party's strength and weakness may be triggered by their perceived brand personality of a party or its leadership and candidate. A positive party brand personality affects voters' voting intentions and choices (Smith, 2009; Andrew, 2013 Nwachukwu et al, 2016) which invariably seem to impact on election outcome.

Brand personality attributes are psychological feelings attached to a brand, and the functionality of such brand to some extent depends on them. For a political candidate to secure an overwhelming support in the vote market, the candidate must have brand image, which is the impression a candidate creates in the mind of a voter or voters; the brand personality dimensions help voters form strong opinions about a candidate. Brand image can be positive or negative giving the agglomeration of factors that shape a voter's perceptual map. Political parties invoke brand image that either appeals to a majority of voters or creates a feeling of hate. Accordingly, "voters see themselves and the candidate as a distinct brand"; this notion of self-brand influences voter perception of a political candidate's brand image and awareness. Hence, it is our submission that reasoning should be applied in choosing brand dimensions and their scales weighed on the scale of rationality choice theory, because brand dimensions are not a standalone variable in voters' choice.

## 7. Limitations and Suggestion for Further Research

The first limitation of this study is its scope, particularly the geographic scope which covered only one state from each of the six geo-political zones in Nigeria. Further research needs to be conducted on the research findings using a wider geographic scope (addition of two more states), unit of analysis scope and adopting a mixed research design (i.e. both qualitative and quantitative research methods) for generating and analyzing data. Such

approach will help to uncover other brand personality traits not discussed or used in this work, which also influenced voters in their choice of presidential candidate. A comparative study of the brand personality traits of both presidential candidates needs to be conducted using states in the geo-political zones where each of the candidates garnered more votes in the 2015 presidential election.

## References

- Aaker, D. A. (1996). *Building strong brands*. New York: Free Press
- Aaker, J. L. (1997). Dimensions of brand personality. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 34(3), 347–356.
- Abubakar, M. Abuh, A., Musari, A., Azeh, E. and Okeke, J. (2015). 2015 Polls: Jonathan, Buhari, others sign non-violence pact. *The Guardian*, (January, 15) 31(13),1-2
- Abuh, A. & Ugehgbu, L. (2015). PDP alleges plans by APC to cause instability, *The Guardian*, (February, 21), Vol. 31, No. 31, pp.3.
- Achor, P.N., Nwachukwu, C., & Udensi, M.I (2016). Politics unusual: Rethinking Nigeria political terrain through political marketing strategies, *European Journal of Business and Management* 8(20),103-112
- Achor, P.N. & Moguluwa, S.C. (2012) *Political Marketing: Marketing, Communication and Politics*, Enugu: Oktek Nigeria Ltd.
- Ahmed, U., Riffat, M., & Aaisha, A (2013) Determinants of effective electoral campaign *A Research Journal of South Asian Studies*28(1), 107-126
- Ahmed,M.A, Lodhi, S.A.,& Ahemd,Z.(2015) . Political Brand Equity(PBE) Model: The Integration of Political Brands in Voter choice. *Journal of Political Marketing*, (August), 150527104231009
- Akhmad, F. & Azhar, A.(2015),A Review of Political Branding Research, *Global Journal of Business and Social Science Review*,340-348
- Allen, D. E. & Olson,J. (1995). Conceptualizing and creating brand personality: A narrative theory approach. *Advances in Consumer Research*, 22, 392–393.
- Andrew, D.L( 2013). Obama<sup>TM</sup> : Political Branding and Participation in the 2012 U.S Presidential Election. *Published Thesis submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences of Georgetown University in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Communication, Culture, and Technology*
- Anyanwu, A,( 2005).Dimensions Marketing, Okigwe: Avan Global Publishers
- Bartle, J. & Griffith, D (2002). Social-psychological, economic and marketing models of voting behaviour compared. In N. J. O'Shaughnessy and S. C. Henneberg (Eds.), *The idea of political marketing*. Westport, CT: Praeger, 19–37
- Bélanger, Éric,& Bonnie M. Meguid (2008). Issue salience, issue ownership, and issue- based vote choice, *Electoral Studies*, 27(3), 477–91
- Budge, I. (2015) Issue ownership: How the public links parties to issues and why it matters, *West European Politics* 38, 761-777. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/01402382.2015.1039374>
- Budge, I. (1982) Electoral volatility: Issue effects and basic change in 23 post-war de
- Bulter P. & Collins, N (1996) Political marketing: Structure and process *European Journal of Marketing*, 28 (1) pp 19-34
- Butler, P., and P. Harris. (2009). Considerations on the evolution of political marketing theory. *Marketing Theory*, 9(2), 149–164.
- Bräuniger, T., and Giger, N.(2016) Strategic ambiguity of party positions in multi-party competition. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1017/psrm.2016.18>
- Carrigan. (2006). Building a political brand: Ideology or voter-driven strategy. *Journal of Brand Management*, 13(6) 418–428
- Cwalina,W & Falkowski, A (2014). Political branding: Political candidate positioning based on inter-object associative affinity index, *Journal of Political Marketing* 1 ,152-174 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/15377857.2014.990842>
- Dean, D., & Croft, R. (2009) Reason and choice: A conceptual study of consumer decision making and electoral behaviour, *Journal of Political Marketing*, 8:2, 130-146, DOI: 10.1080/15377850902813386
- Downs, A. (1957). *An economic theory of democracy*. New York: HarperCollins
- Gorbaniuk, O. Kusak,K. ,kogut, A & Kustos, M.(2014)Dimensions of political party personality perception. *Journal of Political Marketing* 3(2):35-63 [dx.doi.org/10.1080/15377857.2014.990840](http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/15377857.2014.990840)
- Guzmán, F., and V. Sierra. (2009). A political candidate's brand image scale: Are political candidates brands? *Journal of Brand Management*, 17(3), 207–217.
- Helmut, S. & Frederik, F (2015). *How to manage a party brand: Empirical perspectives on Electoral probability and internal conflict* 64-95 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/15377857.2014.990832>
- Henneberg, S.C. (2008). An Epistemological Perspective on Research in Political Marketing *Journal of Political Marketing*. 7:2, 151-182, DOI: 10.1080/15377850802053158

- Henneberg, S.C. (1997). *Voting behaviour as a special case of consumer behaviour*. Unpublished PhD thesis, Cambridge: University of Cambridge.
- JoAndrea, H. & Michael, V. L. (2011). The impact of candidate appearance and advertising strategies on election results. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 9(5), 1-51.
- Kapferer, J.-N. (2008). *The new strategic brand management: Creating and sustaining brand equity long term, 4th ed.* London: Kogan Page.
- Kapferer, J.-N. (2004). *The new strategic brand management: Creating and sustaining brand equity long term.* London: Kogan Page.
- Keller, K. L. (2002). *Strategic brand management: Building, measuring, and managing brand equity*. London: Prentice-Hall International
- Keller, K. L. (2006). Branding and brand equity. In B. A. Weitz and R. Wensley (Eds.), *Handbook of marketing*. London: Sage.
- Keller, K. L. (1993). *Conceptualizing, measuring, and managing customer-based brand equity*. London: Prentice-Hall International
- Keller, K. L. (2003). *Strategic brand management: Building, measuring, and managing brand equity, 2nd ed.* Upper Saddle River: Pearson Education
- Kotler, P. & Levy, S. J. (1969). Broadening the concept of marketing. *Journal of Marketing*, 33, 10-15.
- Lees-Marshment, J. (2007). Political marketing how to reach that pot of gold. *Journal of Political Marketing* 4(3), 306-321
- Lees-Marshment, J. (2008a). *Political marketing and British political parties, 2nd ed.* Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Lees-Marshment, J. (2009). *Political marketing: Principles and application*. London: Routledge.
- Lees-Marshment, J. (2001). The marriage of politics and marketing *Political Studies*, 49. Pp 692- 713
- Lees-Marshment, Jennifer. (2008b). Managing a market-orientation in government: Cases in the U.K. and New Zealand. In Dennis W. Johnson (Ed.), *The Routledge handbook of political management* New York, NY: Routledge.
- Lees-Marshment, J. (2009a). *Political marketing: Principles and applications*. New York, NY: Routledge
- Lees-Marshment, J. (2001). *Political marketing and British political parties*, Manchester, United Kingdom: Manchester University Press.
- Lilleker, D., & Lees-Marshment, J. (Eds.). (2005). *Political marketing: A comparative perspective*. Manchester: Manchester University Press
- Lock, A., and P. Harris. (1996). Political marketing—vive la difference! *European Journal of Marketing*, 30(10/11), 14-24.
- Marland, A. (2005). Canadian political parties: Market oriented or ideological slag brains? In D. Lilleker & J. Lees-Marshment (Eds.), *Political marketing: A comparative perspective* (pp. 59-78). Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Mirza, A.A., Suleman, A., & Zahoor, H. (2015). Political brand equity model: The integration of political brands in voter choice, *Journal of Political Marketing*, DOI: 10.1080/1537785.2015.1022629
- Metzner, H. (2010). *How to succeed in marketing a liberal agenda*. Lecture at “Consolidation and Strengthening of Democratic Party Structures in the EU Member States in Central and Eastern Europe, Prague, June 21.
- Muniz and Marchetti (2012). Brand Personality dimensions in the Brazilian context. *Bar- Brazilian Administration Review* 9 (2), <http://dx.doi.org/10.1590/S1807-76922012000200004>
- Needham, C. (2005). Brand leaders: Clinton, Blair and the limitations of the permanent campaign. *Political Studies*, 53, 343-361.
- Needham, C. (2006). Brands and political loyalty. *Journal of Brand Management*, 13(3), 178-187
- Newman, B. I. (2002) Editorial: The role of marketing in politics *Journal of Political Marketing*, 1(1), 1-5.
- Nwachukwu, C.P., Achor P.N., Nkwocha C. A., & Okwara C.C. (2016) Voter choice, decision and party marketing orientation: An inquiry into choice theory in political marketing. *Imperial Journal of Interdisciplinary Research* 2(12), 552-564
- O’Cass, A & Voola, R. (2010). Explications of political market orientation and political brand orientation using the resource-based view of the political party, *Journal of Marketing Management* 26(1&2), 627-645 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080267257x.2010.4>
- O’Cass, A., and D. Grace. (2003). An explanatory perspective of service brand associations. *Journal of Services Marketing*, 17(5), 452-475
- Oleg, G., Kaja, K., Aneta, K., & Marta, K. (2014) Dimensions of political party ‘Personality’ Perception, *Journal of Political Marketing* 35-63 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/15377857.2014.990840>
- Okpara, G., Anuforo, R.U., and Achor, P.N. (2016), Effect of political advertising on voters’ choice of candidate:

- Emphasis on the 2015 governorship election in Imo State, Nigeria, *European Journal of Business and Management* 8(26) 50-69
- Rutter, R.N., Hanretty, C & Lettice, F(2015) Political brands: Can parties be distinguished by their online brand personality, *Journal of Political Marketing* 1-20
- Savigny, H. (2008). Political marketing a rational choice? *Journal of Political Marketing*, 3,1, 21-38  
[http://dx.doi.org/10.1300/J199v03n01\\_02](http://dx.doi.org/10.1300/J199v03n01_02)
- Scammell, M. (2007). Political brands and consumer citizens: The rebranding of Tony Blair. *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 611(May), 176–192
- Schneider, H. (2004). Branding in politics: Manifestation, relevance and identity-oriented management. *Journal of Political Marketing*, 3(3), 41–64
- Schweiger, G., and M. Adami. (1999). The nonverbal image of politicians and political. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publication parties. In B. I. Newman (Ed.), *Handbook of Political Marketing*, pp. 347–364.
- Smith, G. (2001). The 2001 general election: Factory influencing the brand image of political parties and their leaders, *Journal of Marketing Management*, 17, 989–1006.
- Smith, G. (2009). Conceptualizing and testing brand personalities in British politics. *Journal of Political Marketing* 8(3): 209–232.
- Smith, G., and A. French. (2009). The political brand: A consumer perspective. *Marketing Theory*, 9(2), 209–226.
- Speed, R., Butler, P., & Collins, N. (2015) Human branding in political marketing: Applying contemporary branding thought to political parties and their leader, *Journal of Marketing* 14(1&2)  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/15377857.2014.990833>
- Strömbäck, J.(2008). Political marketing and professionalized campaigning: A conceptual analysis. *Journal of Political Marketing* 6(2-3), 49-67
- Stokes, D.E. (1963). Spatial models of party competition. *American Political Science Review* 57(2): 368–377
- Wring, D.(2010).Reconciling marketing with political science: Theories of political marketing. *Journal of Political Marketing* 651-663

#### **Authors' Bio-data**

Corresponding author\* **Achor, Princewell .N** obtained a PhD in Public Relations from the prestigious University of Nigeria Nsukka (UNN). He is a Media, Public Relations & Marketing Communication Consultant with experience spanning over fifteen years. Dr. Achor also obtained both M.Sc(PR) and MBA (Marketing) Degrees from UNN.He is the lead author and co-author of a flagship book in Political Marketing that centered on Nigeria political landscape titled, “Political Marketing: Marketing, Communication and Politics”. His research interest includes Political Marketing, Political Public Relations, Social Marketing, Social/new media studies and Marketing communication, etc.; he has also published several learned articles in academic and professional journals.

**Nwachukwu Chima P** is a PhD candidate and a lecturer in the Department of Marketing, Abia State Polytechnic Aba, Abia State, Nigeria. His doctoral research interest is in Political Marketing. He has widely published in both local and international journals, such as *European Journal of Business & Management*, *Journal of Marketing Communication*, *Intl .Journal of Sc. & Research* etc.

**.Mirian Udensi I** is lecturer in the Department of Marketing, Abia State Polytechnic Aba, Abia State, Nigeria. She has published several articles in notable academic journals such as *European Journal of Business & Management*, *Journal of Marketing Communication*, etc.