Influence of Mass Media Campaigns on Voter Behaviour and Decision-Making in the 2015 General Election in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The phenomenon of political campaigns is tightly tied to lobby groups and political parties. This has existed as long as there have been informed citizens. The mass media has been one of the means of campaigning, which greatly affects the decision of the voters. The study aims to examine the influence of Mass Media Campaigns on Voter Behaaviour and Decision-Making in the 2015 General Election in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. The study is conducted in Uyo local government area of the State. A survey research design is used for the study. A sample of 160 respondents is used to obtain the primary data. The data was tested using chi chi-square statistical technique. Results obtained showed that mass media campaigns significantly impacted voter behaviour and decision in the 2015 general election in Uyo local government area. The study recommends, among other things the need for the government and political parties should encourage rural or village gatherings during electioneering campaigns.

Keywords*: Media, Campaigns, Voters Behaviour, Decision Making, Elections*

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Background to the Study

There is widespread agreement that the process of election campaigning (Mason and Fienberg, 1985; Norris, 2002; Mark, 2004) particularly the roles of parties and the news media, have been transformed during recent decades. Many are concerned that these developments have generated widespread apathy, or even alienation, from the traditional modes of electoral participation in representative democracies. This tendency is thought to be particularly pronounced among the young (Uya, 2004). Many observers have documented the evolution of electoral campaigns, including the significant changes in parties, the news media, and the electorate (McCarthy and Mayer, 1996; De Graaf, 1999). Alternative interpretations of these developments are offered in the literature although there is considerable consensus about the main characteristics of these changes.

With growing interest in political activities, political parties are adopting new strategies to mobilize popular support and influence voter's choices. As preparations for the 2015 general elections gathered momentum, politicians across political divides stepped up their campaigns. However, it was evident that, instead of issues, personal attacks and vendettas had taken center stage. Ordinarily, what one would have expected are robust debates and discussions on issues that are more relevant to the development and growth of Nigeria as a nation, but what we are seeing today is very disgusting (Nse, 2015). Thompson (2005) added that malicious campaigns or statements were based on hatred and misinformation. To that extent, such messages polluted the minds of not only the electorate but the entire citizens. The danger of these personal attacks and campaigns of hatred and ill-will was that most of those receiving these messages were not well educated and, therefore, the tendency is for them to believe the information being passed across even though it may not be true. Although those who are well-educated can't be influenced by the campaign of calumny, it can cause harm to those who are not well-educated, and the majority of the voters belong to this category. Mass media campaigns normally use radio, television, billboards, or other media to reach a wide segment of a community. It also offers individuals, especially young people, anonymous access to valuable information and resources without having to go through others they may not trust (e.g. doctors, teachers, etc.). The focus of this study is to examine the influence of mass media on voter behaviour and decision-making, using Uyo Local Government Area as a study location.

Statement of Problem

Effective political campaign is an intense experience and, when done correctly, it is also a lot of hard work. To the campaign workers, a lot of time and skills are required. This therefore means that a poorly constituted political campaign team will lead to election failure. Equally, a lot of finances are necessary for running an effective campaign. This may deter competent candidates from contesting elections. Result, unqualified candidates are interested in governance and leadership, but have the financial ability and sponsorship contest and often would win. This leads to continuous setbacks and ineffective governance. These challenges form the concern of the researcher to examine the impact of political campaigns on voters' choice in the 2015 general election in the Uyo local government area.

To address the problems stated above specific research questions are raised to guide the study. These are:

i. How did the mass media impact voters' choice in the 2015 general election in Uyo local government area?
ii. What are the challenges and strategies for effective political campaigns for subsequent elections in Nigeria?

Objectives of the Study

The primary objective of the study is to evaluate the influence of mass media campaigns on voter behaviour and decision in the 2015 General Elections in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State.

Research Hypothesis

Mass media campaigns do not significantly impact voters' behaviour and decisions in the 2015 general election in Uyo local government area.

Literature Review

Political campaigns have existed as long as there have been informed citizens. The phenomenon of political campaigns is tightly tied to lobby groups and political parties. The first modern campaign is thought to be William Ewart Gladstone's Midlothian campaign in the 1880s, although there may have been earlier modern examples from the 19th century. American election campaigns in the 19th century created the first mass-based political parties and invented many of the techniques of mass campaigning (Walker, 1990). The case is the same in most of the world where democracy is embraced as the form of government. In Nigeria, Uya (2004) asserts that political campaigns are significant tools for the sustenance of democracy. During campaigns, candidates often launch expensive television, radio, and direct mail campaigns aimed at persuading voters to support the candidate.

As in most of democratic nations, Lincoln (1998) said, major campaigns in the United States are often much longer than those in other democracies. Campaigns start anywhere from several months to several years before Election Day. Once a person decides to run, they will make a public announcement. This announcement could consist of anything from a simple press release to concerned media outlets to a major media event followed by a speaking tour. It is often well-known to many people that a candidate will run before an announcement is made.

According to Stanley (2006), successful campaigns involve a formidable team and calculated strategies. Ford (2013) added that campaign teams must consider how to communicate the message of the campaign, recruit volunteers, and raise money. Campaign advertising draws on techniques from commercial advertising and propaganda. The avenues available to political campaigns in disseminating their messages are limited by the law, available resources, and the imagination of the campaigns' participants (Sears, David, and Weber 1988). These techniques are often combined into a formal strategy known as the campaign plan. The plan takes account of a campaign's goal, message, target audience, and resources available. The campaign will typically seek to identify supporters at the same time as getting its message across.

While it is true that every campaign is unique, some basic principles can be applied to any election campaign. The basics of any election campaign are deceptively simple. All campaigns must repeatedly communicate a persuasive message to people who will vote. This is "the golden rule" of politics (Rosenberg, William, and Elliott, 1989). A political campaign is a communication process - find the right message, target that message to the right group of voters, and repeat that message again and again. Unfortunately, the actual planning process is much more difficult than simply following one rule. There is much more that goes into the process. These steps include:

1. Doing the research necessary to prepare for the campaign.
2. Setting a strategic campaign goal of how many votes are needed to win.
3. Analyzing and targeting voters.
4. Developing a campaign message.
5. Developing a voter contact plan.
6. Implementing that plan (Oshagan, 1988).

Therefore, the candidate, the campaign manager, and all the key advisers should conduct a strategic planning meeting and go through this manual seriously and rigorously. The strategic planning session should also result in a written campaign plan. Too often, politicians believe that they hold the winning strategy "in their heads" (Uya, 2004). In reality, if the plan is not written down, there is no strategy at all and the campaign is wandering. Or, at other times, the candidate and the campaign manager believe that they are following a single strategy, only to find out later that their opinions about the strategy are completely at odds. Nelson (1989) disclosed that a written campaign plan, agreed upon by the candidate, the campaign manager, and all the key advisors, avoids such problems. The rule is simple - if a plan is not written down, no plan exists. Nelson (1989) said that once the plan is written, the team must follow that plan in a disciplined way. As with any plan, it is only as good as its implementation. All campaigns must be flexible to changing circumstances, but these changes should be carefully considered and weighed against the original research and strategy laid out in the plan (Nelson, 1989).

Every campaign is unique. While certain basic principles can be applied to each campaign, it is important to have a complete understanding of the particular situation and the conditions in which your campaign will be waged. At some point in almost every campaign, someone says, "It is different here" or "You're not considering our particular situation." "Step One: Research" is where you start and where you consider the differences and peculiarities of each campaign (Luttbeg, 1988). It is here that you have the chance to demonstrate just how different your situation is. The first step in developing a winning strategy must begin with a realistic assessment of the political landscape in which you will be running. Indeed, one can never know everything about a district, its opponents, and the voters. However, by using one's time wisely and setting clear priorities, one can compile the kind of information needed to develop a good strategy and be prepared for most events in the political campaign (Luttbeg, 1988).

Several factors should be understood as completely as possible as you prepare to write a campaign plan:

1. What is the type of election and what are the rules?
2. What are the characteristics of the district?
3. What are the characteristics of the voters?
4. What has happened in past elections?
5. What are the main factors affecting this election?
6. What are the strengths and weaknesses of your candidate?
7. What are the strengths and weaknesses of all the viable opponents?

He added that it is important for the campaign team to take some time to research the answers to as many of these questions as possible. The ultimate goal of almost every political campaign is to win elected office. What is needed is to determine what must be done to achieve that victory and setting specific goals with achieving strategies are significant in this regard.

Common Functions of Political Campaigns

According to Paul (2005), before you approach a campaign to ask about a position, you should give serious thought both to the type of position you would optimally prefer, and to the types of positions you would be willing to take. Campaign workers usually begin with field, advance, or fundraising work, and later "graduate" to doing policy or political work – but the hierarchy is not rigid, and depending on your particular connection, it may be possible to enter the campaign process at a different point. Paul (2005) identified the lists below as arranged alphabetically, rather than in hierarchical order, as the relative hierarchy may depend entirely on the nature of a particular campaign. Finally, depending on the size of the campaign, several of these functions may be unnecessary, or handled by a single person.

1. **Ballot access:** Ballot access laws are often cumbersome and esoteric, with fees and/or signature requirements from certain populations, all with their deadlines. Lawyers have to review these requirements to ensure that a candidate or ballot measure can get on the ballot.
2. **Communications compliance:** Campaign finance law places certain restrictions on campaign communications, including the McCain-Feingold provisions for federal campaigns. Lawyers have to ensure that the communications comply with the regulatory requirements.
3. **Election administration:** Each jurisdiction will have its idiosyncrasies in terms of voter registration, absentee ballot, early voting, and poll site regulations. Parsing these requirements is necessary to inform a campaign's registration and/or get-out-the-vote (GOTV) resources and strategy. These same laws can also form the basis of an election protection effort, to ensure that eligible voters can cast an effective vote.
4. **Fundraising compliance:** Campaign finance laws also restrict the sources of funds and require disclosure of some donations and expenses. Lawyers ensure compliance by reviewing checks coming in the door and reports going out.
5. **Transactional review:** Campaigns are essentially mini-nonprofit businesses,

ramping up and shutting down with extraordinary speed. As in any business, a campaign organization must be formed and organized in compliance with legal requirements. Campaigns will very quickly generate many contracts –including contracts for personnel, field offices, equipment, and data – that should be reviewed by an attorney.

6. **Advance:** Before a candidate appears in public, an advance team will scout the location, arrange logistics, and assist in drumming up an appropriate audience. Many advance teams have at least one staff member present during an event to oversee logistics. Advance work involves lots of travel; you could be on the road twenty days out of the month on a national or statewide campaign. This work is less sensitive and is more likely to go to campaign novices who exhibit independence, self-confidence, imagination, and good judgment.

7. **Campaign management:** Campaign managers and their deputies integrate all campaign functions, sometimes doing, and sometimes directing traffic. It is ultimately their job to make sure that the entire campaign runs as smoothly as possible.

8. **Communications:** The communications staff is responsible for public manifestations of the campaign's message and is a very politically sensitive area. Staff members write speeches, prepare and place ads ("paid media"), create media events ("free media"), and respond to press inquiries. The official campaign spokesperson or spokespeople will be members of the communications staff. As Election Day nears, communications generally take on a lot of low-level staff to man war rooms (which consist of watching a lot of television screens in shifts 24 hours a day).

9. **Constituent liaison:** Constituent liaison work is less politically sensitive and conducts outreach to the local leadership of particular interest-group communities: sometimes organized along racial or ethnic lines and sometimes along professional or issue lines (e.g., "lawyers for XX", "environmentalists for XX").

10. **Convention support:** For major statewide or national campaigns, political parties may celebrate the end of the primary process with a formal nominating convention. Often, parties or campaigns will have their team hired specifically to plan and coordinate these conventions. Important functions leading up to the convention may include addressing rules and platform issues and organizing delegate selection and support.

11. **Field:** Field teams contact voters, assemble supporters, and create events in particular geographic regions. They help register voters, deliver campaign literature and other information, call potential voters to inform or persuade, and above all, are responsible for getting supporters to the polls on election day.

12. **Fundraising:** Fundraisers generate the cash that lets the candidate spread his or her message, which often serves independently as a test of the candidate's credibility. Fundraising can involve big events, extended web campaigns, small house parties, group-based incentives, or individual contributions. In any guise, it is welcome. Staff tends to consist of very young people, especially at the lower rungs.

13. **Information technology:** A designated IT staff is critical, especially on a larger campaign. They keep the back office running, manage phone and/or BlackBerry

service, and ensure that the campaign's computer network functions. More advanced campaigns need staff to tend the infrastructure for volunteer coordination programs or voter contact programs that run directly off of a campaign's technology platform.

14. **Policy:** The policy shop prepares policy and position statements, responds to issue-based questionnaires sponsored by interest groups (usually in the context of a group's pending endorsement), and helps prepare talking points and position papers for the candidate on particular issues, ranging from education, health care, economic development and crime to international relations. In a large campaign, these jobs are likely to go only to those with substantial experience in a substantive policy area.

14. **Political:** The political desks of a campaign usually have three primary functions: briefing the candidate on a particular political terrain, securing the goodwill or endorsement of other political leaders, and maintaining a close liaison with the campaign's field workers. Political desks are usually arranged by geographic territories. This is very sensitive work, but campaigns occasionally hire newcomers if they are politically savvy.

15. **Research:** "Opposition research" (the art and science of finding out as much as possible about the opponent) is extremely important and the most notorious research function, but by no means the only role of research staff. Staff also research their candidate. This rapid response can be exciting for someone who loves the political game, but the hours can be grueling and boring. Expect twelve to sixteen-hour days of Googling and Nexis research.

   Research staff keeps the campaign informed: they may vet would-be staff or volunteers, dig up details on particular policy proposals, or track media appearances by their candidates, surrogates, and opponents. Research is one of the most sensitive areas of a campaign, but if the staff trusts you, it does not require a lot of experience. Research is a great introductory job in a campaign if you are willing to put in the hours.

16. **Scheduling:** The competing demands on the candidate's time can be tremendous, and someone on the campaign has to be responsible for negotiating the competing priorities and setting the candidate's schedule. In the complicated internal dynamic of a campaign, the schedulers are among those with the most internal clout because they guard the campaign's most scarce resource. Scheduling is very sensitive work with the need for staff to be on call 24/7.

17. **Surrogate management:** The candidate can only be in one place at one time: for everything else, there are surrogates. Surrogates are public or quasi-public figures enlisted to speak or appear on the candidate's behalf – they may be members of his or her family, prominent public figures, or other elected officials. Larger campaigns will have staff specifically devoted to scheduling and managing surrogate appearances, including providing speech materials and talking points that are closely coordinated with what the candidate is saying. Surrogate management is politically sensitive work and is quite interesting because you will get to meet some of the heaviest hitters in the business.

18. **Targeting:** Campaigns must figure out how best to deploy their resources: though it may feel like the country is saturated toward the end of a campaign cycle, campaigns

cannot possibly hope to reach everyone all the time. The targeting staff is tasked with determining which voters the campaign should contact through different means – both in terms of general groups and specific individuals. In many campaigns, this responsibility falls under the political shop and requires people who love campaigns and data management.

19. **Volunteers:** Many campaigns are so awash in volunteers that they must find a way to productively harness this energy. Some will employ campaign staff specifically to find and manage volunteers and to deploy the talents of campaign supporters where they can do the most good. This is generally less sensitive work, but requires a lot of patience!

20. **Web development:** In addition to supplying basic information about a candidate, many campaigns will use the Web (especially websites and blogs) to allow supporters to interact with the campaign or with each other, to raise funds, and to generate publicity for particular events and the campaign in general. Website design and maintenance is incredibly important work but can be open to someone with no prior campaign experience if they have strong technical skills (Paul, 2005).

The Post-Modern Mass Media Campaign and its Influence on Voter's Behavior and Decision

According to Engstrom (1989), the mass media emerged as a modern form of campaign. Mass media is the primary means of communication used to reach the vast majority of the general public. The most common platforms for mass media are newspapers, magazines, radio, television, and the Internet. The general public typically relies on the mass media to provide information regarding political issues, social issues, entertainment, and news in pop culture. The newspaper is a platform for mass media; one purpose is to keep the public informed of major events, like volcanic eruptions (Bracht and Kingsbury 1990).

Marion (1990) maintained that the mass media has evolved significantly over time. Have you ever wondered how the latest news and information was communicated in the past? Well before there was the internet, television, or the radio, there was the newspaper. The newspaper was the original platform for mass media. For a long period, the public relied on writers and journalists for the local newspapers to provide them with the latest news on current events. Centuries later, in the 1890s, came the invention of the radio. The radio would soon supersede the newspaper as the most pertinent source for mass media. Families would gather around the radio and listen to their favorite radio station programs to hear the latest news regarding politics, social issues, and entertainment. Through mass media, news outlets have a major influence on the general public and a major impact on the public's opinion on certain topics. In many cases, the mass media is the only source that the general public relies on for news. For example, when Neil Armstrong landed on the moon in 1969, mass media made it possible for the public to witness this historical event (Uya, 2004). It is a significant tool in mobilizing voters' support through political campaigns support during elections.

The evolution of the modern campaign from the early 1950s to the mid-1980s was marked by several related developments in established democracies: the move from dispersed state and

local party organizations to a nationally coordinated strategic campaign; from party officials and volunteers contributing time and labor to paid professional consultants specializing in communications, marketing, polling, and campaign management; the shift from more partisan newspapers towards national television news; and the development of a more detached and instrumental electorate, less strongly anchored to party loyalties and social cleavages (Kelley, 1990). The 'long campaign' in the year or so before polling day gradually became as important strategically as the short 'official' campaign.

Nse (2015) stated that the new media have become veritable tools for political campaigns, because they break boundaries and frontiers, reaching every part of the world. The new media have consequences on the social, political, and economic values of people. New media hold out a possibility of on-demand access to content anytime, anywhere, on any digital device, as well as, interactive user feedback, creative participation, and community formation around the media content. What distinguishes new media from traditional media is not the digitizing of media content into bits, but the dynamic life of the new media content and its interactive relationship with the media consumer. This dynamic life, moves, breathes, and flows with pulsing excitement in real time.

In most postindustrial democracies, the critical shift towards the modern campaign developed with the rise of television, as well as the publication of regular opinion polling, during the 1950s. This process gradually shifted the primary location of political communications, from the print media towards broadcasting, particularly the mainstream national evening news on the major television channels (Kelley, 1990). The printed press remains politically important, particularly in newspaper-centric systems, since the per capita circulation level of newspapers in OECD countries has remained stable. Nevertheless, many countries have experienced weakening press-party linkages, as newspapers have become increasingly politically independent, selecting news based on commercial logic to maximize sales, as discussed earlier, rather than following the political logic of party support (Kolbert, 1992).

He added that, in the Netherlands, for example, at least until the 1960s there were strong sectoral cleavages, producing 'polarization' as people within a community attended the same schools and churches, joined the same social clubs, sports clubs, and community associations, tended to vote for the same party, and therefore bought the party newspaper (Kolbert, 1992). The 'Quillen' or pillars were formed around Protestant, Catholic, and labor mass movements, which mobilized politically in the early 20th century, at the same time as mass circulation newspapers developed in the Netherlands, creating stable cleavage sub-cultures (Kolbert, 1992). A limited number of papers reflected the Protestant, Catholic, and Socialist pillars. The de-pillarization process started in the mid-1960s leading to the decline of the partisan press in the Netherlands. Other countries seem to have often followed a similar process, producing greater internal diversity within newspapers.

Luttbeg (1988) stated that, as with direct forms of personal communications, newspapers did not necessarily decline in importance as sources of political communications, but they became supplemented by television. The main effort of party campaign organizations, from

the morning press conferences through the day's events, visits, and photo opportunities to the evening rallies and speeches, became increasingly focused on achieving favorable coverage through the main evening news, current affairs programs, and leadership debates on television. The effort was exacerbated by the mainstream audience for these programs, given that until the early 1980s only two or three television stations were broadcasting in most OECD countries, major news programs occurred at regular prime-time slots in the evening rather than on a 24-hour cyclical basis, and most countries offered no opportunities for paid political advertising on television (Luttbeg, 1988). To a large extent, therefore, what was reported on the flagship news programs on Britain's BBC and ITN, on Sweden's SVT, or Japan's NHK, to a largely captive electorate, *was* the heart of the modern election campaign, setting the agenda for the following morning's newspapers (Oshagan, 1988). The role of television news heightened the party leadership's control over the campaign, which became increasingly nationalized.

Many writers such as Swanson and Mancini suggest that the focus on television campaigns has strengthened the spotlight on the party leadership, moving from cleavage-based and issue-based conflict towards a 'personalization' of politics (cited in Oshagan, 1988). Case studies suggest that this trend is particularly marked for presidential elections, such as those in Latin America, but it is also apparent in parliamentary elections as well. The shift in emphasis from newspapers to television has probably heightened the visibility of leaders, especially those like Tony Blair and Bill Clinton who seem most comfortable in this medium, although systematic evidence is unavailable to confirm whether this is a general trend in many democracies. Moreover, it is not clear whether the focus on leaders in campaign coverage has necessarily led to the increasing importance of party leaders in determining votes in parliamentary systems (Oshagan, 1988).

Rosenberg and Elliott (1989) said, that in the modern campaign, following the rise of television, parties increasingly developed a coordinated national and regional campaign with communications designed by specialists skilled in advertising, marketing, and polling. The adoption of these practices did not occur overnight; rather one study of European political marketing terms this process a 'shopping model', as parties grafted particular practical techniques that seemed useful or successful in other campaigns onto the existing machinery on a more ad hoc basis (Sears and Weber, 1988).

Vancil and Pendell (1988) added that party adaptation was particularly evident following extended periods out of power. The move from amateur to professional campaigns was marked by more frequent use of specialist experts, PR consultants, and professional fund-raisers influencing decisions formerly made by candidates or party officials. They reported that ever since the expansion of the franchise there have always been some 'professional' campaigners, in the form of full-time local agents or party managers, along with permanent staff like press officers at central headquarters. The new professionals, however, were essentially 'hired guns' external to the party organization, often working on campaigns in different countries, like advertising consultants at Saatchi and Saatchi (Vancil and Pendell, 1988). Increased use of paid consultants, public opinion polls, direct mail, and professional

television broadcasts during the long campaign, led to rising costs and the shift from labor-intensive towards more capital-intensive campaigns.

The professionalization of the political consultancy industry has developed furthest in the United States, with demand fuelled largely by the traditional weakness of American party organizations, the rise of the candidate-centered campaign in the 1960s, the capital-intensive nature of advertising-driven campaigns, and the number and frequency of American primary and general elections. Outside of America, the rise of independent political consultants has been slower, mainly because parties have incorporated professionals within their ranks (Walker, 1990). Organizations like the International Association of Political Consultants (IAPC) and the World Association of Public Opinion Research, along with regional affiliates, bring together polling experts, advertising specialists, and campaign consultants (Swanson and Paolo, 1996).

The rise of the modern campaign was also related to major changes in the electorate. Many studies highlighted how dealignment has eroded traditional social cleavages and partisan loyalties, producing a more instrumental electorate supporting parties on a more contingent basis based on their policies and performance. The familiar cleavages of class and religion, which had long anchored the European electorate, proved weaker predictors of voting behavior in many countries as party competition over issues; images, and leadership became increasingly important from the 1970s onwards. Earlier theories (Mazzoleni, 1987; Mason and Fienberg, 1985) suggested that dealignment was largely a product of long-term socioeconomic secular trends gradually transforming the mass public, stressing rising levels of education, class mobility, and crosscutting cleavages like race and gender. In contrast, more recent accounts have emphasized that parties have both contributed towards and sought to benefit from, these changes in the electorate by developing 'bridging' or 'catch-all' strategies, designed to attract voters from outside their core constituency (Mughan, 1995).

Norris (2000) observed that the Internet is now a core element of modern political campaigns. Communication technologies, such as e-mail, websites, and podcasts for various forms of activism enable faster communications by citizen movements and deliver a message to a large audience. These Internet technologies are used for cause-related fundraising, lobbying, volunteering, community building, and organizing. Individual political candidates are also using the Internet to promote their election campaigns.

Signifying the importance of internet political campaigning, Barack Obama's presidential campaign relied heavily on social media, and new media channels to engage voters, recruit campaign volunteers, and raise campaign funds (Nse, 2015). The campaign brought the spotlight on the importance of using the internet in new-age political campaigning by utilizing various forms of social media and new media (including Facebook, YouTube, and a custom-generated social engine) to reach new target populations. The campaign's social website, my.BarackObama.com, utilized a low-cost and efficient method of mobilizing voters and increasing participation among various voter populations. This new media was incredibly successful at reaching the younger population while helping all populations organize and promote action.

Workalemahu, in Pecora, Osei-Hwere, and Carlsson (2008:84) notes that if globalization is an engine, then the media, especially global media, is the fuel that keeps it going. Without mass media and modern information technology, globalization would be impossible. Thus, one aspect of globalization is media globalization, which refers to the worldwide expansion of media production and distribution companies that trade on the emerging global market and is therefore, primarily the global proliferation of a small number of media conglomerates. Advancements in science and technology have given rise to yet another form of global media embodied by the Internet. The Internet's easy accessibility, availability, and speed at which it relays information from all parts of the globe make it a perfect global advertising medium for the goods and services of any business owner. Its widespread access to consumers of all ages, races, nationalities, and political, social, economic, and religious roots, enables business owners to establish a solid name for their brand and gain a richer return on investment. Through the Internet, entertainers can introduce their crafts, and showcase their talents and skills to their millions of prospective and would-be fans.

Recently, politicians have recognized the impact of utilizing the Internet as a means of establishing rapport with their existing and potential supporters and as a way of introducing their platforms to the various target members of the population. Mobile phones now also serve as an effective form of advertising, promotional, and campaign media. General members of the population usually have a mobile phone in their possession. With features that are comparable with the Internet, mobile phone advertising and information dissemination enables business owners, politicians, and entertainers to reach their prospective audiences from every corner of the globe in a fraction of a second. One major advantage of formulating adverts and campaigns through mobile phones is that the sender can reach the receiver while they are traveling, regardless of the area or time of the day (Asemah, 2011).

Asemah (2011) notes that in their media search, politicians best consider forms of interactive media, such as the Internet and mobile phones. Success in their chosen field is characterized by the greatest number of votes and supporters. To obtain this, politicians must not only be able to communicate their platforms clearly across the target population; they must also be able to provide exactly what the people need. Interactive media allows politicians to gain insight about the reactions of the masses, regarding their platforms and make known to the politicians, the pressing needs and concerns of the people that should be addressed. Interactive media in the form of polls and surveys is also a great means of determining the popularity of a politician among the masses and predetermining the success of a politician in an upcoming election. In all respects, the modern campaign evolved into a familiar pattern from the early fifties until the mid-eighties, with similar, although not identical, changes becoming evident across many post-industrial societies.

Evolving strategies of post-modernism in political campaigns
Huckfeldt and John (1995) disclosed that accounts commonly identify only two steps in this historical sequence, regarding the age of television as the culmination of the modernization process. But during the last decade, there is evidence of the rise of the 'post-modern' campaign marked by several related developments: the fragmentation of television outlets, with the shift

from national broadcasting towards more diverse news sources including satellite and cable stations, talk radio and 24-hour rolling news bulletins; the opportunities for newer forms of party-voter interaction facilitated by the rise of the Internet; and the attempt by parties to reassert control in a more complex, fragmented and rapidly changing news environment through strategic communications and media management during the permanent campaign, with the continuous feedback provided by polls, focus groups and electronic town meetings to inform routine decision-making, not just campaigns. They said, that this last stage of the modernization process remains under development, and it is more clearly evident in some societies than in others, but it seems likely to represent the future direction of political campaigning in post-industrial societies (Huckfeldt and John, 1995).

According to Aldrich (1995), the concept of 'postmodernism' represents a complex phenomenon, open to multiple interpretations, yet it is usually understood to include the characteristics of greater cultural pluralism, social diversity and fragmentation of sources; increased challenges to traditional forms of hierarchical authority and external standards of rational knowledge; and a more inchoate and confused sense of identity. For these reasons, the term does seem to capture many of the developments that are currently transforming the process of campaigning, at least in postindustrial societies.

Aldrich (1995) said, two qualifications need to be made. First, the conceptualization refers to the campaign, not societal modernization. As Swanson and Mancini argue, many other factors may well be transforming society in general, like a greater differentiation of roles, rising educational levels and cognitive skills, and more complex social identities, but these factors remain well outside of the scope of this study. The focus here is restricted only to the developments within campaign communication. Moreover, many like Scammell have characterized recent changes as the rise of political marketing, placing primary emphasis on the strategic activities of parties, politicians, and campaign advisers in their attempt to maintain or expand their share of the electorate (Carty and Monroe, 1999). The heart of the political marketing concept is a shift from sales of existing products (advertising party policies, leaders, and images) towards a focus that puts the 'customer' first, using research into voter's needs, wants, and drives as revealed through polls, focus groups, and similar techniques, and subsequently adopts strategies like developing a dependable reputation for reliable service delivery on key policy issues that aim to maximize votes (Pippa, 1999). He added that this approach does provide useful insights but in contrast, the conceptualization of the post-modern campaign in this interpretation places greater emphasis on the way that technological and socio-economic developments have altered the context of campaign communications, like the rise of the Internet, which all actors - parties, campaign professionals and journalists - have been forced to respond (Pippa, 1999).

Even in recent campaigns, the use of systematic marketing to inform party policies has often proved limited. The post-modern conceptualization sees politicians as essentially lagging behind technological and economic changes, and running hard to stay in place by adopting the techniques of political marketing in the struggle to cope with a more complex communication environment, rather than driving these developments (Scammell, 2000).

Instead of a linear development, the post-modern campaign symbolizes a return to some of the more localized and interactive forms of communication that were present in the pre-modern period. Digital technologies allow forms of political communication that can be located schematically somewhere between the local activism of the pre-modern campaign and the national-passive forms of communication characteristic of the modern television campaign. The development of political discussion user groups on the net, party intranets, interactive websites by government agencies, community associations, or transnational policy networks, and the use of email or list-serves to mobilize and organize, as well as the use of the web by 'traditional' news media, represents a mid-way point in the model (Scammell, 2000). These formats continue to evolve, along with the political uses of the web, but parties, governments, and social movements have been rapidly adapting to the digital world.

Theoretical Framework
The Agenda Setting and the Technological Determinism framework are used in the study. The agenda-setting theory, as noted by Asemah (2011:176) was proposed by Maxwell McCombs and Donald L. Shaw in 1972/1973. The major assumption of the theory is that the media sets an agenda for the public to follow. The theory holds that most of the pictures we store in our heads, most of the things we think or worry about, and most of the issues we discuss, are based on what we have read, listened to, or watched in different mass media. The media make us think about certain issues, they make us feel that certain issues are more important than others in our society. Wimmer and Dominick (2000) observe that the theory on agenda setting by the media proposes that the public agenda or what kinds of things people discuss, think and worry about is powerfully shaped and directed by what the media choose to publicize. The theory is relevant to the study in the sense that political parties in Nigeria can use the mass media to set political agendas for the public to follow and influence voters' choices during elections. This is because both the traditional and new media can be used to set an agenda for the public to follow.

Methodology
Research Design
The research design used in this study is the survey design. Survey research design is directed toward determining the nature of the situation that exists at the time of investigation. Survey design aims to find out the relationship existing between the variables of the study and elicit information that reveals specific facts about the entire population of the study. This research design will be used to investigate the impact of political campaigns on voters' choice in the 2015 general election in Uyo local government.

Study Area
The study area is the Uyo local Government area which also doubles as the capital of Akwa Ibom State lies between latitude 5.05 North and Longitude 80 East. This is within the equatorial rainforest belt, which is a tropical zone and home to vegetation of green foliage of trees, shrubs, and oil palm trees. The total population of the area is 309,573; Males 153,113, Females, 156,460 (Source: 2006 National Census)

Sample of the Study

The sample of the study is 160 respondents systematically selected from the political wards in Uyo to form the representative sample of the study population. The sample is obtained from the 4 clans and 11 political wards in Uyo local government area. The sample size is representational of each clan in Uyo local government area. The clans are the Ofort clan, Oku clan, Etio clan, and Ikono clan. In each of the four clans, 40 respondents were selected. Thus, 160 respondents used in the study. The sample size was determined with the use of Yaro Yemen's formula for sample size determination.

Sampling Procedure

The sampling procedure used in this study was the multi-stage approach. First and foremost, a purposive sampling procedure was adopted to select the 4 clans in the Uyo local government area. The selection of these clans is the interest of the researcher based on the observation of the phenomenon under study. To draw the sample for this study, the systematic sampling technique was adopted. This involved the enumeration of all political wards in each of the clans (16 clans) into old and even numbers. From these numerations, 8 clans were selected. In each of the 6 clans, the research instrument was randomly administered to 20 respondents, mainly adults in the clans/communities. It yielded a total of 160 respondents involved in the study. However, after administering the research instrument to the 160 respondents, only 150 questionnaires were properly filled and returned, which means that the analysis of data was done on the 150 questionnaires properly filled and returned.

Sources of Data

Data for the study are obtained from both primary and secondary sources. The primary source consisted of first-hand information obtained from respondents in the process of fieldwork. In this study, the questionnaire and interview formed the primary sources. The secondary source of data consisted of reviews of the work of other scholars especially information on the major variables of the study, internet materials, journals, and library materials.

Instrument of Data Collection

The main instrument used for data collection is the questionnaire designed by the researcher. It is a 10-item questionnaire entitled "*The Influence of Mass Media Campaigns on Voter Behaviour and Decision-Making in the 2015 General Election, Using Uyo Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State as a Case in Review.*" The questionnaire is divided into three main sections; A and B. Section A focuses on the demographic information of respondents such as sex, age, marital status, occupation, and educational qualifications. Section B deals with the questions about the variables of the study. This section elicits the respondents' responses on a 4-point Likert-type scale such as "SA" for strongly agree, "A" for agree, "D" for disagree, and "SD" for strongly disagree.

Method of Data Analysis

Data collected were properly checked to make sure all items were responded to. Thereafter, they were edited, coded, and analyzed using appropriate statistical methods. Used were

frequency distribution tables, cross-tabulations, percentages, and Chi-square (X2) test of significance. The test of significance is best on the .05 level.

Presentation of Data and Summary of Findings
In this study, the hypothesis was tested using the chi-square test of independence, and a summary of findings was given. The hypothesis was tested at a 0.05 level of significance. The questionnaire and interview schedules were structured such that the data obtained helped the researcher achieve the objective of the study. The questionnaire was administered to one hundred and fifty (160) respondents. However, after administering the research instrument to the 160 respondents, only one hundred and fifty (150) questionnaires were properly filled and returned, which means that the analysis of data was done on the 150 questionnaires properly filled and returned.

Responses obtained from the respondents were presented in tables and analyzed using the Chi-square test of independence.

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents by Sex

Sex	No of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Male	56	37.3
Female	94	62.7
Total	150	100.00

Source: Researcher's field work, August, 2015

From the responses in Table 1, it showed that 56 respondents (37.3%) were male while 94 respondents (62.7%) were female.

Table 2: Age Distribution of Respondents

Age	No of Respondents	Percentage (%)
16 – 25	14	9.3
26 – 35	30	20.0
36 – 45	49	32.7
46 and above	57	38.0
Total	**150**	**100.00**

Source: Researcher's field work, August, 2015

Also, in Table 2, it is shown that 14 respondents (9.3%) were between the age bracket of 16 – 25, 30 respondents (20%) were between the age bracket of 26 – 35, 49 respondents (32.6%) were between the age bracket of 36 – 45 and then 57 respondents (38%) were between the age bracket of 46 and above. Adult populations 38% were significantly more than the youths. A few young people remain at home and help their parents in other domestic activities, while a great number may have migrated to urban centers.

Table 3: Marital Status of the Respondents

Marital Status	No/Respondents	Percentage (%)
Married	102	68.0
Unmarried	11	7.30
Divorced	37	24.7
Total	**150**	**100.00**

Source: Researcher's field work August, 2015

In Table 3, it is shown that 102 respondents (68%) were married, 11 respondents (7.3%) were unmarried, while 37 respondents (24.6%) were unmarried. This shows a significant level of the married population used in the study. This married population of 68% cuts across farmers, workers in the civil service and the businessmen and women.

Table 4: Academic Qualification of Respondents

Academic Qualification	No of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Incomplete Primary Education	6	4
Complete Primary Education	30	20
Incomplete Secondary Education	18	12
Complete Secondary Education	30	20
University Education (B.Sc/HND)	41	27.3
Others (Polythenic, Colleges of Education and Agriculture, etc	12	8
Non response	13	8.7
Total	**150**	**100.00**

Source: Researcher's field work, August, 2015

The response in Table 4, shows that 6 respondents (4%) had incomplete primary education, 30 respondents (20%) obtained complete education, 18 respondents (12%) had incomplete secondary education, and 30 respondents (20%) had completed their secondary education. 41 respondents (27.3%) had a university education, 12 respondents (8%) had other forms of educational qualifications and then 13 respondents (8.7%) made no remark about their educational qualification. From this response, it is clear that a negligible percentage of 20 respondents, mostly the rural farmers and the businessmen class, completed primary education, while only 12% attempted secondary education but could not complete it. The other percentages (27.3%) of respondents who completed university education and obtained other forms of educational qualifications were a few farmers, businessmen, and mostly the civil service class.

Test of Hypothesis
The verification of the hypothesis for this study will be done using two statistical methods: percentage distribution and chi-square statistic. While the percentage distribution helps in comparing and describing the data obtained, the chi-square test of independence is to

determine whether a statistical relationship exists between the variables intended to be verified.

Hypothesis: Mass media campaigns do not significantly impact voter behaviour and decision in the 2015 general election in Uyo local government area.

Table 5: Chi-square (X^2) response distribution to assess the impact of the mass media campaigns on voter behaviour and decision in the 2015 general election in Uyo local government area.

Variables	Responses SA	A	D	SD	TOTAL
Mass media campaigns	28 (18.4)	18 (22.2)	38 (36.7)	22 (24.7)	106
Voter behaviour and decision in the 2015 general election	8 (7.6)	12 (9.8)	14 (15.3)	13 (10.3)	44

Results:
Calculated X^2	-	9.91
Table value of Chi	-	7.82
Level of significance	-	.05
Degree of freedom	-	3

The response as indicated in Table 5 above shows that the computed value of X2 stood at 9.91, while its tabulated value at 0.05 level of significance and 1 degree of freedom is 7.82. Since the calculated value of Chi-square which is 9.91 is greater than the critical table value of 7.82 at 0.05, we ignore the null hypothesis that the mass media campaigns does not significantly impact voter behaviour and decision in the 2015 general election in Uyo local government area and accept the alternative that, mass media campaigns significantly impact on voter behaviour and decision in the 2015 general election in Uyo local government area.

Conclusion
The study was set to examine the influence of mass media campaigns on voter behaviour and decisions in the 2015 general election in the Uyo local government. This study was conducted in the four political wards in Uyo local government area. Mass media campaigns do not significantly impact voter behavior and decisions in the 2015 general election in Uyo local government area. Relevant literature and theoretical issues were reviewed and to achieve the objective of this study, a questionnaire schedule was constructed and administered to 160 respondents in the identified political wards. In the end, 150 of the distributed questionnaires were properly filled and returned. This was the number used in the analysis of data. After administering the instrument, the data were analyzed using frequency distribution and the Chi-square test of independence. The hypotheses were tested at 0.05 degrees of freedom.

Results obtained showed that mass media campaigns significantly impacted voter behaviour and decision in the 2015 general election in Uyo local government area. By implication,

therefore, more efforts should be channeled through the mass media in sensitizing citizens on the ideology of political parties, the policies, and programmes if allowed to lead the country. The study therefore concludes that in subsequent elections in the country, concerted efforts should be made by the government, political parties, civil organizations, and other non-government organizations to promote effective political campaigns in the country.

Recommendations
1. As a strategy, the government and political parties should encourage rural or village gatherings during electioneering campaigns. This is important as most villagers may not have access to television or radios to listen to news or watch political campaigns.
2. Political campaigns by political parties should clearly state party ideologies, policies, and programmes. This will enable citizens to make the right decisions at the pool

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