

The Kenyan Political Marketing: Developing a political marketing panacea; the case of the Liberal Democratic Party of Kenya

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Abstract

Political marketing research has now established itself as a spirited sub-discipline of main core marketing with scholars writing high quality articles and books. This article is a case study on LDP in Kenya, its main focus being to look at its marketing orientations, Attitude towards political concepts, to get the understanding of the party's grasp of the marketing concept and to identify how the party markets itself whether by sales, market or product orientation.

The study on LDP was carried out in March-April 2006.

The findings in nutshell proves that political marketing as a concept is feasible and it already exists in Kenya but in a rudimentary form, not the book tailored approach as depicted in marketing models. Finally the recommendations are in two perspectives, the first phase appeal to the academia and second phase is purely recommendations to political marketing practitioners, in this case LDP party think tank.

Introduction

The study will involve a case study on Liberal Democratic Party in Kenya, looking at the marketing orientations, attitudes towards political marketing concepts, and understanding of marketing concepts by Liberal Democratic Party elite, malpractices that surround party and national politics. Currently LDP joined the Orange Democratic Movement before the last general election 2007 as a coalition member which ultimately formed the current coalition government in Kenya.

What is Political Marketing?

Political marketing is the adaptation of business-marketing concepts by political organisations to help them achieve their goals (Lees-Marshment, 2001). It is concerned with the demands of the market and political behaviour in a much broader sense. In basic terms it is a marriage between political science and marketing.

Political marketing is a global phenomenon with parties from all corners of the world developing political manifestoes based around the results of qualitative and quantitative marketing research (Lilleker and Lees-Marshment, 2005a).

Wring (1996b) has a modern approach towards political marketing: "The party or candidate use of opinion research and environmental analysis to produce and promote a competitive offering which will help realise organisational aims and satisfy groups of electors in exchange for their votes."

Origin of political marketing

Political marketing field started fifteen to twenty five years ago with several contributions (Harrop, 1990; O'Shaughnessy, 1990; Mauser, 1983; Reid, 1988) that introduced topical foci and in-depth analyses of marketing instruments; but none proffered a general theory. The origin of political marketing have been traced to the United States and the use of marketing in the USA has naturally been a focus of research as depicted by the following O'Shaughnessy (1990), Kavanagh (1995), Scammell (1991,1997). The rationale was that each and every organisation had a product, whether you deal in services, goods, ideas and people. The inclusion of non-profit aspects met a lot of arguments/criticisms since it was not regarded as either theoretically justified or worthwhile by scholars like (Arndt 1978; Enis 1973; Luck 1969, 1974).

Where has political marketing been applied?

Take the case of New Labour in the 1997 General elections, studies have shown that the remodelling and re-branding the Labour political brand encouraged the electorate to vote for them and all this was attributable to the market oriented approach adopted by the party think tank. Similarly in the 2000 USA presidential election campaign, George Bush and the Republicans followed the market-oriented model which is designing party behaviour to suit what voters want (Knuckey and Lees_Marshment, 2002).

The political marketing concept has succeeded in Third world countries like Peru and Brazil (Lilleker and Lees-Marshment (2004).

Overall Research Aims

-To study the existing theory and practice of contemporary political marketing in LDP of Kenya.

-To make recommendations that will help LDP ultimately to adapt political marketing techniques to help them attain their party goals and objectives.

Specific Research Objectives:

1. To study the general attitude of the LDP political elites towards the political marketing concept as a whole.
2. What do the LDP elite think marketing concept is in practical terms?
3. To explore marketing orientation on the LDP strategy and see whether it is sales-oriented party/ product-oriented party or market-oriented party by testing the Lees-Marshment model on party behaviour, (2001a).
4. To explore the likely mal-practices that deters the LDP in their day to day political endeavours.
5. To make recommendations that will help LDP ultimately to adapt political marketing techniques to help them attain their party goals and objectives.

Brief Kenyan political history

Our research is on Kenya, which has undergone protracted transition to democracy, when the likes of late Jaramogi Odinga Odinga, Kenneth Matiba and Charles Rubia called for an end to single party rule. The repealing of the section 2A of the Kenyan constitution ushered in a new era of multiparty politics. It helped to sweep away the regime of Daniel Arap Moi and the Kenyan African National Union (KANU) and voted in the National Rainbow Coalition (NARC) to power led by Mwai Emilio Kibaki (Daily Nation, 2ND January 2003). Multi-party politics in Kenya is after all a story of murder, mayhem, gerrymandering, financial scandals, election rigging, unprincipled calculations of tribal and self-interest, defections, political resurrection and reincarnations. It is a tragic farce in which none of the actors possesses the moral courage to do the right thing, hence there are no heroes(Throup & Hornsby,1998).They further argue that Kenyan voters have always rewarded politicians who could guarantee Maendeleo(means development, but usually understood as patronage of state resources),voters and politicians alike, have let ethnic calculations to always outweighed any ideological considerations and the euphoria of pluralism created unrealistic expectations of change in the era of multi-party competition. With Political marketing, parties can be more policy, market oriented than being driven along tribal loyalties.

This political transition ushered an era of politics of reconciliation and understanding and for once the voter behaviour and trends did not run along tribal lines though this was short lived. Mwai Emilio Kibaki became the president of Kenya after a successful 2002 general election. His government has tried to revive the economy, fight corruption, restructure the education system and offers free primary school education, stream line civil service, fight poverty, improve security and in a nutshell try to attract foreign investment (East African Standard, 10th January 2003).

This new government had a lot of problems as in internal wrangling between the two warring factions groups of Raila i.e. Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) and National Alliance of Kenya (NAK) which is allied to the president's faction. The root source of the problem being the unfulfilment of pre-election promises and pledges. LDP was the largest coalition member per se seats in parliament (Daily Nation, 25th 2005).

LDP Political Party

The Liberal Democratic Party was considered one of the major parties in the Kenyan political scenario. As a political party it was registered in 1999. The symbol of the rainbow was the logo the LDP and the colours of the rainbow are the colours of the LDP. The National Alliance Party (NAK) linked up with the LDP to form the National Rainbow Coalition in October 2002. The NARC agreement entailed that the LDP and NAK were equal partners though it was a coalition. NARC was registered as a political party because the current constitutional dispensation did not provide for the registration of coalitions. In the 2002 general election in Kenya the LDP was instrumental in the campaign and historic victory of the coalition.

LDP though formed in 1999 came to the political limelight in 2002.

The party had proven to Kenyans that it had what it takes to lead and form the government by stable and meaningful coalitions with like minded party with similar policies and vision. A key achievement for LDP was that they had built party structures at grass root level through the then just concluded LDP national party election 2006.

Political Marketing of LDP

The party had a serious mechanism of marketing itself, by using its traditional methods of campaign. In terms of written political marketing strategies per se market segmentation, positioning, targeting, research and intelligence, there was none. From time to time when the party had by-elections and the just concluded National Constitutional Referendum in November 2005, it did a market survey, then targeted its message. Given that the Kenyan society is highly segmented in various levels like age, religion, tribe, political parties, lifestyle, education, social status, LDP tried to come up with different strategies that would generally target all of them.

LDP used aspects of political communication and staff training. They had a website, plus constant party documents which are generated regularly and sent to the members.

The party had a Rainbow newsletter which was totally internet based though this had a lot of limitations in regard to accessibility. Market intelligence and market research was done by the National Secretariat and Election Board on behalf of the party on all kinds of issues. The task was not done by full time staff but the board members, part-timers, volunteers and other party officials.

Critically these are aspects of political marketing we cannot ignore; it involved the market intelligence, informal survey, market segmentation, market targeting, positioning and market research. The party was willing to adapt political marketing concepts but with a lot of caution.

Conclusively LDP was the most formidable political party in Kenya, given its history and the political maturity and consistency it had shown from registration till it got absorbed in the Orange democratic movement in 2007.

Literature Review

Political Marketing Theory

The Literature review analyses the very fundamental concepts and theories of political marketing by the pioneering scholars, development of political marketing and how to market a political party by testing the Lees-Marshment model on party behaviour, (2001A). Political marketing is a useful sub-discipline would appear to be winning rather limited acceptance by political scientists. Political marketing is a guiding theory in the development of a model voting behaviour with management implications. The concept is still in its infancy as an authority and astonishingly even seminal texts do not provide adequate definitional or conceptual clarifications of the essence or the scope of political marketing (Lock and Harris 1996; Henneberg 1996b).

Fundamental Concepts of Political Marketing

A lot of scholars have written articles on political marketing but, Henneberg 2002 has the basis of the theoretical framework for posterity.

Political marketing has come along way but in the context of my research, the basis of my literature review is on two key contributors, Lees_Marshment (2001) and Henneberg, (2002, 2004). Political marketing theories have not been developed in much depth. Henneberg (2004) in discussing the core of political marketing identifies 2 different stances: focuses on understanding marketing activities in politics and secondly a wider context concerned with a more holistic attempt of achieving breadth knowledge of politics. He further exemplifies the different aspects by 2 questions: "How to do marketing in politics" and "How to know in politics.

Comprehensive Political Marketing (CPM)

British political parties were analysed between 1979 to 1997, by Lees-Marshment in 1997 using comprehensive political marketing research and it produced integrated theoretical frameworks and when they were used to analyse empirical behaviour they produced interesting results. Comprehensive political marketing is a term used to indicate how political marketing should be studied broadly. In a nutshell before we proceed with this research, taking one of the CPM principle that suggests that we need to utilize marketing concepts not just techniques. In such a case parties can apply a product, sales or market –orientation to their behaviour when trying to achieve their goal. Political marketing can finally be applied to a wide range of behaviour and suggests its potential to be applied to several areas of political studies so long as we explore those three key orientations. Political parties arguably go through a developmental process, moving from product, to sales and then a market-orientation as the market changes.

Lees-Marshment (2001a), states that political marketing is not simply used by parties to determine the style and substance of election campaigns but takes a comprehensive political marketing (CPM) approach to political marketing that has several distinctions from previous work.

In a nutshell political marketing has gone through a number of developmental stages. Research has endeavoured to show the path political marketing has taken and to then suggest where we might go in the future. Political marketing still remains somewhat limited in theoretical understanding and scope. CPM is the fourth stage in the development of the political marketing theoretical framework and the three others are; the founding fathers, the innovators (non-profit marketing) and the developers (political marketing communication).

CPM approach to political marketing is a yardstick and basis of the theoretical framework on the research because not much has been written on the political marketing theory but this seems the most comprehensive theoretical approach to go it as a scholar.

These theoretical contributions present the political marketing theory as field that still has a lot of gaps. The approach basically discusses these two authors Lees-Marshment and Henneberg approach to political marketing theory but the basis is purely a marketing oriented approach. The study used Lees-Marshment aspects of marketing political parties as a core basis of our research. The literature review is focused, basis being the theoretical assumptions that the models that we want to test on the LDP case study. For posterity, the epistemological and ontological essence of a political marketing theory needs to be described in order to gauge an understanding of how far these provide a specific and valuable lens for the gaining of knowledge in the political sphere (Cornelissen, 2002).

Table 1: How to market a political party (Test of Lees-Marshment model on party behaviour, 2001A)

Market oriented party	Sales oriented party	Product oriented party
Stage 1:Market intelligence	Stage1: Product design	Stage 1 :Product design
Stage 2: Product design	Stage 2:Market intelligence	Stage 2 :Communication
Stage 3:Strategy & product adjustment	Stage 3: Communication	Stage 3 : Campaign
Stage 4:Implementation	Stage 4 : Campaign	Stage 4 : Election
Stage 5:Communication	Stage 5: Election	Stage 5 : Delivery
Stage 6: Campaign	Stage 6 : Delivery	
Stage 7: Election		
Stage 8 : Delivery		
Stage 9:Maintaining market orientation		

Source: Lees-Marshment and Lilleker, (2001a, 2005)

The market-oriented party (MOP)

The MOP is an attempt to deliver what people need and want and not change what they think. This market based orientation is not driven by leader opinion or ideology but the desire to develop and deliver a tradition. This Lees-Marshment model is 9 step process that satisfies voters' demands which is supported and implemented by the internal organisation and is deliverable once in government.

The sales-oriented party (SOP)

A sales-oriented party focuses more on selling its argument to voters despite signs that voters might not like it. Unlike MOP, SOP involves at this stage conducting research for advertisement and message construction and not for product design (Lees-Marshment (2001a). Lees-Marshment (2001a) states that SOP approach is likely to fail at an election, because it does not respond to the emergent political consumers and continues to seek to change voters' demands rather than to follow them.

The product-oriented party (POP)

POP depicts the classical conviction-based form of party behaviour of arguing for what it stands for and believes in. It assumes that voters will realise the worth of its ideas and will therefore vote for it. The party adopts this approach, refuses to change its ideas, or product, even if it fails to gain electoral or membership support. A product-oriented party argues for what it stands for and believes in.

The Lees-Marshment model takes a highly systematic approach to the study of political parties, avoiding the tendency to simplify or to ignore key aspects of party behaviour such as party policy, leadership, organisational structure, membership, and both external and internal communication. The model distinguishes political marketing from other, less subtle, analyses which reduce it to salesmanship, populism or following majoritarian opinion with no provision of leadership (Lees-Marshment, 2005).

Our research is on a party in Kenya though the model was developed through study of UK political parties in 1997. Definitely the model has drawback per se other political parties in other continents and this justifies the need and drive for more research globally on political marketing. This study is a foundation of more to come on Kenyan political marketing both to academics and practitioners and justifies need for more research to fill the gaps that keep arising in this field of study in its infancy.

Research methodology

The study being a case study, it yields a hypothesis and in a propositional form and subjects it to a critical analysis (empirical) and develops new propositions grounded in the data.

Data collection

Case study

This was an intrinsic case study and my intention was not to generalize but rather to understand the case in its complexity and its entirety, as well as in its context. In our context generalization would not be the objective because political marketing is a field of study that is in its infancy and its so important, interesting, misunderstood to a point that it deserves study in its own right (Punch, 2005).

The research was a success, in that political marketing is a field of study where knowledge is incomplete, fragmentary and shallow. An in-depth understanding of the case was facilitated by the approach used. This led to an understanding of the important aspects of such a persistently problematic research area.

Questionnaires

The questionnaires were dropped to the subjects and appointments fixed for an in-depth face to face interview. The questionnaire had 12 questions, which entailed issues related to the marketing concept, marketing orientation, attitude towards political marketing, party product. The aim of the questionnaire was to identify characteristics, measure attitudes; knowledge and understanding plus act as a basis for the in interviews.

The sample of the data collection was a small sample and the questionnaires were structured with multiple choices, with answers like (agree, disagree, strongly agree and strongly disagree, yes, no, do not know plus situations where by they had to make a choice from a set of multiple choices. This gave the respondents an idea of what political marketing is since it is a rare field of study.

The questionnaires were basically for the 3 groups of respondents namely the party elite, MPs and personal assistants to the MPs. Most respondents found the questionnaires quite simple and thus made data collection abit

less taxing. The personal assistants played a major role since they are in office more or less full-time hence they helped to pass the questionnaires to the MPs and fix appointments for the face to face interviews. This approach of data collection was successful as in given the time span and data collected. The questionnaire was short, simple and questions moved from slightly easy to difficult. The aspect of using questionnaires which are dichotomous (yes or no), multiple choice (alternative answers listed) paid dividends.

Interviews

The third aspect of primary data entailed, semi-structured interviews though the interviews were recorded then transcribed and that proved to a very rich source of data. This first phase consisted of non-structured in-depth interviews with six LDP party members. The nature of research involved a small sample, given that out of the 6, we had 2 party executives, though one executive doubled up as MPs, 3 MPs and 2 personal assistants to the MPs. The criterion used to select the interviewees was based on experience, party position and level of political activism in the party set up.

Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2005) state interviews may be highly formalised and structured, using standardised questions for each respondent or they be informal and unstructured conversations. In this form of semi-structured interviews, there was a topic guide which entailed a list of themes and questions to be covered, although this varied for each interviewee. The approach was absolutely open and free to my interviewee. The study entailed 3 qualitative methods of primary data collection which proved very successful as in all the research aims and objectives were met. Politics being a sensitive and technical topic, adherence to confidentiality and data protection norms must be upheld because it involved sensitive and vital aspects of the Liberal Democratic Party of Kenya. Thus the names used in the transcribed interviews schedule were not the actual names of the respondents.

Qualitative data analysis

In the context of our research, the data analysis was systematic, disciplined, transparent and descriptive. A vital question put forward, is that; how did we arrive at these conclusions from the data. In this case we have the answers to the questions because the method can be described and scrutinized.

Analysis methodology

Analytic induction

Analytic Induction was used to analyse the data. Analytic induction was developed by Znaniecki (1934); originally it was identified with the search for 'universals' in social life. In modern times, analytic induction is used to refer to the systematic examination of similarities between cases to develop concepts or ideas. In the context of our research, we used studies earlier on the developed countries like UK and USA to compare with Kenya.

At this point we develop concepts inductively from the data and raised it to a higher level of abstraction and totally traced out their interrelationships. Induction is central; deduction is also needed since theory generation involves theory verification as well. This sort of qualitative data analysis depicted a series of alternating inductive and deductive steps, where data driven inductive hypothesis generation is followed by deductive hypothesis examination for the purpose of verification (Kelle, 1995).

The research has tried defining political marketing phenomenon. The UK and USA cases of this phenomenon have been investigated and documented potential explanatory features. A vital aspect of the case study was that a hypothetical explanation was framed on the basis of analysis of the data that was designed to identify common factors across the cases. In this particular case we did not have to reformulate the hypothesis/model. Since we had a positive case and research was a success. The western case helps us to redefine the phenomenon until we confirmed the validity of the hypothesis; in this case study and at this point we concluded that the hypothesis is correct. In our research context we used a purely analytic inductive approach to harmonize this rich data.

Findings

The findings from a case study can be put forward as being potentially applicable to other cases. In the context of the research, to conceptualize means that on the basis of the discipline study of LDP case and using methods for analysis which focus on conceptualizing rather than describing. The LDP study has yielded an African concept that political marketing is an expensive undertaking that needs the party to re-organise and train its operational structures. This was evidenced by the rich data collected from the interviewees. This was only possible to deduce using a case study approach.

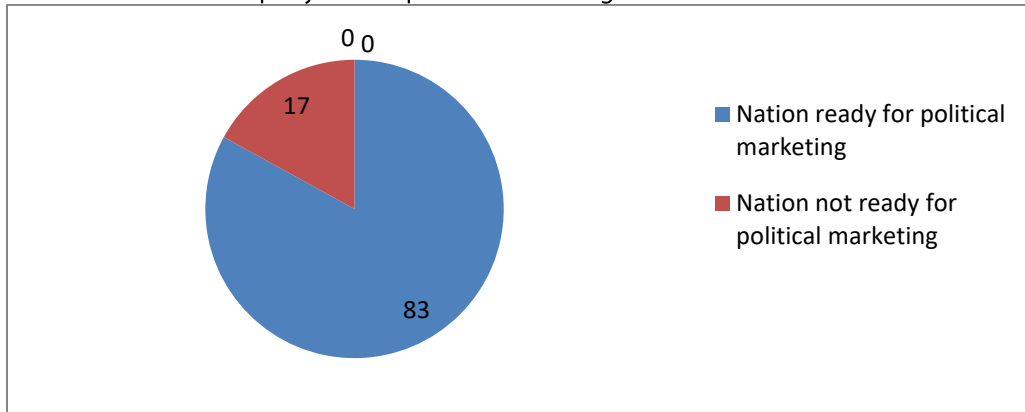
The second option is a very vital aspect of a case study. I developed a proposition basically means that, based on the case studied, I put forward one or more propositions, which are called hypothesis. The hypothesis links factors/concepts within the case. It was derived as follows; 'political; marketing is an approach that will only thrive in developed economies unlike underdeveloped African economies with absolutely different voter behaviour. The quantitative research often begins with propositions or hypothesis as they are inputs in to the research but on the contrary in a case study scenario we end with them and they become outputs of the research.

To Find The General Attitude Of The Party Elite Towards Political Marketing. (Research Objective)

100% of the interviewees and respondents had a very positive attitude towards political marketing and they felt that it would help them reach the voters better and give them a more people driven scenario.

83% of the respondents feel that indeed the nation is ready for political marketing, 17% feel that the country still is not ready for the political marketing concept. The general attitude is very positive and encouraging and this means that most respondents find political marketing a very viable field of study in Kenya.

Pie chart 1: General attitude of party elite to political marketing

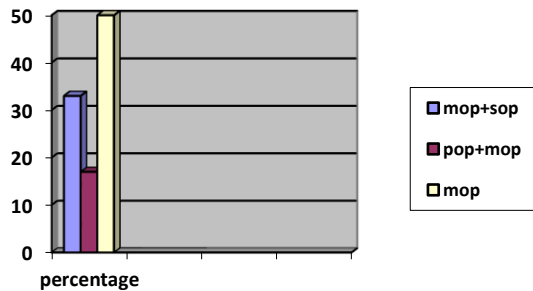


To Explore the Marketing Orientations of the party

33% of the respondents felt it was a mixed blend that is between a MOP and SOP.

50% of the respondents felt that it was a solely marketing oriented party approach, thus fully people driven. 17% of the respondents ,who happens to be a key party think tanks, felt that, it is a mixed blend though of a product oriented approach but with MOP. In the context of our study, empirically we find that over half feel that the LDP party has a market oriented approach that caters for the needs and wants of the political consumers.

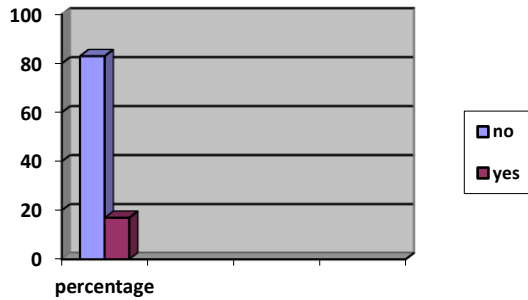
Bar charts 1: Exploring marketing orientation of the party



Explore marketing oriented concept of determining voters needs and wants and endeavouring to satisfy them also works in politics

83% of the respondents disagreed with the notion that marketing oriented concept of determining voters needs and wants and endeavouring to satisfy them only works in commercial world and not in politics. The literal meaning is that, they feel it works too in political spheres or scenarios of marketing. 17% of the respondents, strongly disagreed, thus this furthers justifies that the concept too applies in non-profit marketing or politics.

Bar charts 2: Exploring marketing oriented concept of determining voters needs and wants and endeavouring to satisfy them also works in politics



Research question

The second phase of the findings involves the answering of the research question. In the context of our research needs, the question examines whether political marketing is as advanced in Kenya as it in UK and USA.

The 2 interviewees depict a situation whereby, political marketing is practical in Kenya, in an informal way though not the book tailored approach, which involves all these many stages, depicted from the secondary data sources. Political marketing is prevalent in underdeveloped economies but the parties do not really have funds to set up offices and branches in all constituencies.

Derived research hypothesis at the end of case study

The third phase of the findings involves the non-statistical testing of the hypothesis which comes up at the end of the case study. The first hypothesis purports that political marketing is an approach that will only thrive in developed economies unlike underdeveloped African economies with absolutely different voter behaviour. This hypothesis is well tested or answered in the questionnaire, which states, "Do you think political marketing is a western school of thought tailored for developed economies?"

All respondents disagree with this notion and what this means is that, the party elites, MPs and personal assistants to MPs, 100% of them feel that political marketing is not western but is a way of party approach to its consumers just that the western approaches and African approaches vary given different political market segments.

The second portion of the third phase of the findings involves the non-statistical testing of the hypothesis. The hypothesis entails, market oriented approach and the whole idea of parties and political leaders following not leading voters' demands is possibly becoming in itself very popular. The questionnaire helps us answer and test this hypothesis by precise and concise coverage.

The question in the questionnaire stated that "In contemporary party political marketing there are basic conflicts between meeting party objectives and satisfying voters needs and wants"?

50% of the respondents agree that there is conflict between meeting party objectives and satisfying the needs and wants.

A further 50%, strongly agree hence this shows that it is really not easy to balance the two though this is the basis of any orientation.

Existence of Political Marketing

All the interviewees executive and non-executive acknowledge the existence of political marketing in contemporary politics. 100% of the respondents responded positively. This too further depicts the attitude of the respondents, which is positive because they acknowledge the concept feasibility.

Understanding of the marketing concept

The extent of understanding of the marketing concept is examined from the results of the interviews. We can deduce that the top executives had a very sound understanding of marketing concept.

Understanding the definition of Political Marketing

The depth of understanding of the definition of political marketing is one of the aspects that had very interesting analysis. 17% including a key party think tank felt that political marketing is a western approach to marketing of political parties.

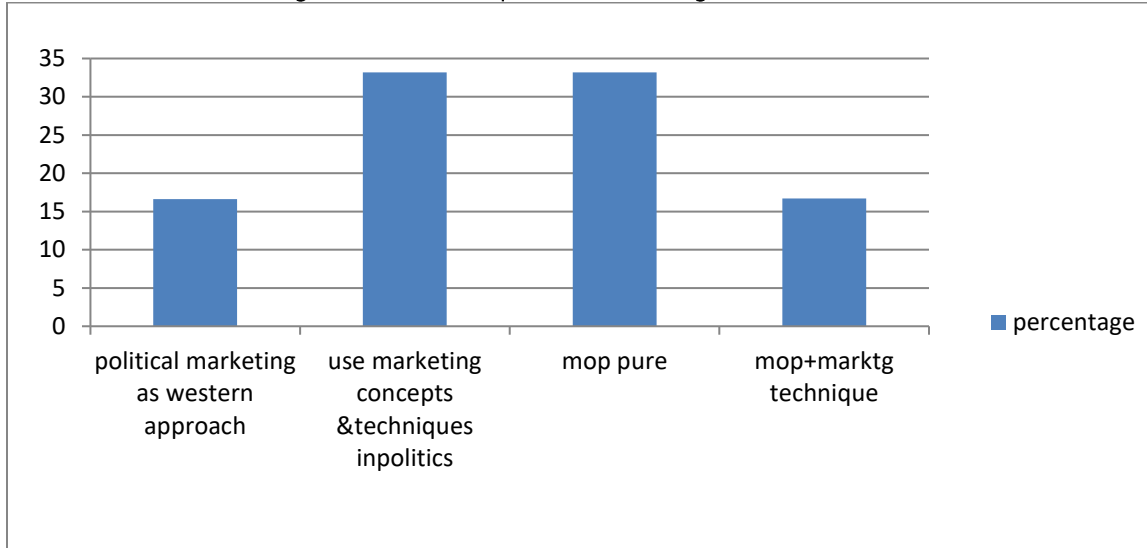
17% felt political marketing is a marketing oriented political endeavour to convince the political consumers and it's the use of marketing concepts and techniques in politics (campaign strategy).

Thirdly 33% of the respondents thought that political marketing is a marketing oriented political endeavour to convince the political consumers.

Fourthly 33% of the respondents felt that political marketing is the use of marketing concepts and techniques in politics.

Overall political marketing is broad based and is the use of marketing concepts and techniques in politics and is a marketing oriented political endeavour to convince the political consumers.

Bar chart 3: Understanding the definition of political marketing



The concept of marketing party product

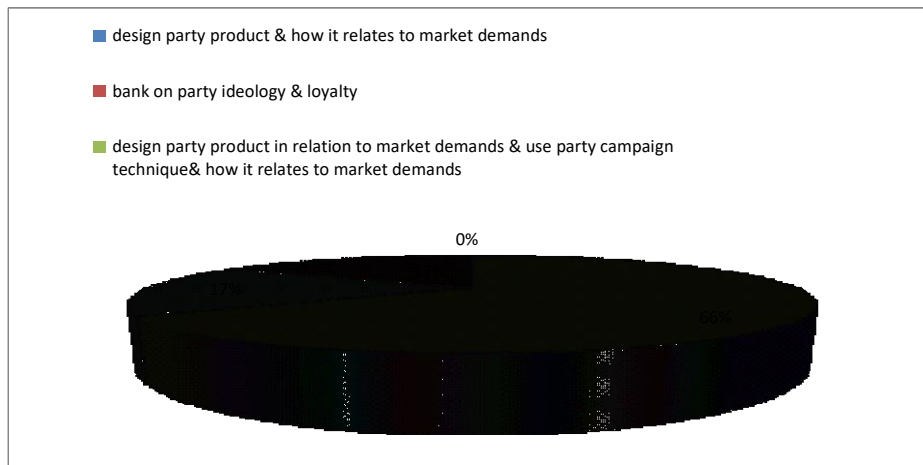
The analysis of the political product has 3 approaches, first school of thought, has about 66%, felt that LDP party markets its product through the design of the party products and how this relates to market demands.

The second option is 17%, who picture political party product as two faced, in that the product is marketed by banking on party ideology and loyalty which embeds itself on political theories and not marketing concepts plus the use of normal party campaign techniques.

The third approach, which is 17%, felt that the product marketing to political consumers is through the design of the party products and how this relates to market demands and use of normal party campaign techniques.

Conclusively this is complex because, how we market our product will basically depend on our marketing orientation , hence from a professional point of view , I tend to support option 2 and 3 because, it further depicts their sound understanding of the political marketing concept.

Pie chart 2: Concept of marketing party product



Understanding of coalition politics

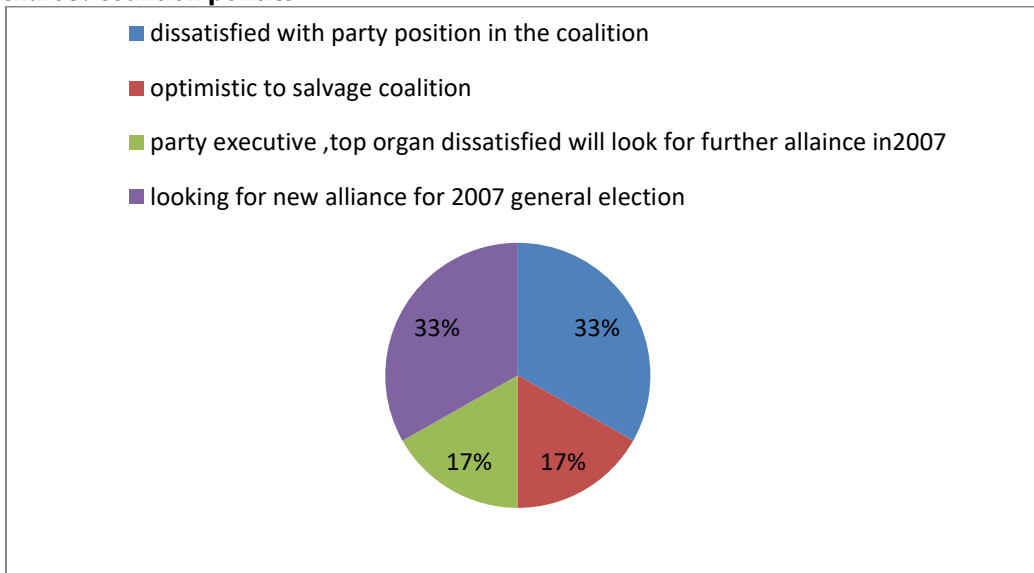
Coalition is the way forward in contemporary politics because Kenyan political market is segmented along regions and ethnicity. This was more of a personal opinion of the respondents, 33% of the respondents, were dissatisfied with their party position in the coalition while another 33%, of the respondents were looking for further alliances for the coming 2007 general elections.

The third option by a key party executive, this was 17%, felt that, as a party they were dissatisfied and definitely they were looking for further alliances for 2007 elections.

Fourthly 17% of the respondents are committal so far because they felt there is hope to salvage the current ruling coalition.

The best analysis is that the party is dissatisfied and is looking at strategic options for the 2007 elections.

Pie chart 3: Coalition politics



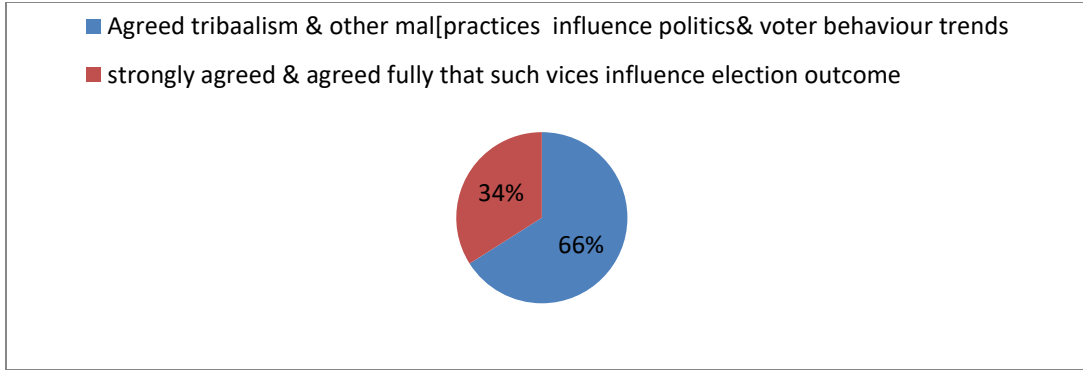
Understanding the malpractices in the Kenyan political market

To research in such a market segment one must understand the nature and characteristics of the segment. This basically entails other facets which influence the political players. They comprise of tribal aspects as ethnicity and election malpractices like violence, vote buying and abuse of office by the incumbent government. The ethnicity card will still take a lot of sensitisation to stamp out, to an era based on political product policy and not tribal following. In the context of this research that is 66% of the respondents, agree that tribalism and other malpractices very much influence politics and voter behaviour trends.

34% of the, respondents, felt the same, they strongly Agreed or agreed fully that tribalism and other practices very much influence politics and voter behavior and trends.

The bottlenecks are a real drawback to the Kenyan political endeavors but the interviewees have justified that the voter enlightenment is in the right direction as evidenced by the recent voting in the National Referendum on the Constitutional Review process in which the government lost to the opposition in 21st November 2005(Daily Nation, 22nd November).

Pie chart 4: Understanding political malpractices



Understanding on applicability and implementation

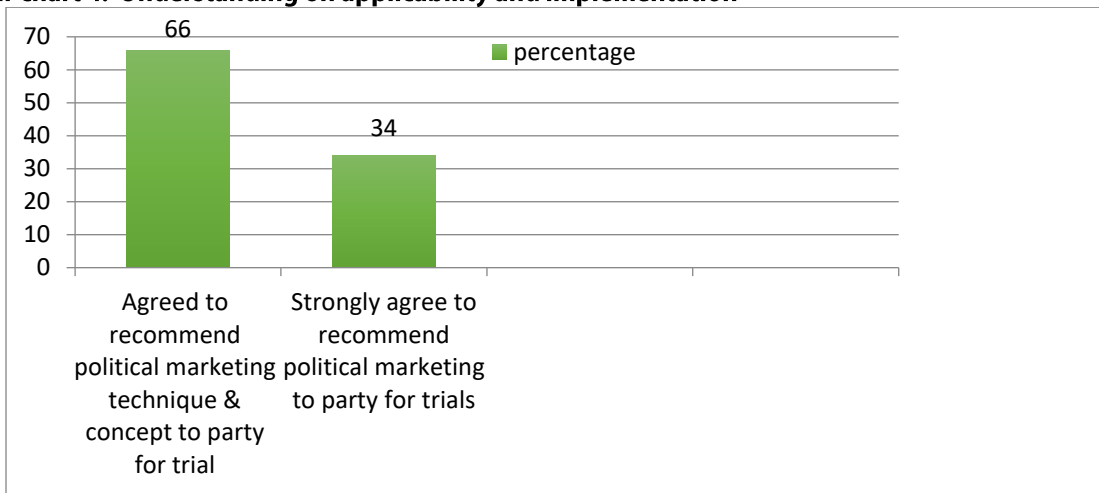
Understanding the aspect of application and implementation of political marketing is a bit complex since it entails the actual institutionalisation of the concept.

66% of the respondents Agree that they will recommend political marketing techniques and concepts to their party (LDP) for trials.

34% of the respondents, strongly Agree that they definitely recommend political marketing techniques to LDP too for trials.

The questionnaire respondents and interviewees expressed a similar degree of agreement that trying out political marketing would definitely help them win more votes. Precisely this still justifies that the attitude towards the concept is very positive hence our research was a huge success.

Bar chart 4: Understanding on applicability and implementation



Limitation to the study

Questionnaires and interviews are subject to many errors and abuses that the researcher should be aware of, in order to minimize the harmful effects on their project. In many published studies, researchers have ignored relevant contrasting evidence because they want to prove a particular theory and because they are giving the general public a piece of research that confirms what they want to believe. In this case study on LDP, the researcher was completely objective and viewed the whole research as an opportunity to discover the real truth and not a pre-perceived truth. The research did not have many bottlenecks because it was more of a small sample. Eminent problem was that the timing was a bit wrong given that the 9th parliament was starting a new session and the MPs were very busy. Thus it was hard to fix an appointment and get it honored.

Secondly some MPs were not reliable in honoring their interviews as in we would have drawn from a slightly bigger sample if it were not for some MPs unreliability. For instance for anonymity sake, there was an MP, who the researchers tried to fixing an appointment with for 10 days until they gave up, given that the data collection had attained the required numbers.

Thirdly the cost implications given that there were a lot of miscellaneous expenses like phone bills, transport. All these put together was expensive.

Fourthly, honest and humble opinion is that, some MPs were academia freaks because; they would fix an appointment repeatedly without honoring and at times give excuses that do not hold water. One took 10 days to read a questionnaire though still fail to offer audience.

Fifthly the control of questionnaires is beyond your control once you give them out.

Sixthly the politicians have a highly book tailored approach to political marketing concept. They make it look too complex and complicated.

Recommendations

Positive attitude towards Political Marketing

The empirical data justifies that most of the respondents interviewed are very positive about the political marketing concept and practice. The only fear depicted was that it is an expensive undertaking. In my opinion, scholars and practitioners should develop models which would suit the local needs and demands

Need for Political Marketing

Secondly all the interviewees expressed the need for political marketing approach to be embraced by LDP and this confirmed the need for contemporary techniques. The Kenyan political scenario has been undergoing a transitional phase from the ethnic based voting patterns to policy driven and socio-trends which depict voter enlightenment or maturity. At this point in time political marketing comes in to help re-brand, rejuvenate and re-mould party political brand to a market leader.

Research methodology

The research entails three qualitative methods of primary data collection but there is need to beef up with focus groups, more so for much advanced research on political marketing, party and voter behaviour. This will involve the party strategists; think tank who will form this group so that we can delegate what political marketing can do for any given party, its potentials, barriers and its implication for posterity per se Kenyan party politics. Focus groups can help us to fasten the formal institutionalisation of political marketing in the party strategy and operations.

E-resources for Party Communication

Fourthly LDP stood out as a leading member of the NARC coalition but it was a shame, that they never had a fully functional website. The internet is a tool that any organisation marketing its self for profit or non-profit should not miss.

Funds

Fifthly a key problem of LDP was lack of adequate funds, which kind of crippled its operations. A strong recommendation was that the then current 9th parliament should have hasten and passed the Oloo Aringo Bill (2004) that endeavoured to have the state finance key political parties. Parameters should be set to ensure that such avenues are not abused by the politicians.

Media

The LDP must foster stronger relations with the media. The media has a significant role to play in helping political parties market themselves indirectly. The essence of any given media house is to help promote unity, peace and fundamental democratic values. The Kenya Broad casting corporation, Kenya television network, Nation television and the private stations can help parties through balanced and fair coverage of party activities.

Brand building

LDP party has a strong training approach as evidenced by a number of party material availed to us. This is not enough, from a marketing perspective, we need to train MPs on how to sell/ market themselves better to the electorate and against the competition. The success of any marketing endeavour is its brand strength. Political marketing is helping parties win elections and better the brand image, brand awareness and brand loyalty.

Development of political marketing models

The biggest challenge is that after the many successful Western stories, how can we help LDP party? Most Kenyan LDP practitioners want you to have a model that will help/ suit them institutionalise the political marketing concept in accordance with the contemporary standards of global political marketing. My opinion is that any model must have the basic marketing orientation tenets/norms but not necessarily same to Lees_Marshment models (2001). Thus this calls for more advanced research foci in to the Kenyan political marketing genre with an ultimate view of develop a model that meets the needs and demands of the Kenyan political segment.

Marketing communication

LDP uses mass media techniques both electronic and print, though electronic is normally used during campaign time because of costs. The party has to try and communicate regularly with its member and not just at election. Contemporary marketing lays a lot of emphasis on customer relationship management as a key prerequisite for marketing success

Leadership

LDP in the coming general election need to get a coalition partner who will help them build a new Kenya by realistically creating more opportunities and improving the standard of living for the masses living below poverty line. This entails more than just good leadership but leaders with a vision for the nation of which the incumbent government has failed to do.

The party must lure more professionals into its political mainstream, people who add value and do not necessarily see themselves as politicians. LDP must learn to listen and take on board the concerns and feedback and translate them into policies and actions. This approach will inevitably yield better leadership for the party and the nation at large.

Conclusion

The Kenyan political set up has very unique characteristics that requires a thorough research to make good of its political practices per se political marketing as a tool to better governance, more accountability and transparency ,delivery and a total political brand re-modelling. Political marketing can help to re-brand, re-image parties and inculcate the moral drive that Kenyan politicians lack. Time has come for Africa, to try and stand on its feet. The western countries should not be seen as a yardstick to poverty eradication and a solution to most of the economic and social bottlenecks, we face. Kenya has a lot of resource of which must be put in to good use for the gradual revival of ailing economy (Kenya Times, 15th January).

The future is to use the political parties as a tool to help sensitize the general public on their rights and responsibilities. This will promote and enhance active citizenry which is a prerequisite for any contemporary democracy.

In the context of my research, all the objective, aims, research questions were met and answered hence the study was a success and LDP is ready to embrace political marketing techniques for the future, though the question is how, and when will they adapt these techniques?

All this still call for more research at an advanced and detailed level to try and explore all these issues satisfactorily.

Future research direction

These research objectives will definitely contribute to understanding because basically the objective of our research is to study the political marketing skills and techniques within the LDP. Our position is not to advise them on what method to adopt but to fully come out as an academia, whose key objective is to study the state of political marketing in LDP with regard to their party behaviour and approach. Secondly to look at the potential barriers to the development of political marketing in the LDP scenario. In order to develop this research fully, we avoided a path that would be problematic in our position as a researchers cum activists but stick to a purely academic analytical approach.

The next Kenyan general election is in 2007 hence this is the time political parties are strategising on how best, they market themselves to the electorate.

Precisely once these aims are attained it will be a big step forward in to the onset of Kenyan parties political marketing endeavours plus a general overview on African political marketing state.

From our perspective, what we did not do that should have been done was to develop a model for LDP based on the Western models and the vision is to model it to the developed economies standards, but in an African perspective. This is as a result of the nature of our study which was not very broad, precisely looking at the marketing orientations. Africa has a lot to learn politically from the west since it has successful economies, which is a vital prerequisite for a sound democratisation process.

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