

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION IN CULTURE-BASED POLITICAL CAMPAIGNS: A STUDY OF EDO NORTH SENATORIAL DISTRICT, NIGERIA.

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Abstract

This paper focuses on strategic communication in culture-based political campaigns among the people of Edo North senatorial District, Nigeria. The study specifically examines the role of cultural values, norms and practices in shaping narratives of strategic communication during political campaigns in the area. Anchored on three theories of Cultural Dimension, Framing, and Uses and Gratification, the study identifies certain communication strategies used by political actors to leverage indigenous cultural elements and values in the reception and interpretation of political messages among different communities in Edo North. Using the quantitative survey method to obtain data, the study administers 300 copies of questionnaire to respondents to explore the roles of traditional institutions in the dissemination of political campaign messages in Edo north senatorial district. The questionnaires are analysed in simple percentage and presented in tables. Findings reveal that cultural values and identity are central to political support while traditional rulers and their subjects play a major role in political influence. The paper highlights the imperativeness of culture and its complex roles on strategic communication while promoting uniformity in Edo North. The paper recommends the need to communicate political party manifestos through indigenous languages and cultural values of the people through engagement with traditional leaders and their subjects. Also, the need to blend modern and traditional media of communication to achieve efficiency in strategic communication during and after political campaigns is recommended.

Keywords: Culture, Identity, Strategic Communication, Political Campaigns,

Introduction

In today's world, Strategic Communication (SC) has emerged as a key player in shaping cultural narratives across the globe. SC is defined as the intentional use of communication by

organizations, governments, and individuals to achieve specific goals. But it goes beyond mere persuasion; it actively builds meanings, identities, and norms. Its reach extends to politics, consumer culture, and social movements; woven into the very fabric of our daily lives. Grasping how SC interacts with culture is crucial for understanding not just how societies interpret messages, but also how they absorb and replicate values.

Several definitions of what Strategic Communication entails have been developed over the years. Heath et al. (1) define it as the purposeful, normative use of functions and discourse processes by organizations to accomplish their missions, visions, and core values. Also, Strategic communication is the purposeful use of communication by an organization or other entities to engage in conversations of strategic significance to its goals (Zerfass et al., 493). The first definition is somehow limited since it only refers to organizations, while the latter definition has a more open approach, referring to entities, which include people (such as celebrities or individual politicians) as well as social formations other than organizations. The latter definition is normative, highlighting engagement and conversation, while the first one is more descriptive. In other words, strategic communication may be used for good (such as creating engagement, or positive social or organizational change), or for evil (such as propaganda, disinformation or other forms of distorted communication).

In this age where information shapes perception and perception drives action, strategic communication has become a vital tool for societal growth and cohesion. For the people of Edo North Senatorial District, a community that is rich in cultural heritage, political dynamism, and economic potential, the way messages are crafted, delivered and received during political campaigns played a crucial role in shaping public opinion, influencing behaviour and fostering community development.

Strategic communication, in its essence, goes beyond mere information dissemination. It is the purposeful use of communication to achieve specific objectives, often aimed at engaging stakeholders, guiding decision making and building mutual understanding. In Edo North area of Nigeria, this concept takes on a unique indigenous flavour, intertwining traditional forms of expression with modern media platforms to address issues ranging from political campaigns to civil engagements and conflict resolution.

Literature Review

Strategic communication goes beyond marketing and public relations to aligning with cultural perception and ideology. As Hall (91) points out, culture is a realm of “shared meanings” where power and ideology play significant roles. In other words, culture is the way of life of the people and this encapsulates the totality of its ideology, norms and custom. Thus, communication strategies do more than just relay information; they create frameworks that either reinforce or challenge dominant cultural ideologies. For example, advertising campaigns often reflect cultural values centred on individualism success but consumerism plays a crucial role in weaving economic ideas into our cultural fabric (Jhally 29). Just as important as culture is, the same way strategic communication shifts and adapts depends on cultural contexts. Hofstede’s cultural dimensions’ theory shows that values like collectivism and individualism can influence how messages are received (Hofstede 53). This means that strategic communication is not only influenced by culture

but it also actively shapes it, creating a dynamic relationship between the communicator and the audience.

The verbal and non-verbal symbols with which the members of a culture communicate are culture bound (Neuliep 20). Ignoring cultural peculiarity can lead to misunderstandings, misinterpretations, and ultimately, communication failures. Cultural dimension is essential for strategic communication practitioners to build meaningful relationships, foster trust, and achieve desired outcomes in diverse cultural contexts. Successful interaction with someone from a different culture requires a degree of communication competence. Communication competences, according to James Neuliep include cognitive, effective and behavioural components (29). The cognitive component refers to how much one knows about communication.

The effective component includes one motivation to approach or avoid communication. The behavioural component refers to the skills one has to interact competently. In our increasingly interconnected world, the relationship between culture and strategic communication has moved from a peripheral consideration to a core concept. Culture is far from being a static backdrop because it actively shapes and informs every aspect of how we communicate culturally sensitive issues through strategic communication. To disregard cultural influence in strategic communication is misinterpretation, alienation, and can ultimately lead to failure in achieving communication objectives. An intercultural competent communicator is motivated to communicate and should be knowledgeable about how to communicate, in order to achieve the set goals and objectives.

Culture's influence permeates the very fabric of strategic communication, beginning with the fundamental act of shaping communication styles. The diverse ways in which individuals and groups express themselves, both verbally and nonverbally, are deeply rooted in their cultural backgrounds (Harris et al, 204). For instance, the directness valued in some Western cultures can be perceived as abrasive in cultures that prioritize indirect communication and subtle cues. Similarly, variations in language, symbols, and gestures can lead to unintended misinterpretations, highlighting the critical need for cultural awareness in message crafting.

In the communication arena of Nigerian politics, communication is more than just message delivery; it is a culturally coded performance that reflects and engages the values, beliefs, and expectations of the people. Omotoso argues that political communication in Nigeria must be approached from within its indigenous cultural frameworks rather than borrowed wholesale from the West. According to her, “strategic communication” is most effective when it aligns with traditional norms of meaning-making that is rooted in language, symbols, ethics, and collective memory (192).

Omotoso critiques the dominance of Western models in Nigerian media and political messaging, observing that these models often neglect the lived realities of local audiences. Her analysis of Yorùbá communicative tools such as **òwe** (proverbs), **àrokò** (symbolic messages), and the use of **oríkì** (praise poetry) which offers a powerful reminder that political messaging in traditional African societies has always been layered, metaphorical, and deeply tied to moral expectations. In

many communities, the person who delivers a message is just as important as the message itself; the moral integrity of the speaker carries weight in how the audience perceives intent and truthfulness (Omotoso 198). This principle holds resonance beyond Yoruba land. In regions like Edo North, where cultural respect for elders, chiefs, and religious leaders remains strong, similar dynamics may determine the effectiveness of campaign messages.

One of Omotoso's most compelling arguments is the need for "domesticated political communication" that is, a framework tailored to the socio-cultural and political realities of Nigeria's diverse peoples (190). This approach challenges the assumption that television ads or social media campaigns alone can reach rural or traditional audiences. Instead, it invites politicians and their strategists to integrate indigenous communication practices such as festivals, community meetings, music, religious symbolism, and language idioms into their outreach. For Edo North, this could mean designing campaign narratives that reflect local histories, use of indigenous proverbs or dialects, and even involve respected local figures in delivery such messages.

The broader implication of Omotoso's work is that political communication is not just technical but ethically and culturally-based. It involves a negotiation of identity, history, and community values. In a setting like Edo North Senatorial District that is rich with diverse ethnic and religious communities, political actors who ignore these cultural codes risk being perceived as inauthentic or manipulative. Those who engage local symbols and ethics with sincerity, however, may find greater legitimacy and connection. She concludes, by saying that for Political communication, to be effective and democratic, it must reflect the epistemic and ethical realities of the people it seeks to engage. This statement affirms that any communication gap between the political actors and the people could lead to poor acceptance and outcome of the result of an election. Therefore, political communication or campaign must align with the culture of the people to effectively yield the needed results.

When it comes to political communication and cultural identity, the impact of strategic communication is particularly evident. Political campaigns often use rhetoric, symbolism, and media tactics to connect leaders with cultural narratives. Take Bola Ahmed Tinubu's 2023 presidential campaign, for instance; it cleverly tapped into themes of Renew hope and change, which resonated deeply with Nigeria's ideals of progress and renewal. This approach not only energized voters but also transformed the cultural conversation around inclusivity and civic engagement.

Strategic communication also plays a significant role in the realm of transnational politics. Governments engage in "nation branding" to create cultural identities that resonate on a global scale. Countries utilize communication strategies to showcase cultural values like innovation, hospitality, or stability, all aimed at attracting investment and tourism (Anholt 21). It is important to state here that strategic communication goes beyond merely reflecting culture to actively shaping cultural perceptions and identity worldwide.

Corporate giants are masters at using strategic communication to shape how the public see consumer culture. Their advertising and branding efforts go beyond just selling products to crafting messages that integrate lifestyles and identities. Naomi Klein points out that brands like Nike and Apple are in the business of selling cultural meanings—think empowerment, creativity, or rebellion rather than just physical items (Klein 5). This shows how corporations can sway cultural norms, as people often embrace branded identities to showcase their personal or shared values.

Digital platforms have taken this to a whole new level. Social media campaigns are increasingly blurring the lines between how we consume and how we engage with culture. Hashtags, influencer marketing, and viral trends highlight how strategic communication is transforming cultural participation into something interactive, participatory, and connected (Castells 102). While strategic communication is often linked to corporate and political power, it also plays a crucial role for grassroots movements. Social movements harness strategic narratives to push back against dominant ideologies and carve out countercultural spaces. Using the examples of the #Bringbackourgirls campaign and #Endsars movement, these two instances effectively used social media to break the silence around the kidnapping of the Chibok girls and police brutality in Nigeria respectively. Social media activism has reshaped accountability norms and increased government's responses to issues that concern citizenry.

The recent thread on social media shows that strategic communication is not just a one-way street but a multifaceted approach of achieving core values and agenda of organizational goals and objectives. Culture can be influenced just as much from the edges as it can from the centre. Social movements craft narratives that challenge mainstream ideologies and push institutions to embrace new cultural norms. J. E. Grunig and L. A. Grunig (40) suggest the capabilities and benefits of using social media for strategic communication which are rarely fully exploited. Often social media are used primarily as a platform to spread organizational messages. There seems to be a widespread assumption that social media per se will reach expected outcomes automatically and that published information also will be read and interpreted in a certain way. This is wishful thinking among many communication professionals and is likely derived from a desire to gain access to an effective medium in which the results are obvious and predictable. History proves that when new tech comes out, we usually start by thinking the tools will control how our culture changes rather than looking at how people will actually use it.

In our interconnected world, strategic communication plays a crucial role in shaping both cultural uniformity and diversity. On one side, multinational companies and global media outlets spread prevailing cultural values, which Tomlinson refer to as “cultural imperialism” (Tomlinson 64). He argues that cultural imperialism is not a single or simple event. Instead, he suggests that cultural imperialism is just the spread of global modernity. Conversely, digital technologies allow for local adaptations and give a voice to those who are often overlooked, promoting intercultural conversations.

This creates a paradox in the cultural impact of strategic communication: it reinforces dominant narratives while also supporting cultural diversity. Understanding this balance is vital for researchers, policymakers, and practitioners who want to grasp its long-term effects.

Objectives of the Study

The study identifies the following objectives:

- To examine the roles played by cultural values, norms and practices in shaping strategic communication during political campaigns in Edo North.
- To identify the communication strategies used by political actors that leverage indigenous cultural elements
- To analyze how cultural factors influence the reception and interpretation of political messages among different communities in Edo North
- To explore the roles of traditional institutions in the dissemination of political campaign messages

Research Questions

Arising from the objectives, the study asks the following research questions:

- What roles do cultural values, norms and practice play in shaping communication during political campaigns in Edo North?
- What are the culture-based communication strategies commonly used by political actors in Edo North?
- How do cultural factors influence the ways local audience interpret political messages in Edo North?
- What are the roles of traditional institutions and cultural gatekeepers in the dissemination of political messages?

Theoretical Framework

This study is grounded on three interconnected theories: Cultural Dimension Theory, Framing Theory, and Uses and Gratification Theory. Geert Hofstede's cultural dimension theory propounded in 1980 provides lens to examine how deeply embedded cultural values influence both message construction and audience interpretation. Framing theory introduced by Erving Goffman in 1974 allows for an analysis on how political messages are deliberately shaped to align with local cultural symbols, idioms, and beliefs. Also, the Uses and Gratifications theory formally developed by Elihu Katz, Jay Blumier and Michael Gurevitch in 1973-1974 explains the motivation behind the consumption of political messages, revealing how cultural background informs media preference and information processing during political campaigns in Edo North senatorial district.

Research methodology

Research design

This study adopts a quantitative research design. This approach is appropriate because, it allows the researcher to measure and analyze the relationship between the cultural factors and strategic political communication using numerical data. It enables the study to obtain data from a larger population, enhancing the generalization of the findings across Edo North Senatorial district.

Population of the Study

The population of the study is three hundred respondents (300) drawn from the six local government areas that made up Edo North senatorial district. They are: Etsako East, Etsako West, Etsako Central, Owan East, Owan West and Akoko Edo Local government areas. Each local government were allocated 50 copies of the questionnaire. The study comprises all eligible voters

in Edo North Senatorial District who are residents of the six local government areas and have been exposed to political campaign messages. From this population, a sample was selected using purposive and convenience sampling techniques

Limitations to the Study

Although this study provides valuable insight into culture-based political communication in Edo North Senatorial District, certain limitations were acknowledged. The reliance on a quantitative survey made it possible to identify general trends but limited deeper exploration of how individuals interpret cultural messages in their everyday lives. As cultural meanings are often nuanced, therefore structured questionnaires may not fully capture these complexities.

Furthermore, while respondents were drawn from all six local government areas, Edo North was treated as a single unit. Consequently, variations in the influence and legitimacy of traditional institutions among Etsako, Owan, and Akoko Edo communities were not fully examined.

Instrument of Data Collection

The instrument used for data collection is a structured questionnaire designed to capture quantifiable data on:

- Cultural values and beliefs,
- Channels of communication (Radio,TV, social media, traditional leaders)
- Exposure to political campaign messages,
- Effectiveness of culturally aligned campaign messages,
- Perceived influence of culture on message interpretation and voting decision.

Method of Data Collection

Data were collected by the researcher and research assistants who administered the questionnaire on respondents in the six local government areas. In urban areas, respondents filled the questionnaire directly while in rural areas or among low literacy populations, the trained research assistants assisted in interpreting the questions and record responses. A total of 300 copies of questionnaire were administered across the six local governments in Edo North Senatorial District.

Method of Data Analysis

Data collected were analysed in simple percentages using the formula below

$$\frac{x}{y} \times \frac{100}{1} = n$$

Where x = Number of responses.

Where y = Number of respondents.

Where n = Number Percentage obtained.

Presentation and Analysis of Psychographical Data

Table one: I am more likely to support a political party candidate who respects and promotes traditional values.

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly disagree	4	1.33%
Disagree	14	4.67%
Agree	82	27.33%

Strongly agree	200	66.67%
Total	300	100%

Source field survey 2025

Data in table one indicate that 1.33% strongly disagree, 4.67% disagree, 27.33% agreed and 66.67% strongly agreed. This implies that 94% agree and have strong preference for candidates who uphold traditional values.

Table two: political messages that reflect my cultural identity are more convincing to me.

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly disagree	Nil	0.00%
Disagree	29	9.67
Agree	118	39.33%
Strongly agree	153	51.00%
Total	300	100%

Source field survey 2025

This result indicates that 0.00% strongly disagree, 9.67% disagree, 39.33% agreed and 51.00%. This implies that 90.33% agree that culturally reflective messages are highly persuasive.

Table three: I trust campaign messages delivered through community elders or traditional leaders

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly disagree	50	16.6%
Disagree	88	29.33%
Agree	104	34.47%
Strongly agree	58	19.33%
Total	300	100%

Source field survey 2025

The data show that 16.6% strongly disagree, 29.33% disagree, 34.47% agreed and 19.33% strongly agreed. The data shows a moderate level of trust in campaign messages delivered by traditional leaders. A slim majority (54%) trust this message.

Table four: I believe that politicians who speak my native language during campaigns understand my needs better.

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly disagree	Nil	0.00%
Disagree	11	3.6%
Agree	39	13.00%
Strongly agree	250	83.33%
Total	300	100%

Source field survey 2025

The data shows that 0.00% strongly disagrees, 3.67% disagree, 13.00% agreed and 83.33% strongly agreed. Overwhelming 96.33% agree that language is key in connecting with voters.

Table five: Cultural symbols such as attire, local proverbs and music used in campaigns influence how I perceived the candidate.

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly disagree	20	6.67%

Disagree	41	13.67%
Agree	85	28.33%
Strongly agree	154	51.33%
Total	300	100%

Source field survey 2025

Strongly disagree 6.67%, disagree 13.67%, agreed 28.33% and strongly agreed 51.33%. This shows that 79.66% respondents agreed that cultural expressions strongly impact candidate perception.

Table six: I find campaign messages more credible when they align with my religious beliefs.

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly disagree	200	66.67%
Disagree	50	16.67%
Agree	18	6.00%
Strongly agree	32	10.67%
Total	300	100%

Source field survey 2025

This data shows that 66.67% strongly disagree, 16.67% disagree, 6.00% agreed and 10.67% strongly agreed. This proves that 83.34% disagree which indicated that religion is not a major credibility factor in campaign messages.

Table seven: I pay more attention to political messages that are tailored toward the customs and tradition of my community.

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly disagree	34	11.33%
Disagree	83	27.67%
Agree	120	40.00%
Strongly agree	63	21.00%
Total	300	100%

Source field survey 2025

These results indicate that 11.33% strongly disagree, 27.67% disagree, 40.00% agreed and 21.00% strongly agree. This implies that 61% agree that tailoring political campaigns toward traditions increases attention, but 39% do not support this view.

Table eight: I feel disconnected from political campaigns that do not use only modern communication method.

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly disagree	250	83.33%
Disagree	49	16.33%
Agree	1	0.33%
Strongly agree	0	0.00%
Total	300	100%

Source field survey 2025

The data here shows that 83.33% strongly disagree, 16.33% disagree, 0.33% agreed and 0.00% strongly agreed. This shows a Strong resistance of (99.66%) to modern-only methods. This confirms that traditional methods of communication are equally important.

Table Nine:I am more likely to vote for candidates endorsed by respected traditional leaders in my community.

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly disagree	5	1.67%
Disagree	15	5.00%
Agree	100	33.33%
Strongly agree	180	60.00%
Total	300	100%

Source field survey 2025

This shows that 1.67% strongly disagree, 5.00% disagree 33.33% agreed and 60.00% strongly agreed. This implies that 93.33% agree that traditional leaders' endorsements are highly influential.

Table ten: Culturally insensitive messages reduced my interest in the choice of candidates, even if the policies sound good.

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly disagree	43	14.33%
Disagree	52	17.33%
Agree	81	27.00%
Strongly agree	124	41.33%
Total	300	100%

Source field survey 2025

The table shows that 14.33% strongly disagree, 17.33% disagree, 27.00% agreed and 41.33% strongly agreed. This therefore implies that 68.33% agree that cultural sensitivity is essential in political messaging

Discussion of Findings

In this section, the study discusses its findings in relation to the research questions. The following are the key findings:

On cultural values and identity as being Central to Political Support, a large majority (94%) prefer candidates who promote traditional values (Table 1), and 90% find messages more convincing when they reflect cultural identity (Table 2). This indicates that cultural alignment significantly boosts political appeal.

On indigenous language as a symbol that strengthens voter connection, In Table 4, over 96% of respondents believe politicians who speak their native language understand their needs better. Similarly, nearly 80% are influenced by cultural symbols (Table 5). These findings highlight the power of linguistic and cultural symbolism in campaign communication. This finding is consistent with Sharon Adetutu Omotoso's assertion that it is most effective when political communication aligns with traditional norms of meaning-making—rooted in language, symbols, ethics, and collective memory (Omotoso 192).

On whether the traditional leaders and subjects play a major role in political influence, the findings establish that traditional leaders hold substantial influence, with 93% of respondents more likely to vote for candidates that the traditional leaders endorse (Table 9). Over 54% also trust campaign messages delivered through elders (Table 3). This implies that traditional leaders in Edo North exercise influence primarily through symbolic endorsement and cultural legitimacy rather than direct persuasive communication, reflecting a hybrid political culture where traditional authority coexists with modern democratic practices.

On whether Modern Communication alone is the most effective means of communicating political messages, Table 8 shows that more than 99% feel disconnected from political campaigns that rely solely on modern methods of communication. This reflects a clear preference for traditional or hybrid communication strategies.

On whether Cultural Sensitivity is Crucial, 68% of respondents lose interest in candidates who deliver culturally insensitive messages (Table 10), even if their messages are appealing. This reinforces the importance of respecting cultural norms and identities in political communication.

Religion has less influence in Campaign Credibility: Surprisingly, in Table 6, 73% of respondents do not find religious alignment a strong credibility factor in campaign messages. This suggests that cultural identity outweighs religious messaging in this context. Meanwhile, on Custom-Based messaging, 61% of the respondents pay more attention to messages tailored to customs and traditions (Table 7), while nearly 39% do not. This could suggest generational or urban–rural divides on how tradition is perceived.

Recommendations

Based on the respondents' responses, it is clear that culture, language, and community values play a powerful role in how voters connect with political messages in Edo North senatorial district. Here are some practical steps political actors, campaigners, and policymakers can take to build deeper trust and engagements with the communities they hope to serve:

- Speak to the people's culture and values: People are more likely to support candidates who understand and respect their traditional beliefs and cultural practices. Political messages should reflect what matters to the community; whether it is based on family values, respect for elders, or local customs. It is hereby recommended that political actors and policymakers should speak to people's cultural values and norms in order to earn their trust.
- Those political actors should use people's indigenous languages during their campaigns: Language is more than just words; it is a symbol of identity. Many respondents said they

trust politicians more when they speak in their native language. Campaigns should embrace local languages in speeches, posters, radio jingles, and even social media content.

- **Work with trusted traditional leaders:** Respected community elders and traditional leaders still hold influence in many communities. Many voters are more likely to support a candidate endorsed by such figures. Campaigns should engage with traditional leaders in an authentic and respectful way not just as figureheads, but as bridges to the community.
- **Blend modern and traditional communication models to achieve efficiency:** While modern tools like social media are everywhere, they are not enough on their own. Most people still feel disconnected from campaigns that rely only on digital platforms. A successful campaign should include community meetings, radio talks, cultural festivals alongside digital outreach to achieve their aims and objectives.
- **Respect culture and avoid insensitive strategic messages:** Even if a candidate has good ideas, many people lose interest if their messages sound disrespectful or dismissive of the community's ways of life. It is not just what is said, but how it is said. Campaign teams should review all messages for cultural sensitivity.
- **Avoid too much reliance on religion while sending politically strategic messages:** While faith is important to many, most people in this study said religion alone does not make a message more trustworthy. Political messages should be inclusive, avoiding the impression of favouring one religious group over another.
- **Tailor strategic messages to fit local customs and culture:** People are more attentive when messages reflect the customs and traditions they live by. Campaign teams should take time to understand the unique cultural rhythms of each community and adapt their messages accordingly.
- **Support community-based political education:** Not everyone sees traditional leaders or culturally themed campaigns the same way. Some are sceptical. That is why it is important to invest in local civic education so that people can learn to critically assess political messages and make informed choices.

The research shows that people want to be seen, heard, and respected in the political process. When political leaders take the time to understand the cultural identities of their constituents and communicate with care and respect, they build not only support but lasting trust.

Future research should adopt qualitative or mixed methods to gain deeper cultural insights, extend the study to other regions for comparative analysis, and examine the growing role of digital media in culture based political communication. Detailed attention should be given to traditional and religious institutions, as well as the long term effect of cultural communication on political participation and voter's behaviour in future research.

Conclusion

This study examined the role of strategic communication in culture-based political campaigns in Edo North Senatorial District, Nigeria, and clearly demonstrates that culture is central to how political messages are understood, evaluated, and acted upon by voters. The findings show that political communication in this context is not merely about presenting policies or promises but about engaging deeply with shared cultural values, language, symbols, and community authority

structures. It contributes to theory by showing how established communication frameworks operate within a non-Western, high-context cultural setting. Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions Theory is reinforced and localized by revealing that collectivist values in Edo North are expressed through communal identity, respect for tradition, and endorsement by trusted social institutions. Political legitimacy, therefore, is achieved not only through message content but through cultural alignment and communal recognition.

Similarly, the findings extend Framing Theory by demonstrating that effective political frames in Edo North are culturally grounded rather than media-driven alone. Messages framed through indigenous language, symbols, and locally meaningful narratives resonate more strongly than those relying solely on modern or generic campaign strategies. Frames that disregard cultural codes are likely to be dismissed, regardless of the strength of the policies they promote.

The application of Uses and Gratifications Theory further confirms that voters are active participants in the communication process. They selectively engage with political messages that affirm their cultural identity, sense of belonging, and familiarity. The strong preference for hybrid communication approaches of combining traditional and modern channels highlights the limitations of digital-only strategies in culturally rooted communities.

It is instructive to note that the effectiveness of political campaigns in Edo North requires more than technical communication expertise. It demands cultural sensitivity, respect for indigenous communication practices, and genuine engagement with community structures. Political actors who understand and embrace these cultural dynamics are more likely to build trust, enhance participation, and achieve meaningful democratic outcomes.

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