

A CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR MODEL FOR VOTERS IN GHANA

**By
STANLEY NELVIS GLATE**

Doctor of Philosophy in Management Sciences
(Marketing Management)

in the

Faculty of Management Sciences

CENTRAL UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY, FREE STATE

Promoter: Dr D Onojaefe

Co-promoter: Professor DY Dzansi

Co-promoter: Dr EO Amoakoh

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DECLARATION

I, Stanley Nelvis Glate, Student Number #####, do hereby declare that this research project submitted to the Central University of Technology, Free State, for the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in Management Science (Marketing) is my own independent work; and complies with the Code of Academic Integrity, as well as other relevant policies, procedures, rules and regulations of the Central University of Technology, Free State; and has not been submitted before to any institution by myself or any other person in fulfilment (or partial fulfilment) of the requirements for the attainment of any qualification.

25/05/2024

Signature of Student

Date

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To God be the glory for the great things he has done. I am most grateful to the Almighty Father and our Redeemer Jesus Christ for fulfilling his promise in my life. *“So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it”* Isaiah 55:11.

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to Madam Cecilia Gadonu and Anita Trust Akubia, my beloved wife and to my two adorable children, Angel Akushika Vayram Glate and Nelvis Timmy Yao Glate.

ABSTRACT

This research identifies and examines evidence of political marketing and, more specifically, consumer-oriented political marketing to develop a consumer behaviour model for voters in Ghana. The examination used quantitative research to determine the relationship between voting behaviour and political campaign. Data were collected through a cross-sectional survey with semi-structured questionnaires administered to 7203 randomly selected respondents from participating political parties and voters in Accra, Ghana. Data received were analysed using descriptive statistics and Structural Equational Modelling (SEM). Findings revealed a statistically significant relationship between the behaviour of voters in Ghana and the campaign messages of political parties.

The study suggests that as we move toward participatory democracy, increased competition for a vote by political parties and increased voter awareness and demand for more accountable governance. The role of political marketing is critical within marketing, and a consumer behaviour model is a particularly important tool for successful political-marketing campaigning. The work reported is corroborated by an analysis of data that suggests campaign strategy is vital to win voters' interest in a political campaign. A consumer behaviour model is presented to guide the political party campaign strategy for success and victory at the pool. Voter apathy and dissatisfaction regarding poor service delivery and good governance remain a concern for both political parties and voters in Ghana. It reveals that although research has revealed numerous models, some experts have begun to make a connection between the model and voter behaviour.

This research concludes that there are opportunities for political marketing and change in voter behaviour. Still, sufficient attention should be given to developing and deploying a consumer behaviour model that recognises the challenges and changes with political-marketing campaigning for vote in Ghana. The model shows that success in a political-marketing campaign would be determined by a campaign message that is responsive and proactive to voters' needs.

Keywords: Voter behaviour, political parties, stimulus–organism–response model, party campaign messages, Ghana, political marketing.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This research is an exercise in political marketing, specifically consumer-oriented political marketing. The approach is to study voting behaviour as inherently psychological, with the choice and scope of psychological theories bounded by voting behaviour as it appears in the consumer behaviour literature.

In this research, the voter is depicted as a consumer, while the political campaign is viewed as their marketing mix or marketing strategy. This conceptualisation allows the study to draw on the psychological theories such as stimulus-response (SOR) of Mehrabia and Russell (1974) and others as applied in consumer behaviour to understand the complex interplay between political marketing and voter's behaviour (vote for; vote against; do not vote). The study, therefore, resides in the marketing domain.

Behavioural dynamics is concerned with descriptions of behaviour change (Davis, Campbell, Hildon, & Michie, 2015) and is defined as the underlying overt behaviour caused by internal patterns of motivation influenced by competitive strategies of political parties (Park, 2019). The principles underpinning the dimension of consumer behaviour in the commercial domain have gained traction in politics to include personal, psychological, and social dimensions of voting behaviour (O'Cass & Pecotich, 2015). These dimensions have different interest levels and provide the basis for the consumer behaviour model. As political parties compete for support and vote, voters' behaviour choices should be used to measure democratic maturity and development. Can political parties compete and influence voters' behaviour?

In traditional marketing, companies exploit consumer behaviour (choice making) where the marketer uses glossy advertisements and promotional messages to

stimulate consumer interest in products and services (Keller & Rajeev, 2016). Consumer purchase decisions are also influenced through videos and audio messages to attract attention. stimulate needs and desires (Kotler, 2017).

In politics, the consumer behaviour model can become a tool for participatory democracy and measurement of the democratic process. The proposed model, based on the findings of this study, is an essential contribution to knowledge within the domain of political marketing in Ghana and a tool for electoral governance. Democracy in Ghana, like many other African countries, has witnessed numerous instances of voter apathy and the absence of democratic dividend in terms of job creation and economic growth as contained in the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDG8), reduced inequalities (SDG10), quality education (SDG4), and ensuring peace, justice and strong institutions (SDG16) (Silva, 2021). Therefore, subjecting political parties to well-developed frameworks worth revealing the behavioural patterns of voters and the need to provide voters with their basic needs is of much importance.

1.2 PROBLEM BACKGROUND

Butler and Collins (1994) define political marketing as promoting viewpoints and beliefs linked to societal and political matters or specific political figures. It's generally crafted to sway voters in elections (Rayner, 2014), utilizing many strategies common to product marketing like advertising and promotion (Rayner, 2014). In broader terms, political marketing applies business marketing tools to the political arena. It provides systematic approaches for gauging public desires and the means to impact vast numbers of people and specific demographics. Consequently, it provides theories and methods for studying voter behaviour and political positioning (Blumenthal, 2000; Nimmo, 2019; Sparrow & Turner, 2011), also extending to governments in contemporary democracies (Butler & Collins, 2011; Henneberg, Scammell, & O'Shaughnessy, 2017).

Political marketing seeks to convince an audience to vote for a certain candidate, party, or policy (American Marketing Association (AMA), 2002). It places the voter

at the core of the strategy, thus making them central to the plans of the candidate or party.

It is inferred that the understanding of the political market is intertwined with societal and personal interests (Schwartz, 2018). These interests are communicated through political parties' campaign messages to stimulate voters' action of voting and supporting the party. Parties choose societal issues to craft compelling, and occasionally light-hearted campaign messages that resonate with voters' personal and socio-economic needs. The analogy that Schwartz (2014) gives is a laundry detergent ad promising a cleaner, brighter wash. In this analogy, voter education is part of the message, fostering voters' comprehension and interpretation of the meaning and purpose behind the democratic process.

Balancing party tactics and innovation with voters' personal, social, and psychological requirements is essential for growing the political market (Kotler, 2017). This suggests that a mature political market can fulfill personal growth, societal advancement, and psychological innovation. Porter (1979) adds that campaign messages seeking to influence behaviour and meet voters' personal, social, and psychological needs are essential to voters' benefits and desired growth.

Certain presumptions about electoral markets in developing countries seem to hold true (Haron & Mokhtar, 2010). Firstly, political parties often fail to fully grasp voter needs. Secondly, they frequently downplay or ignore key issues of concern to voters. Thirdly, they underestimate the significance of growth, development, and societal-economic evolution in altering voter behaviour. Lastly, parties often neglect the equilibrium between voter benefits and societal-economic growth, changes, and development (Hartley, 2014; Haron & Mokhtar, 2010), and how these factors can discourage voters. Keller and Rajeev (2016) argue that because consumer attitudes and behaviours are ever-changing, understanding voters' needs from a consumer perspective aligns with the personal, social, and psychological interests that influence both political strategies and voter behaviour.

1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT

From the preliminary literature search prior to the formal study, it became abundantly clear that the understanding of the behavioural dynamics of voters is conflated in the context of consumer behaviour because the existing consumer behaviour model does not consider the unique differential between political marketing and voter behaviour. In this study, it is argued that the context of voter behaviour however is a condition that provides the opportunity for reflective appraisal of the nexus between (i) marketing mix (as the stimuli) and (ii) perception, beliefs, attitude, and motivation (as factors that affect the behaviour of the voter from the decision-making process perspective) to highlight salient aspects of message content such as psychological, social, and personal elements and voting relativism to develop a model for understand voters' behaviour in the Ghanaian context.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This section identifies the main research questions and the subsidiary questions guiding the study.

1.4.1 Main research question

The primary research question is, what will be the appropriate components of for a consumer behaviour model for voters in Ghana? Answering this question requires answering the following specific/ subsidiary questions.

1.4.2 Subsidiary research question

1. What is the relationship between the campaign message arousal element and voter behaviour?
2. What is the relationship between the campaign message information element and voter behaviour?

3. What is the relationship between the campaign evaluation element and voter behaviour?
4. Is there any significant relationship between campaign message elements and voting decisions?

1.5 HYPOTHESES

This section identifies the main and the subsidiary hypotheses tested in the study.

1.5.1 Main hypothesis

The main hypothesis is “campaign message arousal elements influence voters’ behaviour”.

1.5.2 Subsidiary hypotheses

H₁: Need arousal of campaign messages has a positive relationship with the psychological behaviour of the voter.

H₂: Need arousal of campaign messages has a positive relationship with the social behaviour of the voter.

H₃: Need arousal of campaign messages has a positive relationship with the personal behaviour of the voter.

H₄: Campaign message information search has a positive relationship with the psychological behaviour of the voter.

H₅: Campaign message information search has a positive relationship with the social behaviour of the voter.

H₆: Campaign message information search has a positive relationship with the personal behaviour of the voter.

H₇: Campaign message alternative evaluation has a positive relationship with the psychological behaviour of the voter.

H₈: Campaign message alternative evaluation has a positive relationship with the social behaviour of the voter.

H9: Campaign message alternative evaluation has a positive relationship with the personal behaviour of the voter.

H10: Campaign message element (arousal) has a positive relationship with the voting decisions.

H11: Campaign message elements (information seeking has a positive relationship with the voting decisions.

H12: Campaign message elements (information evaluation) has a positive relationship with the voting decisions.

H13: Psychological behaviour element influence voter decisions in Ghana

H14: Social behaviour element influence voter decisions in Ghana

H15: Personal behaviour element influence voter decisions in Ghana

1.6 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

This section identifies the main and the subsidiary objectives addressed in the study.

1.6.1 Main objectives

The primary objective of the study is to develop a consumer behaviour model for voters in Ghana. This is accomplished by determining the relationship between campaign message arousal elements and voters' behaviour.

1.6.2 Specific objectives

1. To determine the relationship between campaign message arousal element and voter behaviour.
2. To examine the relationship between campaign message information elements and voter behaviour.
3. To ascertain the relationship between the campaign message evaluation element and voter behaviour.

4. To examine the relationship between campaign message elements and voting decisions.
5. To identify elements that can be included in the consumer behaviour model for voters in Ghana.

1.7 CONTRIBUTION OF THE STUDY TO KNOWLEDGE

The study provides another lense for understanding voter behaviour by advancing the application of consumer behaviour models, showing that voting can be understood in a similar way to purchasing decisions. In other words, the study advances existing traditional marketing related theories into the politics realm to better understand voting behaviour from a marketing perspective. Thus, through this research, voting behaviour (politics) can be understood from a consumer behaviour (marketing) perspective. In other words, the application of theories often used in analysing consumer behaviour (a traditional marketing concept) has been used to successfully demonstrate the relationship between voter behaviour (politics) and consumer behaviour (marketing).

The study highlights the role of psychosocial variables in voting behaviour, thus expanding the application of psycho-social theory into the field of marketing and political science hence enriching the fledgling field of political marketing. Using rationality theory helps in validating the assumption of rationality in the voting behaviour of Ghanaians. And, using the S-O-R model and EKB theories together in the study provides a comprehensive understanding of how external stimuli, individual's internal conditions, and decision-making processes influence voting behaviours from a marketing perspective.

The study also enhances our understanding of the cultural, economic, and social factors that influence voters in Ghana. Since consumer behaviour can largely be regarded as a Western concept and the variables and theories used are of Western origin and the framework was confirmed, this research literally confirms the applicability of Western voting behaviour models in an African context.

This study contributes to the political marketing knowledge through the development of a conceptual model which identifies campaign messaging and consumer behavioural elements as inputs by political parties to have desired impact on voters' decision to vote for their parties. The study also contributes to political marketing knowledge by providing understanding to political parties, candidates, and citizens on the elements of campaign messages that defines the decision process of the voter. It further elaborates on how each campaign message element could change the behaviour of the voter and voting decision.

The study provides knowledge base for developing policy strategies relevant to institutions such as the Electoral Commission as to how best to educate and sensitise citizens on political party campaign messages towards making rational voting decisions. Political parties are also provided knowledge base regarding elements/ factors considered by voters towards their voting choices, and the strategies by which they can adopt to make their campaign messages attractive and appealing to voters.

1.8 CONTRIBUTION OF THE STUDY TO PRACTICE

Marketers and marketing managers can use the results of this study to improve marketing strategies. They can do so by the understanding provided by the consumer behaviour model in the political context, particularly in terms of how individuals respond to various political 'products'.

This research also offers practical insights into effectively using traditional marketing tools and techniques in political campaigning in Ghana by tailoring political messages, voter outreach, voter education, and the design of public policy initiatives. The study results could therefore be used by political parties and candidates to better understand the electorate and adjust their existing strategies accordingly.

The research further provides knowledge about how voters in Ghana make their decisions, and this could assist politicians in tailoring their messages and policies

to appeal to voters more effectively. The study results could also be used by NGOs and civil society groups in advocating for voters' interests and supporting democratic participation.

1.9 CONTRIBUTION OF THE STUDY TO POLICY

While the study did not find that voters are systematically disadvantaged by the way political messages or policies are presented, this possibility cannot be ruled out largely because this was not an objective. Nonetheless, the study results are comprehensive enough to inform policies related to political marketing, campaigning, and election conduct. Additionally, international entities or NGOs working to support democracy in Ghana or similar contexts might use the study's findings to shape their initiatives.

1.10 ORGANISATION OF THE THESIS

This study is organised into seven chapters. Chapter 1 commences with the introduction to the study, which generally provides an overview, basic understanding, and justification of the need to conduct the research. In addition, the chapter includes the problem background, statement of the problem, research questions, hypotheses, research objectives, aims and the outline of the study. Generally, the first chapter of the study provides a rationale for the study, elaborating on the purpose of the study, the objectives to be achieved and the need for which the study is being carried out.

The second Chapter of the study is dedicated to understanding the major concept from which the study emanated. The chapter discusses thoroughly the concept of political marketing, the application of marketing in the field of politics and the behaviour of consumers in political marketing. The chapter further discusses and provides a detailed understanding of the political consumer. The insight into political marketing has been linked to Ghana's evolution and political trends over the years. For this, chapter two also focused on the political atmosphere in Ghana, specifically political marketing and voting behaviour. Comprehensively, the chapter

discusses the voter as a consumer and the use of relationship marketing through political campaigns as a marketing mix to develop a relationship with the voter/consumer.

Chapter 3 delves much into reviewing various theories underpinning the study. The theories considered in this study include the psycho-social theory, the rational theory, Engel, Kollat and Blackwell's theory, the Hawkins, Best and Coney theory and the Stimulus Organism Response model. The understanding of these theories helps in the development and formulation of hypotheses and is also instrumental in developing a framework for the study in the next chapter. However, before discussing and debating these theories, the chapter provided an overview of the concept of consumer behaviour and the factors that influence consumer behaviour.

The fourth chapter detailed the development of a conceptual framework and the development of a hypothesis for the study. It involved discussions on the various derived from the theories and concepts of the study and the empirical evidence in the literature that relates the variables to each other.

Chapter 5 entails the research methodology, spelling out the philosophical understanding and position of the researcher and the methods applicable toward selecting participants and collecting data and analysis.

Chapter 6 presents and thoroughly discusses the results obtained from data analysis. The final Chapter (Seven) includes conclusions based on the findings and recommendations for practice and future research. The chapter also captured the limitations of the study.

1.11 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter has provided a general introduction to the study. It introduces the importance of marketing in politics and how essential it has become for political parties to rely on marketing strategies as a means of selling their ideas to the voter

(customer). The chapter conceptualise that, by understanding the behaviour of the voter marketing mix strategies can be developed to influence the final decision of the voter. However existing consumer behaviour models does not consider the unique differential between political marketing and voter decisions. This study therefore sought to develop and model for voter behaviour in Ghana as a marketing tool for political parties, to help deepened democracy in the country. Generally, the study seeks to address the question as to how consumer (voter) decision making process influences consumer behaviour towards purchasing (voting) decisions. The chapter highlighted that, the interplay between political marketing and the behaviour of the voter would best assist political parties and candidates to adopt good campaign strategies. A detailed structure of the entire study was also outlined in this chapter.

CHAPTER TWO

POLITICAL MARKETING AND THE POLITICAL CONSUMER

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter entails a thorough review of materials that provides in-depth insight and understanding of political marketing, a major concept generally covering this study. It also provides insight into the political atmosphere of Ghana. In addition, it discusses the political consumer and why the voter can be described as a consumer in political marketing. Finally, the chapter further discusses political marketing in the context of Ghana.

2.2 POLITICAL MARKETING

Political marketing is seen as a form of political communication that promotes specific messages or candidates. Thus, when evaluating voter behaviour, it's crucial to have a comprehensive understanding of political marketing. The following sections examines marketing concepts pertinent to politics.

2.2.1 Understanding political marketing

Political marketing is a topic that has been studied in depth by academics. In 1969, Kotler and Levy first suggested that marketing techniques could be applied beyond businesses to all organizations, including politics. Bagozzi further enhanced this concept in 1975 by viewing marketing as a form of exchange that can be indirect, symbolic, and involving more than two parties. Political marketing thus became part of this paradigm, extending the methods of traditional marketing to the political domain.

The American Marketing Association is no doubt the most respected marketing organisation hence its conception of marketing needs to be considered when

discussing political marketing. According to the American Marketing Association (2013), marketing can be defined as creating, communicating, and delivering offerings of value to various stakeholders. This definition should therefore, set the stage for understanding political marketing. Not surprisingly, Hughes and Dann (2009) view political marketing as communicating, delivering, and making promises to voters and other stakeholders.

Political branding, studied by Scammell (2007), Smith, and French (2009), and others, is an essential aspect of political marketing, linking parties' functional and emotional characteristics and forming a deep connection with voter consumers. These branding strategies aim to create an atmosphere of community, authenticity, and relevant value.

Political marketing blends traditional marketing with political science, necessitating constant adaptation to changes in marketing trends. Rather than being just about advertising or public relations, political marketing is about positioning a party in the electoral market, as stated by Marland, Giasson, and Lees-Marshment (2012). This involves using commercial marketing techniques to address citizens' needs and wants.

Several scholars have provided their interpretations of political marketing. Kavanagh (1996), for example, sees it as strategies and tools to understand public opinion and develop impactful campaign communications. Others like Harris and Lock (2010), and Newman (2016), emphasize the communication with various stakeholders and the use of market research to present a competitive political product in exchange for votes. According to Lees-Marshment (2015), political marketing reflects the infiltration of the political sphere by marketing, likening political parties to businesses selling their policies to the electorate.

From the above definitions, it is evident that in essence, political marketing includes every aspect of the marketing process, from initial market study to testing and targeting. It deals with using market information to design and implement political offerings, and it aligns more closely with service marketing, focusing on intangible

offerings like policy platforms and party image. The goal is to create a holistic experience that connects voters and political actors, involving all party members in delivering the political product to the electorate.

2.2.2 Marketing application in politics

The marketing concept, considered the bedrock of identifying and meeting consumer needs (Kotler & Levy, 2007), has been deemed applicable across various contexts (Kotler, 2010; Kotler & Levy, 2007). In business, it guides companies to plan and operate based on customer needs with the aim of profitable sales volume. This customer-focused principle provides an economic and social rationale for a company's existence. Political candidates or parties applying this concept to their operations could greatly satisfy voter needs (Mauser, 2013; Newman & Sheth, 2018). Nimmo (2010) suggested that politicians use information to influence behaviour and retain voter support, requiring a clear understanding of voters' values.

Shama (2011) emphasized that political marketing employs many tools to disseminate ideologies, much like marketing goods and services. Preter (2020), Niffenegger (2014), and Kotler (2010) added that politicians, like consumer products, utilize marketing strategies and promotional campaigns to gain voter share, with election campaigns increasingly resembling marketing campaigns. To be successful, political parties must understand and apply basic marketing principles (Niffenegger, 2014; Reid, 2012). Kotler and Andreasen (2010) suggested that marketing could help political parties meet diverse voter needs through comprehensive marketing analyses, planning, and campaign management.

Foxall (2014) and Trustrum (2012) promoted the idea that applying a complete set of marketing tools and concepts effectively satisfies customers. They argued that the marketing concept integrates mechanisms to achieve both organizational and customer goals.

The study suggests the need for empirical research to measure the adoption of the marketing concept in political realms. Some researchers propose that the marketing concept is a viable approach for both profit and non-profit entities (Kotler & Zaltman, 2010; Stolle et al., 2013; Smith & French, 2019). Robinson (2012) was among the first to present the marketing concept as a universal management philosophy, sparking debates among researchers.

O'Cass (2011) posited that marketing applies to political processes as it concerns how transactions are formed, stimulated, and valued. When voters vote, they expect better government and policies in return.

Houston (2013) interpreted the marketing concept as a link between the exchange process and the marketing concept, facilitating efficient exchanges. All organizations, including their relationships, operate within marketing, which includes value exchanges among social entities (Kotler, 2010). Hence, politics, being a subset of marketing, fits within its broad domain.

Just like customers, voters engage in a transaction by exchanging their time and support (votes) for the services promised by the candidate. Thus, marketing applies to all political processes in the form of a transaction and is primarily concerned with how these transactions are initiated, stimulated, and valued.

Houston (2013) offered a concise view of the marketing concept, considering it a management tool necessary for achieving organizational goals. It suggests that an establishment can efficiently achieve its goals in complex yet restrictive market situations by having a deep understanding of potential exchange partners, their needs and wants, and the associated costs of fulfilling those needs, and then developing and distributing products based on this understanding.

2.2.3 Political marketing versus political science

Political marketing, as stated earlier, is the intersection of marketing and political science, taking marketing principles, theories, frameworks, and activities and applying them to political science in a cohesive theoretical structure. Political science delves into the underpinnings of the state and principles of government. Garner (1999) suggested that politics begins and ends with the state, while Gettel (1998) described it as a study of the state's history, present, and future. Laski (2009) viewed the study of politics as the examination of individuals in connection with an organized state.

The study of political science encompasses theories of state, sovereign power concepts, roles and functions of government, legislation creation and execution, elections, political parties, citizens' rights and duties, policy functions, and government welfare activities. The evolution of political systems closely aligns with the application of marketing to politics, leading to some political scientists showing skepticism towards accepting political marketing (Lees-Marshment, 2001; Scammell, 1999). Political marketing is often seen as having limited value due to its primarily descriptive role, with scholars showing more interest in outcomes rather than the processes through which governments shape public opinion.

The transition from party-based to candidate-based political and electoral systems has led to increased reliance on technical support and professional expertise outside of traditional politics. The introduction of new professionals into the political sphere has facilitated the use of new technologies, especially those related to media, data processing, and election polling. These technologies necessitate additional technical professionalism, especially with the growing use of new media. Thus, media coverage of politics necessitates political professionalism, which is associated with possessing different skills.

The evolution of election campaigns has been segmented into pre-modern (up to about 1950), modern (up to the mid-80s), and postmodern (current) periods by Norris (1997). Differences between these periods include campaign durations and

shifts in electorate orientation from stable to fluctuating and finally intermittent. Over time, the importance of presenting immediate and tangible solutions to daily problems has grown, rewarding those political figures that appear most credible and consistent.

The structure of campaigns has also shifted from being primarily local to entirely national and then to a mix of local and national. The number of political consultants has increased along with their professionalism level. The predominant mode of political communication has shifted from interpersonal to national and finally to a combination of local and national, leading to a substantial increase in campaign costs.

Farrell and Webb (2000) established a similar pattern of the tripartite division of election campaigns, encompassing the development of professionalization and election campaigns in general. The first phase involved party-managed low-tech communication activities. The second phase was characterized by the advent of television, leading to lengthier campaigns, the need for professional skills, and a greater need for funds. The third phase, in the era of advanced mass communication technologies such as satellites and the internet, featured permanent campaigns run by professional staff and increased use of feedback and message targeting.

Over time, political campaigning has transitioned from party-centered, volunteer-driven efforts to candidate-focused campaigns employing mass media advertising, marketing strategies, and professional consultants (Gunlicks, 1993; Rayner, 2014; Strömbäck, 2007). Many types of political consultants may be involved, including campaign strategists, media consultants, direct correspondence specialists, polling experts, and fundraising experts.

The professionalization of political marketing has also allowed for the adoption of mainstream marketing trends in politics, such as mass customization, experiential marketing, and real-time marketing, which aim to provide personalized services,

create complete experiences for potential voters, and adapt services in real-time to the changing preferences and needs of users, respectively.

2.2.4 Political marketing: the case of two known Americans

Politicians and their parties have long applied marketing strategies (Kelley, 1956). In other words, politicians and their parties have applied marketing concepts/strategies such as branding, segmentation, targeting and positioning in their campaigns. It is noteworthy that the American politics has excelled in this arena and none seems to surpass the political marketing activities of their last two presidents that need mentioning.

A classic example of branding is Barack Obama's 2008 presidential campaign, with the "Hope" and "Change" messages that were incorporated into all forms of campaign communications. This depicts the concept of branding where politicians and parties establish a brand that represents their identity, values, and promises to the electorate.

In a similar manner, Trump employed several marketing strategies such as branding, social media use, simplicity and repetition, emotional appeal, direct and provocative tactics to attract voters. It is on record that Trump, as a businessman and reality TV star, had a strong personal brand before entering politics and he capitalized on this, promoting himself as an outsider and non-politician, capable of disrupting the status quo. Trump also used social media, especially Twitter, to bypass traditional media, share his message directly with the public, and stir up controversy. This approach not only gave him control over his narrative but also kept him in the news cycle. Trump also often used simple, easy-to-remember slogans like "Make America Great Again" and repeated key messages around immigration, trade, and "draining the swamp". This repetition helped these messages stick in the public's mind. Trump also tapped into emotions and used divisive issues to appeal to his base. He leveraged the discontent among certain voter groups, especially in rural and industrial areas. Last but not the least, Trump's

direct and often abrasive communication style stood in contrast to traditional political discourse. His provocative statements and actions continuously attracted media attention and helped him dominate the news cycle. These “borrowed marketing” strategies helped Trump to appeal to a specific segment of the population and energize his base. They also kept his campaign at the center of media discussion, giving him a significant amount of free media coverage.

2.2.5 Political marketing behaviour

Lees-Marshment's (2001) Comprehensive Political Marketing model (CPM) posits that political parties have transitioned from adhering strictly to their ideological convictions to being more receptive to voter needs. This model divides political parties into three types namely product-oriented, sales-oriented, and market-oriented (Ormrod, 2007). The model shows that a product-oriented party (POP) creates policies based on what it believes is beneficial for the public, with the hope that voters will endorse these policies and vote for the party. This is reminiscent of the product orientation theory of marketing. The similarity is that the policies of parties represent their ideological stance. The problem is that, if a party's ideology does not align with the populace's views, it becomes reflective of this discrepancy, as seen in Michael Foot's Labour Party leadership in the 1980s. Communication and messaging are major components of POP where they are configured to promote the ideology of the party, aiming to persuade voters to align with it. A sales-oriented party (SOP), like a POP, develops policies but utilizes marketing strategies like opinion polls to gauge voter sentiment and tailor party messaging accordingly and uses various persuasive selling techniques to sway voters. Finally, a market-oriented party (MOP) tailors its actions to satisfy voters by using information obtained from market intelligence to discern voter preferences to formulate policies to match them (Lees-Marshment, 2001). MOPs characteristically long-term orientation with permanent staff.

However, unlike commercial firms, political parties face a unique set of challenges and tensions when adopting a market-oriented approach. For instance, political

parties are made up of coalitions with varying power bases, which may limit the influence of the party leader on certain key issues and affect the party's image and messaging. Additionally, unlike commercial firms where customer satisfaction directly relates to profitability, the diverse interests within a political party may overshadow voter interests.

The marketing theory's direct application to political parties can also lead to inconsistencies, raising questions about the theory's suitability for analyzing party behaviour. While these challenges do not negate the usefulness of marketing in politics, they do highlight the need for tailored frameworks that address these unique tensions (Lock & Harris, 1996).

The theoretical landscape of political marketing has seen an increasing reliance on managerial and operational marketing concepts to elucidate its domain (Lees-Marshment, 2001; Kotler & Kotler, 1999). Critics argue that political marketing needs to develop its own theoretical framework and avoid comparisons with commercial marketing as the two are fundamentally different entities (O'Shaughnessy, 2001).

In terms of research, political marketing has been criticized for its increased application of positivism theory and its focus on the promotional aspects of marketing in politics. The critics, while acknowledging the improvement in political communication strategies, argue that the field is becoming overly concerned with spin and packaging rather than substance (Henneberg, 2004). This suggests that continuous research is required to address these criticisms and contribute to the ongoing discourse in the field of political marketing.

2.2.6 The consumer and political markets

Scammell's 2013 research highlights the similarities in the growth of consumer and political arenas. With the augmentation of choices and informational resources, both consumers and political participants gain power. However, this comparison is

not as simple as it seems. Even though marketing provides insights into the relationship between institutions and consumers, some advice caution in its direct application to politics, due to its inherent complexity and its epistemological divergence from marketing (Savigny & Temple, 2010; Savigny, 2007).

The idea proposed by Hansen and Jensen in 2007 is that a political party could be seen as a service provider, with its actions and decisions being the service. This service is 'purchased' through voting. In another perspective, the party can be the brand, the politician a tangible attribute, and the promised policies the main service provided (O'Shaughnessy & Henneberg, 2007). These perspectives need further scrutiny, considering the distinct differences between politics and marketing.

Smith and French's 2019 study proposed that party members are typically viewed as the users of a political party, while other users could include those who publicly support the party, such as celebrity endorsers. Ben-Ur and Newman (2010) maintain that voters become the consumers of the political party during elections, with their vote determined by the perceived value the party can offer if elected. Needham (2015) suggests that voters choose a candidate or party much like consumers select a product, and this choice occurs at the point of transaction. From this standpoint, all voters during an election are potential users of the political party. However, defining who the user of a political party is can become ambiguous once the election is over.

Applying the consumer behaviour concept of usage to political marketing theory could be plausible. But, considerations must be made regarding the differences between voters and consumers to understand how usage can be applied to political marketing. Even though the terms 'customers' and 'consumers' have found usage in political marketing as 'voters', bridging the gap between politics and marketing, it doesn't mean the two are interchangeable. As per Dean and Croft's 2011 argument, traditional marketing models don't seamlessly blend into a political marketing context. Henneberg (2008) argues that political marketing constructs remain vaguely defined within the marketing framework, suggesting that some

terms used in marketing may need recontextualization or reconsideration (Marland, 2013) before being effectively applied to political marketing.

2.2.7 The political consumer

Based on traditional liberal theories, Micheletti and Follesdal (2007) viewed consumers as electors who can endorse or penalize certain goods and manufacturers via their buying capacity. These politically-minded consumers purchase or abstain from purchasing products based on various political, ethical, or societal factors, thereby merging everyday life with political involvement (Persson, 2008). Micheletti and Follesdal (2007) defined these politically-conscious consumers as citizens who utilize the marketplace as a platform for political activities. The notion of characterizing consumers in political marketing as "political consumers" originates from the idea of political consumerism. Political consumerism is the practice of using the market as a platform for politics, either to alter institutional or market practices deemed objectionable on ethical, environmental, or political grounds, or to reward companies for their commendable practices (Stolle, Hooghe & Micheletti, 2013). In this context, the companies are likened to political parties. Çiftçi (2018) further suggested that a political consumer could be someone who shows support by buying products that satisfy specific standards.

Neilson (2006) underscored that political consumers are individuals driven by both personal goals and public interests, expressing their individual and group identities through their actions. It is also suggested that such consumers show more interest in environmental matters like global warming and climate change rather than macroeconomic issues like unemployment (Çiftçi, 2020). From this viewpoint, political consumerism could be connected to how citizens interact with political parties in the political marketplace. Broadly, it is posited that political consumers wield their purchasing power like a vote, assessing the political, economic attitudes and values, and the suitability or unsuitability of business and government practices. As such, they have the power to put political parties and actors in difficult

positions through their actions or decisions (Baringhorst, 2015; Rao, Morrill & Zald, 2020).

2.2.8 The voter as a consumer

Marketing is characterized as a process that enables interactions between organizations and their environments, with customers playing a significant role (Kotler & Murray, 1975; Phillips, Reynolds, & Reynolds, 2010). If political parties are seen as organizations, one could argue that voters essentially serve as the consumers of the political party. Thus, much like customers being a crucial aspect of a company's environment, voters too are a vital part of the political landscape (Harris & Lock, 2010). There's a school of thought that positions voters as the decision-makers in this dynamic (Butler & Collins, 2014), though the extent to which this mirrors consumer decision-making isn't entirely evident. What is apparent, however, is that voters have to eventually decide who to vote for - the candidate, the political party, or both. Analyzing voter behaviour on a large scale reveals some similarities with consumer behaviour, such as being swayed by a politician or party's image or the attractiveness/endorsement of a celebrity (Peng & Hackley, 2019). It's not uncommon for consumers to rely on the candidate's appeal or perception in lieu of other information (Lane, 2013). Despite these similarities, Peng and Hackley (2019) warn against assuming that all aspects of voter behaviour can be equated with consumer behaviour, emphasizing the importance of context.

Harris and Lock (2010:300) identify timing, cost, complexity, and post-purchase decision making as key areas in which the voter and the consumer may differ. Further scrutinizing the distinctions between voters and consumers, it's worth noting that the ultimate "choice" is not made by an individual consumer but emerges as a collective decision. Even more, a voter may find themselves "subscribing" to a party for which they didn't vote. This decision, or purchase, happens over extended periods after an election is called. In this regard, political marketing resembles a non-profit service provider or a subscription market that a

consumer signs up to for a certain period. Consequently, politics is more akin to a subscription market than a fast-moving consumer good or a repertoire good, in line with Scammell's (2013) concept of politics as a long-term services market. Campaigns are sometimes referred to as a "political season" (Altschuler & Stuart, 2017; Moltedo, 2020).

In such circumstances, communication during the campaign gains importance. However, despite the rise of the permanent campaign (Sparrow & Turner, 2011; Newman, 2016), many voters may not regularly contemplate their voting options between elections. This sporadic nature can lessen the significance of making the electoral choice, as it is infrequent and often forgotten between elections. The act of political choice is usually more detached from the voter than a purchase is from a consumer. Although a consumer might have to live with the consequences of their choice and potentially be reminded of it daily, a voter may not have the same experience. Unless brought to their attention, the political decision might seem distant and largely irrelevant; indeed, many voters can't even recall whom they voted for (Lane, 2013; Belli, et al., 2019; Selb & Lachat, 2019).

In the introduction, arguments were presented for applying marketing techniques and principles to the electoral marketplace and extending consumer behaviour principles beyond commercial markets (Yorke & Meehan, 2017; Tweneboah-Koduah, Akotia & Akotia, 2015). Delving into the underlying principles and methods of consumer behaviour, Blackwell, Miniard, and Engel (2016) identify four main principles governing consumers' behaviour in commercial markets, which can conveniently be extended to voters in any electoral market.

Blackwell et al. (2016) list consumer sovereignty as the first principle. They argued that consumers are autonomous in all commercial markets, and this sovereignty also applies to voters in an election. Kotler (2010) supports this by declaring the consumer as a 'king', which can be said about voters too. For instance, Article 1(1) of the Constitution of the Republic of Ghana (1992) proclaims that the people hold the country's sovereignty.

Another principle relates to the globalisation of the customer. Blackwell et al. (2016) suggested that customer expectations and decision-making processes are universally present. Despite cultural differences, as consumers become more global, the similarities outweigh the differences (Blackwell et al., 2016). In the context of voter globalization, Lindberg and Morrison (2008) and Bob-Milliar (2016) contend that voters in Sub-Saharan Africa demonstrate a level of maturity comparable to citizens in developed countries.

2.2.9 Marketing mix in political campaigns

Political marketing is often associated with public appearances and television advertisements. However, it encompasses much more than publicity stunts and smart ad strategies. Sapura et al. (2013) and Sari and colleagues (2019) agree that the political marketing mix involves transforming political entities and actions into a cohesive campaign that leverages various marketing mix elements such as product, promotion, distribution, voter placement, and value determination to be paid by the party and certain voter segments.

The 'product' aspect pertains to the party, candidates, and party ideologies presented to voters. It includes the ideas, identity, and philosophy shaping a political product. As Niffenegger (2014) states, the 'product' offered by political marketers is a complex array of potential benefits that voters expect will materialise if the candidate gets elected. The candidate's record and personal attributes, alongside the party image, also shape voters' benefit expectations. Designing the product to meet targeted market segments is a crucial task, managed by the political consultant in political marketing (Niffenegger, 2014).

'Price' denotes the value extended by the political party to its supporters. This can be conceived as the cumulative cost related to the election campaign (Niffenegger, 2014). According to Sari, Ardi, Kurniawan and Vitarani (2019), this involves economic price, psychological price, and the national image cost. Economic price refers to the cost that political parties bear to fulfil their campaign promises, while

the psychological price embodies public confidence in the party's ability to deliver on its promises.

'Place' strategy involves the tactics used to personally deliver campaign messages to voters. It pinpoints where and how the party or candidate interacts with voters, facilitated by technological advancements that permit real-time interactions with a vast pool of potential voters.

Promotion, as Niffenegger (2014) emphasizes, is a crucial marketing component for political parties or candidates. It involves not just significant expenditure on TV and radio ads but also careful consideration of media spending's concentration and timing for maximum impact.

The political marketing mix's advantages highlight its indispensable nature. It helps political parties identify their constituents, empathize with them, and closely track competitor activities. This approach aids the creation of political communication between the candidates, the party, and the constituents. As Hughes and Dann (2015) propose, political marketing focuses on voters' emotional expectations, turning the 'product' into a combination of the politician, their image, and brand. In conclusion, political marketing is rooted in voters' needs. By understanding these needs, political parties can draw parallels between voters and political consumers (Hughes & Dann, 2015).

2.3 POLITICS AND POLITICAL MARKETING IN THE GHANAIAN CONTEXT

By its nomenclature, political marketing evokes politics. Consequently, it becomes mandatory to discuss Ghana's political evolution albeit briefly to place this study in context. A historical perspective of politics in Ghana is being discussed and being linked to the Ghanaian political system and how political marketing in Ghana have evolve.

Political marketing has evolved into a global practice (Scammell, 2019) with most parties around the globe now managing their campaigns, policy proposals, and

fundraising efforts based on insights from market research (Lilleker & Lees-Marshment, 2005). However, researchers including Scammell (2019) have reservations about the influence of this growing importance on the marketing mindset on politicians. In other words, the question remains, is there a comprehensive applicability of marketing theories to politics?

Despite these concerns, it is undeniable that political marketing is an indispensable tool for politicians, driven by local, international, and global forces impacting political groups worldwide, with democracy being a primary influence. Democratic principles stipulate that citizens can hold their elected officials responsible (Curran, Iyengar, Brink, & Salovaara-Moring, 2009). As Henneberg (2004) emphasized, it is vital for political marketing studies to examine the primary aspects of multiparty democracy: the political and party systems because these systems are the most important analytical units of the marketing concept namely competition and exchange. The following section therefore, provides an overview of these systems within the context of Ghana's politics.

2.3.1 Ghana's political history

The intricate landscape of Ghana's politics has always been painted with ethnic hues. The introduction of multi-party politics and the process of democratisation in African countries has intensified the politicisation of ethnicity throughout Ghana's history, which still influences the political dynamics of the present day (Bogaards, 2008). As Chazan (2001) observed, the importance of ethnicity in Ghana's politics has been accentuated or minimised by different administrations depending on their political strategies and effectiveness. This political trend traces back to pre-independence voting patterns that persist among the Danquah-Busia group (primarily Asantes) and the Nkrumahists, regardless of whether the government is military or civilian (Morrison & Lindenberg, 2008). Political movements led by J.B. Danquah and Kwame Nkrumah demonstrated contrasting ideologies, with Danquah's party appearing as elitist and ethnocentric (mainly serving the Asantes and the Akyems) through the UGCC, while Nkrumah's party was perceived as

more inclusive and populist through the CPP. Present-day political entities like the NPP and the NDC are believed to continue these traditions (Wilmsen & McAllister, 2009).

Prior to Ghana's independence, politicians were already utilising ethnicity as a powerful lever for accumulating mass support. However, after the CPP came to power, the problem became more pronounced with ethnically-aligned parties forming a sturdy opposition. Post the CPP's victory in the general elections of 1952, 1954, and 1956, many new parties sprung up, primarily based on ethnic and regional lines (Ghanaweb, 2008). Two of such ethnically-aligned parties were the Northern People's Party (NPP) on the one hand who's main was to secure the interests of the northern population. On the other hand, as stated by Asante and Gyimah-Boadi (2004), the Togoland Congress movement was formed in 1951 with the singular aim of unifying the Togoland's British and French-mandated territories. One cannot also forget that the Asante nationalist movement, the National Liberation Movement (NLM), emerged in 1954 seeking to protect the Ashanti and their institutions. In that quest, they formed alliances with other parties like "the Northern People's Party and the Anglo Youth Association in the Volta Region" (Allman, 1990). The ascent of the NLM caused a period of disruption and violence in the Ashanti region and sparked debates over electoral timing and the constitution of an independent Ghana (Asante & Gyimah-Boadi, 2004). Finally conflict between the CPP and the Gas resulted in the formation of the Ga-Standfast Association in 1957, which aligned with the opposition against the CPP (Asare, 2002).

Faced with these ethno-political problems, the Avoidance of Discrimination Act of 1957 was promulgated. The regional assemblies formed under the 1957 Independence Constitution were also disbanded in 1959 and Nkrumah appointed CPP Chief Regional commissioners to replace the British representatives (Asante & Gyimah-Boadi, 2004). Despite measures taken to minimise ethnic politics, it resurfaced time and again, especially during Ghana's First and Second Republics. The opposition formed the United Party (UP) in 1957, led by Kofi Abrefa Busia (an

Akan). Major Afrifa (an Asante) and Colonel Kotoka (an Ewe) led a coup in 1966. Yet, the unity was temporary, leading to continued ethnic rifts (Hettne, 1980).

The National Redemption Council (NRC) took over in 1972 under IK Acheampong's leadership and made efforts to diminish the role of ethnicity in Ghanaian politics. Despite these initiatives, problematic relationships with specific ethnic groups, like the Ewes, led to discontent, and the fall of Acheampong and the NRC in 1975.

Post the NRC's fall, the Supreme Military Council (SMC) assumed power through a coup. This regime further intensified ethnic and class responses. While it faced discontent from various ethnic groups, local community groups also became politicised and actively joined political movements (Chazan, 1982).

In 1977, three crucial factors led the ethnic groups, previously at odds, to unite against the government. First, they demonstrated against dwindling resources and demanded compensation. They opposed the decreasing benefits from government policies and their exclusion from the epicenter of state activities (Chazan, 1982). Though it may seem that certain ethnic groups in Ghana are perpetually in conflict, there are instances, such as the collaboration between the Ewe and Asante, where ethnic groups put power access and the significance of patronage ties over ethnic divisions. A government's ability to achieve economic development and fulfil its obligations and pledges to voters is crucial to its success and was a key factor in the opposition faced by the Supreme Military Council. The urban ethnic elite were vocal advocates for policy changes during the SMC regime. Their protest took various forms: petitions, increased public discourse and criticism, and professional services being withheld.

The growing dissatisfaction in Ghana led to the proposal of a "Union Government" or "Unigov" concept in October 1976. Its main aim was to incorporate major class-linked and ethnically-based groups into a non-party democracy, including the military and the police. Despite this proposal, the backlash was significant. Ethnic elites united against the common issue and fuelled communal disputes lasting until

Spring 1978 (Chazan, 1982). The "Unigov" concept was widely opposed across various classes, with the Ewe, Ga, and Akan regions becoming anti-"Unigov" hotspots.

The AFRC paved the way for a civilian government. Presidential and vice-presidential elections continued between June and July. After the elections, the AFRC stepped down on September 24, 1979. However, the new order was short-lived and was replaced by the provisional National Defence Council (PNDC) through a coup led by Flight Lieutenant Jerry John Rawlings on December 31, 1981. In December 1982, the PNDC decided to decentralise the government from Accra to various districts, regions, and local communities, with appointed secretaries to exercise executive power.

From the above, it can be surmised that the political history of Ghana spans from the era of slavery and colonial rule, through post-independence multiparty democracy, to military rule, and then a return to multiparty democracy in 1992 (Handly & Mills, 2001). It can also be concluded that Ghana's political history is characterized by various military coups. Hence due to these military interventions, previous constitutions dating 1958, 1969, and 1979 were abolished. Moreover, these military interventions influenced the country's political system through party formations, the media system, and other democratic institutions, such as the Electoral Commission, resulting in weakened and often neglected political institutions that languished in uncertainty until the milestone election in 2000. The next section examines the political system in Ghana.

2.3.2 Ghana's political system

Since its independence, Ghana's democratic process has increasingly relied on political parties as the primary platforms for political engagement, especially for those seeking elected office. This trend is evidenced by the number of Presidents and Members of Parliament (MP) who have been elected under party affiliations compared to those who have been elected as independent candidates. Despite

their efforts, independent candidates have not fared well compared to party-affiliated candidates.

Ghana's constitution can be described as a hybrid that fuses the American presidential and the British Westminster parliamentary systems. This hybrid system allows the president, if they are a party candidate, to be elected directly by popular vote, similarly to how members of parliament are elected.

Historically, political parties formed in the 1950s in Ghana generally fell within the socialist-capitalist ideological spectrum, mirroring the philosophies of their founding figures, Nkrumah and Danquah, who set the pace for party politics in Ghana. Therefore, Nkrumah's Convention Peoples Party (CPP), Ghana's first ruling party post-independence, is considered left-leaning, while Danquah's UGCC party, which later evolved into PP, UP, and presently NPP, is seen as right-leaning (Anebo, 1997).

In 1992, when constitutional rule was restored, a significant third party by name the National Democratic Congress (NDC) emerged and adopted the radical approach of the CPP (Carbone, 2003). After winning several elections, the NDC regrettably moved further away from its early ideological position which significantly diluted the impact of ideological position in mobilizing voters (Nugent, 2001; Ninsin, 2006). It is unsurprising that the NDC subsequently lost power to the NPP. Since then, the tussle has been between the NDC and NPP as the two most dominant political parties. As such, the political landscape in Ghana continues to be dominated by the NPP and the NDC.

Goin back to political ideology, in Ghana, one can confidently say that ideology does not seem to hold much sway on voters' decisions. Rather, most voters appear to cast their votes based on family political affiliations or the appeal of parties during election campaigns (Nugent, 2001; Ninsin, 2006).

2.3.3 Political marketing in Ghana

Over time, politicians and academics have meticulously studied the strategies of political marketing. Parties, particularly those in America and Britain, are adept at leveraging political marketing to tailor the political "product" they offer, inspiring others to incorporate these concepts into their own marketing strategies, considering their sociopolitical cultures. The primary focus of political marketing concepts is on its use in Britain and America, as seen in Labour Party Marketing (Negrine & Stayner, 2017; Wring, Atkinson & Mortimore, 2018) and American "leader-centered" marketing (Kavanagh, 1996). American political parties and presidential candidates are widely recognized for innovating many techniques currently used in modern election campaigns in major democracies (Hellweg & Canals, 2014; Knuckey & Marshment, 2015). The birth of contemporary political marketing is anchored in the history of American political communication (Lilleker, 2016). The U.S. methods have been replicated worldwide (Hallin & Mancini, 2014), with Western democracies being the earliest adopters (Maarek, 2015), leading to the "Americanization" of political communication (Negrine, 2017; Plasser & Plasser, 2012). Nevertheless, political marketing strategies are molded to fit the unique cultural contexts and voter demands of the regions in which they are implemented.

In Ghana, similar to other countries, the rising impact of media and Americanization has resulted in a greater emphasis on "leader impact" in political marketing. However, this isn't as pronounced as in other "leader-centered" countries due to differences in election systems and political cultures. Despite technological advancement heralding changes in political marketing in Ghana, traditional tactics such as face-to-face persuasion at meetings continue to be crucial. Moreover, elements like religion, nationalism, and patriotism sway voters' decisions and can be exploited for political gain. Consequently, alongside the influence of global political marketing and Americanization, Ghanaian political parties have begun to recruit campaign advisors and new political actors such as academics, advertisers, and PR experts.

Ghana first encountered political marketing after the adoption of a multi-party system in the 1990s as a democratic symbol, leading to an uptick in campaigns. In particular, during the last eight general elections, all parties deployed political marketing strategies to secure political victory. However, it's essential to factor in electoral conditions and cultures when assessing political marketing since successful campaigning doesn't guarantee success (Ozkan, 2016). Despite advancements in communication methods, political marketing in Ghana is still a developing field. Nevertheless, campaign slogans from the two major parties, the NDC and NPP, signal political marketing tactics. For example, the NDC used "the people's manifesto" as their slogan during the 2020 general elections, reflecting the manifesto's development based on research among the Ghanaian populace.

Research on political marketing has surged recently, highlighting certain behavioural patterns among Ghanaian citizens during elections. Voters value transparency and authenticity and deem party ideologies and the integrity of party leaders and parliament members as paramount. Promises and party ideologies significantly shape voter preferences (Mensah, 2017).

In essence, politics are bound by ideas and ideologies, and political parties are united by a core set of ideas that resonate with their members (Jackson, Scullion & Lilleker, 2016). This is also true in Ghana, where politics revolve around party ideologies and societal perspectives. However, research suggests that merely relying on ideology isn't enough to sway voters, who increasingly demand more in response to economic, social, and educational needs, fueled by globalisation and subsequent social movements (Mensah, 2017; Narteh, Mensah & Nyanzu, 2017). In Ghana, ideologies in political communication are framed in the context of nationalism, patriotism, and religion. The common thread in all political marketing strategies in Ghana is the image of political parties and candidates, often emphasizing charisma or unique personal qualities. This is particularly evident in the political marketing of the NDC and NPP, which heavily relies on the leader's image. Mass media, especially television, plays a significant role in crafting and propagating a leader's image. Therefore, political marketing in the country is shaped and curated like a television program, with a heightened focus on the

"show aspect". Political marketing methods commonly include meetings and rallies, advertising and propaganda, one-on-one interviews, election manifestos, billboards and posters, and internet strategies, including social media.

2.3.4 Voting behaviour during election in Ghana

Academics assert that understanding the voting tendencies in Ghana requires a thorough examination of the role of ethnicity (Erdmann, 2007). According to Berman et al. (2004), ethnicity stands as the most conspicuous and significant factor shaping African politics. Arthur (2009) perceives African ethnicity and its political connections as recent phenomena, a reaction to modern capitalist dynamics. Similarly, Berman (1998) discussed the emergence of ethnic nationalism among Europeans in the late 19th century. Arthur (2009) adds that In the African scenario, this situation arose due to colonial influence and the resulting prominent role of ethnicity in African societies. Ethnicity has been a significant criterion for forming political parties following the advent of electoral politics post-independence in Africa (Vail, 1989).

As stated previously, Ghana's, post-independence saw the formation of ethnically-aligned parties. These developments have fostered an artificial sense of ethnicity-based self-awareness among Ghanaians. Not surprisingly, Kohli (1993) and Horowitz (1985) agree that ethnicity serves as a mobilization catalyst, providing a sense of security, mutual aid, trust, and defence against possible marginalization by outsiders.

Beissinger and Young (2002) suggest that while members of an ethnic group might share common physical traits, it is primarily their shared economic interests that bind them. Arthur (2009) claims this fear of unequal resource distribution motivates people to use ethnicity to gain access to state resources. From this perspective, ethnic groups can be expected to come together exert pressure on political leaders for their fair share of resources (Beissinger & Young, 2002).

Chabal and Daloz (1999) is not surprised to see ethnicity as the primary factor shaping African politics. Instead, they concur with Horowitz's (1985) that elections in African countries are essentially ethnic consensus votes rather than policy-based decisions. Similarly, Arthur (2009), Chazan (1982), Horowitz (1985) and Salih and Markakis (1998), observe that African countries have long been bound by ethnic ties hence these ties heavily influence partisan politics.

Despite the prohibition of party formation along ethnicity lines, this tendency persists. Gyimah-Boadi and Asante (2006) view the NPP and NDC, Ghana's two political parties as representing Asante/Akan and Ewe groups, respectively. Arthur (2009) further elaborates that fears of Ewe political dominance among the Asante people have solidified support for the NPP, while the perception of Ewe dominance in the PNDC, later transformed into the NDC, has created a belief that the NDC is primarily an Ewe party.

It is reasonable to infer that alliance voting often stems from the apprehension of a particular ethnic group dominating politically. Awoonor (1984) posited that the Ewes generally consider themselves in opposition to all Ghanaian governments, which invariably are dominated by the Akan (Asante) group. Arthur (2009) concluded that, ethnicity is sometimes explicitly and implicitly used during elections. This accounts for the sporadic ethnic propaganda, particularly between the Asantes and Ewes.

Ethnic based politics in Ghana seems to be waning. As such claims by researchers like Frempong (2001), Gyimah-Boadi and Asante (2006), and Arthur (2009) are no longer tenable. These researchers had claimed that Rawlings, of Volta Region lineage, is the primary reason for the Ewe's predominant support for the NDC. On the contrary, there is no doubt that the influence of the same has significantly contributed to a decline in ethnic-based voting over the years in Ghana. The fact is many years have passed since Rawlings stepped down from power and has been largely absent from Ghana's political scene. The NDC, since then, has had two non-Ewe presidents (Atta Mills and John Mahama). Similarly, NPP also had Kufuor (an Ashanti) followed by Nana Akufo-Addo (from the Eastern Region) as

presidents. Hence, it can be argued that strong ethnic voting motivations no longer exist in these two regions.

Reasons for the decline in ethnic-based voting might include the rising trend of interethnic marriages, increased rural-to-urban migration, and improved literacy levels (Lindberg & Morrison, 2008). These factors have helped voters become more objective, tolerant, and critical in their selection of public officials. The role of civil society organizations should also not be underestimated since such organizations focus on informing and raising public awareness about governance, thereby improving the quality of voter decision-making. The next section explicates the voters decision making process from the classical consumer perspective.

2.4 CHAPTER SUMMARY

The entire study is born-out of the concept of the political marketing. This chapter was dedicated to the understanding of the concept. The chapter provided an in-depth literature on political marketing and revealed political marketing as a strategic communication tool. In brief, it is emphasized that political marketing covers a whole area of party positioning in the electoral market, and not only limited to advertising and public relations. The chapter further delved into how political marketing was developed and its importance. Just as consumers act in any market, the voter as a consumer in political markets was well described with justifications as to why voters can be considered consumers. The relationship between voter(consumers) and political parties or candidates were therefore thoroughly discussed. The chapter indicated that political campaigns are a major marketing tool for political parties, and the marketing mix strategies including products, price, place and promotion is essential in developing campaign messages. The chapter was then streamlined to the understanding of politics in Ghana, and the application of political marketing in the context of Ghana. It was pointed out that some forms of political marketing exist in the political sphere in Ghana through political activities such as manifestos and fundraising. However, voting decision among voters (consumers) in Ghana has been largely linked to ethnicity as a major factor, rather than investigating other behavioural factors that influence the decision of the voter.

CHAPTER THREE

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: THE CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In attempting to disclose the motivation of voters in Ghana, a major school of thought surrounding the “why” of a certain consumer (voter) behaviour is discussed. The theories reviewed in this research are fundamental foundations of the study. These theories are fundamental and rational thoughts in political marketing and consumer behaviour that would generally purport to explain empirical observations. They form the testing hypothesis in this study that is generated to support or challenge the theory. These theories provide insight into the thought processes of voters and an explanation as to why they vote the way they do.

3.2 WHAT IS CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR?

Numerous definitions abound for consumer behaviour. Belch and Belch (2004) defines consumer behaviour as the study of humans in their role as consumers where, consumer behaviour touches every facet of human lives. Walters (1974) views consumer behaviour as specific human actions related to the buying of products and services from marketers. Schiffman (2007) offered another interpretation. According to Schiffman (2007) consumer behaviour refers to the processes of exchanging, obtaining, using, and discarding goods, services, experiences, and ideas. This definition emphasises the role of buying units, which includes individuals or groups making purchases. Schiffman and Kanuk (2008) describe consumer behaviour as the array of activities exhibited in the pursuit, purchase, usage, evaluation, and disposal of products, services, and ideas.

According to Schiffman and Kanuk (2008), consumers can be split into two categories: personal and organisational. Personal consumers buy products and services for their own use, household use, or as gifts, thus purchasing for final consumption. Organisational consumers, conversely, buy products and services

to operate an organisation, which can be profit or non-profit organisations, governmental organisations, or institutions.

Consumer behaviour encompasses a range of actions associated with obtaining, utilizing, and managing products and services, as well as decisions made prior to purchase. These activities include the purchase, ownership, and use of products (Makarewicz, 2013). Consumer behaviour is evidenced by the purchase of products and services to fulfill needs. The act of purchasing is a complex process that is preceded by a selection phase, which follows certain guidelines. Economic factors, backed by psychological elements, are crucial as they compare a consumer's financial capacity with the cost of a product or service. The consumer aims to achieve an anticipated level of aspiration, represented by the needs that are expected to be satisfied by the purchased products (Makarewicz, 2013). Consumer behaviour can be elucidated by examining consumers' internal reactions to varying stimuli and perceptions, as these situations elicit different behaviours during the purchasing process (Karczewska, 2010).

As such, consumer behaviour can be classified into rational and irrational. Rational behaviour is seen as internally consistent actions leading to maximum gratification (Makarewicz, 2013). A consumer behaves rationally when they allocate their available income to procure goods that will yield them the greatest satisfaction. Irrational consumer behaviour, on the other hand, is typified by the consumer's inconsistent actions, where they knowingly make purchase decisions that may not serve their best interests. Such irrational purchasing decisions do not stem from dispassionate calculations but rather from a desire to imitate, incentives, snobbery, and unconscious motivations. The consumer is often oblivious to these influences (Rudnicki, 2011).

3.2.1 Factors influencing the voter as a consumer behaviour

3.2.1.1 Cultural factors

The decision-making process for consumers, whether they be individuals, groups or organizations, involves selection, acquisition, and disposal of goods, services, experiences, or ideas to fulfill needs. The cultural backdrop heavily influences this procedure, shaping the consumers' needs and desires, as well as guiding the development of targeted marketing strategies (McCracken, 1990; Lamb, Hair & Daniel, 2011; Durmaz, Celik & Oruc, 2011; Chiu, Kwan, Li, Peng & Peng, 2014; Nataša, 2022; Tong & Chiu, 2012). Culture heavily dictates consumer behaviour, meaning marketing tactics need to reinforce the beliefs, values, and customs of the targeted cultural group. A consumer's cultural origins mold their wants, preferences, and how they perceive product attributes, resulting in different buying behaviours even among individuals from the same cultural group (Torelli & Alhuwalia, 2012; Zhao & Belk, 2018).

Durmaz, Celik and Oruc (2011) highlight the substantial impact of culture on consumer behaviour, breaking down cultural factors into three categories: consumer culture, sub-culture, and social class. A society's culture is a distinctive characteristic, separating it from other cultural groups, and consists of values, language, myths, customs, rituals, laws, and products passed down through generations (Lamb, Hair & Daniel, 2011). Durmaz (2014) and Ijewere and Odia (2012) note that culture plays an essential role in shaping a person's desires and behaviour, setting standards and norms for society, and significantly affecting consumption patterns and decision-making.

A person's cultural background can lead to the emergence of various sub-cultural elements. Individuals from similar societies often share comparable attitudes towards products and services due to their shared experiences and upbringing (Rani, 2014). Sub-cultures are small groups with common beliefs and consistent habits (Srivastava & Kulkarni, 2019) that significantly influence their psychology and lifestyles (Hasslinger, Hodzic & Opazo, 2008). These sub-cultures can

comprise nationalities, regions, racial groups, and geographic regions. Additionally, social classes are influenced by a combination of education, income, occupation, wealth, and other factors. Cultural elements such as culture, sub-culture, family, individual roles, and particularly social class shape an individual's purchasing behaviour (Karaboğa & Çakırkaya, 2020). These elements also affect the brand and value preferences of the products a person chooses to buy (Durmaz & Taşdemir, 2014), as well as influencing consumer behaviours within the same social group (Özsungur, 2017).

In the context of voting or elections, these cultural factors also impact consumer (voter) behaviour. Political subcultures, defined by political values, beliefs, attitudes, and behavioural patterns, differentiate geographically grouped individuals (Elazar, 1970). American studies show an increase in voters influenced by culture (Dreitzel, 1977; Wildavsky, 1987, Lieske, 2021), with voting behaviours guided by social identities, cultural norms, and legitimacy standards. Lieske (2021) found that voters (consumers) tend to support political candidates and parties based on their cultural affiliations, such as racial-ethnic and religious identities. Similarly, a study in Malaysia by Nizah and Bakar (2020) demonstrated that sub-cultural factors like education level and ethnic identity significantly affect voting behaviours and decisions.

As stated before, in African countries like Ghana, voter behaviour is predominantly influenced by cultural issues related to ethnicity and regionalism. However, Lindberg and Morrison (2007) asserted ethnicity may be important but is certainly not the only decisive factor that influences voters' decisions. They instead contended that acknowledging the role of ethnicity in politics doesn't necessarily translate to its significance in voting behaviour. As stated earlier, there has been a shift in Ghanaian voting trends towards a more consumer-oriented reasoning that is not necessarily culturally or ethnically based. Therefore, it's crucial to explore other factors influencing consumer (voter) behaviour beyond culture (Lindberg and Morrison, 2007).

3.2.1.2 Psychological factors

The psychological factor may affect consumer behaviour (Ali & Ramya, 2016). According to Schiffman and Kanuk (2007), these factors include motivation, perception, learning, beliefs and attitudes. In addition, these factors significantly impact individual and group behaviour as they relate to consumer behaviour (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2013).

According to Schiffman and Kanuk (2007), motivation is an internal emotion that frequently promotes the desire for goods and services. Consumers are motivated to identify their requirements and take action to find options or solutions that will meet those demands (Thilmany et al., 2008). Motivation also refers to strong internal stimuli that influence consumers to take certain actions to achieve specific goals (Daugherty et al., 2008). Setiadi (2013) explained that two types of motivation (rational and emotional) influence consumer behaviour. Therefore, in purchasing certain products, rational and emotional motivation may impact consumer purchasing decisions. Motivation occurs because there is a need. A need forces people to act and fulfil their needs, resulting in satisfaction. Research by Auf, Meddour, Saoula and Majid (2018) found that motivation plays a pivotal role in determining consumer buying behaviour. This finding was corroborated by Chen, Kirkman, Kim, Farh and Tangirala (2010), who suggested that motivation could naturally arise from workplace closeness, interaction, and shared experiences, which could, in turn, enhance consumer buying behaviour. In exploring the impact of social media and consumer motivation on consumer purchasing choices, Sudirjo (2021) found a positive correlation between motivation and consumer decision-making. Similarly, a study by Singh (2020) highlighted the effect of motivation on voting behaviour, suggesting that an individual's likelihood of voting increases with their motivation or ability to vote. According to Singh (2020), this motivation to vote could stem from a strong preference for one candidate over another.

On the other hand, perception is regarded as a process that begins with consumer exposure and attention to marketing stimuli and ends with consumer interpretation (Hawkins & Mothersbaugh (2013). However, Kotler and Armstrong (2011) noted that each individual receives and interprets the environmental stimulus differently due to the high subjectivity inherent to each one's perception. According to Schiffman and Wisenblit (2015), perception creates consumer imagery towards a certain object, affecting consumer behaviour and purchasing decision process. The behaviour of a consumer to purchase a product or service is determined by the perception of the consumer in relation to the product or service. Foxhall (2014) pointed out that perception is rooted in an individual's reactions to psychosocial stimuli- a stimulus-response.

According to a study by Nalindah, Chan, Tresna and Barkah (2022), consumer perception significantly determines purchasing decisions. This position is also supported in the literature with studies conducted by other scholars (Jani, 2014; Di Crosta, Ceccato, Marchetti, La Malva & Maiella, 2021). Just as perception influences the consumer's behaviour, the voter (consumer) in the political market is also influenced by their psychological perception of a political party, candidate, or party towards making informed voting decisions.

Consumer behaviour is linked to their cognitive and emotional responses towards a product (Chaparro-Africano & Garzón-Méndez, 2021). In marketing, attitude refers to the knowledge and either positive or negative feelings about a product or service (Pride & Ferrell, 1991). It can also be defined as an overall assessment that indicates our level of preference or aversion for an object, issue, person, action, product, or service (Hoyer & Macinnis, 2011; Solomon, 2004). If consumers have a positive attitude towards a product, they are likely to endorse its use. Conversely, if their attitude is negative, they are likely to abstain from using the product (Baydas, Yalman, & Bayat, 2021). Consumers' attitudes, based on perceptions, play a crucial role in determining the product purchase process. This psychological predisposition influences the choice for organic products (Radulescu, Cetina, Cruceru & Goldbach, 2021), and consumer behaviour may change in line with their psychological and emotional states. However, Hoyer and

Macinnis (2011) contended that the influence of an individual's attitude on their behaviour depends on various factors, such as the level of engagement or reflection, knowledge and experience, attitude accessibility, situational factors, and personality traits.

3.2.1.3 Social factors

Research has shown that social factors significantly influence consumer behaviour (Schiffman et al., 2013; Ramya & Mohamed, 2017; Lin et al., 2019; Rodrigues, Lopes & Varela, 2021). Social influence refers to how individuals modify their behaviour to comply with social environment expectations. This can manifest in various ways, such as conformity, socialization, peer pressure, obedience, leadership, persuasion, and marketing (Etuk, Anyadighibe, Eka & Uma, 2022).

Key social factors that influence consumer behaviour include family, peers, societal roles, and status. Family plays a crucial role in consumer decision-making (Tenda, John & Richard, 2012; Cotte & Wood, 2014; O'Malley & Prothero, 2017; Hamilton, 2019). Tenda et al. (2012) created a model illustrating family purchasing decision-making as a process involving various actors in different roles. A majority of consumer choices are influenced by several factors, many of which are linked to the family and their role in the consumer's life. Family members, including spouses, children, and parents, can have a strong impact on consumer purchasing behaviours (Ramya & Mohamed, 2017). Al-Azzam (2014) pointed out that purchasing behaviour is shaped by family dynamics, and family responsibilities can lead to varying demands for goods and services.

Peer influence is also a powerful determinant of consumer choices. For instance, Nawawi's (2016) study revealed that peer groups significantly influenced consumer decisions to purchase BlackBerry Smartphones in Jakarta. Moreover, Buazzizi, Muhammad, and Afhaz's (2016) research demonstrated that peer groups significantly affected the purchase of fashion wear in Tunisia. This is because people naturally belong to groups and are influenced by their peers' choices to fit

in. Additionally, a person's societal role and the status of that role often dictate certain purchasing decisions (Jonathan, 2013).

Pandey and Dixit (2011) emphasized that consumer behaviour is influenced by social factors, including the consumer's reference group, family, and social roles and statuses. Reference groups exert social influence on consumer behaviour as consumers often rely on them for purchasing decisions (Shareef, Mukerji, Dwivedi & Rana, 2019). A reference group can be an individual or group of people that significantly influences one's behaviour (Durmaz & Sebastian, 2012). The beliefs, values, attitudes, behaviours, and norms of the group can shape an individual's decisions and aspirations (Eva & Judit, 2010). For example, if a reference group approves and uses a product, those who regard the group as a reference are likely to purchase that product. Conversely, when a reference group objects to a product, all who identify with the group are less likely to buy it.

Thus from a political marketing perspective, social factors may also have an impact on voter behaviour. For instance, Biesta (2011) suggested that individuals often exhibit strong loyalty towards the political values of their family, peers, and organizations. According to Holmberg (2008), affiliation to political parties and voting decisions are influenced by social factors, including family members and the broader social environment.

3.2.1.4 Personal factors

Personal factors, unique to each individual such as age, lifestyle, personality, occupation, and economic circumstances or income, greatly impact consumer buying behaviour (Kotler et al., 2001). Age is a critical factor, as people tend to purchase different products at different stages of life, and their preferences can change over time (Ramya & Mohamed, 2016). Rani (2014) asserts that age is a key element in marketing strategy as it significantly affects consumer choices, consumption habits, and patterns. As individuals age, their needs, desires, and product expectations evolve. Age can affect a person's lifestyle, thereby altering personal needs and values (Pratap, 2017). Consumer behaviour is closely tied to

age, with the buyer's age indicating their product preferences (Kotler, 2009). According to Shamri, Suhaimi, & Alawi (2021), consumer behaviour varies with age. Older individuals, who have more purchasing experience, make choices based on their experience, while younger, less experienced individuals often rely on branding and price (Kotler & Keller, 2016).

An individual's occupation also significantly influences their buying behaviour. People in the same profession often have similar tastes in music, clothing, and hobbies, and tend to share values, opinions, desires, and ideas (Solomon, 2004). For example, a doctor's buying behaviour differs markedly from that of a lawyer or a policeman due to the unique needs of each profession. Similarly, the buying patterns of a manager and a low-level worker can greatly differ. Hence, marketers must design diverse strategies to cater to different occupational groups.

A consumer's lifestyle significantly impacts their buying behaviour and decisions. This encompasses their activities, interests, values, and opinions, and reflects their spending habits (Rani, 2014). According to Khan (2017), customers' product choices are closely tied to their lifestyle. A study by Krishnan (2011) concluded that lifestyle characteristics significantly influence purchasing decisions, with consumers often choosing products or brands that reflect their lifestyle identity. Yi and Yu (2012) also found that lifestyle has a significant positive influence on consumers' buying decisions.

Income level is another important factor that can shape consumption patterns. It is a vital source of purchasing power, and people with different income levels exhibit different buying patterns (Kotler, Armstrong, Harris, & Piercy, 2014). A positive relationship between income and buying behaviour has been noted (Mihic & Culina, 2006).

3.2.2.1 Pricing

Pricing is one method for changing consumer behaviour (Ahmetoglu et al., 2014; Rödiger & Hamm, 2015). Pricing is a crucial component of consumer behaviour because it determines the demand for a product and can potentially affect how much businesses can make (Yeoman et al., 2017). According to consumer behaviour strategists, pricing may affect how consumers perceive things, with luxury goods frequently commanding greater prices than everyday products without intentional positioning or branding (Dhaliwal et al., 2020). Businesses utilize strategic pricing to sway consumer behaviour, as is clear during seasonal promotions when they provide particular product percentage discounts in an effort to increase sales by lowering prices (Oliveira-Castro et al., 2005). Pricing is one of the most successful consumer behaviour methods, as seen by most consumers' enthusiastic responses to sales and promotions (Husnain et al., 2019). According to Kotler and Armstrong (2010), pricing is one component of a company's marketing mix that can be exploited to produce income.

In their research, Al-Salamin, Al-Baqshi, Al-Rassasi, and Al-Salem (2015) found that the high cost of renowned brand products negatively impacts the buying process. While young consumers exhibit a keen interest in branded goods, their limited income often prevents such purchases, despite them being a significant market segment for these brands (Boztepe, 2012). As per Al-Salamin and colleagues (2015), exorbitant prices associated with famous brands serve as a deterrent to purchasing. Young individuals, although drawn to branded products, are often impeded by their low income. Consequently, price is the sole component of the marketing mix that brings in revenue, whereas the other elements result in costs.

3.2.2.2 Promotion

One of the effective consumer behaviour strategies is promotion. Kotler and Armstrong (2010) define promotion as the strategic act of creating awareness. Promotion is one of the elements of the 4Ps of the marketing mix. It is executed

through advertisements, personal selling, marketing campaigns and other exciting activities, such as experiential marketing events, which are geared towards creating product awareness and influencing consumer behaviour towards outcomes such as purchase decisions, loyalty and referrals (Keller, 2013; Misra & Kanda, 2019). Promotion effectively informs consumers of the products and services of firms and helps consumers to acquire knowledge and information useful during the decision-making process (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2007; Kotler & Armstrong, 2010). In, various techniques associated with sales promotions, such as posters, banners, buttons, hats, bumper stickers, printed shirts and others, are used by political parties in their campaigns. In addition, it is highlighted that political parties use strategic marketing communication plans as a promotional strategy.

3.2.2.3 Packaging

Since visual stimuli impact consumers, marketers have long tried to change their behaviour by using appealing packaging (Kotler & Armstrong, 2010). According to Yokokawa et al. (2018), consumers are influenced by package design and can decide to accept or reject a product or brand based on its packaging. Wikström et al. (2014) and other researchers also noted that container design is a significant consumer behaviour approach businesses may employ to increase demand for a product. Companies have strategically used distinctive packaging because it has been shown to affect customers' perceptions of product quality and eventual purchase decisions. Packaging is a consumer behaviour method that increases consumer demand and shapes how consumers react to particular items and brands. The way political campaigns are packaged is also essential in political marketing, just as in mainstream marketing. Bajwa and Yousaf (2022) noted that packaging political campaigns as an aspect of branding a political party is important in influencing the political perception of the public.

3.2.2.4 Branding

Branding is the act of endowing a product, service, idea or place with a unique identity that can distinguish it from competing products on the market (Keller, 2013). By positioning products as value-added offerings that appeal to consumers' emotions and forge connections that lead to a lifetime of consumption and patronage, brands can increase revenue for their businesses (Keller, 2013; Pinson & Brodsahl, 2014). When utilising branding, businesses may make goods that customers want to buy and support (Keller, 2013). Uncertainty about a product has been found to affect consumers, and branding is used to lower risk and foster consumer confidence in a manufacturer's offering (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2008). No matter where customers are, consumers have grown affluent in certain brands and support them (Kotler & Armstrong, 2010). This demonstrates the power of branding as one of the most successful methods for changing consumer behaviour.

The practice of applying branding principles to intentionally cultivate personal reputation is a well-established tactic in political marketing, both formally and informally. The function and structure of brands in the political sphere parallel branding notions in the consumer market. A potent political brand can directly translate into votes (Gangloff & Yuran, 2020), similar to how a robust commercial brand directly correlates with the company's value (Cox & McCubbins, 2004; Lock & Harris, 2001; Needham, 2005; Smith, 2001; Veloutsu, 2015; White & de Chernatony, 2002). As Needham (2006) has illustrated, branding is used by political parties to influence voters by imbuing party leaders with brand attributes, fostering relationships with supporters that transcend the initial voting engagement. Political branding has ventured into areas such as personal branding, celebrity endorsements, and community engagement to build a more nuanced model of interaction between candidates and the voter demographic (Hughes & Dann, 2009).

3.2.3 Voting decision

Voters must be aware of their options (the parties or candidates) and have knowledge pertinent to at least one of them to make a choice (Gigerenzer & Goldstein, 1996). Then, he or she must choose based on a particular decision procedure. Together, these actions make up the decision-making process. Prior to using a specific decision-making method, it's essential for the voter to acquire relevant information to make an informed choice. Therefore, the procedural perspective on voting forms a fitting theoretical groundwork for investigating how the assimilation or influence of information, collected throughout the electoral campaign, shapes the voter's decision-making process (Lau & Redlawsk, 2007). The decision phase, when a method is utilized to make a choice based on information about the various possibilities accessible, is of utmost importance.

Voters can choose based on the decision-making process. Voters make decisions based on the information available to them at the moment, but the method used to make those decisions will significantly affect the result (Gigerenzer & Goldstein, 1996). This is because the decision mechanism only allows for a portion of the information to be kept and discards the remainder. The bounded rationality framework, developed in response to the purely rational decision model, is the foundation for this strategy. The expected utilities of the parties are compared to one another during the decision-making process in the rational voting model. The predicted utility for each party is calculated using all the available information. Having done this, choosing the party with the highest expected usefulness is simple (Harrop & Miller, 1987). Downs (1957), in referring to this model, however, conceded that numerous fundamental assumptions of the model were empirically dubious. For instance, the rational choice model presumes that information acquisition is devoid of costs. However, this supposition is untenable as the process of gathering information invariably requires resources, such as effort and time. To illustrate, a voter devoting time to analyze a political party's campaign agenda or policy is foregoing time that could be allocated to other activities. Even though most citizens possess fundamental political knowledge, the presumption of complete information is never justifiable.

Rational choice theories posit that voters make their decisions based on a mechanism aimed at maximizing utility. However, the assumptions required to support such a conclusion are often unrealistic. As highlighted by Van der Eijk, Van der Brug and Franklin (2006), not every voter opts for the party that they perceive would provide them the maximum expected utility. Psychological theories of decision-making suggest multiple mechanisms could be at work concurrently (Herstein, 1981). While expected utility might be the final factor influencing the decision, various pieces of information could initially bias these expected utilities. Given voters' cognitive limitations, not all information can be taken into account.

The framework of bounded rationality posits that voters are rational, but only to a certain degree. This concept fundamentally assumes that decision-makers generally don't seek the perfect decision but one that is satisfactory (Simon, 1985). It's not feasible for voters to process all the available information (Sniderman, Brody, & Tetlock, 1991). Instead, the decision-making process often results from a low information rationale where not all information is considered. Popkin (1991) describes this process during electoral campaigns: voters generally don't seek out information actively, but rather accumulate it, disregarding some while retaining others. According to the bounded rationality framework, voters primarily use heuristics or cognitive shortcuts to make decisions. These shortcuts limit the information considered and are always employed, even when nearly unavoidable (Tversky & Kahneman, 1997).

Heuristics have the advantage of enabling voters to make a decision without being overwhelmed by the cognitive load of processing all information (Lau & Redlawsk, 2007). For example, they might only consider the most recent or easily accessible information. The main downside, however, is that disregarding some information may result in biased or suboptimal decisions. Despite this, cognitive heuristics are well-established in psychology and have made their way into political science (Sniderman et al., 1991). If we accept that heuristics are the key mechanisms in play, it will significantly shape our understanding of campaign effects.

3.2.4 Factors influencing decision to vote: political perspective

Countless factors are identified to influence voters' decision to vote. The study looked at these factors from the perspective of individual factors, the social environment and the attributes of the election and the campaign. These issues are well discussed in the chapter section since they are relevant to the study and linked to the consumer behavioural factors that influence consumer decisions in marketing.

3.2.4.1 Individual factors

The individual factors are demographic variables. One such variable is the educational level of a person (Barbaranelli, Caprara, Vecchione, & Fraley, 2007; Caprara, Schwartz, Capanna, Vecchione, & Barbaranelli, 2006; Gerber, Huber, Doherty, & Dowling, 2012; Schoen & Schumann, 2007; Vecchione, Schoen, Castro, Cieciuch, Pavlopoulos & Caprara, 2011). Research indicates that the higher a person's level of education, the likelier they are to vote. The explanation is education increases the sense of civic duty such as voting (Harder & Krosnick, 2008). According to Hillygus (2010), people who took more social science classes in college had a more civic duty and were also more likely to turn out on election day (as cited in Harder & Krosnick, 2008).

Age is also regarded as determinant of voting behaviour. The argument is that older people are more likely to vote than the younger ones because they know more about the candidates and understand the intricacies of voting (Blais, Gidengil, Nadeau & Nevitte, 2002; Nevitte, 1999; Anderson, Loewen & McGregor, 2018; Harder & Krosnick, 2008). Other authors (Ysmal, 2019; Muxel, 2011) opine that the vote of youth is more volatile than that of the elderly. According to François, Claire and Mariot (2014), the youngest and the oldest people abstain the least. According to Quintelier (2007), the lifecycle effect is one of the major reasons explaining the less likely decision of young people to vote. For Quintelier (2007), the reason is that young people are less experienced in electoral processes, have

lower education and unstable residence and employment, disrupted social and political ties and other distinct characteristics and social inclinations are more common among young people. It is further suggested that young people have a narrower conception of politics and, therefore, consider it irrelevant to their lives since politicians fail to address the questions that trouble young people. As a result, young people view politicians and political parties as untrustworthy and self-interested (O'Toole et al., 2013).

Personal attributes (Rosema, 2004; Krosnick, 2008; Shang & Lau, 2015) such as openness and extraversion (Vecchione & Caprara, 2008; Osborne & Sibley, 2012); locus of control (Sweetser, 2014) have been found to influence voting behaviour.

3.2.4.2 The social environment

The family is a social environmental factor that plays a large role in voting behaviour. Research shows that people inherit voting preferences from their families (Rosema, 2014). Parents with high socioeconomic status pass on their voting preferences to their children, owing to the indirect effects of education, the more direct effects of the political behaviours they learn, and the advantages they gain due to their social class (Plutzer, 2012). Participation in civic organizations increases voter turnout. Engaging in cooperative work with others motivates people to cast their votes. Middle-school involvement in certain student organizations, particularly those with civic participation, such as scouts, religious youth groups, and non-school team sports, predicts whether people will vote in the first elections, they are eligible to participate in. The effect of scout groups is particularly robust, remaining significant after controlling for socioeconomic status and academic attainment (Frisco, Muller, & Dodson, 2004).

The neighbourhood context also influences one's vote. In fact, sociological models of voting behaviour explicitly recognize the effect of one's social groups such as neighbourhood context in determining voting preferences. The power of social messages in mobilizing voters in the age of the internet was seen in an experiment

involving 61 million people on Facebook. People in one treatment were given a social message at the top of their news feeds in which they were encouraged to vote and click an “I Voted” button, given information on polling places, and shown pictures of friends who had already clicked the button. A second experimental treatment was shown an informational message in which they were also informed about polling places and encouraged to vote and click the button. However, pictures of friends who clicked the button were not shown. The social message mobilised significantly more people than the informational message, suggesting that real-life ties, reflected in online friendships, play a significant role in voting behaviour (Bond, Fariss, Jones, Kramer, Marlow, Settle & Fowler, 2012).

These real-life ties may be with family and close friends, and even co-workers with whom we do not have close relationships are significant contributors to our interpersonal discussion networks (Beck, Dalton, Greene, & Huckfeldt, 2022). Related to this is the heuristic summarised as “Vote for the party or candidate others say you should,” the sixth of the heuristics discussed by Rosema (2004). Certain issues also determine voting preferences along social categories, such as religion and gender. Abortion, for example, is a particularly polarizing issue. In the 2004 US presidential elections, pro-life voters chose George W. Bush, while pro-choice people voted for John Kerry (Frisco, Muller & Dodson, 2004). Differences are also found across genders regarding issue appreciation: Kaufmann (2020) found that issues such as reproductive health, gender equality, and legal protection for the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) are increasingly important determinants of partisanship (Frisco, Muller & Dodson, 2004) for women. The same study found that women are more liberal than men regarding these issues. Partisan women are also highly likely to cross party lines on election day to support a female candidate from another party (Brians, 2005).

3.2.4.3 Election and campaign characteristics

In the lead-up to elections, political parties intensify their efforts to disseminate information to the public, resulting in a noticeable uptick in mass media coverage

of politics. This creates a marked contrast between 'campaign times' and 'normal times'. Direct evidence comparing media coverage during campaign periods and regular periods is sparse, but the existing data suggests a heightened focus on politics during campaign periods (Van Aelst & De Swert, 2009; Van Aelst, Thorbjørnsrud, & Aalberg, 2011). In addition, parties strive to connect directly with voters through newspaper ads, TV commercials, distributing leaflets, or even through face-to-face discussions. However, voters aren't merely passive recipients of information, as interpersonal communication also plays a vital role in spreading political messages. Consequently, election campaigns contribute significantly to the proliferation of political information.

As the election date draws closer, the motivation to vote increases, however, early registration deadlines might prevent potential voters from registering when their motivation is at its peak. Candidate characteristics may also sway voter preferences; thus campaigns can activate individuals who might otherwise abstain from voting. A wealth of research supports the notion that campaigns can steer voters' decisions by offering information and forging connections (Fridkin & Kenney, 2011; Sides & Vavreck, 2013). The most basic piece of information – the candidate's name and existence – can effectively be highlighted by campaigns, thereby making voters aware of the candidates (Jacobson, 2013; Elms & Sniderman 2006; Fridkin & Kenney, 2011). This is key because voters are generally hesitant to support unknown candidates (Jacobson, 2013). Also, an initial awareness of the candidate is crucial for other types of information to come into play, impacting vote choice in several interconnected ways.

Firstly, campaigns enable voters to learn about the candidates and the issues that will influence their voting decisions (Popkin, 1991; Bartels, 1993; Johnston, Jamieson & Hagen, 2004; Alvarez, 1997; Vavreck, 2009; Fridkin & Kenney, 2011). They provide insights into candidates' qualifications, traits, issue stances, competence, and existence, and raise awareness about pertinent political conditions such as the state of the economy and national issues. More importantly, they create associations between information about candidates and issues, and voters' pre-existing attitudes and beliefs. This process, known as priming, reminds

voters of the electoral significance of their current attitudes and perceptions (Bartels, 2006), thus altering the importance they assign to various considerations (Hillygus, 2010). Research has shown that campaigns can increase the salience of a range of considerations, including the state of the economy (Vavreck, 2009; Sides & Vavreck, 2013; Erikson & Wlezien, 2012), ideology (Gelman & King 1993; Bartels, 2006, Hillygus & Shields, 2008), candidate images (Druckman, 2004), and diverse policy issues (Druckman, 2004; Kenski, Hardy & Jamieson, 2010).

Campaigns operate by presenting diverse pieces of information and striving to highlight different considerations, based on how their strategists wish voters to perceive the choices before them. Evidence suggests that campaigns rarely modify voters' fundamental inclinations. Instead, they function by prompting voters to conceptualize the choice in a way that encourages support for their side (Hillygus & Shields, 2008; Vavreck, 2009). According to Popkin (1991), campaign communications influence voters by making them aware of the correlations between their personal lives and interests, the personality traits of the political leaders they select, the policies implemented by the government, and the efficiency of its governance. Viewed in this light, the art of campaign persuasion is no different from other forms of political persuasion: it revolves around providing compelling reasons for individuals to act as you would like them to.

Physical appearance is another notable aspect to consider. Voters draw inferences about traits based on facial characteristics and are inclined to vote for candidates they view as competent, with competence deemed the most critical attribute a politician should possess (Hall, Goren, Chaiken, & Todorov, 2009). Moreover, voters' preferences for physical traits fluctuate depending on the situation: in times of war, masculine features, suggesting dominance, are preferred, while in peaceful times, feminine traits, associated with prosocial behaviour, are more desirable (Little, Burriss, Jones, & Roberts, 2007). Incumbency is another element related to the candidate that influences voting preferences. Incumbent candidates have a strong race advantage (Hall, Goren, Chaiken & Todorov, 2009).

It is also of the view that negative campaigning can also affect mobilization. It stimulates problem awareness and anxiety about candidates and makes people think that races are closer, motivating people to turn out. However, negative campaigning might also stimulate other psychological mechanisms (for example, it could undermine political self-efficacy) that impede other people from voting (Martin, 2014).

Lau, Sigelman and Rovner (2007) underscored that while negative advertisements tend to be marginally more memorable and informative compared to other types of ads, they don't enhance political interest. These ads diminish the target's support as much as they reduce backing for the attacker, resulting in a statistically neutral net effect. Consequently, they concluded, "there is no substantiation in the research literature that negative political campaigns effectively shift votes in favor of those who conduct them" (Lau et al., 2007: 183).

3.3 THEORIES APPLIED TO THE STUDY

Relevant theories which underpinned the study are discussed in this section. These theories include psycho-social theory, rationality theory, the Engel, Kollat and Blackwell (EKB) decision making model, the Hawkins, Best and Coney (HBC) model and the Stimulus-Organisms-Response (S-O-R) model. These theories support the hypothesised relationship between the variables as shown in the conceptual framework.

3.3.1 Psycho-social theory

The theory regarding voting behaviour has roots in the Michigan School's research (Campbell, Converse, Miller, & Stokes, 1960), conducted during the US presidential elections in 1948, 1952, and 1956. The theory employs a combination of sociological and psychological factors to elucidate voting preferences. Its primary tenet is that partisanship drives voting behaviour, indicating that a voter's affiliation with a political party represents psychological alignment, which may or may not lead to a vote (Saxena, 2017). This emotional connection to a political

party influences individual behaviour and defines if a person prefers to identify with a particular reference group, which significantly impacts the individual's voting decision.

Individuals' values and attitudes are shaped by their family, friends, and colleagues. Partisanship involves social identification, where individuals associate with their social groups, fostering a sense of belonging to their chosen political party (Green, Palmquist, & Schickler, 2002). Saxena (2017), however, firmly stated that partisanship does not necessarily convert into a vote but instead serves as a gauge for assessing elections and the leaders' positions. Essentially, partisanship aids in evaluating leaders, associated issues, campaign events reported in media, and conversations about the election within their social circles.

Partisan voters are viewed as loyal supporters who deeply identify with a political party (Howard & Sheth, 1969). This robust connection makes it challenging to convince partisan voters to switch their vote or withdraw support from their chosen party. Partisans typically remain loyal to their party, even when their political beliefs diverge significantly from the party's principles (Jowell & Cottice, 1985). Thus, a voter's party identification is seen as stable and unlikely to change easily, with the vote choice during elections merely reflecting this long-standing predisposition. However, voters' political leanings can undergo minor shifts depending on the specific issues and candidates in a given election (Campbell, 1964). Some scholars (Dalton, 2000; Franklin, Mackie, & Valen, 1992; Wattenberg, 1994) also point to instances of voter misalignment with partisanship, suggesting a possibility for a voter to cast a ballot for a different party despite psychological alignment with a specific one.

The socio-cognitive theory, a subset of the psychological theory, offers another perspective on voting behaviour. This theory posits that an individual's socio-cognitive attributes influence their voting patterns. The formation of political attitudes and interests is a function of one's personality (Sears & Funk, 2003). As with any behavioural trait, these socio-cognitive characteristics can stabilize or evolve over time, with traits like patriotism prevalent among young voters, while

practicality and rationality may dominate later years. Additionally, an individual's association with a political party could hinge on their issue orientation – the perspectives and stances on issues and the degree to which policy preferences influence their vote.

For instance, a voter who prioritizes education policies will likely cast their vote for the party that best aligns with their viewpoint. Meanwhile, candidate orientation pertains to voters' interest in the candidates' personalities, including their perceived likability. Voters may also be swayed by the candidate's attributes, such as demeanor, style, and intellect (Rabinowitz & Macdonald, 1989; Bartels, 2002). Furthermore, the theory suggests that voters choose candidates not solely based on personal traits but also on their stand on certain issues or party affiliation. This perspective doesn't make a clear distinction between party affiliation, candidates, and issues. There's also a notion that a voter's political knowledge significantly impacts their voting decisions, being a crucial component of their cognitive understanding. Essentially, the psycho-social theory shapes their assessment of candidates and electoral issues (Campbell et al., 1960).

The psycho-social theory proposes that an individual's first political influences stem from their social groups, primarily their family, which cultivates a sense of partisanship. This partisanship then affects how voters process information and evaluate issues and candidates, ultimately shaping their voting decision. Overall, the psychological theory asserts that early childhood socialization leading to party identification creates a "perceptual screen." This screen filters how voters assess candidates and issues, guiding them towards their voting choice (Campbell et al., 1960; Evans, 2004; Erdmann, 2007). Niemi and Weisberg (2004) maintain that while parties and candidates can impact electoral results, the key determinant of voter choice remains the issues because all parties and candidates present their stance on issues during campaigns, which forms the basis of the electorate's choice. However, they also concede that voters often decide on their preferred party or candidate before the campaign even begins.

3.3.2 Rationality theory

Antunes (2010) presents the rationality theory, also known as the rational choice model, which likens voters' behaviour during elections to consumers' behaviour in an economic market. The theory fundamentally suggests that voters, much like market consumers, make rational decisions when choosing among the policy offerings of parties or candidates. Voting, under this theory, is seen as a strategic action rather than a routine habit, contrasting sharply with the socio-psychological aspects of voting behaviour. The theory asserts that voters have the ability to process complex information and make sound decisions. Voters' decisions are considered rational, clear-cut, and made after thorough deliberation on the issues at hand (Pomper, 1972).

In this model, voters are thought capable of understanding the political landscape and basing their choices on this understanding. While ideologies matter, voters primarily rely on the actual performance of a political party. This theory is rooted in an economic explanation of voting behaviour (Arrow, 1951; Downs, 1957), suggesting that economic variables—like resources, goods, and technology—impact political decisions. Much like businesses aim for profit maximization and consumers seek maximum utility, the theory posits that voters strive to maximize their vote's utility, and political parties aim to maximize their electoral gains from their political propositions (Saxena, 2017). Accordingly, political parties and politicians craft policies that resonate with voters and tailor their ideologies to garner the widest possible support from diverse social groups.

The rational choice theory operates on the assumption that all decisions made by voters or political parties are rational and self-interest driven, aiming to maximize the utility of the decision. The theory also assumes that it's possible to predict the outcomes of choices made, albeit with a degree of uncertainty. For political parties, rationality is equated with winning elections. From the voters' perspective, they'll vote for a political party if the utility of doing so exceeds that of voting for another party (Saxena, 2017). Ultimately, this theory views voting as a deliberate rational act in which individuals weigh the pros and cons of available options when making

their voting decision (Catt, 2006). After careful consideration of costs and benefits, individuals will vote for the party or candidate whose policies and programs best serve their self-interests (Andersen & Heath, 2003).

The theory focuses on two decisions made during elections: whether to vote or abstain, and who to vote for if one decides to vote. The rational assumption is that an individual will vote if the anticipated benefit outweighs the cost of not voting (Farber, 2009). Once the decision to vote is made, the rational voter imagines a scenario where each party wins and compares the potential benefits. They will vote for the party or candidate that best serves their interests. However, the voter may abstain if either party winning provides similar utility (Antunes, 2010). This theory posits that voters will analyze their choices thoroughly and opt for outcomes with higher utility over those with lower utility (Aldrich, 1993), with personal interests guiding their voting choice.

This model perceives voters as individualistic entities, asserting that individuals make voting decisions independent of their social group membership or psychological attachment to a political party (Downs, 1957). Consequently, voters, seen as self-interested and materialistic individuals, will prioritize personal benefits over collective gains. As a result, such voters typically lack strong party loyalty or connections to political parties (Bartle & Griffiths, 2002; Fiorina, 2007).

In the electoral market, swing voters will exchange their support for potential benefits such as improved living conditions, wage hikes, or any other initiative that promises to positively affect them (Bartle & Griffiths, 2002). While the rationality model places emphasis on the actions of the individual, it doesn't disregard the influence of social structures on an individual's behaviour. However, it considers collective behaviour and decision-making as the sum of individual interests (Olsson, 2015). Hence, group voting behaviour is perceived as a compilation and representation of individual rational voting behaviour.

The traditional rational approach to consumer decision-making has been increasingly scrutinized as research reveals that for many products, consumers

either dedicate minimal time or skip what are typically regarded as crucial steps in the decision-making process. Research has found (Bozinoff, 2012; Lachman et al., 1979) that consumers often demonstrate subconscious behavior when making decisions, suggesting that consumer decision models attempt to rationalize an inherently subconscious process within an overtly conscious information framework. Even though the real-world consumer decision-making process may appear inconsistent and chaotic, it is actually practical, adaptable, and frequently opportunistic (Hayes-Roth, 2019), an approach that doesn't mesh well with traditional structured decision-making models. Some studies, for example, have shown that many consumers conduct little or no preliminary information search and have minimal plans before stepping into retail stores (Solomon, 1996; D'Astous, Bensouda & Guindon, 2009). It became clear that consumers employ an array of decision-making strategies depending on the product, situation, context, and prior experiences (Solomon, 1996).

Additional research has suggested that consumers typically do not employ systematic decision rules to optimize their choices, but rather rely on heuristics, leading to satisfactory decisions (Solomon, 1996). The notion of the rational consumer became the target of numerous critiques arguing that consumers process both cognitive and emotional information prior to making a purchase (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2000; Alet, Boshoff, & Rousseau, 2001; D'Astous et al., 2009). Cognitive information processing involves proactive planning and purposeful consumer behavior that requires mental activity, whereas emotional processing relates to the evaluation of product options within more abstract terms. Ratchford and Vaughn (2008) proposed that factors like ego satisfaction, social approval, and sensory pleasures could guide decision-making activities that diverge from those traditionally accepted and depicted in consumer decision-making models. They expressed concern that conventional models might exaggerate the significance of external factors in consumer decision-making, while underplaying or ignoring emotional aspects.

Bettman (1993) underscores that comprehending consumer decision-making behavior necessitates a focus on the utility of products and an understanding of

what these products represent to consumers. Guided by emotional needs and considerations, consumers narrow down their choices during the decision-making process and modify their decision-making approach (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2000; Bettman, 1993). Schiffman and Kanuk (2000) characterize a rational consumer decision as one where the consumer is cognizant of all product alternatives, can accurately rank these alternatives based on pros and cons, and can pinpoint the best option. However, arguments opposing rational consumer behavior suggest that consumers operate in a flawed world with restricted knowledge and abilities, and that certain values may predominate their aims and decisions. Consequently, the concept of rational consumer behavior seems excessively idealistic and oversimplified.

3.3.3 Engel, Kollat and Blackwell (EKB) decision making theory

The EKB theory describes the consumer decision-making process and how choices are made among available options. This model is based on theories and models from consumer psychology such as Howard and Sheth's (1969) buyer behaviour theory and Nicosia's (1976) consumer decision process theory. In this theory, a consumer undertakes an external search for more information and might decide not to make a purchase if dissatisfied with the findings. Thus, the decision-making process may not necessarily lead to a purchase. However, the gathered information could be used in the future. The decision-making process could also be interrupted due to significant issues, or the consumer may fail to reach a final decision due to various reasons. Thus, the EKB theory is considered a critical work in consumer behaviour (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2008).

This theory essentially comprises five sequential steps where information is processed before making consumption decisions. It begins with recognizing a need or problem. This leads to a search for alternative solutions, involving the collection of relevant information from various sources, both external and internal. The consumer then evaluates these alternatives based on their own criteria to determine a preference. After evaluation of alternatives, a decision is made

regarding product choice and purchase decision., after the chosen alternative is purchased, the customer is likely to experience dissonance and uncertainties about the purchase decision, leading to the final step of post-purchase evaluation and behaviour. This process is depicted in Figure 3.1.



Figure 3.1: The purchasing decision process

Source: Adapted from Kotler and Keller (2012, page 188)

In relation to elections and voting behaviour, it is evident that some voters choose to gather more comprehensive knowledge than others. They might decide not to vote if the information they gather does not align with their expectations regarding the political parties. Such experiences could influence their decisions in future elections, causing them to abstain from voting. They might also abstain if they could not gather sufficient information about the political parties due to unforeseen circumstances.

However, the EKB theory has been criticized. Saxena (2017) noted that, despite having numerous feedback loops, the theory illustrates a linear consumer decision-making process. It suggests that a consumer gathers more information and evaluates alternatives, ultimately leading to a purchase or decision to abstain. But it's acknowledged in consumer behaviour literature that the buying decision-making process isn't always sequential (Brinberg & Lutz, 1986), and there can be instances where multiple processes occur simultaneously (Phillips & Bradshaw, 1993). This could apply to election scenarios as well.

Consumer decision-making models offer structured, comprehensive frameworks that portray the fundamental consumer decision-making process from specific viewpoints and within defined contexts (Walters, 1978). These models often guide and shape consumer behavior research, including product-specific investigations. Nonetheless, this could imply that when using a specific decision-making model, the research approach has to conform to certain presumptions put forth by the model's initial creators. This could lead to a prejudiced perspective of the consumer decision-making process from the outset (Burns & Gentry, 1990).

Sirgy (1983) questioned the conventional understanding of consumer behavior, introducing a level of analysis dimension in his examination of consumer behavior research within the theory of social cognition. He suggested classifying some consumer decision procedures at a micro level (focused entirely on sensation, perception), others at a micro-macro level (incorporating the five steps of decision-making), and some at a macro level (pertaining to repeat purchase behavior and innovation diffusion). Rather than generalizing the decision-making process, Sirgy (1983) advocated for the categorization of consumer decisions for discussion and research.

Building on Hoyer's (1984) work, D'Astous et al. (1989) concluded that consumer decision-making should be examined in light of the relevant aspects of the purchase, specifically, purchase frequency and importance. Although it's not a hard and fast rule, it's widely accepted that the significance of a product correlates with the complexity of the decision-making process. For example, when more substantial social, personal, and financial risks are implicated, consumers typically

seek external information and engage in a more thoughtful decision-making process (Du Plessis & Rousseau, 1999; Du Plessis et al., 1991; Assael, 1989). Consequently, consumers usually allocate more cognitive effort towards purchasing a product deemed important.

Consumer decision-making models have also been critiqued for their idealized representations (Cox et al., 1983). Given instances of unusually brief planning periods for procuring complex items, research should strive for a closer match between theory and reality. Due to their complexity and detail, these models often imply that extended purchasing behaviors are standard. The constructivist framework indicates that consumer attitudes and preferences, derived from previous experiences, are not merely disclosed but are actually constructed during the decision-making process. Particularly in infrequent purchases, consumer goals are often indistinct and are formulated within the confines of personal experience. The assumption in hierarchical consumer decision-making models that the decision is independent of the alternative chosen and that the decision-making process invariably passes through various stages to reach a final decision may not always be accurate. Consumers often make or avoid choices depending on the situation (Dhar, 1992), suggesting that in-store search activities might exert a more significant influence on consumer decision-making than pre-store readiness. This aspect is not represented in traditional consumer decision-making models.

Traditional models propose that the decision-making process adheres to a sequential or linear order (Martin & Kiecker, 1990). According to Newell and Simon's problem-solving theory, these models generally assert that only a single information process occurs at any one time (Martin & Kiecker, 1990). While more contemporary models in cognitive science allow for parallel stages in the decision-making process, all conventional consumer decision-making models are linear. Considering that the momentum for model building waned after 1978 (Du Plessis et al., 1991), it might be beneficial to reevaluate if additional research in this area is necessary. Stewart (1990) contends that despite the extensive work done in consumer decision-making, the scope has remained relatively narrow. He presents a simplified consumer decision-making model, questioning the widespread belief

that a purchase signifies the culmination of consumer decisions. Instead, he proposes a model devoid of a distinct starting or ending point and encourages studies that deliberately shift the starting point of the decision-making process to explore what transpires before and after a specific scenario. He also observes that due to decision automation, consumers often cannot account for their actions or behaviors, suggesting there is much more to understand about consumer decision-making.

Olshavsky and Granbois (1979) suggest that the prevailing assumption in consumer behavior research is that a decision process precedes purchases. They maintain that information processing often depends on previously collected and stored information, indicating that consumers likely traverse the decision-making process faster than conventional models imply (John & Whitney, 1982). This perspective has led some researchers to claim that these models often overly complicate relatively straightforward situations and tend to overgeneralize specific product and situational conditions. Despite the 1982 iteration of the Engel Blackwell model (an extension of the original Engel, Kollat & Blackwell model from 1968) (Du Plessis et al., 1991) offering an in-depth view of high and low involvement decision-making, it still seems excessively intricate. Little has evolved since these models were first introduced to address the aforementioned points of contention.

Srinivasan (1993) takes a different stance from previous viewpoints, suggesting that consumers might be educated and motivated to enhance their decision-making through extensive information searches during the decision-making process. However, an excess of complicated information often leads to information overload, resulting in the information being rejected as it threatens the consumer's self-concept and confidence. Generating such information could be time-consuming and potentially costly, making it easier and less intimidating for consumers to rely on previously gathered information. In Srinivasan's perspective, even comprehensive product searches may not be as intricate as depicted in traditional consumer decision models.

Consumer choice processes are influenced by factors such as product type, timing, and the individuals involved (Burns & Gentry, 1990), so no consumer decision-making model can entirely represent all purchases or complex consumer decisions. Therefore, using these models to describe or interpret consumer decision-making tends to oversimplify the actual situation. While Walters (1978) acknowledges that these models simplify reality, their detailed nature might appear complex and exhaustive to novice researchers, creating an illusion that they accommodate all facets of decision-making. Harrel (1990) also points out concerns that frequently used multi-attribute models, like the Howard Sheth-model and Engel, Kollat, and Blackwell model, assume attributes' importance and often overemphasize brand choice. While brand decision-making does form a significant part of consumer decision-making, it does not represent the whole process (Harrel, 1990).

Real-life situations often present consumers with incomplete information, making the detailed, rational decision-making depicted by traditional models nearly impossible (Burke, 1990). Under these suboptimal conditions, decision shortcuts become the go-to alternative. Even under ideal conditions, consumers weigh product alternatives as if establishing statistical expectations based on probability-weighted outcomes, implying a compensatory choice process. Many studies show that consumers, when making decisions under uncertainty, are highly concerned with negative information or losses. As such, consumers typically select the option with the smallest potential loss, a non-compensatory strategy focusing on losses, potentially due to consumers' inability to consider key concepts or features that would result in a satisfactory outcome (Hansen, 1992). Such decision-making behaviour deviates from rational decision-making and isn't captured by traditional models.

Like Chhabra and Olshavsky (1986), who found that product evaluations are often done holistically based on memory-retrieved preferences, Burke (1990) acknowledges the use of alternative decision-making strategies when confronted with insufficient information. Burke (1990) states that missing information often compels consumers to adopt an alternative approach to decision-making. This is

especially true for complex decisions requiring a higher level of understanding and infrequent purchases where consumers lack relevant experience. When consumers feel overwhelmed, they tend to follow alternative decision-making paths (Burke, 1990; Solomon, 1996).

In Chhabra and Olshavsky's view (1986), consumers heavily rely on prior experiences, known as scripts, in decision-making. They suggest that consumers can even "decide not to decide", delegating the choice to someone else, or use hybrid strategies combining personal information with recommendations from friends. These possibilities are hard to discern from traditional models. According to Bettman (1993), decision-makers aim to make good decisions while conserving cognitive effort, choosing a strategy that offers a reasonable accuracy/effort trade-off. Consumers use different strategies in different situations, which traditional models fail to capture. Consequently, these models, which predominantly reflect classical economic philosophy, are founded on logical positivism, with evidence of being enriched with psychological rationales (Du Plessis et al., 1991; Firat, 1985).

In consumer decision-making models, predicting consumer behaviour to exploit and profit from behaviour trends takes precedence over understanding and explaining consumer decision behaviour. Traditional models embody a technological-managerial orientation focusing on influencing, controlling, and managing specific phenomena (Firat, 1985). These models are seemingly uninterested in why certain actions occur, despite claims to the contrary (Engel et al., 1995; Walters, 1978). The disciplines of marketing and consumer behaviour tend to study buyer behaviour rather than consumer behaviour, the former being more measurable and understandable. Notable theorists such as Engel, Kollat, Blackwell, and Nicosia have accepted this (Firat, 1985). However, a study of consumer behaviour can provide insights for better satisfying consumer needs, a crucial concern for consumer scientists, whereas buyer behaviour aligns more closely with a marketing approach.

A major advantage of the Consumer Decision Model is its ability to adapt and evolve since its initial introduction in 1968. This ongoing evolution has enhanced

the model's explanatory power, considering advances in consumer behaviour theory and knowledge. One notable improvement is the incorporation of elements such as consumption and divestment, aligning with modern definitions of consumer behaviour that encompass these stages of consumption (Peter & Olson, 2008; Schiffman & Kanuk, 2007; Solomon & Bamossy, 2006). As a result, the model offers a transparent representation of the consumption process, which is easy to understand and intuitively satisfying (Foxall, 1990). However, the model's mechanistic approach has been criticized for being too limiting to fully encompass the diverse scenarios of consumer decision-making (Loudon & Bitta, 1993).

Similar to the theory of buyer behaviour, the effects of environmental and individual factors are assumed to be specific to certain procedures within the model. This notion seems counterintuitive and overlooks the potential broader impacts of these variables. For instance, individual variations may significantly influence the marketing stimuli a consumer encounters and the ways these stimuli are perceived and processed. Moreover, the environmental and individual variables have been criticized for their ambiguous definition and role in the decision-making process (Loudon & Bitta 1993). For example, the impact of environmental factors is acknowledged, but their role in influencing behaviour is not clearly defined. Also, individual purchase motives are only indirectly mentioned within need recognition, somewhat ignoring a substantial and significant theoretical area of focus (Bagozzi, 2002, Loudon & Bitta, 1993).

3.3.4 The Hawkins, Best and Coney (HBC) model

The HBC (Hawkins, Best, and Coney) model proposes that both cognitive and affective processes play a significant role in consumer decision-making, necessitating a comprehensive understanding of the drivers of consumption and choice. According to Hawkins, Best, and Coney (1998), consumer needs are influenced by various internal and external factors categorized under consumer self-concept and lifestyle. The model illustrates those internal forces like perception, emotions, and learning, along with external influences such as culture,

family, and demographics, generate experiences and acquisitions that shape consumer self-concept and lifestyle. Consequently, these experiences and acquisitions translate into needs and desires that drive the decision-making process, building upon the concepts of the EKB (Engel, Kollat, and Blackwell) model.

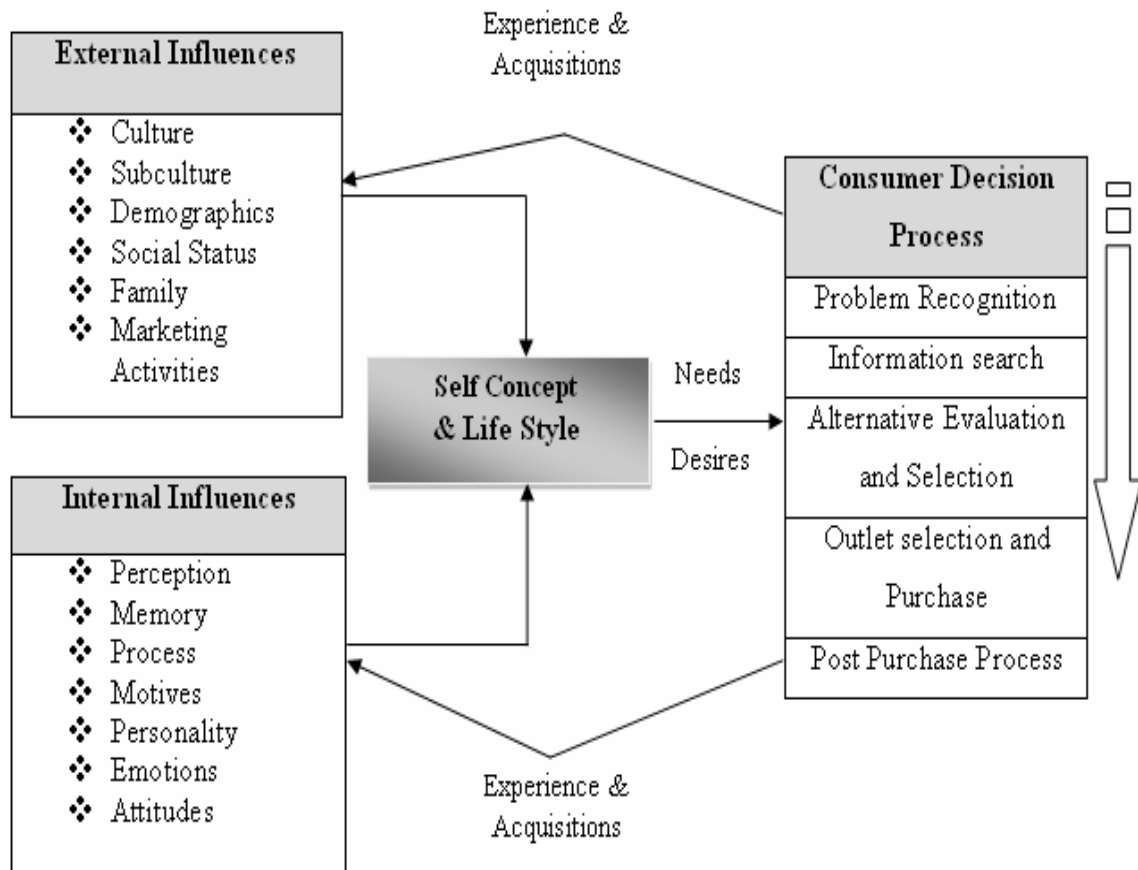


Figure 3.2: The Hawkins, Best and Coney consumer behaviour mode

Source: Hawkins, Best and Coney (1998)

The HBC model expands upon the EKB model by incorporating external and internal influences that shape the individual. However, despite acknowledging the influence of emotions on decision-making, this model still assumes that consumers approach consumption and purchasing decisions rationally. It suggests that consumers carefully evaluate options and alternatives before making a decision. Similar to the EKB model, the HBC model emphasizes a rational and deliberate decision-making process, where consumers consider cost-benefit analysis and

functional benefits. Both models contribute to understanding the planned purchase and exploring the factors and motivations that drive consumer behaviour. This theory serves as a foundation for examining the relationship between elements of the consumer decision process and consumer behaviour.

3.3.5 Stimulus-organism response (S-O-R) model

The Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) theory, developed by Mehrabian and Russell (1974), elucidates how the environment influences an individual's perception and behaviour. Derived from environmental psychology, the SOR theory posits that the environment acts as a stimulus (S) comprising signs that trigger internal evaluations in individuals (O), leading to specific responses (R) (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974). According to the model, consumers' emotions play a crucial role in their response to environmental stimuli (Mowen & Minor, 2002). Conscious and unconscious perceptions, as well as interpretations of the environment, influence individuals' emotional experiences (Donovan & Rossiter, 1982).

Mehrabian and Russell (1974) identify three dimensions to explain emotional responses to the environment namely pleasure, arousal, and dominance. The pleasure dimension is gauged through verbal judgments regarding feelings of happiness, joy, or satisfaction in each situation. The arousal dimension encompasses a broader assessment of an individual's level of excitement or activeness in a particular situation. Finally, the dominance dimension captures an individual's inclination to assert dominance and influence in an environmental context. These dimensions assume that each environment elicits specific emotional states in individuals. In the SOR model, the stimulus serves as an independent variable, the organism acts as a mediator, and the response is the dependent variable (Wong et al., 2012; Yoo et al., 1998; Turley & Milliman, 2000). The model has been applied in various marketing contexts to explore consumer behaviour. For instance, researchers have utilized the SOR model to understand online shopping behaviour (Peng & Kim, 2014), examine the impact of a positive

environment on satisfaction in retail settings (Cachero-Martínez & Vázquez-Casielles, 2017), investigate the influence of user-generated content on consumer behaviour (Arif, Aslam & Siddiqui, 2020), assess the effects of home page aesthetics on satisfaction (Liu, Guo, Ye & Liang, 2016), evaluate the impact of electronic word-of-mouth on purchase intention (Aslam, Ham & Farhat, 2018), and explore the influence of social media on brand awareness and purchase intention (Dabbous & Barakat, 2020).

3.4 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This study is well underpinned by existing theories in literature. These theories are therefore discussed in this chapter of the study and help in deducing the various variables that would the study to achieve its objective. A major theory that begins the chapter is “theory of consumer behaviour”. Attempt was made in this chapter to understand consumer behaviour, outlining some of the major factors that influence the behaviour of consumers. Some of these factors included cultural factors, psychological factors, social factors, and personal factors. The chapter further revealed that there are marketing strategies that can be deployed to affect the behaviour of consumers. These included pricing, promotion, packaging, and branding. Even though the above-mentioned strategies were not a major concern for the study, they are critical for political parties or candidates towards influencing voters (consumers) and dominating the political market. Other theories such as the psycho-social theory, the rationality theory, the decision-making process or the EKB theory, Hawkins, Best and Coney (HBC) theory and the Stimulus-Organism-Response model were also discussed.

CHAPTER FOUR

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND HYPOTHESIS

DEVELOPMENT

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter of the study, the study utilised the ideas provided in the theoretical discussions and debates to develop a conceptual framework. This framework connects the various variables the study considered, resulting in the study's hypothetical development.

4.2 THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The concept of the SOR theory is applied to develop a conceptual framework for the study. The framework is also based on the insight of other underpinning theories. In developing a consumer behaviour model for voters in Ghana using this theory, the model illustrates that in a two-party scenario, campaign message arousal, campaign message information search and campaign message evaluation constitute the stimulus, psychological, social and personal attributes constitute the organisms and voting decision is used as the response. In the classical SOR model, stimuli are elements that influence/ arouse voters' attention in the form of information. This information is evaluated against psychological, social or personal needs. This practice is common in marketing and consumer behaviour specifically. The theoretical framework or model for voter behaviour is shown in Figure 2.

Framework for voter's behavior

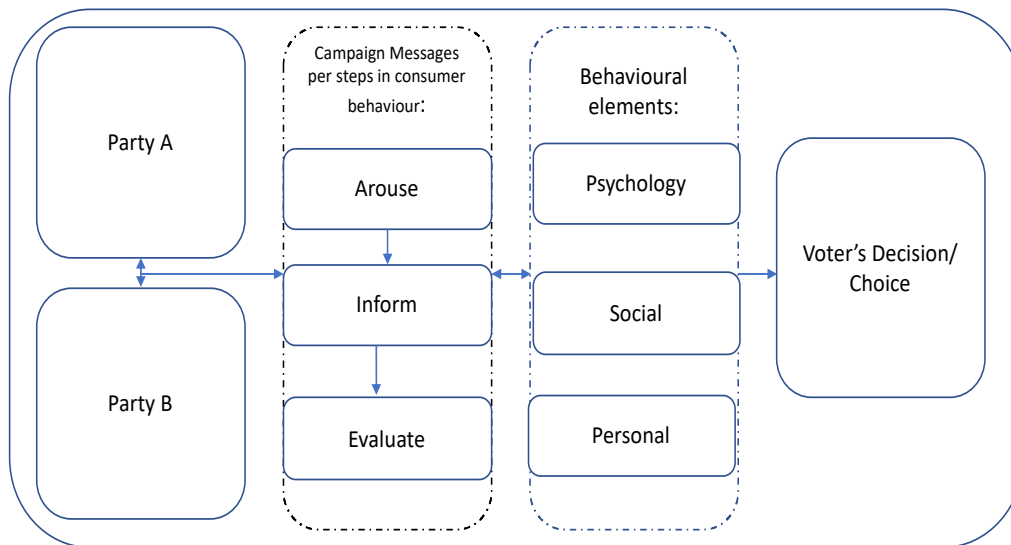


Figure 4.1: Conceptual framework for voter's behaviour

Based on the above, a hypothesised conceptual framework is developed in the later part of this chapter.

4.3 VARIABLES IN THE MODEL (FRAMEWORK)

The major variables presented in the conceptual framework are discussed in this section. These variables are the basic units on which analysis would be based, hence, adequate knowledge of them is relevant. The variables influence need arousal, information search and evaluation of alternative, all these variables constitute the elements of campaign message. Other variables namely psychological behaviour, social behaviour and personal behaviour describes consumer (voter) behaviour.

4.3.1 Need arousal (recognition)

Need arousal, also referred to as need recognition (Bruner & Pomazal, 1993), measures whether there is recognition by individuals of the need to find a solution to a problem and the choice to activate the process. This is regarded as the first

step or a component in the decision-making process, and it is expected to elicit the continuation of the process (Bruner & Pomazal, 1993), as captured in the EKB consumer decision process model as “need recognition”. According to Bruner and Pomazal (1993), to address the problem of consumers adequately, there is the need for the problem first to be delineated. This is the beginning of the consumers’ (voters’) process of deciding to vote as to if the campaign messages as advertising and promotional mix tools properly define the problems or challenges confronting them. Therefore, in building a behavioural model for predicting consumer (voter) decisions, need arousal has been identified as the starting point.

According to Solomon et al. (2006), this is the stage where a consumer has encountered the difference between perception and tangible satisfaction level. Therefore, it is amplified that a consumer buying decision process will begin when a person’s unsatisfied needs are recognised. These unsatisfied needs can be further divided into functional and psychological (Solomon et al., 2006). Whilst functional needs refer to the performance of the product or service, psychological needs concern consumers’ feelings about the product or service they purchase (Oke, Kamolshotiros, Popoola, Ajagbe & Olujobi, 2015). Tyagi (2004) also mentioned that need recognition at various levels often occurs when encountering the product under various circumstances. In other words, Tyagi (2004) convincingly argues that an individual might not be aware of the need for a specific product until he or she encounters the product due to engaging in ‘window-shopping’, media advertisements, or in a range of other circumstances.

In political marketing, campaigns are seen as advertising to induce or invite the consumer (voter) to consider purchasing (voting). The campaign messages of political parties are designed and deployed by a professional advertising agency. The content is presented in such a way as to arouse consumers’ attention and increase campaign effectiveness. Attention is placed on the arousal concept and measurement of campaign messages to understand its relationship with ad attitude, recall and the probability of a decision to vote. Inferring to the insight derived from need recognition by the consumer, the consumer (voter) may consider the messages in political campaigns and weigh them up with their

satisfaction level. This would begin their need to identify whether the messages in the political products advertised to them satisfy their needs. From the perspective shared by Solomon et al. (2006), the functional need of the voter (consumer) may entail their assessment of how previous campaign messages have performed or helped solve their problems. The psychological need, on the other hand, relates to the feelings of the voter about campaign messages.

The concept of need arousal is caused by a perceptible difference between the actual and desired state of the consumer regarding a particular want or need (Engel, Blackwell & Miniard, 1990). Further elaboration on the construct by Bruner and Pomazal (1993) assumed that two sets of internal circumstances influence the actual state. These circumstances relate to response to the current product's depletion and the consumer's dissatisfaction with the current product. Similarly, the desired state is assumed to be influenced by two factors which are external to the consumer. These external factors relate to product acquisition corresponding to a new need and purchasing a product that promises higher satisfaction than the current one. Political campaign messages need arousal and therefore were measured in the study along with understanding this construct. The new contents of campaign messages were measured against consumers' (voters) recognition of their needs in the old ones.

4.3.2 Information search

Information search is the second stage of the EKB consumer decision process model. At this stage, the consumer searches for information on the product or service. Kotler, Armstrong, Saunders and Wong (1996); Chiang (2005); Solomon (2019), information search refers to the consumer looking for appropriate data to make a decision. better purchase decisions. According to Majumdar (2010), source of information, can be dividing into four categories, namely commercial, personal, public and experiential sources. Majumdar (2010) added that private information sources include family members, colleagues, friends and others. In the search for

information, voters (consumers) may get more information from confidential sources than from other sources.

The voter (consumer) aroused by the needs spelt out in the political campaign messages may or may not search for more information (Kotler et al., 1996). If the driver of the consumer is strong, and the issues entailed in the campaign messages are satisfying, the consumer is likely to buy. If not, the consumer may store the need in memory or undertake an information search related to the need. Information search, however, has several aspects (Hoyer & MacInnis, 2003), including the extensiveness of the search, the direction, the type of information search and structure (alternative based as against attribute-based). Majumdar (2010) argued that since consumers are different, their search for information may also differ depending on their knowledge about the product/service or external information search such as feedback. Likewise, voters (consumers) are not the same; therefore, their reasons for information search, levels of search for information and type of information they are looking for in a political campaign message may differ.

According to Kotler et al. (1996), the consumer may simply enter heightened attention at one level. In this study, therefore, the voters' attention to information on the need or problems recognised and captured in the campaign messages of political parties would be measured. The level of search that may be conducted by the voter (consumer) may depend on the strength of her drive, the amount of information available, the ease of obtaining more information, the value placed on additional information and the satisfaction derived from the search. Haridasan, Fernando and Saju (2019) outlined that the search for information by consumers is based on factors such as knowledge of the consumer, price, perceived risk, experience, involvement and uncertainty. In political marketing research such as this, information search by voters (consumers) concerns the knowledge, source of information, availability, experience and involvement. The extent to which voters search for information regarding the contents of campaign messages would be measured in alignment with these characteristics in the search for information as validated by studies (Bei, Chen, & Widdows, 2004). As more information is

obtained, the awareness and knowledge of the consumer on the availability increase.

4.3.3 Evaluation of alternatives

According to the Consumer decision process model (EKB mode), evaluating alternatives is the third stage. The major question is, how does the voter (consumer choose among alternative brands (political parties)? There is a need for the marketer to know about alternative evaluations. When information has been found, the consumer will most likely have some alternatives to choose from. In modelling the behaviour of voters towards voting decisions, this stage is also considered as it reveals how the voter (consumer) considers other alternatives. At this stage, the consumer uses the information from the search to evaluate alternative brands in the choice set (Kotler, Armstrong, Saunders, & Wong, 1996). After gathering enough information, the consumer evaluates them to take the best decisions (Gigerenzer & Gaissmaier, 2011).

Kotler et al. (1996) explained that in the consumer evaluation process, it is assumed that each consumer is attempting to satisfy some need and therefore looking for certain benefits that can be acquired by buying a product or service. Consumers see products as a bundle of product attributes with varying capacities for delivering these benefits and satisfying their needs. For political party campaigns, the attributes might include economic benefits, social benefits and physical outcomes. Voters (consumers) will vary as to which attributes they consider relevant and will pay the most attention to those attributes connected to their needs. The consumer will attach different degrees of importance to each attribute. Kotler and colleagues (1996) highlighted that while some attributes may be important, others may be salient. For example, some messages in political party campaigns may be salient because the voter (consumer) just saw an advertisement and had a problem with them. In this sense, some issues contained in campaigns may be “mere promises”.

Furthermore, the consumer is likely to develop a set of brand beliefs about where the brand stands on each attribute. Gomez-Diaz (2016) posited that the consumer also has a utility function for each attribute spelt out in campaign messages. This shows that the voter expects total satisfaction from messages with different levels of attributes. For instance, a voter expects that a campaign message touting to help reduce the inflation rate in a country for a better standard of living should perform as expected. These attributes would aid the study in measuring the degree of evaluations of political campaign messages in their decision-making process.

4.3.4 Psychological behaviour of the voter

This variable is born out of the psycho-social theory and the understanding of consumer behaviour. In consumer behaviour, psychology is highly noted to have shaped the behaviour in decision choice. The consumer's character, attributes or traits define their psychological behaviour (Durmaz, 2014; Jonsson, 2010), and these factors are defined mostly as psychological factors that influence consumer behaviour. The key psychological factors to understand when considering consumer behaviour include motivation, perception, attitude, belief systems, and lifestyle (Cetina, Munthiu, & Radulescu, 2012; Rani, 2014). Perception, motivation, beliefs and attitudes determine a consumer's conscious and subconscious thought processes before making a choice. The psychological factors influence the consumer's behaviour and are therefore as Kimmel (2018) alludes to, it is appropriate to consider psychological factors when looking at voter behaviour. This is even more necessary considering that the psychological process persuades an individual to behave in a certain way and according to Kimmel (2013).

4.3.5 Social behaviour of the voter

Consumers are influenced by various people in their lives, including relatives or families, friends, neighbours, co-workers, acquaintances (Melnyk & Carrillat, 2022) and the like. Influences from these categories of people impact the consumer

(Kardes & Wyer, 2019) in several ways, such as what products or services to buy, how to use them, where to shop, what brands to prefer, and which ones to avoid. As established by the social-cognitive theory, which is a component of the psychological theory of consumer behaviour, the social-cognitive traits of the individual consumer determine their behaviour (Griskevicius & Kenrick, 2013). For example, the consumer may want to behave in a way that depicts him/her as a social influencer, thereby developing a sense of identity and loyalty to a brand.

This study, therefore, measures the social behaviour of consumers (voters) by examining the degree of their social valuation of campaign messages. In this regard, how the consumer has become an influencer of other potential customers regarding messages entailed in political campaign messages. According to Kimmel (2013), an individual's social behaviour is to portray their value, social status, image, connections and importance. In a study by Sangroya and Nayak (2017), the social behaviour of consumers can be assessed using a dimensional scale developed for social value. In conjunction with other scholars (Masini & Menichetti, 2012; Nelissen & Meijers, 2011), social behaviour is discussed based on others' acceptance of consumers' word-of-mouth, making a good impression, good perception of by others and social approval.

4.3.6 Personal behaviour of the voter

Consumers are individuals and, as such, have different personality traits by which they behave. As such, consumers' personality may drive their behaviour to accomplish their goals in different situations. Pikturnienė and Kurtinaitienė (2010) described personality as individuals' traits that impact their behaviour. Personality traits refer to individual's physical characteristics, attitudes, values and behaviour (Park, 2016).

Aaker (1997) advocated that consumers' personality affects their evaluation of brands and product choice is based on the congruency consumers feel with the product and its characteristics. Consumers seek image congruence in their

purchase decisions (Grubb & Hupp, 2008; Ericksen & Sirgy, 2012) as the choices mirror their personalities.

Personality traits have been shown to influence consumer purchasing behaviour substantially (Khatri, 2021; Landon, 2014). For instance, consumer personality has been found to influence behavioural intention and consumer evaluation of products and brands (Sirgy, 2012; Belk, 2018).

The personality theories that are important for marketers to be aware of are trait theories (Hawkins & Mothersbaugh, 2010). Trait theories allow marketers to segment consumers based on personality differences. This theory proposes that an individual's personality comprises predisposition attributes called traits (Vainikka, 2015). A trait can be defined as a distinguishable way an individual can be differentiated from another (Engel et al., 1995).

A five-factor model (FFM), sometimes known as the big five, emerged for assessing personality in individuals and was deemed sufficient to cover the trait-descriptive elements of personality (Khatri, 2021). Benet and Waller (1995) hypothesised that this five-factor structure accounts for much of the covariation between self-ascriptions and peer judgments of personality characteristics. Despite changing precise factor labels, the composition's fundamental structure has not changed (John & Srivastava, 1999). The same five elements or domains are considered by most measurements of individual differences in people's behaviour, in part or full (Digman, 2009; McCrae & John, 2012; Tupes & Christal, 2012). Extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, negative emotionality (neuroticism vs emotional stability), and open-mindedness are the most typical descriptors for these domains (alternatively labelled openness to experience, intellect, or imagination; John, Naumann & Soto, 2008; McCrae & Costa, 2008).

Extraversion is a measure of a person's social and outgoing tendencies. Its characteristics include assertiveness, sociability, and substantial amounts of energy. Extraversion is related to being motivated by external stimuli, for instance, people, objects, or environments. Individuals high in Extraversion are more driven

to seek stimulation and enjoyment. According to Eysenck (1990), sociability is the core of Extraversion, while other researchers view hedonic capacity (positive emotions) as the core element of Extraversion (Gustavsson et al., 2003; Tellegen, 1985; Watson & Clark, 1997).

“Agreeableness (also known as sociability)” describes a person’s tact, friendliness, and warmth, characterised by compassion, respect, and trust. People high in agreeableness are caring, friendly, warm, and tolerant and have a general predisposition for prosocial behaviour (Chamorro-Premuzic, 2012). In addition, individuals high in agreeableness tend to trust rather than be suspicious of others (Roos & Kazemi, 2022). On the other hand, people low in agreeableness are suspicious and less concerned about other people than their more agreeable counterparts (Roos & Kazemi, 2022).

Conscientiousness refers to the propensity for planning and seeking high achievement. Individuals high in this trait have a strong sense of purpose, are self-disciplined, efficient, organised, deliberative, methodical in daily routines, and achievement and goal-oriented (Costa & McCrae, 1992). People low in conscientiousness, in contrast, tend to be more impulsive, lazy, and give up more easily. The organisation, productivity, and responsibility are characteristics of conscientiousness related to one’s degree of self-discipline. Neuroticism is the tendency to feel guilty, depressed, and anxious. People with neuroticism usually express negative emotions in stressful situations (Costa & McCrae, 1992). Neuroticism is concerned with a person’s capacity to maintain equilibrium and stability, and the traits linked to it include anxiety, depression, and emotional turbulence. Neuroticism is highly related to negative affect and basic negative emotions such as anger, disgust, fear and sadness (Digman, 1990; Roos, 2014).

According to Costa and McCrae (1992), openness to experience is reflected in individuals’ curiosity, adventurousness, and openness to new experiences. Openness to experience moreover refers to being open to feelings, change and variety and intellectually oriented. Such individuals often have many hobbies and diverse interests. People high in openness to experience are usually creative and

innovative, whereas people low in openness to experience tend to be more conservative and restricted. Its characteristics include creative imagination, artistic sensibility, and intellectual curiosity.

Several studies have found a strong relationship between the Big Five personality domains and brand preferences (Banerjee, 2016), impulsive buying behaviour (Pelau, Serban & Chinie, 2018), online behaviour (Dobre & Milovan-Ciuta, 2015), political consumer behaviour (Quintelier, 2014), sustainable consumer behaviour (Luchs & Mooradian, 2012) and travel-related consumer-generated media (Yoo & Gretzel, 2011). Moreover, whereas neuroticism negatively impacted intentions to buy from international brands, extraversion, conscientiousness, and openness to new experiences have positive effects (Zabkar, Arslanagic-Kalajdzic, Diamantopoulos, & Florack, 2017). These personality traits are implicit and do not easily change over time; thus, one can generally observe them through a consumer's behaviour.

4.4 HYPOTHESISED RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN VARIABLES

A hypothesised relationship between various variables in the study is presented in this section. These discussions relating the variables are based on findings and conclusions of previous scholars. They provide various claims and assertions to be tested by the study.

4.4.1 Need arousal (recognition) and psychological behaviour

Thus far, it is indicated that the behaviour can also be in the form of psychological issues. At the same time, the consumer's decision to purchase a product/service starts with the consumer's recognition of needs or problem identification. Scholars have attempted to examine the relationship between the need for recognition by the consumer and their psychological behaviour. These studies, however, relate the recognition of consumer needs to various dimensions of the psychological behaviour of the consumer. Arguably, when considering the psychological

behaviour of the consumer, motivation is the most dimension that comes to the fore (Lars, 2018). Motivation drives the consumer to act in a certain way or purchase certain products. According to Lars (2018), the consumer desire to satisfy certain needs motivates them psychologically to purchase certain products. Lars emphasised that these needs can be based on physical sensations, such as hunger or thirst, or can be based more on psychological needs, such as a desire to feel a sense of belonging.

When a consumer feels the need to acquire a product, the consumer goes shopping; but shopping does not only occur to acquire a product (Li & Zhang, 2002). According to Li and Zhang (2002), there are more reasons or needs why an individual can decide to go shopping. These reasons or needs are called shopping motivations (Jansen, 2006). Per the proposals made by Abraham Maslow, the hierarchy of needs is the most commonly used descriptor of motivation for any human behaviour (Aruma & Hanachor, 2017). It is emphasised that when the needs are met, motivation increases. (Aruma & Hanachor, 2017). Consumers often determine what needs products can satisfy, motivating them to make purchase decisions. The relationship between motivation and needs theories is that a motive is a need sufficiently pressing to drive the consumer to act (Kotler, 2003). These views articulated by scholars proposed that, in terms of politics, when the voters (consumers) can identify their needs in campaign messages provided by political parties, their psychological behaviour in terms of motivation towards the decision to vote would increase. However, voters' (consumers) psychological behaviour in terms of motivation would reduce when the needs outlined in political campaign messages are unmet.

Furthermore, the psychological behaviour of the consumer is also explained in the dimension of consumer perception, which is linked to the need arousal of the consumer. As noted in the earlier presentations, perception generally deals with how individuals select and recognise information to develop their meaningful sense (Taylor, Franke, & Kyong, 2016). Pastore (1949), in a study examining needs as a determinant of perception, presented that the arousal of needs is a factor that determines perception. This notion forms an integral part of the systematic

approach to social psychology as applied in marketing and in studying consumers' behaviour. The needs and desires of the consumer play a vital role in their perception of a product/service (Sree, 2019; Slameto, 2013). Consumers at different levels of needs and desires perceive the same thing differently (Sree, 2019). The need arousal of the political campaign messages may therefore change the psychological behaviour of the voter (consumer) in terms of perception.

Another dimension of consumer psychological behaviour is attitude and beliefs. Particular consumers' behaviours are driven by particular needs, which thus have an impact on their activity (Bartosik-Purgat, 2018). Social psychology highlights the large meaning of needs in setting attitudes and beliefs. On the other hand, consumers' needs and desires are also moulded by their values (Yau, 2004), which are components of the attitudes and beliefs of consumers. It is revealed that the consumer's needs directly influence their attitude and belief towards purchasing decisions (Kamakura & Novak, 1992; Kim et al., 2002; Chryssohidis & Krystallis, 2005). Researchers (Homer and Kahle, 1988; Kim et al., 2002; Hollywood et al., 2007) conclude that individual needs and psychological behaviour towards products/services are positively and strongly correlated; hence, consumer needs remain an important predictor of consumer psychological behaviour. The study, therefore, seeks to test the hypothesis below.

H₁: Need arousal of campaign messages is positively related to the psychological behaviour of the consumer (voter).

4.4.2 Need arousal (recognition) and social behaviour

The recognition or arousal of consumer needs about a product is different, including physical, social, security, self-esteem, and self-actualisation, per Maslow's need hierarchy (Maslow, 1965). Social needs, also referred to as affiliation, are identified to influence individuals' social behaviour (Odekerken, Bloemer & Kestens, 2002). Consumers would want to recognise the need for a product to boost their social needs (Arora, et al., 2019). The arousal of the need

for a product/service influences peoples' desire to "preach" it to social groups such as relatives, friends and peers through word-of-mouth to create a social relationship and social value for themselves (Nelissen & Meijers, 2011). Further to this, a study examining the conceptual framework of contemporary luxury consumption revealed that luxury goods consumers would share their needs for acquiring a product with others to raise their social status and show their loyalty to others (Nelissen & Meijers, 2011). It is deduced that if a consumer recognises a problem or a need that a product can help solve, they prove to others that they are socially affiliated with the brand. Can voters (consumers) need arousal of political campaign messages significantly influence their social behaviour?

H₂: Need arousal of campaign messages is positively related to the social behaviour of the consumer (voter).

4.4.3 Need arousal and personal behaviour

The research on the need for arousal (recognition) of a product and the personal behaviour of consumers is very limited in the literature. However, scholars have made some attempts to relate personality and problem recognition in psychology. It is of a view that personal behaviour, which is largely described in this study in terms of personality traits, proxies as a way of recognising problems. Barrett, Marsh, Boogert and Templeton (2022) posited that a link between personality and problem identification leads to the ability to solve the problem. According to Cacioppo and Petty (1982), need recognition delves into an individual's tendency to engage and enjoy effortful thinking. Hence the recognition of needs differs in accordance with people's personalities. Tuten and Bosnjak ([2001](#)) noted that need recognition usually correlates with certain personality traits, particularly openness to experience. For instance, Kearney, Gebert and Voelpel (2009), introverts who are reluctant to new experiences might enjoy thinking in a reassuring environment. In a similar situation, a consumer (voter) who is an introvert may be reluctant to new issues in campaign messages of political parties, hence may not necessarily be concerned about identifying the needs in the message. The study seeks to

provide evidence and contribute immensely to the link between consumer behaviour and the need for arousal or recognition of a product.

H₃: Need arousal of campaign messages is positively related to the personal behaviour of the consumer (voter).

4.4.4 Information search and psychological behaviour

The empirical literature indicates that there is a connection between consumers' information-seeking behaviour in the purchase decision-making process and their psychological behaviour. From a psychological standpoint, various factors have been identified as influencing consumers' information search behaviour, including individual characteristics, product types, and task-related variables (Lin, 1999). This psychological viewpoint is rooted in the motivational approach proposed by Howard and Sheth (1969), which posited that attention, governed by the relationship between stimulus ambiguity and arousal, forms the motivational basis of the search.

In this context, a consumer employs attention as the primary control mechanism to satisfy their information needs, considering the limits of the stimuli to which they're exposed. If this mechanism proves insufficient, they are motivated to engage in overt search activities, the secondary control method. Stimulus ambiguity leads to arousal, prompting an external search until the consumer gathers sufficient information to make a decision (Lin, 1999; Schmidt & Spreng, 1996; Srinivasan, 1990). Engel, Kollat, and Blackwell (1972) conceptualized information search as a phase in the decision-making process, transitioning the consumer from problem recognition to decision making.

Several scholars have acknowledged a relationship between motivation and information search activities (Burnkrant, 1976; Hansen, 1972; Howard, 1977; Howard & Sheth, 1969; Nicosia, 1966). The information search approach of the consumer, which has evolved from a psychological perspective, emphasizes this

connection (Schmidt & Spreng, 1996; Srinivasan, 1990; Sternthal & Craig, 1982). Bettman and Park (1980) suggest that the degree of information search depends on an individual's motivation and perceived ability to search, with higher perceived ability leading to increased information search activities. Empirical evidence shows a positive correlation between consumers' ability and their information-seeking behaviour (Srinivasan, 1987). In purchase decisions, the perceived ability to evaluate products and brands positively influences consumers' information search (Duncan & Olshavsky, 1982).

Bauer (1960) proposed that information search serves as a strategy to reduce perceived risk from a psychological standpoint. As per Cox (1967), the nature and inherent amount of perceived risk will dictate the information needs of consumers. Consequently, consumers will seek those sources, types, and quantities of information that seem best equipped to meet their specific needs. This process can also help to psychologically shift consumers' attitudes and beliefs towards a product or service. The present study aims to test the hypothetical relationship between the information search embedded in political campaign messages by voters (the consumers) and their psychological behaviour.

H₄: Campaign message information search is positively related to the psychological behaviour of the consumer (voter).

4.4.5 Information search and social behaviour

It is believed that information search is related to social behaviour among people. It is depicted that social and behavioural factors affect information search behaviour (Flurry, 2007), including family structure (Lotfizadeh & Hanzaee, 2014). Ip et al. (2012) believe that the probability of using websites for searching information on a product/service is higher among young people with high education and high incomes. It can be understood from previous studies that families from high social classes mainly use cognitive criteria, and those with lower social classes mostly use objective criteria and less subjective criteria to evaluate

products. On the other hand, in families with a traditional structure, the husband is the only decision-maker that usually uses internal information search for decision-making. In contrast, in modern families, a high level of joint decisions is noticed (Ip et al., 2012). Therefore, the desire for internal information search in modern families is less than in traditional ones.

Furthermore, consumers often act as influencers in the decision-making process of others through the provision of information. The social behaviour of consumers has made them influencers (Zak, 2020; Singh, 2022), especially in an advancing technological era. Through social behaviour, the consumer would use information-seeking behaviour through communication and interactions that influence human information search (Khan, 2018). People are motivated to seek and share information about a product/service with the public through the media, especially social media in recent times, to build their social status and values to seek social approval. These submissions per literature propose that the search for information in the political campaign messages could be related to the social behaviour of the voter (consumer).

H₅: Campaign message information search is positively related to the social behaviour of the consumer (voter).

4.4.6 Information search and personal behaviour

Research has highlighted the connection between the big five personality traits and information search behaviour (Gul, Mahajan, Shah, & Nisa, 2014; Jani, 2011; Halder, Roy, & Chakraborty, 2010). These studies suggest that traits such as openness to new experiences and extraversion are positively associated with motivation for external information search behaviour in consumers. Among the big five personality traits, researchers assert that agreeableness has the least connection with information search, while conscientiousness has the most significant relationship (Schmidt & Wolff, 2016).

Gul, Mahajan, Shah and Nisa (2014) revealed positive correlations between openness to experience and information search. Individuals open to experience, being more curious, and willing to learn and experience new things are found to make extra efforts to get the required information. In contrast, people with low levels of openness to experience show less effort towards information search. Gul, Mahajan, Shah and Nisa (2014) further show that people with high openness to experience will likely evaluate the retrieved information more critically. These findings were also confirmed by Heinstorm (2003).

Personal behaviour in terms of extraversion was also found to have a positive correlation with information search, according to Gul, Mahajan, Shah and Nisa (2014). It is added that characteristics such as enthusiasm, activeness and confidence associated with extroverts tend to trigger their efforts in searching for information. Gul, Mahajan, Shah and Nisa (2014) further show correlations between information and personality traits such as agreeableness and conscientiousness.

H₆: Campaign message information search is positively related to the personal behaviour of the consumer (voter).

4.4.7 Evaluation of alternatives and psychological behaviour

The link between consumers' evaluation of product/service alternatives and psychological behaviour has received some attention in the literature. Nevertheless, these connections were provided in terms of the various dimensions of psychological behaviour (motivation, perception, attitude and belief. For example, Gumilar, Rizal, Sriati and Putra (2017), in a study on consumer behaviour analysis in purchasing decision-making, proved that consumers normally evaluate product alternatives. They are either motivated to purchase or return for their initial product choice if satisfied. The evaluation, however, is based on the information deduced from consumer searches (Solomon, 2004), which is the second stage of the consumer purchasing decision-making process. Mishra (2018) added that the

motivation for consumers to buy a product depends on evaluation results after purchase. It is also argued that psychologically, consumers make perceptual judgments that inform decision-making on various products after careful evaluation (Folkes & Matta, 2004; Ordabayeva & Chandon, 2013; Raghurir & Krishna, 1999; Wansink & van Ittersum, 2003).

It is also identified that the perception of the consumers on a product's price and quality as aspects of a marketing mix is informed by evaluations of alternatives (Teas, 1993). The price of a product and its quality are important factors consumers consider in the evaluation process, which change the perception that a consumer has a particular product. A consumer's attitude is also formed from evaluating product alternatives in consumer behaviour (Petcharat & Leelasantitham, 2021). Largely, is a connection between the evaluation of alternative products and consumer psychological behaviour. Voters (consumers) may likely evaluate the alternative political campaign messages, which could influence their motivation, perception and attitude towards the message.

H₇: Campaign message alternative evaluation is positively related to the psychological behaviour of the consumer (voter).

4.4.8 Evaluation of alternatives and social behaviour

The relationship between empirically evaluating alternatives and social behaviour has been scarce and limited. The Hawkins, Best and Coney model largely linked the alternative evaluation, a step in the consumer decision-making process, to consumer behaviour factors, including social factors such as social status preference groups, roles and families. This study seeks to fill the gap in the literature, attempting to hypothetically ascertain the link between customers' evaluation of alternatives and their social behaviour. Voters, in their decision-making, would evaluate various alternatives. However, how this evaluation relates to the voter's social behaviour would be evidenced.

H₈: Campaign message alternative evaluation is positively related to the social behaviour of the consumer (voter).

4.4.9 Evaluation of alternatives and personal behaviour

Again, the nexus between customers' evaluation of alternatives in the decision-making process and consumers' personal behaviour have been proposed in the Hawkins, Best and Coney model. It is argued that the consumer's personality defines their personal behaviour and influences their evaluation of alternatives (Nouraie, Moorineh & Kordi, 2017). In relating consumer personality to their emotional intelligence in decision-making, Othman, Othman, and Hallit (2020) believed that emotional intelligence is key in evaluation by individuals. These two views are consistent with each other. Therefore, in this study, the following hypothesis is proposed.

H₉: Campaign message alternative evaluation is positively related to the personal behaviour of the consumer (voter)

4.4.10 The hypothesised conceptual framework

Following the above hypotheses, the Figure 4.2 illustrates the various hypotheses tested.

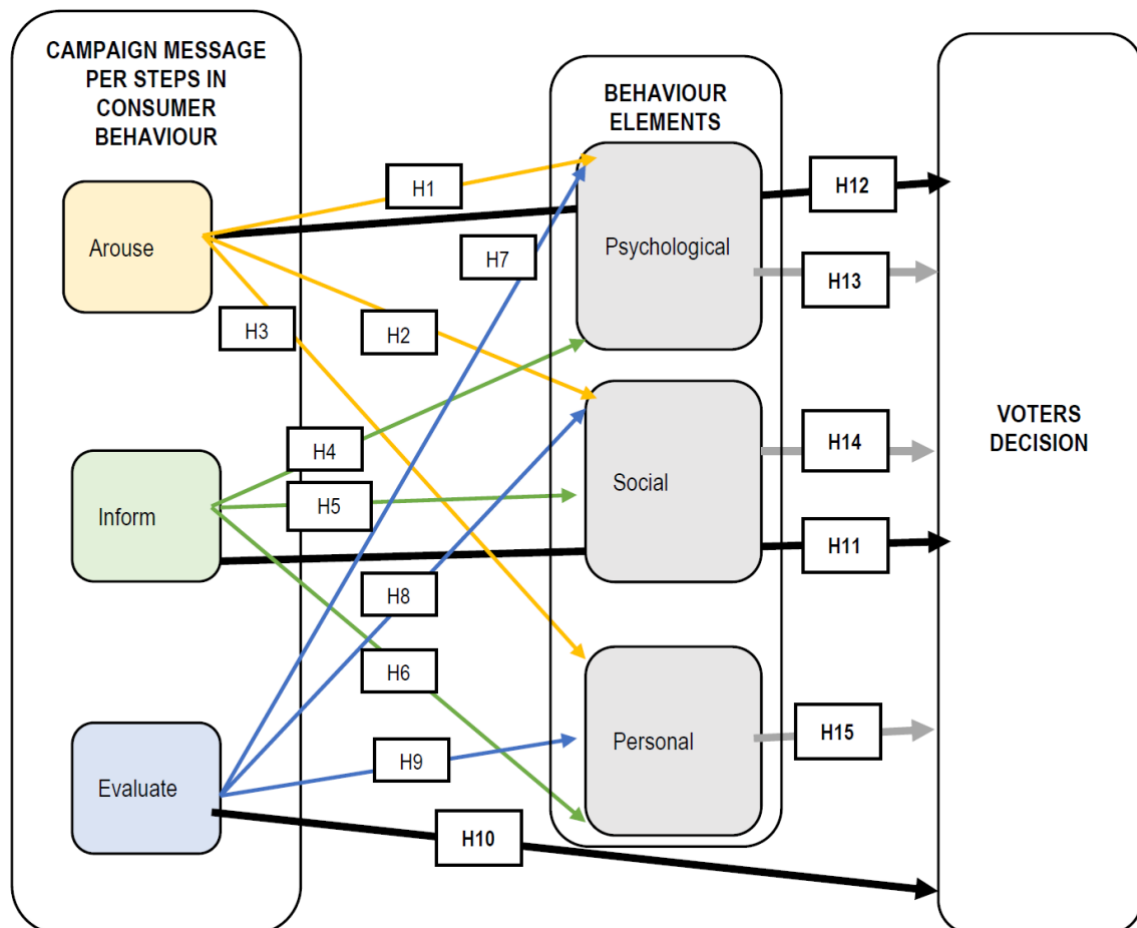


Figure 4.2: the hypothesised relationships among variables.

4.5 CHAPTER SUMMARY

In this chapter, a conceptual framework was proposed for the study based on the knowledge deduced from the variables discussed in previous chapters (chapters 2 and 3). The chapter provided a link between the various variables (campaign message elements, consumer behaviour elements and consumer decision). Each variable was thoroughly discussed, and a hypothetical relationship was developed between them based on empirical literature. Campaign message elements

included campaign message need arousal/problem identification, information search and evaluation of alternatives, which are steps in consumer purchasing decision process. The behaviour of consumers covered their psychological behaviour, social behaviour, and personal behaviour. Empirically, significant relationships were found between need arousal and psychological behaviour, need arousal and social behaviour, likewise, need arousal and social behaviour. This indicated that if a product provides the needs of consumers, it influences their behaviour towards purchase. Information search on the other hand empirically has relationships with consumer behaviour elements. Same applies to the link between evaluation of alternatives and consume behavioural elements.

CHAPTER FIVE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The methodology and methods of research followed systematically to achieve the purpose of the study are discussed in this chapter. Applying the right and appropriate theories, methods, and skills of research is a roadmap to finding a solution to the research problem (Panneerselvam, 2014). Methodology in research is “a plan of actions, strategy or design, and processes” (Crotty, 1996:3). Defining how research, as a whole, is conducted or accomplished with regards to what type of data/information is needed, where the information is obtained, from who the information is obtained, how the information is collected and analysed (Crotty, 1998; O’Leary, 2014). This methodology chapter deliberates these underlying questions of what, where, when, who and how and provides justifications for the choice of methods in this study. It further entails how information needed for the study were collected, from whom the information was gathered, and where, when and what information were required to answer the research questions.

It is asserted that the research methodologies and methods are embedded in the research philosophy (Crotty, 1998; Mathews & Ross, 2010; Bryman & Bell, 2011). The chapter, therefore, begins with a discussion of the philosophies of research. The various methods of research applicable for the collection of data through to the analysis are further discussed.

Review of online thesis reveal two ways to present the methodology chapter. While some decide to indicate their methodological choice and justifications upfront followed by discussion of the pertinent methodological issues, others do the opposite. The style adopted in this chapter is to first provide a thorough perspective on each methodological issue followed by stating and justification of the choice made.

5.2 PERSPECTIVE ON COMPETING PHILOSOPHIES

Research philosophy is a term that recounts the nature and the development of knowledge (Bajpai, 2011). Understanding research of this kind requires an understanding and consideration of research philosophies that define beliefs, perceptions, assumptions and scope of truth and reality. According to Fisher (2007), understanding the concept of the research philosophy impacts the research from its design to the conclusion. Research philosophy is at the centre of one's research as it assists in finding answers to problems in a particular setting or the development of new knowledge. For instance, this research intends to establish what phenomenon underpins voter behaviour and decisions in Ghana. The various philosophical viewpoints in social science research are grouped into paradigms, which refer to a researcher's philosophical or theoretical orientation (Creswell, 2014). These philosophical orientations shape scientific research (Singh, 2017).

According to Neuman and Kreuger (2003), each paradigm is constructed, observed and measured using a different social reality or way of understanding the world. The philosophies of research, therefore, point to the appropriate methods of inquiry and also direct researchers on how to conduct the research properly and guide them to success and gaining knowledge in the end. The research philosophy describes the belief about how data about the phenomenon of voter behaviour and voter decisions in Ghana would be collected, analysed and used. For a detailed understanding of the various stages of the methodologies linked to the research philosophy, Figure 3 shows the pictorial view of philosophies in research, interlinked with the various assumptions and techniques in the research process.

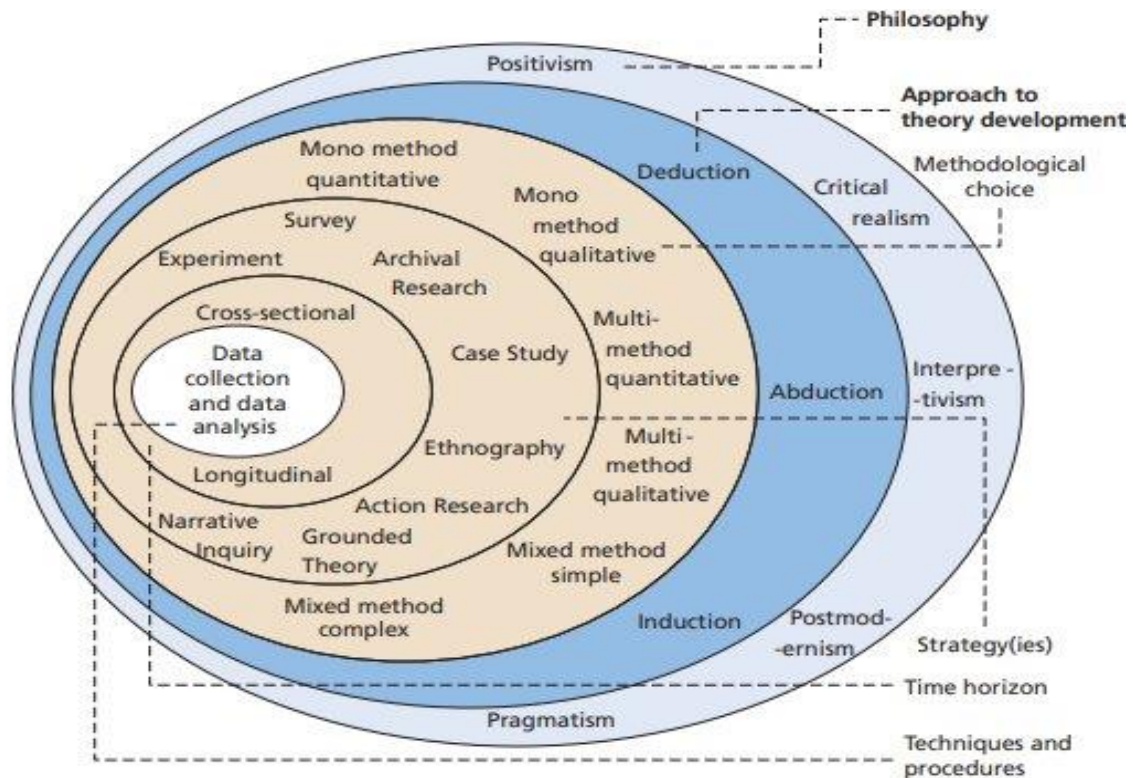


Figure 4.3: Research onion

(Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2019: 108).

The various philosophical viewpoints in social science research are grouped into paradigms, which refer to a researcher's philosophical or theoretical orientation (Creswell, 2011). These philosophical orientations shape scientific research (Singh, 2017). According to Saunders et al. (2019), firms and management researchers adopt five main research philosophies: positivism, critical realism, interpretivism, postmodernism and pragmatism, and they vary in terms of their ontology, epistemology, and axiology. This is to say that each paradigm adopted by a researcher possesses its own ontological, epistemological, and methodological beliefs, values, norms and assumptions, which give a structure that differentiates one paradigm from the other (Creswell, 2011).

Ontology refers to assumptions and beliefs about the nature of reality. As a branch of philosophy, ontology describes how a researcher makes meaning into a social phenomenon under investigation (Scotland, 2012). This enlightens the researcher on the probable approaches to adopt in answering the research questions (Kivunja

& Kuyini, 2017). The term epistemology comes from a Greek word, “episteme” (Krauss, 2005). Epistemology concerns assumptions and beliefs about knowledge, what constitutes acceptable, legitimate knowledge and how knowledge is communicated to others (Hannam & Knox, 2010).

Meanwhile, according to Cooksey and Mc Donald (2011), epistemology is how knowledge comes within the world. Epistemology is essential in research because it helps in establishing the truth of the phenomenon under study in the social context. In short, ontology is the nature of reality (Hudson & Ozanne, 1988). In contrast, epistemology is the relationship between the researcher and the reality of how this reality is apprehended or known (Carson, Gilmore, Perry & Grønhaug, 2001). On the other hand, axiology refers to the role of values and ethics exhibited by the researcher when conducting research. A key axiological choice a researcher will face is the extent to which he or she wishes to view the impact of his or her values and beliefs on his or her research as a positive thing (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2019).

5.2.1 Positivism

Positivism offers a guarantee of accurate and explicit knowledge of the world. According to Al-Ababneh (2020), positivism refers to something that is theorised. Al-Ababneh (2020) clarify that positivists are interested in the development of a comprehensive theory that applies the scientific method to the study of society and human beings for their benefit. Positivism is based on direct experience, not speculation. Positivism stands on the philosophical stance of the natural scientist and necessitates working with an observable social reality to produce law-like generalisations (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2019). With positivism, it is assumed that researchers must deal with issues or a phenomenon being studied objectively. In this philosophy, the researcher assumes the role of an objective analyst, making detached interpretations about data collected on issues under study in a value-free manner with an emphasis on a highly structured methodology to facilitate replication (Gill & Johnson, 1997) and on quantifiable

observations or data that leads to statistical analysis (Remenyi, Sherwood-Smith & White, 1998). Consequently, positivism supposes that researchers objectively analyse and interpret data (Saunders et al., 2007). The positivists, therefore, focus on being objective rather than subjective. The assumption is that the researcher is independent of and neither affects nor is affected by the subject of the research (Remenyi, Sherwood-Smith & White, 1998).

The ontology or the nature of reality of the positivist paradigm is real, independent and also universal. The Positivist ontology believes that the world is external (Casson, 2005) and that no single objective reality exists in any research phenomenon or situation, regardless of the researcher's perspective or belief (Hudson & Ozanne, 1988). According to Marsh and Furlong (2002), positivists adopt a fundamental ontology, believing that it is possible to observe everything that happens about a phenomenon and understand it without any mediation or interference by social actors, thereby denying any appearance/reality dichotomy.

The stance of positivists concerning epistemology is that the researcher and the phenomena being investigated are assumed to be independent of each other for the researcher to be capable of studying the phenomena without influencing it or being influenced by it (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998). The positivists in this position thus take a controlled and structured approach to conduct research by identifying a clear researchable issue, formulating suitable hypotheses, and adopting a suitable research methodology (Churchill, 1996; Carson, Gilmore, Perry and Grønhaug, 2001). In other words, positivism by epistemology believes in establishing a cause-effect relationship in nature. Generally, the assumption of positivists regarding epistemology is that knowledge about the phenomenon is well investigated through scientific methods, observable and measurable facts, law-like generalisations or numbers and measuring causal explanation and prediction as a contribution. With the axiology of the positive paradigm, research is done in a value-free way, the researcher is neutral and independent of the data, and he or she maintains an objective posture (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2019). The typical methodology adopted by the positivist includes highly structured, large samples and quantitative methods of data analysis.

5.2.2 Interpretivism

Interpretivism, also known as phenomenology, is another philosophical perspective that emerged in contradiction to positivism to understand and explain human and social reality. Whereas the interpretive approach looks for culturally derived and historically situated interpretations of the social life-world, the positivist approach follows the methods of natural sciences by way of purportedly value-free, detached observation, identifying universal characteristics of human-hood, society and history that provide explanation and consequently predictability and control (Crotty, 1996). The interpretivism philosophy looks at phenomena or social world problems as too complex to be treated as physical science and that the complexity of the problem will be lost and reduced to law-like generalisations (Amakiri & Eke, 2018). Interpretivists consider that situations or problems in each case or issue are unique and differ from other situations.

This philosophy is not an appropriate method for generalisation due to the changing state of phenomena, various interpretations by people, and the complexity and uniqueness of the world (Saunders et al., 2012). The interpretivist philosophy develops knowledge differently by focusing on a subjective and descriptive method to deal with complicated situations rather than an objective and statistical method (Pather & Remenyi, 2005). The interpretivists believe that social research requires investigating theoretical generalisations due to the complexity of the social issues.

The ontology of the interpretive paradigm established the stance that multiple realities exist in the world and are dependent on human interpretation and experience. Its epistemology sees knowledge as very subjective and time-bound. The axiology of the interpretive paradigm sees that research is value bound and the researcher is part of what is being researched; for that reason, he or she cannot be separated and so will be subjective. The methodological assumption of the interpretivism paradigm adopts a qualitative approach of gathering data through interviews, observations, and questionnaires (Boateng, 2016; Saunders et al., 2012).

5.2.3 Critical realism

This is another philosophy in research which relates to scientific enquiry. The realist philosophy is based on the belief that reality exists in the world, and this reality is independent of human thoughts and beliefs (Al-Ababneh, 2020). Realism is opposed to idealism due to the assumption that the existence of reality is independent. Realism is one type of epistemology; it is, therefore, similar to positivism which assumes a scientific approach to developing knowledge. However, there are two types of realism, namely direct realism, “what we see is what we get”, where the researcher sees the real world accurately, and critical realism, “what we see is not what we got” where the researcher sees the world as sensations, not the real things directly, that requires more criticism in the reality (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2019, p. 114). The philosophy recognises that people are not objects to be studied in the style of natural science, at the same time; it recognises the importance of understanding people through socially constructed interpretations and meanings.

The ontology of this paradigm states that the nature of reality is stratified into four layers: empirical reality, the actual reality, and the real reality. The epistemology of critical realism states that knowledge is historically placed and temporary. Facts are social constructions; therefore, historical causal explanations as a contribution are necessary. The axiology of critical realism states that the researcher’s knowledge is biased by the world’s view, cultural experiences as well as the researcher’s upbringing. Critical realism employs in-depth historical situated analysis of pre-existing structures and emerging agencies as data collection and analysis methods.

5.2.4 Pragmatism

Pragmatism philosophy asserts that reality exists in the world and supports science's objective nature. This philosophy also assumes that individuality may impact how people perceive the world, and therefore research is subjective

(Saunders et al., 2007). The view of this philosophy brings multiple explanations and interpretations for science. This philosophy uses both objective and subjective criteria (Saunders et al., 2012). Hence, the pragmatist philosophy is between positivist and interpretivist research philosophy. It means that there is no one appropriate philosophy; therefore, researchers can adopt more than one research philosophy. Furthermore, pragmatism argues that it is possible to work with variations in epistemology (Saunders et al., 2009).

The ontology of the pragmatic paradigm states that reality is the practical result of ideas, and its epistemology stands on the knowledge that true theories and knowledge empower effective action. The axiology of the pragmatic paradigm stands on the belief that every research is started and continued by the doubts and beliefs of the researcher. The pragmatic paradigm adopts various methods in its data analysis and collection, including mixed method, qualitative method, quantitative method, action research and the like.

5.2.5 Philosophical stance adopted

Flowing from the knowledge and understanding derived from the discussion on research philosophy, examining the consumer behaviour theory/model as a framework for building political marketing strategies can be best achieved using the positivists' beliefs and approach to conducting research. The positivist approach followed in this study uses the epistemological assumptions of causality between variables that would be examined through the hypothetical or theoretical test. This research tests the theory of consumer behaviour as a marketing tool for application in political marketing.

In terms of epistemology, the focus of the research is based on investigating the phenomenon of voter behaviour and its influence on the voter decision or choice through the collection of data or facts that is credible enough. The research also epistemologically assumes that causality between variables would be examined through the hypothetical or theoretical test. The research, taking the stance of

positivism, follows the ontological belief that deductions from this study are objective rather than subjective. This research is also undertaken in a value-free way where the researcher is independent of the data and maintains its objective stance, making it also adapt to the assertions of axiology.

Generally, the positivist's approach to this research paves the way to understand the interplay between the campaign message elements, consumer (voter) behaviour elements and the consumer (voter) decisions/choices in Ghana. In the multidisciplinary context of political marketing research, different types of knowledge and influencing attributes of voters' psychology, social and personal content and context vary with the expectation of difference in decision and choice made (Saunders et al., 2019). Positivism, like other social science philosophies, is known for logical empiricism associated with the context and dynamic of voting behaviour.

5.3 THE RESEARCH APPROACH

In accordance with Figure 4.3, the approaches to research philosophy for the development of theories are related to deductive, retroductive or abductive and inductive reasoning (Saunders et al., 2019).

The deductive approach, also known as the falsificationist approach or the hypothetical-deductive strategy, is associated with critical rationalisation (Blaikie, 2007). The deductive strategy seeks to disprove hypotheses that are to falsify them for generalisation, unlike the induction approach, which looks for evidence to confirm generalisations. The argument for this strategy is that research questions are well addressed by starting from problem explanations to the problem being investigated; this strategy provides solutions to problems through falsifiable hypotheses (Blaikie, 2007). Deductive reasoning or approach deals with developing a hypothesis based on existing theory. Thereafter, a research strategy is designed to test the hypothesis which has emanated from the theory (Wilson, 2010).

In deductive reasoning, the researcher moves from a more general level to a more specific one while studying a phenomenon. This approach to research relates to investigations of scientific nature. Deductive reasoning to research is particular about making inferences and generalisations. In deductive reasoning, attempts are made to examine the relationship between variables (Blaikie, 2007), helping to make specific conclusions to research findings (Saunders et al., 2012). From the data collection perspective, the deductive approach concerns rigorous theoretical development evaluated through several propositions related to the theory (Saunders et al., 2012) and is more predisposed to positivist research (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe, & Lowe, 1998). Addressing the research questions in this study rather requires testing existing hypotheses on the phenomenon of consumer/voter behaviour in the context of Ghana, rather than giving an explanation to the occurrence phenomenon as spelt out in the inductive approach.

The inductive strategy of research is an approach where researchers make careful observations, conduct experiments, conduct a rigorous analysis of data, and hence produce new theories or discoveries (Blaikie, 2007). Similarly, Bernard (2011) asserted that inductive strategy concerns assessing patterns in observations and experiments and interpreting such patterns by series of hypotheses. The inductive approach is used when collecting data and developing a theory as a finding of the data analysis (Saunders et al., 2012). This strategy of answering research questions excludes personal opinions in the process of arriving at what is believed to be objective knowledge. The induction strategy requires that the researcher thinks logically, after which generalisations are followed from the data (Blaikie, 2007). This strategy relies on facts, objective and logical procedures to defend generalisations made in studying a phenomenon.

The retroductive or abduction approach, on the other hand, is developed due to alleged deficiencies and criticism accompanied by inductive and deductive strategies. The retroductive or abduction research strategy involves the construction of hypothetical models as a way of uncovering the real structures and mechanisms which are assumed to produce empirical phenomena (Blaikie, 2007).

The term “retroductive” is associated with Peirce, an American pragmatist philosopher who incorporates the Latin *retro* (‘going backwards’) and *ducere* (to lead). According to Peirce (1998), the term means to deliberately and rigorously lead backwards to find new factors to a well-known problem. This means redefining and reconceptualising the problem itself by assembling or discovering, based on an interpretation of collected data, combinations of features for which there is no appropriate explanation or rule (Ahti-Veikko & Bellucci, 2014).

The retroductive or abduction strategy is a process used to produce an account of social life by drawing on the concepts and meanings of social actors and the activities in which they engage (Blaikie, 2007). Through the abduction strategy, participants can account for their actions and those of others. Unlike inductive, deductive and retroductive strategies, the abductive strategy assists in explaining, developing or changing the theoretical framework before, during, or after the research process (Dubois & Gadde, 2002). Abductive research moves back and forth between inductive and open-ended research settings to more hypothetical and deductive attempts to verify hypotheses. The abductive approach relates to research data collection for exploring a given phenomenon, themes and patterns identification, conceptual framework development, and testing the validity of results (Saunders et al., 2012). The abductive strategy entails ontological assumptions that see social reality as socially constructed by social actors, where there is no single reality but multiple changing social realities (Ong, 2012).

The test and development of a consumer behaviour theory for political marketing in Ghana is based on the deductive philosophical approach to research. This study employed deductive reasoning to test and development of theories concerning the issue under study. Findings of the study based on the hypothetical test can therefore be used in making inferences and generalisations. Applying the quantitative research technique in this study also calls for using the deductive approach.

5.4 RESEARCH METHOD

The research method can be quantitative and/ or qualitative, inferring that a mixed method can be used. Adopting the appropriate research method helps detect the data collection techniques (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003), hence the need to have an insight into the various methods.

5.4.1 Quantitative method

Quantitative research is defined as unbiased and statistically valid and is measured by numbers (Williams, 2007; Fallon & Schofield, 2006). Quantitative research deals with phenomena that can be measured and observed consisting of individuals, events and things with the view of finding the weight of the relationship between two or more variables with the aid of statistical tests (Couchman & Dawson, 1995). To Creswell (2011) quantitative method is the collection and statistical analysis of numerical data. Meanwhile, according to Zikmund, Babin, Carr and Griffin (2010), quantitative research measures concepts that either directly or indirectly deliver numeric values. Kothari (2004) describes quantitative research as including the generation of data in a quantitative form which can be exposed to thorough quantitative analysis formally and rigidly. The objective of quantitative research is to develop and employ mathematical models, theories and/or hypotheses about phenomena. Quantitative research analyses numbers statistically to help researchers interpret findings for the consumption of stakeholders (Cormack & Benton, 2000).

5.4.2 Qualitative method

On the other hand, qualitative research attempts to discover and appreciate the meaning that individuals or groups attach to a social or human problem (Creswell, 2011). Malhotra and Dash (2011) posited that qualitative research is an unstructured, exploratory research methodology based on small samples that

provide insights and understanding of the problem set. According to Mason (1996), qualitative researchers are concerned with how the social world is construed, comprehended and experienced by respondents in the study. The focus is on phenomena that occur in natural settings, and the data are typically analyzed without the use of statistics. This research method is also sometimes referred to as field study since it always takes place in the field or wherever the participants normally conduct their activities.

In the application of the qualitative research method, researchers are typically not interested in simplifying, objectifying, or quantifying what they observe (Jackson, 2003). Instead, the interest is more in interpreting and understanding what has been observed. The use of the qualitative research method makes the researcher far less structured and more open to changing their research direction based on variations in the research setting and the participants (Jackson, 2003). They may change what they observe based on changes in the field setting. As such, the method is more connected with the belief of the interpretivists, making inductions and abductive reasoning, making subjective conclusions.

5.4.3 Rationale for choosing the quantitative method

Generally, the quantitative research method is applied in this study. The objectives of this study and means of addressing these objectives largely inform the use of the quantitative research method. The application of this approach/method of research is also justified by the philosophical beliefs and assumptions and the kind of reasoning guiding the study. Quantitative research, generally, follows a natural science model of the research process to establish objective knowledge (Creswell, 2011). The quantitative research approach seeks to evaluate and understand the relationship between variables in a specific context. In the context of this study, arousal, information and evaluation elements of political campaign messages would be related or correlated to psychological, social and personal behavioural attributes of voters, which are intended used to predict the voter's decisions to make the process of voting a particular political party.

The quantitative research involves the use of a structured questionnaire to collect data from randomly selected participants who are voters in past elections in Ghana. The quantitative method is thus applicable to this research because the required information/data to be collected in the study would be gathered by using questionnaires. Responses provided by participants in the research would be coded or quantified for analysis. The analysis techniques to achieve the study's various objectives will demand the test of hypothesis, hence the use of quantitative analysis techniques. The results of his study would also be used to make inferences or generalisations, hence the need to employ quantitative and statistical techniques. Though largely quantitative, information used to develop the data collection instrument (questionnaire) would be collected through a desktop study of past campaign messages of two main political parties in Ghana. This induces that a little qualitative method of research is applied to help develop the research instrument.

5.5 RESEARCH DESIGN

The research design entails the overall plan geared towards answering the research questions (Polit & Beck, 2004). According to Grey (2014), research design sets the procedure for the required data, the methods to be applied to collect and analyse this data, and how all of this will answer the research question. To meet the unique requirements of this research, which is to test the consumer (voter) behaviour model and its influence on the choices/decisions of the consumer (voter), the choice of research design is key. De Vos (1998) posited that research design is a detailed plan or a blueprint depicting how research is conducted. The research design mainly asked the question “how” (Polit & Beck, 2004) the behaviour of the voter population in Ghana predict their final decision-making on the choice of a candidate or a political party. The type of research design selected for this study is carefully guided by the primary fact that it is best possible to provide trustworthy answers to the research questions. There are three major research design types: descriptive, exploratory and explanatory (Robson, 2002; Cooper & Schindler, 2005).

5.5.1 Descriptive design

According to Marlow (2005), descriptive research is a process of recording and reporting phenomena which is not primarily concerned with the cause. Descriptive research is to portray an accurate profile of persons, events or situations (Robson, 2002). Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2019) explained that descriptive design provides a clear picture of the phenomena. Engel and Schutt (2013) and Morris (2006) add that descriptive questions are normally overarching and involve the gathering of facts. The descriptive research design is seen as an attempt to discover facts or describe reality accurately as it exists naturally to gain an overview of the current status of a situation (Barker, 2003; Gravetter & Forzano, 2003; Mertens, 2009).

In descriptive studies, one might find a relationship between two variables but still be unable to say why this relationship exists (Mitchell & Jolley, 2010) because no explanation has yet been given. It is also added that in the descriptive design, there is no indication of determining cause-and-effect relationships. However, the aim is to describe situations and events and accurately determine the real situation. The purpose of a descriptive study is to provide a picture of a situation, person or event or show how things are related to each other and as it naturally occurs (Cooper & Schindler, 2005).

5.5.2 Exploratory design

This research design generates initial insights into the nature of an issue and develops questions to be investigated by more extensive studies Marlow (2005). Exploratory research is conducted when enough is unknown about a phenomenon or problem that has not been clearly defined (Saunders et al., 2007). It does not aim to provide the final and conclusive answers to the research questions but merely explores the research topic with varying levels of depth. Exploratory research is often a prelude to a more detailed study, but it can also be an important form of research in its own right (Alston & Bowles, 2003). Exploration is also

appropriate for more persistent phenomena, testing the feasibility of undertaking a more extensive study, developing the methods to be employed in the study, and generating more focused research questions and hypotheses for additional investigations (Babbie, 2013; Babbie & Mouton, 2010).

With the exploratory design, qualitative techniques, which are almost always inductive, are frequently used to gather data (Adler & Clark, 2008; Neuman, 2006). From the philosophical stance and the method of research adopted for this study, the exploratory design is not applicable. This study is primarily concerned with testing an existing theory (consumer/voter behaviour) with possible adjustments to the model, but not to assess the phenomena of voter behaviour for which a new theory would be proposed as commonly known with exploratory research design.

5.5.3 Explanatory design

This research design seeks to identify causes, ascertain causality between factors, determine the effects on a social phenomenon's behaviour, and predict how one phenomenon will change or vary concerning another variable (Jackson, 2011; Marlow, 2005). The design explains why events occur, builds, elaborates, extends, tests, or revises a theory (Babbie & Mouton, 2010; Neuman, 2006). According to Thyer (2010), explanatory research design aims at developing and testing theory in a particular field of study, in this case, political marketing. Glicken (2003) explains explanatory research as a research design that attempts to provide meaningful and accurate conclusions from the considerable amount of information already available. When a researcher already knows a great deal about an issue and has a description of it, the “why” question might arise, and one might want to explain why things are the way they are and demonstrate the factors needed to produce or eliminate a behaviour pattern (Jackson, 2003). A causal connection between the independent and dependent variables can thus be established in explanatory research (Grinnell, 2001). Explanatory design tends to be deductive and thus quantitative in nature. It intends to generate data about relatively large

numbers of cases using statistical analysis to interpret the data (Adler & Clark, 2008).

5.5.4 Choice of research design and strategy

To hypothesise or test the consumer (voter) behaviour model/theory and relate it to the consumers' (voter) choice to develop a new or unique theory or framework for political marketing in Ghana, the descriptive design is employed. The descriptive design is deployed to ascertain and describe the behaviour of consumers/voters as to how they absorb and react to campaign messages of political parties/candidates. A description of the psychological, social and personal attributes of voters was also determined through descriptive research design. This design helps the study to have a clear picture or an overview of the behaviour of consumers/voters. The theories underpinning this study already exist. Hence the deployment of the descriptive design was only aimed at testing these theories and affirming their application in theory and practice in the field of political marketing.

The design of this study through descriptive means also provided the opportunity to examine the relationship between the variables in the model. However, since the descriptive design is not appropriate for determining cause-and-effect, the explanatory design was also utilised to enrich the research findings. As noted, the explanatory research design establishes the causal relationship between variables. Explanatory design, therefore, sets out to explain and account for the descriptive information. Therefore, after deploying the descriptive design to portray the behaviour of consumers/voters and their voting decision, the understanding of explanatory design was applied afterwards to examine the effect or influence of behaviour on voting decisions. The combination of descriptive and explanatory design to investigate a phenomenon, just as deployed in this study, is what Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2019) referred to as "descripto-explanatory studies".

Descriptive research design, as utilised in this study, is of different forms or strategies, namely, naturalistic observation, case studies and surveys. In this study, the survey strategy is appropriate. The survey strategy is a widely utilised descriptive research design for collecting standardised information from a representative sample of a population (Cooper & Schindler, 2006). Cooper and Schindler (2006) emphasised that survey strategy represents a probe into a given state of affairs that exists at a given time, hence is deployed in this research to make contact with the individual consumer (voters) whose behaviour or attitude and characteristics are being relevant to be the investigation. According to Couchman and Dawson (1995), the survey design designates any research activity where the investor collects information or data from a portion of a population to examine the characteristics, opinions or intentions of that population.

For this reason, the survey design is considered appropriate for this research to select a portion of Ghana voters and gather information about the study upon which inferences and generalisations can be made. Exploiting the survey design helps the research undergo a scientific process where the researcher has little or no control over the entire research setting (Brink & Wood, 1998; Burns & Grove, 2001). The survey design used questionnaires to measure human behaviour, such as beliefs, attitudes and opinions, which cannot be examined directly. Polland (2005) clarifies that survey design is highly recommended for public opinion polls and market research for a highly theoretical analysis of social influences. According to Polland (2005), survey design is used by scientists to measure voter behaviour, the behaviour of consumers in general, attitudes, values and beliefs.

The survey research strategy, however, can be cross-sectional and longitudinal (Borg & Gall, 1989). In a cross-sectional survey design, subjects are studied with data collected at one point in time. In the longitudinal design, however, subjects are followed over time, with data collection occurring at predetermined intervals or set events (Scott & Brailey, 2021). Longitudinal designs allow for determining the timing of events and, therefore, can discern something about the order of effects. In this study, however, the focus is not to determine the timing of events or conduct a repeated measure of the behaviour of consumers (voters). Thus, the research

ensures that the survey design corresponds to the cross-sectional design. According to Polland (2005), the cross-sectional design allows for the examination of associations between variables and can also establish the prevalence of a problem. Furthermore, the cross-sectional design in this research allows for determining consumer (voter) behaviour stimulated/induced by political campaign message elements and its influence on voting decisions.

5.6 THE STUDY POPULATION

According to Macanda, Rammutloa and Bezuidenhout (2014), the population of a study refers to all the units or the universe (people or things) possessing similar features, which is the focus of a research study. Therefore, the population of the research is made up of the entire group to which the result of the research findings can be applied. Unfortunately, there is no reliable record of the number of voters in Ghana. However, evidence according to the 2020 general presidential and parliamentary elections shows there are 17,029,971 (Electoral Commission Ghana, 2020) registered voters in Ghana. The main research objective is to assess the impact of behavioural dynamics of voters on their voting choices to vote for, against or not to vote at all to enable the development of a model to guide political actors in taking strategic electoral decisions from the perspective of consumer behaviour. Therefore, the population in this study is 17,029,971 registered voters in Ghana.

The population of the study from which sample selection would be made is large. To avoid the challenges of getting a sample size representative of the population, the research considered the voter population in Accra as the target population. The total voter population in Accra is estimated at 3,529,181. The voter population in Accra is considered the target population because Accra, the capital of Ghana, comprises citizens from all sixteen regions. Therefore, the population composition/characteristics of Accra generally are representative of Ghana.

5.7 THE SAMPLE SIZE

In research, the sample size is defined as the smaller size of the total population (Cooper & Schindler, 2008). In the estimation of sample size in research, selecting a part of the population to represent the whole is keen to determine the sample size (Noordzij, Tripepi, Dekker, Zoccali, Tanck & Jager, 2010). The sample is carefully chosen from the whole population, is fewer in number, and yet sufficiently replicates the whole population so that reliable inferences about that population can be drawn from the study's outcomes. In regards, the research estimates the size of samples that would be representative of the voter population in Accra. The assumptions, beliefs, approach and design of this entire population sample rely entirely on making objective deductions through hypothetical or theoretical tests for inferences and generalisations. As such, determining suitable sample sizes minimises the chance of errors occurring in estimations (Sihoe, 2015).

Charan and Biswas (2013) provide that every research strategy has its sample size estimation technique to enable the sample size to have good precision and high statistical power. In this research, the cross-sectional survey strategy is employed. This strategy is to help estimate population parameters like the prevalence of voting behaviour among voters (Charan & Biswas, 2013; Setia, 2016). This study is set to predict the proportion of Ghanaian voters likely to vote a certain way based on their behavioural elements stimulated by campaign messages of political parties. Cochran's proportionate sample size estimation formula is commonly associated with a cross-sectional survey.

$$\frac{Z_{1-\alpha/2}^2 p(1-p)}{d^2}$$

$Z_{1-\alpha/2}$ is the standard normal variate (at 5% type 1 error with value 1.96 and 1% type 1 error with value 2.58). p is the expected proportion of the population. In this research, the expected proportion is estimated as the proportion of voters (2637036) to the total number of registered voters in Accra (3529181), that is,

$$\frac{2637036}{3529181} = 0.75$$

and d is the absolute error or precision. To ensure good precision of the sample size and make it more representative, the absolute error margin considered by the research is 1%, and the confidence level is 95% (0.05).

$$\frac{1.96^2 \cdot 0.75(1 - 0.75)}{0.05^2} = 7203$$

It is thus induced that the required sample size for the research, which data was collected, is estimated at 7203 voters in Accra. This is deemed representative of the population and would enable precision, accuracy and reliability of the information in the research.

5.8 SAMPLING METHOD/ TECHNIQUE

The selection of individual participants to constitute the sample for the collection of data on the research is another important aspect worth considering. Again, guided by the research questions and the methods discussed thus far, a probability sampling technique is most appropriate for the research. Employing a probability sampling method would certify that every voter in Accra has the chance of being included in the sample and ensure that each sampled voter is independent of the other (Pelham & Blanton, 2013). There are several known methods of probability sampling; nevertheless, simple random sampling was employed in the selection of voters/participants in the research. By this technique, voters in Accra were selected at random to provide the necessary information for the study.

5.9 DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENT

With regards to the objectives of the study, which largely inform the use of the quantitative research methods and the descriptive design, questionnaires were required as an appropriate instrument to collect information on the study. The questionnaire is considered appropriate to solicit information that can be quantified and also analysed qualitatively. The questionnaire was developed with a focus on the research questions and objectives. The questionnaire was divided into FOUR parts.

The first section of the questionnaire captures the Socio-demographic information of participants. These include age, gender, religion, location, ethnicity, occupation, level of education, average monthly salary/income and marital status. These variables were measured on nominal/categorical (gender, religion, location, ethnicity, occupation and marital status) and interval (age, average monthly salary/income) scales. In this section, the study also attempted to identify participants' affiliations with the two major political parties (NPP and NDC) in Ghana and whether participants pay attention to the campaign messages of the said parties.

The second section of the questionnaire focused on consumer (voter) behaviour towards political party/candidate campaign messages. This was measured in three (3) dimensions: campaign message need arousal, campaign message information search and campaign message evaluation. Need arousal of campaign messages was measured by 7-items scaled with the Five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 2 = strongly agree, 3 = neutral, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree). The items were adapted from the consumer need arousal constructs of Bruner and Pomazal (1988). Message information search was measured using the same scale of 6-items. These items were constructs of consumer information search behaviour adapted from a study by Bei, Chen and Widdows (2004). Finally, campaign message evaluation was measured based on consumer pre-purchase evaluation of alternative constructs adapted from Lim (2003). All the items or constructs used in the measurement of these variables were also outlined in the EKB Consumer Decision Process Model of Engel, Kollat and Blackwell (2006).

The third section of the instrument deals with the behavioural attributes of the consumer (voter). Three (3) dimensions were used, namely psychological behaviour, social behaviour and personal behaviour. These dimensions were measured on items or construct scaled using the five-point Likert Scale. The psychological behaviour of consumers was measured on 5-items. The items were constructs validated by Shukla and Singh (2015). The social behaviour was measured on 4-items adapted from a study by Sangroya and Nayak (2017). The

social consumer behaviour scale is a key component of the social value of the multidimensional GPV (Green Perceived Value) scale. Consumer (voter) personal behaviour was measured in terms of extraversion, agreeableness and openness to experiences. The variable was measured on a 4-item scale, with constructs also adapted from Sangroya and Nayak (2017). The final section (4) of the questionnaire measures voting decisions. To measure the variable, a 5-item scale was adapted from Ngo, Vo, Ngo, Nguyen, Le and To (2021).

5.10 DATA COLLECTION METHOD

The questionnaire was designed in google forms to fast-track the collection of data and data capture. The questionnaire was administered to the participants using 10 Research Assistants to speed up the process, and the researcher monitored them throughout the data collection process. The Research Assistants were adequately trained on the contents of the questionnaire and the processes and ethics of data collection. The Research Assistants were constantly provided data bundles since using google forms for data collection requires internet connectivity. In instances where participants could provide the information on the study, the Google link to the questionnaire was sent to them via WhatsApp platforms or emails to provide the answers. However, regarding participants who could not read and understand, the Research Assistants self-administered the questionnaire to participants through the computerised method by going through the questions with participants while filling up their responses with the online Google form.

5.11 VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY OF INSTRUMENT

Key aspects of every research worth considering are validity and reliability, which can make the difference between good and poor research (Brink, 1993) and can give assurance of accepting the credibility and trustworthiness of research findings. According to Bryman and Bell (2011), research of any kind should embrace elementary acceptable standards such as validity, reliability, and generalisations to be able to add value to the body of knowledge. Without the trustworthiness of the data collected, the analysis and interpretation of results, the research is

worthless, becomes fiction, and loses its utility (Morse, 2002). For these reasons, a great deal of attention is applied to the validity and reliability of all research, likewise this research.

Validity in research deals with the transparency and honesty of findings, while reliability deals with the consistency, accuracy and trustworthiness of data (Brotherton, French & Pickering, 2013; Miles, Huberman & Saldana, 2014; Saunders et al., 2019). Validity in quantitative research refers to the degree to which a research tool/instrument measures what it is designed to measure (Miles, Huberman & Saldana, 2014; Saunders et al., 2016). To ensure that valid information was obtained from the study, the questionnaire was designed to minimize errors in responses provided by participants. The researcher considers precision of questions, avoidance of winding and ambiguous questions, integration of follow-up questions to serve as checks, keeping questions as brief as possible and ensuring timely retrieval of the questionnaire.

On the other hand, reliability is the repeatability of a research finding. Invariably, the reliability of research is the likelihood of getting the same findings when repeated many times. According to De Vellis (2003), reliability analysis is a technique for determining a scale's accuracy that manifests a set of indications. The Cronbach Alpha statistics were employed to ensure good reliability of the instrument. Cronbach alpha is widely used to ensure test reliability and measurements (Kistner & Muller, 2004). A high alpha indicates that the factors have high reliability and vice versa. According to guidelines by Sekaran (2003), a coefficient of below 0.6 is considered poor, 0.7 is acceptable, and over 0.8 is good.

The 42 items of the questionnaire were assessed with a total Cronbach's alpha (α) of 0.959, depicted in Table 5.1. The Cronbach's alpha for the various variables was; Need Arousal (0.940), Information Search (0.904), Evaluation (0.938), Psychological behaviour (0.933), Social Attributes (0.926), Personal behaviour (0.698), Voting decision (0.876). The results depicted that apart from items on personal behaviour that are considered acceptable, all other variables have a good

reliability measure. Therefore, the questionnaire is reliable for measuring Voter Consumer Behaviour and Choice in the Ghanaian setting.

Table 5.1: Reliability test for variables

Variables	Item No.	Mean	Cronbach's alpha
Arousal	7	4.04	0.940
Information search	6	4.12	0.904
Evaluation	6	4.07	0.938
Psychological attributes	8	3.79	0.933
Social attributes	4	3.82	0.926
Personal attributes	6	3.99	0.698
Voting Decision	5	4.46	0.876
All Items	42	4.04	0.959

5.12 DATA ANALYSIS

The data captured using the Google form was stored online in google excel. The document was retrieved and coded or quantified. The data was cleaned to deal with non-item responses and errors. The data was then imported into SPSS and restructured for analysis, enabling the application of AMOS for the analysis as well. Descriptive and inferential statistics were both used to analyse the data. Results on the socio-demographic variables were presented using frequencies and percentages. The mean and standard deviations were also used to initially describe the behaviour of consumers in terms of the dimensions or variables deployed in the study.

For inferential analysis, Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) was used to test the theoretical relationships in the model. The SEM suite contains different tools to analyse variables to understand their relationship in the context of study objectives. The analysis triangulates variables for deeper inference of measured variables (Hoyle, 2012) and allows researchers to model the relationship between one or

more independent and dependent variables to achieve a set objective (Tarka, 2018)

5.13 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethics in research are behavioural standards expected of a researcher which guide the researcher's conduct regarding the rights of the stakeholders of his or her research (Saunders et al., 2012). A lack of ethical consideration in the research process may lead to a lack of compliance and cooperation from the organization under study or the respondents, making it tough for the researcher to collect the data (Sekaran & Bougie, 2010). Furthermore, to gain access to firms and respondents, it is vital to promise confidentiality and anonymity of the data to be collected (Saunders et al., 2012). Therefore, the researcher considered ethical behaviours in the conduct of the research. This was done by officially writing to the organisations involved in the study to ask permission for data collection, analysis, reporting as well as distribution of results. Once the access was approved, the researcher maintained the agreement by protecting the identity of the participants.

As the two main political parties (the National Democratic Congress (NDC) and the New Patriotic Party (NPP)) are the organizations the researcher was interested in, the first thing the researcher did was to send a letter to these two main political parties seeking permission to collect data from their offices. In the letter, the researcher explained the motivation for the research and assured the political parties that the research was for an academic purpose and that the information to be collected from their customers (followers) would be treated with the utmost confidentiality.

Demographic information relating to the gender, age and income status of customers(followers) was collected from respondents. However, this information would not be traced back to them since respondents were not asked to provide personal information such as their name(s). Also, the respondents were asked to provide their age range and not exact age or salary range and not actual salary. Each questionnaire administered contained a cover letter explaining the purpose

of the study and an assurance to respondents that the information they provided would be only for academic purposes and that the confidentiality of the data to be provided would be guaranteed. In collecting the data, the respondents were not coerced to provide any information they were unwilling to provide. In this study, respondents were not forced to respond to the questionnaires but were given the freedom to either respond or not respond to the questionnaires.

Adopting the positivist and deductive positions the researcher holds expects the researcher to be neutral in all analyses as far as the research is concerned. As a result, all data analyses were done without partialities or adjustments to the outcomes. Likewise, the Research Participants were trained and instructed not to force or interfere with participants in their choice of responses.

5.14 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter covered the various methods, approaches, design, and strategies of research deployed to gather the needed information towards accomplishing the study objectives. The chapter began with the researchers position on the philosophy of research. The stance taken for this research is positivists ontological and epistemological assumptions of reality. This position was taken because the study tests the theory of consumer behaviour as a marketing tool for application in political marketing. The chapter also discusses the various methods of research and adopted the quantitative method which is in line with the positivist approach. By using the quantitative method, the study can use statistical techniques for testing the hypothesis. The chapter also captures that the “descripto-explanatory studies” be deployed as research design. The cross-sectional survey was deployed as a strategy to collect data from participants at one point in time. The target population of the study included all registered voters in Accra, Ghana. Deploying appropriate sample size estimations technique, a total of 7203 participants were captured in the study as a sample size. Data was collected from the participants with well-designed questionnaires. The chapter also covered the description of how validity and reliability of the instrument was handled, the techniques of analysis and the ethical considerations.

CHAPTER SIX

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

Results derived from the data subject to analysis are presented in this study chapter. These results are solely based on the research objectives and questions. The study used both descriptive and inferential analysis to generalise the findings. The descriptive analysis entails using percentages, frequencies, mean and standard deviations to describe the responses/data from participants. The inferential statistical analysis was to conduct hypothetical tests on the study, which also aided the development of the model for voter behaviour. The chapter also includes discussions which put the findings into the context of current literature. The findings were critically analysed juxtaposes with literature. The discussions highlight the contribution of this study to knowledge in the field of political marketing.

6.2 SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF PARTICIPANTS

The socio-demographic profile of the study participants is covered in this chapter section to provide an insight into the calibre of participants representing the voter population of Accra captured by the research. In research of this kind, it is also important to know participants' socio-demographics since they can be used as important contributing or associating factors in the subsequent analysis should the need be. Results are presented in Table 6.1.

Out of the 7203 participants covered in the study, it is observed that 3609, representing 50.10%, were between the ages of 24 – 34, forming the majority. About 37% were between the ages of 18 – 24 years. Participants between the ages of 35 – 54 years represent 11.45%. Largely (87.45%) of voters covered in this study are very youthful citizens. Therefore, the model developed in this study and other findings for policy and strategy formulation and implementation by political parties and candidates in Ghana would be attributed to a youthful

population (ranging from 18 – 34years). With respect to gender, 4137 (57.43%) of the participants were males, while the remaining 42.57% were female. Both male and female voters are well represented in the study; hence findings can be attributed equally to both genders.

Table 6.1: Participants' socio-demographic profile

Variables	Frequency	Percent
Age		
18-24 years	2690	37.35
25-34 years	3609	50.10
35-54 years	825	11.45
55 and over	79	1.10
Gender		
Male	4137	57.43
Female	3066	42.57
Religion		
Christianity	4828	67.03
Muslim	2246	31.18
Traditionalist	129	1.79
Location		
Rural	1752	24.32
Urban	5451	75.68
Ethnicity		
Akan	3312	45.98
Ga-Dangme	1860	25.82
Mole-Dagbani	891	12.37
Ewe	770	10.69
Guan	370	5.14
Occupation		
Employed	5332	74.02
Unemployed	1871	25.98
Educational Level		
No Education	42	0.58
Primary/Secondary Education (JHS&SHS)	1521	21.12
Undergraduate Education (Certificate, Diploma and Bachelor)	5259	73.01
Graduate Education (Masters, PhD, and Post Doc)	381	5.29
Salary/Income Range (In GH¢)		
Less than 1000	3390	47.06
1000-3000	3264	45.31
3000-5000	385	5.34
5000-7000	152	2.11
Above 7000	12	0.17
Marital Status		
Married	2351	32.64
Single	4852	67.36

Regarding religion, the study shows that 4828 (67.03%) of the participants are Christians, and 31.18% are Muslims. A little about 2% indicated to be traditionalists. The religious distribution of the participants seems to have agreed with the country's population distribution by religion. According to Ghana Statistical Service (2022), the 2020 population and housing census shows the Christian population in Ghana is 71.2%, Muslims (17.6%) and traditionalists 5.2%.

This study was conducted in Accra, which is mostly an urban settlement in Ghana; hence the majority of the participants (75.68%) are in urban areas, while those in rural areas constituted only 24.32%. This indicates that consumer (voter) behaviour in this study may be credited more to the behaviour of urban citizens, who are mostly the main target of political parties' especially presidential candidates, during elections in Ghana. However, a chunk of rural behaviours would also reflect in the study; hence, the model can also be applied in such areas.

There are many ethnic groups in Ghana; however, the study covered only 5 major ones. These include Akan, Ga-Dangme, Mole-Dagbani, Ewe and Guan. The study shows Akans were more largely represented, constituting 45.98%, followed by Ga-Dangme at 25.82% in that order. Largely, the major ethnic groups are represented in this study. About 74.02% of the participants were employed, including full employment or underemployment. The remaining 25.98% declared they were unemployed.

Regarding the level of education among participants, the study largely covered the voter population, which is well-educated. It is disclosed that 5359 (73.01%) are undergraduates, including those with certificates, diplomas and bachelor's degrees. About 21% also attained levels of high school certificates. This representation may be attributed to the fact that participants are largely youthful and fond of taking advantage of education in recent times. With participants largely adequately educated, they would be able to have understood well the contents of the research instrument and provided valid and reliable responses. The distribution on income level shows that 47.06% of participants earn less than GH¢1000, whilst 45.31% earn between GH¢1000 to GH¢3000. In addition, participants constitute

single people (67.36%) and married couples 32.64%. This could also be attributed to the youthfulness of the participants.

6.3 POLITICAL AFFILIATION OF PARTICIPANTS

Developing a consumer (voter) behaviour model is based on the principle of political marketing, where voters are considered consumers for political parties. Hence, the study probed into participants' political affiliation and attention to political campaign messages. Table 6.2 represents the results of the survey.

Table 6.2: Political affiliation and attention to campaign messages

Variable	Frequency	Percent
Affiliated with a political party (NPP and NDC)		
Yes	4935	68.51
No	2268	31.49
Attention to campaign messages		
Very Often	1571	21.81
Not so often	5367	74.51
Not at all	265	3.68

Clearly, findings show that 68.51% of the voters in Ghana are affiliated with the two biggest political parties (NPP and NDC) in Ghana. This indicates that consumer (voter) behaviour in Ghana may be mostly based on affiliation with a party/candidate. In relation to campaign message attention, 74.51% of the study shows that most voters do not pay attention to campaign messages so often. About 22% of the time, it is also indicative that voters very often pay attention to political parties' campaign messages. Political parties must know that the contents of their campaign messages are very important as they receive some level of attention from voters. In marketing terms, the voter, as a consumer, sees the messages in a political party's campaign as relevant. Hence the political parties as institutions must well strategize, formulate, package, and implement their campaign messages to meet consumer expectations. This is also a clear indication that most

participants could indicate their behaviour towards the messages in the campaigns, helping to obtain reliable information to build a voter behaviour model.

6.4 MESSAGE ELEMENTS, BEHAVIOURAL ATTRIBUTES AND VOTING

DECISION

In building or developing consumer (voter) behaviour towards voting decisions in this study, important variables deduced from the theory and marketing principles reviewed must be described per the participants' responses. Therefore, the study in this section presents descriptive statistics on these variables to gain insight. Furthermore, these variables were all measured on a five-point Likert Scale of 1 to 5 (1= Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree); hence a scoring system is developed to make interpretations understandable and with ease.

Table 6.3: Scoring system for variables

Scale	Range of Weighted Mean	Response Scale
5	4.2 – 5.0	Strongly agree
4	3.4 - 4.1	Agree
3	2.6 - 3.3	Neutral
2	1.8 - 2.5	Disagree
1	1.0 - 1.7	Strongly disagree

6.4.1 Arousal to political party campaign messages

In marketing, personal selling is utilised to convince and stimulate the customer to buy. The same applies to political parties using the campaign to get their messages to customers to believe in their policies and ideas. The study in Table 6.4 represents results on customers' (voters) level of arousal concerning political parties' campaign messages. These measures the level voters highly value recognising their needs, desires and wants through political party campaign messages. In other words, to what degree do the voters as consumers pay attention to recognising their problems or needs through campaign messages?

The notification of the need by consumers in the campaign messages is a step in informing consumers (voters) as to whether the contents of the message can help solve their problems and the choice to activate the process. Consumer arousal of needs was measured on a 7-item scale in the study.

Table 6.4: Descriptive statistics for campaign message arousal

Items	Mean	S.D
I look out for new campaign messages from political parties before old ones are worn out	4.09	0.794
I feel I need to know campaign messages even though I could “make do” with the information I have about political parties	4.02	0.659
I anticipate new campaign messages even when old ones have not been executed	4.04	0.665
Before voting, it is not unusual for me to feel I need new campaign messages from political parties to influence my decision	4.03	0.693
I tend to look out for new political party messages long before my intentions about a party are informed	4.02	0.669
It is not unusual for me to look out for political party messages simply because I want to decide between them	4.04	0.698
When familiar with their campaign message, I feel comfortable and more interested in a political party.	4.04	0.683
Overall Campaign Arousal	4.04	0.599

The results indicated that participants agree that they look out for new campaign messages from political parties before old ones are worn out (Mean = 4.09, SD = 0.794). Participants also feel they often need to know campaign messages even though they could “make do” with their information about political parties (Mean = 4.02, SD = 0.659). As argued by Tyagi (2004), consumers may not be aware of specific product needs, but their interest in knowing increase as the encounter the product. Finally, participants also agree that they anticipate new campaign messages even when old ones have not been executed (Mean = 4.04, SD = 0.665). These show that consumers (voters) are interested in campaign messages and are always looking for new ones.

The results further disclose participants' agreement that, before voting, it is not unusual for them to feel that new campaign messages from political parties can influence their decision (Mean = 4.03, SD = 0.693). At high mean responses, it is further unveiled that participants tend to look out for new political party messages long before informing their intentions about a party (Mean = 4.02, SD = 0.669).

Participants also feel it is not unusual to look out for political party messages simply because they want to decide between them (mean = 4.04, SD = 0.698). However, there is a feeling of comfortability and more interest in a political party when there is familiarity with campaign messages (Mean = 4.04, SD = 0.683). Overall, the study shows a high level of campaign message arousal (Mean = 4.04, SD = 0.559) among customers (voters) in Ghana. As a consumer of political parties, the Ghanaian voter demonstrates a cognitive and affective process by having high activation levels in their reactions to campaign messages. There are emotional reactions, awareness, and attention among voters in relation to campaign messages. There are high feelings of energy or excitement among voters about political campaign messages, which means the consumer highly values recognising their needs, wants and desires spelt out by campaign messages. Therefore, the campaign message as a marketing strategy arouses the consumer's needs in the initial stage of the voting decision process. When political parties put out campaign messages as promotional and advertising strategies, the consumer (voter) is very attentive and concerned about the ideas in the messages being problem-solving issues. Consumers (voters) always look for information in campaign messages, especially the problems identified to be solved in the messages (Solomon et al., 2006).

6.4.2 Information search for political party campaign messages

A major marketing stimulant is sending the right message across that will intently push the consumer to search for information products or services on the market. This is the second stage in the decision-making process, where consumers actively collect and utilise information from internal and external sources. If the consumer is aroused by the need or problems recognised by the campaign messages, their next intent would be to search more for information on these needs. Therefore, the study in this section seeks to evaluate the extent to which voters (consumers) in Ghana search for information about political party campaign messages, which the parties use as a making tool. Results are depicted in Table

2.5. The results pertain to responses provided by participants on 6-items used to measure information search.

Table 2.5: Descriptive statistics on campaign message information

Items	Mean	S.D
I am comfortable searching for information about political party campaign messages from discussions with friends or family	3.74	0.843
I source information about political party campaign messages from Newspaper/magazines/TV/Radio	4.23	0.903
My search for information about political party campaign messages is usually directly from political party personnel or discussions with party personnel	4.18	0.785
I am comfortable searching for information about political party campaign messages from internal political party sources	4.19	0.778
My search for information about political party campaign messages is usually directly from previous experience with the political party	4.21	0.761
I source information about political party campaign messages that are readily availability	4.19	0.781
Overall Campaign Message Information	4.12	0.661

The results indicate that there is high agreement among participants that they are comfortable searching for information about political parties' campaign messages (Mean = 3.74, SD = 0.843). It is also accepted that people often try to utilise the media (newspapers, magazines, television stations, Radio) as a source of information on party campaign messages (Mean = 4.23, SD = 0.903), while others also look for the information directly from party personnel through direct contact or from party discussion (Mean = 4.18, SD = 0.785), and comfortably from internal political party sources (Mean = 4.19, SD = 0.778). These are indications that the Ghanaian voter is interested in campaign messages of political parties; thus, they are moved to search for information about the message from different sources. Supported by Majumdar (2010), consumers (voters) are always on the look for information, and often try to use the media as a reliable source.

Participants' high agreement also indicates that information about party campaigns is readily available (Mean = 4.19, SD = 0.781). Overall, participants agree with the information search about political party campaign messages (Mean = 4.12, SD = 0.661). The mean response shows high information search levels among Ghana voters regarding campaign messages. Voters are very attentive to the needs or problems that campaign messages are deemed to solve and are therefore interested in having more insight into the details of the messages, thus sort to

search for more information. Therefore, there are high levels of information searches on political campaign messages among voters. Confirmed by Haridasan, Fernando and Saju (2019), voters, as consumers of political parties, take a great interest in searching for information about the contents of campaign messages “preached” by political parties. Solomon (2019) added that, the search for information on products/services is important to consumers, as it paves way for them to survey their environment and get the appropriate information for making reasonable decisions.

6.4.3 Evaluation of political party campaign messages

In marketing, consumers often take their time to evaluate existing and new products/services available on the market before making a decision. In political marketing as well, the customer (voter), after buying into the ideas spelt out by the campaign messages of political parties, proceeds to evaluate the messages against alternatives. The level of evaluation of campaign messages among voters in Ghana is depicted in Table 6.6 based on 6-scaled items.

Table 6.6: Descriptive statistics on campaign message evaluation

Items	Mean	S.D
I usually evaluate the campaign messages of political parties based on the perceived economic benefits that I associate with such messages.	4.04	0.717
I consistently analyse the campaign messages of political parties from a performance-based standpoint.	4.08	0.707
I usually evaluate the campaign messages of political parties based on the perceived social benefits that I associate with such messages	4.07	0.708
I usually evaluate the campaign messages of political parties based on the perceived physical outcomes that I associate with such messages	4.06	0.698
I consistently analyse the campaign messages of political parties from a time-wastage perspective such that they are not mere promises	4.08	0.710
I usually evaluate the campaign messages of political parties based on the source of such messages	4.08	0.689
Overall Campaign Message Evaluation	4.07	0.615

The results indicated that participants agree that they usually evaluate the campaign messages of political parties based on the perceived economic benefits (Mean = 4.06, SD = 0.698). Moreover, there are high levels of agreement that

consistently, participants analyse the campaign messages of political parties from a performance-based standpoint (Mean = 4.08, SD = 0.710). Participants further agree to evaluate campaign messages based on the perceived social benefits associated with such messages (Mean = 4.08, SD = 0.689). Generally, the study discloses high levels of campaign message evaluation (Mean = 4.07, SD = 0.615) among participants (the Ghanaian voter). Consumers (voters) evaluate political campaign messages based on fundamental issues such as economic benefits, the performance of the political party in times of governance, social benefits, and perceived physical outcomes (for example, infrastructure). This also means that the consumer weights the contents of alternative campaign messages by comparing various political brands in the system. This shows that consumers are making comparisons to have some alternatives to choose from. The high level of alternative evaluation in agreement with Gigerenzer and Gaissmaier (2011) reflects that the information searched by consumers is being used for evaluation to inform decision-making. The level of evaluation of alternatives also indicates that consumers expect satisfaction from the messages. In accordance with Kotler et al. (1996), the consumer would evaluate to satisfy some need and therefore looking for certain benefits. Similar, the voter makes evaluations of alternative campaign messages in the political market to help inform their voting decision. The level of alternative campaign evaluation among consumers also means they are likely to develop a set of brand belief for political parties, as supported by Gomez-Diaz (2016).

6.5 CONSUMER (VOTER) BEHAVIOUR

The behaviour of consumers in marketing is based on the characteristics of the consumer. Studies have outlined different psychological, social, personal and cultural behaviours. Based on these behaviours, it is argued that the customers' life could change. Based on the review of theories and the framework, this study measured consumer behaviour in dimensions of psychological, social, and personal behaviour. Furthermore, these behaviours of consumers were measured in relation to political party campaign messages. The behaviours mentioned were also noted as some of the major and important factors that influence and determine

the consumer's behaviour. The results of these variables are described in this section of the chapter.

6.5.1 Psychological behaviour of voters

The behaviour of consumers in marketing also comes from the individual's psyche. A consumer's psychological perception, motivation, learning belief system and attitude determines their behaviour. In developing a model of voter behaviour and how such behaviours apparently would influence voting choice/decision, the psychological and behavioural attributes of the voter are considered. The outcome of the survey on these behaviours among voters is presented in Table 6.7.

Table 6.7: Descriptive statistics of psychological behaviour of voters

Items	Mean	S.D
In my considerations of political party campaign messages, I do so:		
To gain respect	3.82	0.752
To gain popularity	3.82	0.761
To be noticed by others	3.78	0.784
As a symbol of prestige	3.81	0.735
To indicate intellect	3.81	0.735
To indicate achievement	3.77	0.750
Because I am interested in the status	3.75	0.753
To enhance my image	3.77	0.743
Overall, Psychological voter attributes	3.79	0.619

The results show that participants agree to consider political party campaign messages to gain respect (Mean = 3.82, SD = 0.752). Psychologically, the belief/perception of voters towards campaign messages is that their understanding of the contents of the message accrues to them some respect. Moreover, getting insight into campaign messages is to become popular in society (Mean = 3.82, SD = 0.761) and get noticed by others (Mean = 3.78, SD = 0.784). Participants also feel that considering the campaign messages of political parties is important since it symbolises prestige (Mean = 3.81, SD = 0.735). Overall, consumers (voters) recorded high psychological attachment to campaign messages (Mean = 3.79, SD = 0.619). Findings infer that voters get motivated, believe and driven by the fact that paying attention to or considering political campaign messages would get them

famous and respected. There is a high degree of psychological behaviour among voters regarding political party campaign messages Lee, 2017). Moreover, voters want to increase peoples perception about them ((Taylor, Franke, & Kyong, 2016) concerning their knowledge and understanding of political campaign messages.

6.5.2 Social behaviour of voters towards campaign messages

Another behavioural aspect of consumers considered in the study and measured towards political party campaign messages is their social behavioural characteristics. Table presents results on the social behaviour of consumers towards political party campaign messages.

Table 6.8: Descriptive statistics of social behaviour of voters

Items	Mean	S.D
In my considerations of political party campaign messages, I do so:		
To help me to feel accepted by others	3.79	0.793
To improve the way others are perceiving me	3.84	0.778
That I would make a good impression on others	3.85	0.725
That other people would give me social approval	3.81	0.753
Overall Voters' Social Attributes	3.82	0.689

From the results, the participants agree that they consider political party campaign messages to help them feel accepted by others (Mean = 3.79, SD = 0.793). This means voters want to feel associated or have a sense of belongings with a social group, a reason they consider paying attention to party campaign messages. Such behaviours are common among Ghanaian voters. It is further noted that political campaign messages are considered by participants in aid of improving the perception of other people about them (Mean = 3.84, SD = 0.778). Good impression (Mean = 3.85, SD = 0.725) is another attribute of a social character agreeably shown by participants in their consideration of political party campaign messages. Results also reflected the general agreement that participants consider party campaign messages to obtain social approval (Mean = 3.81, SD = 0.753). Overall, there is a social, behavioural attribute to which campaign messages of political parties are considered or well-thought-out by consumers (voters). These findings are equally reflected in empirical literature.

As shown in the study of Melnyk and Carrillat (2022) and Smith and Colgate (2017) the consumer (voter) often demonstrate to be social influencers and ensure that others through their influences respond to making purchases they make. The voter by these revelations socially impresses others by their knowledge of political party campaigns. The voter socially tries to convince others about campaign messages through the word-of-mouth and as such establishes their partisanship with specific campaign messages. Voters show their identity by belonging to a social group or political party and engaging in political arguments concerning political campaigns to defend or support their party.

6.5.3 Voter personal behaviour towards campaign messages

Consumers also portray behavioural attributes towards a product or service, which are neither psychological nor social but personal. The consumer's personality can be seen in their openness regarding their agreeableness, extraversion, neuroticism, and conscientiousness. However, the personal behaviour of consumers (voters) towards political party campaigns in this study was measured on extraversion, agreeableness, and openness. Results are shown in Table .

Table 6.9: Descriptive statistics of personal behaviour of voters

Items	Mean	S.D
In my considerations of political party campaign messages, I do so because:		
I see myself as enthusiastic	3.81	1.382
I see myself as loud on issues	3.97	1.127
I see myself as critical/quarrelsome (reversed)	3.14	1.130
I see myself as sympathetic	4.37	0.982
I see myself as open to new experiences	4.52	0.822
I see myself as conventional (reversed)	4.16	1.089
Overall Voter Personal Attributes	3.99	0.687

The results indicated agreement among participants that their consideration of political party campaign messages is done because they see themselves as enthusiastic (Mean = 3.81, SD = 1.382). The study also shows that Ghanaian voters mostly consider political party campaigns because of their loudness/free-

spoken or extroverted behaviours (Mean = 3.97, SD = 1.127). The Ghanaian voter is a loud or free-spoken person. These are indications that the Ghanaian voter does not mind being the centre of attention on issues about political campaign messages. They are very social and energetic about such issues. This shows that consumers (voters) show signs of extraversion concerning their behaviour towards political campaign messages. This high level of extraversion also means consumers are more driven to seek stimulation and enjoyment from the campaign messages, per description by Eysenck (1990).

Participants demonstrated that they do not see themselves as quarrelsome/critical in considering campaign messages of political parties (Mean = 3.14, SD = 1.304). Participants, however, regarded themselves as sympathetic in considering campaign messages (Mean = 4.37, SD = 0.982). It reveals that voters are compassionate in considering political party campaign messages. In agreement with Chamorro-Premuzic (2012), agreeableness shown by voters is an indication of their caring, friendly, and tolerant nature with campaign messages. Ghanaian voters (consumers) by their nature do not feel suspicious of the campaign messages but have some level of respect and trust that the policies will be delivered (Roos & Kazemi, 2022). The Ghanaian voter is also found to have intelligent personal behaviour and curiosity regarding political party campaign messages. These are reflected by high scoring recorded for items, openness to new experiences (Mean = 4.52, SD = 0.822) and seeing oneself as conventional (mean = 4.16, SD = 1.089). Justified by the study of Costa and McCrae (1992), openness to experience is reflected in voters' curiosity, adventurousness. Overall, the personal behaviour of the Ghanaian consumer/voter is high (Mean = 3.99, S.D = 0.697). The three personality traits measured in the study show consumers' (voters') personal behaviour.

6.6 VOTING DECISIONS

In developing a consumer behaviour model for voters in Ghana, the model's outcome is to examine how the behaviour of consumers (voters) influences their final decision (voting decision). Therefore, consumer decision (voting) constitutes the dependent or major outcome variable. Results in Table 3 depict the evaluation of participants voting decisions.

Table 3: Descriptive statistics of voting decision

Items	Mean	S.D
I would vote for any political party	3.89	0.920
I would seriously consider voting for a political party of my choice	4.63	0.780
I am positive about voting for a political party of my choice	4.59	0.744
I have the intention of voting for a political party of my choice	4.60	0.756
I think it is a good idea to vote for a political party of my choice	4.60	0.758
Overall Voting Decision	4.46	0.641

It is observed that participants mostly agree that they would seriously consider voting for a political party of their choice (Mean = 4.63, SD = 0.780). There is also a high level of agreement among participants that they are positive towards voting for a political party of their choice (Mean = 4.59, SD = 0.744). Participants also demonstrated high intentions of voting for a political party of their choice (Mean = 4.60, SD = 0.756), while they also thought it was a good idea to vote for their party of choice (Mean = 4.60, SD = 0.758). In general, the voting decision among participants is high; they are showing interest in voting for the political parties of their choice. In other words, the voting decision among Ghanaian voters is positive. According to Adenan et al. (2018), high level of purchasing decision among consumers is an indication of high level of involvement with the product. This means that voter's interest in political products continuous to increase, hence their purchase involvement increases, and the voter will go through a more sophisticated decision-making process due to various factors. In line with Spears et al. (2016), the high level of voting decision is also an indication of high motivation among voters to search for extensive information in towards voting. This is also a reflection that voters see voting to be of high personal importance and sometimes situational importance (Sharma & Nair, 2017).

6.7 CAMPAIGN MESSAGE AROUSAL AND VOTER BEHAVIOUR

One of the objectives of this study is to test the hypothetical relationship between campaign message arousal and voter behaviour elements. This relationship is reflected in the final structural model as well. The purpose here is to examine how the arousal of the voter through political campaign messages influences psychological, social and personal behaviours. The result of this relationship is presented in table 6.11. In this model, campaign message arousal is the independent variable, while voters' three behavioural elements (psychological, social, and personal) each constitute dependent variables. A regression coefficient result extracted from the Structural Equational Model (SEM) describes the causal relationship between the variables, likewise, all other models presented in the study.

Table 6.11: SEM of campaign message arousal and voter behaviour

Constructs and Measures	Coefficients		Standard Error	p-value
	<i>Unstandardised</i>	<i>Standardised</i>		
AR → PSY	0.52	0.54	0.010	0.001
AR → SOC	0.43	0.50	0.009	0.001
AR → PER	0.48	0.55	0.009	0.001
RESULTS: Measures of fit: NFI= 0.833, TLI=0.911, CFI=0.921, RMSEA=0.072				

AR=Arousal; PSY=Psychological; SOC=Social; PER=Personal

Results from the analysis show a significant relationship between campaign message arousal and the psychological behaviour of voters. The regression coefficient ($\beta = 0.54$, $p = 0.001$) shows a significant positive causal effect of campaign message arousal on the voter's psychological behaviour. This means any unit change in voters' arousal toward campaign messages would change their psychological behaviour by 0.54. In other words, if there is a unit increase in message need arousal, the psychological behaviour of the voter will increase by 0.54, and a unit decrease in message need arousal will decrease psychological behaviour by the same margin. This indicates that the needs of campaign messages recognised by the consumers (voters) influence their motivation towards political campaigns, their perception of the campaigns and their attitudes and belief.

The findings of the study revealed that, significantly, the problem recognition of voters (consumers) in political party campaign messages positively influences consumer (voter) psychological behaviour. The voter's psychological behaviour is significantly impacted by the voters' ability to take cognisance of the problems elaborated in campaign messages. This agrees with scholars' proposals (Lars, 2018; Aruma & Hanachor, 2017; Bahety, Sarkar, De, Kumar & Mittal, 2022) that the psychological behaviour of the consumer is impacted by need or problem recognition. Voters (consumers) desire to have been able to see if a product (political party campaign message) would be able to satisfy their needs psychologically motivates them to purchase the product. Drawing from the conclusions of Aruma and Hanachor (2017), if the political party campaign messages meet the needs and desires of the voter, they would be highly motivated in their voting (purchase) decisions. Consumers' psychological perceptions and attitudes also change depending on the satisfaction of their needs and desires.

The Ghanaian voter (consumer) is aroused by needs, and problems spelt out in political party campaign messages. Voter's psychological behaviour (motivation, perception, attitude, and belief) towards voting a certain way would increase so far as there are increases in the campaign message arousal. However, if voters are not moved by the needs and problems in the political parties' campaign message, their motivation, attitude, perception, and belief towards voting a certain way would decrease. Therefore, political parties as brands need to ensure that their campaign messages as advertising strategies are well crafted to solve major problems for consumers (voters). This would help induce a positive motivation, perception, attitude, and belief in consumers (voters) towards a political brand and positively impact purchase decisions.

The relationship between political campaign message arousal and voters' social behaviour is also significantly positive. This is indicated by the regression coefficient ($\beta = 0.50$) supported by p-value ($0.001 < 0.05$). This infers that the social behaviour of the voter changes by 0.50 with any unit change in campaign message arousal. Should there be a unit increase in need arousal towards campaign messages, the social behaviour of the voter will also increase significantly by 0.50.

Likewise, a decrease in campaign message need arousal will correspondingly decrease consumers' social behaviour by 0.50. When consumers are aroused and identify with the need for political campaign messages, their desire to preach to friends, families, peers, reference groups and colleagues increases. This is in a bid to attain social values and build social relationships.

The relationship between social behaviour and the consumer (voter) and campaign message need arousal is backed by Arosa et al. (2019), Nelissen and Meijers (2011) and Wang (2021). The study confirmed the hypothesis that product needs arousal in a consumer relates to the social behaviour of the consumer. The product (campaign message) needs arousal in consumers to satisfy their social needs where the voter wants to be affiliated with a brand (political party). The Ghanaian voter feels that having been aroused by the need for a campaign message provides them with a sense of party identification, affiliation, and membership, raising their social status and values. Per the findings of Nelissen and Meijers (2011), the arousal of the need for a product impacts consumers' desire to “reach” others to create social relations and social value for themselves.

Political campaign message arousal also influences the personal behaviour of the voter positively ($\beta = 0.55$, $p = 0.001$). This infers that the personal behaviour of voters would change by 0.55 as a result of any unit change in campaign message arousal. Consumers' personal behaviour would also decrease significantly by 0.55, with a decrease in campaign message arousal needing recognition. Generally, recognising problems revealed in the political campaign message to which solutions could be provided is essential to the voter (consumer) and, therefore, positively influences their behaviour.

It is confirmed that campaign message need arousal of consumers (voters) also positively defines the personal behaviour of the consumer (voter). Simply put, the claim that the need for arousal of a product/service positively relates to the personal behaviour of the consumer holds true. This coincides with Barrett, Marsh, Boogert and Templenton (2022) and Petty (1982) findings. It is of the view that consumers (voters) have different personality traits, and these are variedly

influenced by differences in their problem-recognition ability. According to Petty (1982), recognition of needs differs with regard to individuals' personalities. However, the missing link in this study is that it would have been worth analysing how the need recognition of a product influences each personality traits of the consumer (voter). Nevertheless, voters, per their personality traits, are being aroused by their needs in political party campaign messages. Therefore, political party campaign messages should be developed so that the needs or problems to which such messages can provide solutions can entice consumers in terms of their extraversion, agreeableness, and openness to experience. In the sphere of political research, theories such as the psycho-social model postulated that psychological and sociological factors influence voters' behaviour. This study, however, adds that the psychological and social identity of voters with a political brand is strongly linked to the voters' recognition of problems solving ideas embedded in political party campaign messages.

6.8 CAMPAIGN MESSAGE INFORMATION AND VOTER BEHAVIOUR

Presented in Table is the determination of the relationship between political campaign message information and voter behavioural elements. It also explains the causal effect of campaign message information search on voter behaviour. The study sought to answer the question as to whether their search for campaign messages would influence the psychological, social, and personal behaviour of voters. The consumer is always searching for information on products/services that could affect their behaviour, influencing decision-making.

Table 6.12: SEM of campaign message information and voter behaviour

Variables	Coefficients		Standard Error	p-value
	<i>Unstandardised</i>	<i>Standardised</i>		
INF → PSY	0.54	0.51	0.011	0.001
INF → SOC	0.44	0.46	0.010	0.001
INF → PER	0.54	0.56	0.009	0.001

RESULTS: Measures of fit: NFI= 0.833, TLI=0.911, CFI=0.921, RMSEA=0.072

INF=Information; PSY=Psychology; SOC=Social; PER=Personal

The results presented in Table indicate a significant positive relationship between campaign message information search and voters' psychological behaviour ($\beta = 0.51$, $p = 0.001$). It infers that for any unit change in the campaign message information search, the psychological behaviour of voters would change by 0.51. This positive effect reveals that the change caused by campaign message information search can either increase or decrease the psychological behaviour among voters. The consumer's search for information on the campaign messages motivates them about its contents. Their perception, attitude, and belief of the consumer about the product also change as their information search changes.

It is deduced that the voter's (consumer) psychological behaviour is significantly determined or dependent on the search for information. This assertion is supported by Howard and Sheth (1969), Srinivasan (1990) and Duncan and Olshayvsky (1982). It is purported by these authors that psychologically; the consumer is motivated to search for information about a product/service once the needs of the product/service arouse them. If the voter can get information detailing the contents of a political campaign message, s/he will be pushed to search for more. The degree of the search for information depends on consumers' motivation and perceived ability to search, and higher ability results in increased information search. However, the consumer's motivation, perception and attitude towards a political campaign message could decrease if the search for information reduces or the voter cannot find the needed information. Srinivasan (1990) proved that; the psychological ability of the consumer is positively related to information search. The psychological perception of the voter induced by the search for information is critical, as it serves as a perceptual risk reduction strategy for the voter. Having found much information on a political party campaign message, the voter can identify and differentiate between good and bad policies towards satisfying their needs and development based on their perception. This changes voters' psychological attitudes and beliefs about a political brand or party.

Findings further show a significant positive effect of campaign message information search on the social behaviour of voters ($\beta = 0.46$, $p = 0.001$). This is

a revelation that for any unit change in the search for campaign message information, there would be a corresponding change in the social behaviour of the voter by 0.46. If the search for information increases, the social behaviour of the consumer (voter) correspondingly increases by 0.46, while any decrease also decreases social behaviour by 0.46. The voter searches for information on political campaign messages to push them to increase their social status and social relationship.

The relationship between information search and consumer social behaviour can be described as bi-directional. While studies (Lotfizadeh & Hanzaee, 2014; Ip, Lee & Law, 2012) proposed that searching for information depends on social and behavioural factors such as educational level, income level, social class, age, and gender. Others (Zak, 2020; Khan, 2018; Harminder & Niharika, 2022) found that consumer social behaviour is explained by searching for information about a product/service. The search for information by consumers makes them social influencers as they become more knowledgeable about campaign messages and would carry the message or information to others. Information search changes the communication and interaction of the voter with others. The voter raises his/her social status and value and shows affiliation and identification with a particular political brand or party as more insight is gained through searching for information. Practically, these occur in the political environment in Ghana, where individuals or party faithful or people seeking to be highly identified with a party consistently seek information about party policy strategies and campaign messages to debate or argue out any emerging issues.

Furthermore, the personal behaviour of voters was also positively affected and influenced by political party campaign message information search. This is shown by the regression coefficient ($\beta = 0.56$) supported by the significant p-value ($0.001 < 0.05$). The consumer's behavioural traits change according to the search for information in campaign messages. A unit increase in information search would increase the social behaviour of the consumer by 0.56, while any decrease in the search for information would decrease personal behaviour by the same margin. The search for information by consumers on campaign messages causes them to

get loud, enthusiastic, critical, and conventional about issues entailed in the messages.

Empirically, this relationship is proven by scholars (Jani, 2011; Halder, Roy & Chakraborty, 2011; Schmidt & Wolf, 2016). The voter would like to be very informed about political party campaign messages by the level of their agreeableness, openness to experience and conscientiousness. Voters become more open to experience and conscientious about the campaign message of various political parties once they have derived adequate information from their search. The activeness, enthusiasm, and confidence level of the consumer (voter) towards a political party would change depending on the search for information and the quantum of available information obtained.

6.9 CAMPAIGN MESSAGE EVALUATION AND VOTER BEHAVIOUR

One major issue of concern to consumers is how well a product or service of a company or brand performs its intended functions. Therefore, evaluating products and services is a norm among consumers, which influences their next decision. Moreover, consumers' evaluation of brands and outliers influences behaviour and decisions. Therefore, this section seeks to examine how consumer (voter) evaluation of political campaign messages influences the three key behavioural elements (psychological, social and personal). Results are depicted in Table 4.

Table 4: SEM of campaign message evaluation and voter behaviour

Variables	Coefficients		Standard Error	p-value
	<i>Unstandardised</i>	<i>Standardised</i>		
EVA → PSY	0.54	0.52	0.011	0.001*
EVA → SOC	0.44	0.46	0.010	0.001*
EVA → PER	0.54	0.53	0.009	0.001*

RESULTS: Measures of fit: NFI= 0.833, TLI=0.911, CFI=0.921, RMSEA=0.072

EVA=Evaluation; PSY=Psychology; SOC=Social; PER=Personal

The regression analysis deduced from the SEM discloses a positive relationship between political campaign message evaluation and voters' psychological behaviour. This explains the positive effect of campaign message evaluation on

voter psychological behaviour ($\beta = 0.52$, $p = 0.001$). The study infers that any unit change in evaluating political party campaign messages leads to a corresponding increase in voter psychological behaviour by 0.52. On the other hand, if the evaluation of alternative campaign messages decreases, the psychological behaviour of the consumer will also decrease. Additionally, this finding explains that consumers may be highly motivated by political messages if positive findings derive from alternative campaign messages. The consumers' perception, attitude and belief of the campaign message likewise expands due to positive reactions from alternative evaluations. In simple terms, using a two-party case scenario, if a consumer finds that the contents of campaign messages of party A to be adequate and would help solve their problems, the consumer's level of motivation, perceptions, attitude, and belief of the message rises. The psychological behaviour of consumers towards the campaign messages of the party would decrease.

In support of a study by Gumilar, Rizal, Srial and Putral (2017) and Mishral (2018), it is asserted that the consumer is psychologically motivated to purchase a product if they realise it is a better choice after alternative evaluation. Being satisfied with the product/service after evaluation and consideration of alternatives, the perception and attitude of the consumer about the product/service changes and this could result in customer loyalty and a repeated purchase or patronage. This position is also supported by Folkes and Matta (2004) and Ordabayeva and Chandon (2013).

A significant positive relationship between campaign message alternative evaluation and social behaviour is also revealed. In other words, the social behaviour of voters is positively influenced by the evaluation of campaign messages ($\beta = 0.46$, $p = 0.001$). This explains that should there be any unit increase in the evaluation of campaign messages of political parties by consumers, their social behaviour also increases by 0.46 and vice versa. Therefore, consumers would evaluate alternative messages and make comparisons to identify with one that would enhance their social relationships in society.

Furthermore, the study finds a significant positive relationship between campaign message evaluation and the personal behaviour of voters. The positive effect of campaign message evaluation on personal voter behaviour explains that when there is a unit change in campaign message evaluation, the personal behaviour of the voter will change by 0.53. This claim is significantly supported by a p-value $(0.001) < 0.05$. When the consumer assesses other alternatives and realises some changes or variations, their personal character traits also change accordingly. The agreeableness of the consumer, their extraversion and openness to experiences significantly depend on the evaluation of alternatives by the consumer.

In support of the Hawkins, Best and Coney Model, which links the consumer decision-making process to consumer behaviour, it is hypothetically proven that consumers' evaluation of product/service alternatives strongly predicts consumers' social and personal behaviour. Contrarily, Nouraie, Moonich and Kordi (2017) believed consumers' personal behaviour impacts their alternative evaluation. This was supported because consumers being categorised by various personality traits differ in their evaluation of alternatives. For example, the behaviour of voters towards political parties' changes through satisfaction with some of their needs after the evaluation of campaign messages.

6.10 CAMPAIGN MESSAGE ELEMENTS AND VOTING DECISION

The final expected outcome of this study is to link voter behaviour to the voting decision. The importance of behavioural models in marketing is to test how the final model relates to the consumer's decision. The consumer's decision-making to finally purchase the product/service is essential to marketers. Hence its determination and the associated factors have become key in research and analysis. While the existing refer to empirical studies and study the influential factors that impact the consumer's purchase decision, it is important to continuously refine these factors and identify new ones, especially in the current changing or dynamic system. In this section, the study ascertains the effect of the campaign message arousal, information search and alternative evaluation, the first

three key elements of the consumer buying decision-making process, on consumers' final decisions. Table represents the model estimates.

Table 6.14: SEM for campaign message elements and voting decision

Variables	Coefficients		Standard Error	p-value
	<i>Unstandardised</i>	<i>Standardised</i>		
AR → VD	0.49	0.46	0.011	0.001*
IF → VD	0.43	0.44	0.010	0.001*
EVA → VD	0.54	0.52	0.011	0.001*
RESULTS: Measures of fit: NFI= 0.833, TLI=0.911, CFI=0.921, RMSEA=0.072				
<i>AR=Arousal; IF=Information; EVA=Evaluation; VD=Voting Decision</i>				

The results show that all three elements of the purchase decision process (need arousal/recognition, information search and alternative evaluation) influence the consumer's final decision positively and significantly. Particularly, it is revealed that there is a significant positive relationship between campaign message arousal and voting decision. The voting decision of the voter is significantly influenced by the campaign message needs arousal/recognition ($\beta = 0.46$, $p = 0.001$). The coefficient explains that if there were any unit increase in the consumers' recognition of needs campaign messages, the voter (consumer) voting decision would increase by 0.46. On the other hand, any unit decrease in campaign message need arousal/recognition would lead to a decrease in voting decisions as well by 0.46.

Additionally, the model discloses a significant positive relationship between campaign message information search and voting decisions. In other words, the decision of the voter (consumer) to vote (purchase) for a particular candidate or political party depends on the consumer's search for information on campaign messages. The regression coefficient explains that when consumers' search for information on campaign messages increases by a unit, the consumers (voters) decide to vote (buy) increases by 0.44. Conversely, by the same margin of change (0.44), the voting decision would decrease if there was a decrease in consumers' information search on campaign messages.

Additionally, it is confirmed that a positively significant relationship exists between campaign message evaluation and voting decisions. The voting decision of the voter is thus significantly predicted by the evaluation of campaign messages. Any change in campaign message evaluation would cause voting behaviour to change by 0.52. When consumers can successfully evaluate alternative messages of political party campaigns, they make informed decisions based on that, which influences their voting decision significantly.

6.11 BEHAVIOURAL ELEMENTS AND VOTING DECISION

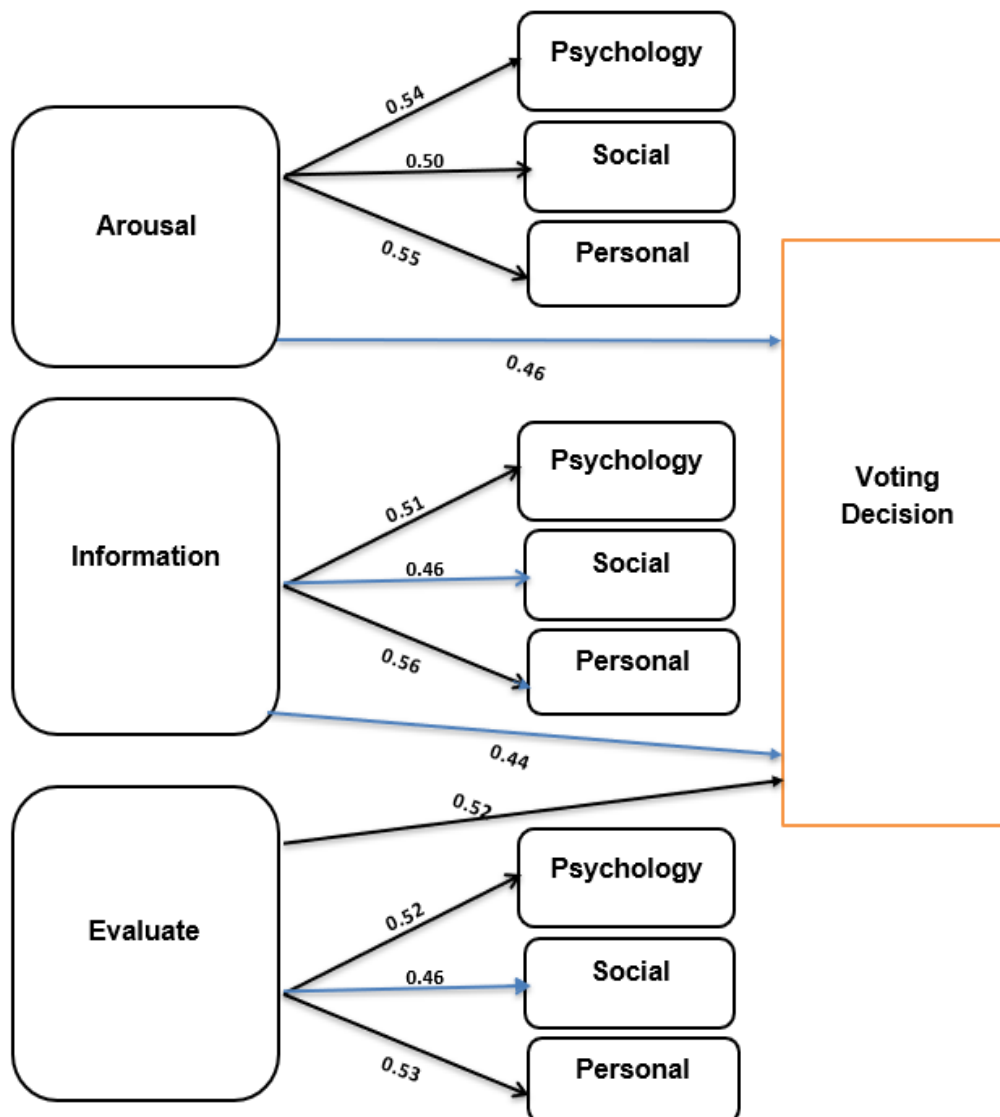


Figure 6.1: The voter behaviour model

Figure 4 represents the final path structure or model deduced from applying the Structural Equational Model to the data. It represents the final voter behaviour model in Ghana and summarises the relationship between specific variables as explained in the earlier submission in the analysis. The model simply proposes that political parties utilise campaign messages as a tool and technique to market/sell their brand to the voter. The campaign messages, therefore, as a stimulus to the voter. Therefore, the voter's behaviour would depend on the nature of the arousal of the message, the information search on the message and the message evaluation. These three are important components of the consumer decision process, thus used in the study to measure the functionality of political campaign messages. In other words, the campaign message as a stimulus is discussed from the perspective of its need arousal function, the information search and evaluation. It is proposed that campaign message arousal, campaign message information search and campaign message evaluation stimulate the voter's behaviour. The behaviour of the Ghanaian voter changes due to changes in the arousal, information search and evaluation of campaign messages. The major aspects of the consumer's behaviours also depend on these three stages of the consumer decision-making process. The consumers' psychological, social, and personal behaviour are influenced positively by the need recognition, information search and alternative evaluation.

Findings of the overall model coincides with the rationality choice/decision theory, which portrays that voter behaviour is similar to consumer behaviour in marketing and that consumers would make rational decisions by weighing up concrete and proper issues. Despite the criticism of the rational choice model, this research also postulates that, rationally, the voter critically analyses the policies and ideologies of political parties as a guide towards voting decisions. The major criticism was that it takes consumers very little time to go through sequential activities important in decision-making. Of importance to the study, however, the timing attributed as a "con" in rational choice mode may depend on the product/service. This study considered political campaigns as a product that could take voters (consumers) longer to process decisions. In Ghana, elections are held every four years. Campaigns, however, intensify about a year before the election, providing ample

time for the voter to make rational decisions. It may, however, hold that, during decision-making, consumers engage in emotional and cognitive processing prior to purchase. This study in overcoming such issues considered behavioural issues such as psychological and personal traits of consumers; these address the emotional and cognitive issues, respectively. Voters would vote for a political party if the utility of voting for their preferred party outweighs that of others.

The decision-making and behaviour of the consumer (voter) in Ghana and Africa have been connected to ethnicity (Steele, Bostic, Lynch and Abdelaaty, 2022; Authur, 2009; Gyimah-Boadi & Debra, 2008), personality of the candidate and personal linkages (Frimpong, 2001) and clientelism (Erdmann, 2007; Posner, 2005). This study, however, moved away from these usual factors and focused on the consumer behavioural theory as a marketing model to predict voter behaviour and decision-making. The EKB model, which delves into consumer decision-making in marketing, applied to this study proposed that problem identification, search for information and evaluation of alternatives by the consumer (voter) significantly influence consumer decision. The voter devotes more cognitive effort to purchasing a political idea considered important and elaborated in party campaign messages. Campaigns are considered a key strategy for advertising in political marketing, and identification or recognition of consumer needs in campaign messages is an invitation to the consumer (voter) to purchase (vote). Voting decisions depend on the campaign message, need arousal, information search and alternative evaluation.

The Goodness of Fit Indices (Model validation)

The models are evaluated using measures of model fit, including NFI, TLI, CFI and RMSEA (Hair et al., 2010). SEM was the focus of the final stage of developing the model. The interrelationships between the variables can be assessed using SEM, which is based on the hypotheses made in the theoretical framework. In this work, two types of model fit measurements were used. The first is a measure of absolute fit (measures), where RMSEA is the appropriate test for this. There are also incremental fit indices. They are used to see if the estimated model matches better

than an alternative baseline model, where the number of items in each model may differ. NFI, TLI, and CFI were used. The normal fit index (NFI) is a metric for a model fit that should have a minimum score of 0.9 (Hair et al., 1998), as well as the Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) and Comparative Fit Index (CFI). Furthermore, Hair et al. (2012) proposed that, in the case of large samples, the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) be used instead of the chi-square test to measure the goodness of fit. RMSEA cut-off is less than or equal to 0.08.

Forty-two items make up the construct. The fit indices NFI (0.833), TLI (0.911), and CFI (0.921) were all high values (0.927). TLI and CFI exceed the minimum level, whereas NFI comes close to it. The findings for model fit met the minimally acceptable level of 0.9. The RMSEA (0.072) was initially above the suggested cut-off (0.083), but with the reversed model maintained, the model's fit was at an acceptable value, satisfying the required basic condition. Therefore, the entire model was considered fit and valid for predictions and decision-making.

6.11 CHAPTER SUMMARY

The analysis of data and interpretation of the results was presented in this chapter. It also included the discussion of the results with existing literature, making comparisons with previous study outcomes. The analysis revealed significant relationship between variables included in the model. Specifically, campaign message arousal has a positive significant relationship with voter behaviour in terms of psychological, social, and personal behaviour. Moreover, campaign message information search also relates positively with voter behaviour. There was also a significant positive relationship between campaign message alternative evaluations and the various dimensions of voter behaviour. the campaign message elements also influence voting decision significantly. Generally, the model was confirmed accurate for adoption and decision making.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 INTRODUCTION

This study examined the behaviour of Ghanaian voters using the concept and understanding of the consumer behaviour model in marketing. Political parties in the new era of democracy and the hunger for political power are seen as business organisations/entities relying on voters to achieve their business or organisational objectives. Hence, the voter is regarded as a “voter or customer” to whom political parties sell out their ideas through campaigns as a marketing strategy. Therefore, ascertaining the behaviour of voters in relation to the campaign messages of political parties towards voting decisions enabled the development of voter behaviour in this study.

This study adopted multiple theories namely the psycho-social theory of consumer behaviour, the rationality theory (the rational choice model), Engel, Kollat and Blackwell decision making theory, the Hawkins, Best and Coney model, and stimulus-organism-response (SOR) theory. The study used the deductive research approach to test hypotheses linked to the proposed conceptual framework.

Through this research approach, the study has been able to achieve the main study objective of developing a consumer behaviour model for voters in Ghana set out in Chapter 1. In pursuance of this objective, the following specific objectives set out in Chapter 1 were also achieved.

1. Determine the relationship between campaign message arousal element and voter behaviour.
2. Examine the relationship between campaign message information elements and voter behaviour.
3. Ascertain the relationship between the campaign message evaluation element and voter behaviour.

4. Examine the relationship between campaign message elements and voting decisions.
5. Identify elements that can be included in the consumer behaviour model for voters in Ghana

This chapter is arranged as follows. Firstly, the study provides a conclusion on the entire research. These conclusions are based on the findings derived from the study results and discussions. The chapter also includes sections on the contribution of this study to knowledge and implications or recommendations for practice, policy, and future research. Finally, the chapter concludes by outlining the limitations of the study.

7.2 CONCLUSIONS

This section presents the conclusions on the hypotheses tested based on the findings discussed in Chapter 6 in Table 7.1 followed by a summarised narrative.

Table 7.1: Conclusions on the hypotheses

Hypothesis	Sig	Result	Conclusion
H ₁ : Need arousal of campaign messages has a positive relationship with the psychological behaviour of the voter.	Sig (5%)	Reject	Political campaign message arousal influences voter psychological, social, and personal behaviour in Ghana
H ₂ : Need arousal of campaign messages has a positive relationship with the social behaviour of the voter.	Sig (5%)	Reject	
H ₃ : Need arousal of campaign messages has a positive relationship with the personal behaviour of the voter.	Sig (5%)	Reject	
H ₄ : Campaign message information search has a positive relationship with the psychological behaviour of the voter.	Sig (5%)	Reject	Campaign message information search has a significant positive influence on the voters' psychological, social, and personal behaviour in Ghana
H ₅ : Campaign message information search has a positive relationship with the social behaviour of the voter.	Sig (5%)	Reject	
H ₆ : Campaign message information search has a positive relationship with the personal behaviour of the voter.	Sig (5%)	Reject	
H ₇ : Campaign message alternative evaluation has a positive relationship with the psychological behaviour of the voter.	Sig (5%)	Reject	Campaign message evaluation influences voter behaviour significantly in Ghana.
H ₈ : Campaign message alternative evaluation has a positive relationship with the social behaviour of the voter.	Sig (5%)	Reject	
H ₉ : Campaign message alternative evaluation has a positive relationship with the personal behaviour of the voter.	Sig (5%)	Reject	
H ₁₀ : Campaign message element (arousal) has a positive relationship with the voting decisions.	Sig (5%)	Reject	Campaign message elements (arousal, information, and

H ₁₁ : Campaign message elements (information seeking has a positive relationship with the voting decisions.	Sig (5%)	Reject	evaluation) influence voting decisions in Ghana.
H ₁₂ : Campaign message elements (information evaluation) has a positive relationship with the voting decisions.	Sig (5%)	Reject	
H ₁₃ : Psychological behaviour element influence voter decisions in Ghana			
H ₁₄ : Social behaviour element influence voter decisions in Ghana			
H ₁₅ : Personal behaviour element influence voter decisions in Ghana			

7.2.1 Campaign message arousal and voter behaviour

With reference to Table 7.1, H₁, H₂ and H₃ are rejected at the 95% confidence level meaning that there are significant positive relationships between political campaign message need arousal and voter psychological, social, and personal behaviour at the 95% confidence level. In other words, high levels of need arousal due to political campaign messages positively influence their psychological, social, and personal voting behaviours.

It is therefore concluded that political campaign message need arousal influences voter psychological, social, and personal voting behaviour

7.2.2 Campaign message information and voter behaviour

Table 7.1 shows that at a 95% confidence level, H₄, H₅ and H₆ should be rejected, meaning that there are significant positive relationships between political party campaign message information search and the voters' psychological, social, and personal voting behaviour at the 95% confidence level. In other words, high levels of political campaign messages information positively influence the psychological, social, and personal voting behaviours of voters in Ghana.

It is therefore concluded that the psychological, social, and personal behaviour of voters in Ghana are influenced by political campaign message information.

7.2.3 Campaign message evaluation and voter behaviour

Like the previous hypotheses, Table 7.1 shows that at a 95%, H_7 , H_8 , H_9 can be rejected meaning that at the 95% confidence level, there are significant positive relationships between alternative evaluation of political campaign messages and the psychological, social, and personal voting behaviours of voters in Ghana.

It is therefore concluded that the psychological, social, and personal behaviour of voters in Ghana are influenced by political campaign message evaluation.

7.2.4 Campaign message and voter decision

Findings of the study as depicted in Table 7.1 also supports the rejection of H_{10} , H_{11} , and H_{12} . Rejection of H_{10} , H_{11} , and H_{12} means that there are significant positive relationships between campaign message evaluation, arousal and information and voting decisions in Ghana.

It is therefore concluded that the psychological, social, and personal behaviour of voters in Ghana are influenced by political campaign message evaluation, arousal and information.

7.3 CONTRIBUTION TO KNOWLEDGE

The study provides another lenses for understanding voter behaviour by advancing the application of consumer behaviour models, showing that voting can be understood in a similar way to purchasing decisions. In other words, the study advances existing traditional marketing related theories into the politics realm to better understand voting behaviour from a marketing perspective. Thus, through this research, voting behaviour (politics) can be understood from a consumer behaviour (marketing) perspective. In other words, the application of theories often used in analysing consumer behaviour (a traditional marketing concept) has been used to successfully demonstrate the relationship between voter behaviour (politics) and consumer behaviour (marketing).

The study highlights the role of psychosocial variables in voting behaviour, thus expanding the application of psycho-social theory into the field of marketing and political science hence enriching the fledgling field of political marketing. Using rationality theory helps in validating the assumption of rationality in the voting behaviour of Ghanaians. And, using the S-O-R model and EKB theories together in the study provides a comprehensive understanding of how external stimuli, individual's internal conditions, and decision-making processes influence voting behaviours from a marketing perspective.

The study also enhances our understanding of the cultural, economic, and social factors that influence voters in Ghana. Since consumer behaviour can largely be regarded as a Western concept and the variables and theories used are of Western origin and the framework was confirmed, this research literally confirms the applicability of Western voting behaviour models in an African context.

This study contributes to the political marketing knowledge through the development of a conceptual model which identifies campaign messaging and consumer behavioural elements as inputs by political parties to have desired impact on voters' decision to vote for their parties. The study also contributes to political marketing knowledge by providing understanding to political parties, candidates, and citizens on the elements of campaign messages that defines the decision process of the voter. It further elaborates on how each campaign message element could change the behaviour of the voter and voting decision.

The study provides knowledge base for developing policy strategies relevant to institutions such as the Electoral Commission as to how best to educate and sensitise citizens on political party campaign messages towards making rational voting decisions. Political parties are also provided knowledge base regarding elements/ factors considered by voters towards their voting choices, and the strategies by which they can adopt to make their campaign messages attractive and appealing to voters.

7.4 IMPLICATIONS/ RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PRACTICE

Political parties, politicians, candidates, and other practitioners should know that marketing has become a major component and a strategy for achieving their objectives. A political party without incorporating ideas and concepts of marketing and branding into its strategic planning and selling out of policies may fail to attain their targets to win elections. This study offers political parties and candidates the opportunity to adopt campaign strategies which are consumer (voter) focused. They should consider the voter's behaviour as the initial step towards developing their manifestos.

Manifestos should be developed with ideas and policies to arouse the voter positively. The voter's basic needs and demanding issues should be the topmost priority. The ideas and policies contained in political party campaign messages should be captivating, catchy, and appealing enough to the voter. The voter's behaviour may change if their basic problems are well captured and preached to them, and their search for information provides hope; their voting decision would also change towards the party's direction.

Political parties and candidates should also strengthen communication strategies to ensure campaign messages reach the target consumer (voter). The messages should be well explained to understand the consumer (voter) to stimulate their interest. There is also the need to provide information on policies developed by political parties or candidates. This information should be easily accessible by the voter. While in recent times the traditional media (radio, televisions and newspapers) has been used as means of advertising campaign messages, political parties should explore the use of social media in order to capture young voters especially and the educated. The campaign messages should also contain policies and ideas that are realistic enough, attainable, and sustainable in the near future. This is because the voter takes a decision based on the evaluation of the messages.

7.5 IMPLICATIONS/ RECOMMENDATIONS FOR POLICY

Per the findings and conclusions of this research, the Electoral Commission of should adopt the following suggestions to help develop policies towards citizens education on voting.

Voters must be made aware of the need to seriously scrutinize political party campaign messages. The citizens must be sensitised to identifying if their needs are being spelt out in the campaign messages and basically make their voting choices based on their needs. The Electoral Commission can make available the various needs spelt out in the campaign messages of parties, so that citizens can make comparisons and make better choice. The commissions should also demand political parties to develop their manifestos or campaign messages based on the needs of a National Development Plan. Parties must be forced to adhere to this policy, else, messages not identified with the development plan must not be encouraged in the public domain.

Voters should also be sensitised on the sources of information on political campaign messages; thus, valid, and reliable sources must be provided by the commissions. The commission as an institution on itself should also provide details on the campaign messages to citizens. This can be done through the traditional media and the social media. the commission in collaboration with other relevant institutions such as the Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA), Centre for Policy Analysis (CEPA) and think-tank organizations should organise national debates for political parties. This should provide a major source of information on campaign messages and implementation strategies to citizens. The debate should also be extended to the constituency levels where the parliamentary candidates of the parties would lead the arguments.

Citizens should also be advised to thoroughly evaluate campaign messages and juxtapose them with other alternative campaign messages for better decision. The political parties should be made to provide detailed implementations strategies on their proposed messages, including feasibility and sustainability to help citizens in their evaluations.

7.6 IMPLICATIONS/ RECOMMENDATION FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This study has contributed significantly to the knowledge of literature in the field of political marketing. Nonetheless, further studies should be conducted in other jurisdictions other than Ghana to validate the model or test the hypotheses. In addition, the study should be extended to examine the demographic differences in the voter's behaviour and how voting decisions differ by such factors (demographics). Finally, a further study should also be conducted to link the voter's political affiliation to their behaviour and voting decision.

This study, in the development of the model, utilised political campaign message elements as stimulants to evaluate voters' behaviour. These elements were based on the consumer decision steps outlined in the EKB (Engel, Kollat and Blackwell) model. However, only three (problem recognition, captures as arousal, information search, evaluation) out of the five process steps were used in the study. Therefore, a further study should be extended to cover the remaining two decision process components (purchasing of the selected alternative and post-purchase evaluation) and their influence on voter behaviour towards voting decisions.

7.7 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

A major limitation of this study is that it mostly covered participants (voters) who are more educated and did not include many of the less educated. This is because the data was mainly collected through a computerised method, and the survey was conducted in an urban population. In addition, the measure of political party campaign elements was also limited based on only three elements of the EKB model out of the five steps.

7.8 CHAPTER SUMMARY AND CONCLUDING REMARKS

This final chapter of the study drew conclusions on the study and makes key recommendations for policy, practice, and further research. It is important to highlight the following as concluding remarks.

Firstly, the study has shown that voters in Ghana get aroused by political party campaign messages, influencing their psychological behaviour to change. This means that the Ghanaian voter's motivation, perceptions, attitudes, and beliefs change towards voting a certain way due to being aroused by the campaign message of political parties. Put differently, if a political party campaign message touches or emotionally stimulates a voter, the voter may have a feeling of a partisanship relationship with the party, and vice versa. This voter arousal by campaign messages provides therefore provide political party proximity and identification which political parties can exploit to their benefit.

Secondly, the results indicate that the Ghanaian voter is looking for content and detailed information on the messages preached by political parties. The voter, as a consumer, wants to be enlightened on the policies and ideas (products) of political parties. To a high degree, the Ghanaian voter also considers evaluating political campaign messages key towards behavioural change. The devotion of time by the voter to understand and have in-depth knowledge and insight about the details of campaign messages causes the voter to express emotions and feelings towards a political party, and vice versa. Also, the voters' social feelings or attachment to a political party may change because of campaign message information search by the voter. This is possible because information search changes the communication and interaction of the voter with others. It can be argued that voters raises their social status and value and show affiliation and identification with a particular political brand or party as more insight is gained through searching for information. The search for information by the voter also influences voters' personal behaviour.

Finally, the voter in Ghana, just like any consumer, makes a rational choice, based on, evaluating the campaign messages of political parties. The valuation process

can therefore be seen as an important step in the voter decision process just as in the classical consumer decision-making process. It can also be argued that voters' behaviour in Ghana towards political parties change positively after the realisation that policies and ideas as products offered to them in the message are realistic, attainable and can benefit them economically and socially. When the voter is satisfied with the evaluation of alternative messages, their motivation, attitude, and perception towards the message (product) and the political party (brand) changes. Likewise, voters social and personal behaviour also increases or decrease after alternative evaluation of campaign messages.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1

Table 5: Test for Model Accuracy

Measures-of-fit Indices		Criteria (Cut-off Value)	Results	
			Model 1	Model 2
<i>Absolute fit (Measures based on the population discrepancy)</i>	RMSEA	≤ 0.08	0.083	0.072
<i>Comparison to a baseline model: incremental fit indices/ comparative indices</i>	NFI	>0.9	0.619	0.833
	TLI	>0.9	0.759	0.911
	CFI	>0.9	0.776	0.921

RMSEA: Root Mean Square Error of Approximation; **NFI:** Normed Fit Index; **TLI:** Tucker-Lewis Index; **CFI=** Comparative Fit Index

Appendix 2

Questionnaire

Section A: Demographics

1. Gender

☐ Male ☐ Female

2. Age group

☐ 18-24 ☐ 25-34 ☐ 35-54 ☐ 55 and over

3. Region of Residence

4. Constituency of Residence

5. Religion

☐ Christian ☐ Muslim ☐ Other _____

6. Location of constituency

☐ Urban ☐ Rural

7. Ethnicity

☐ Akan ☐ Ga-Dangme ☐ Mole-Dagbani ☐ Ewe ☐ Guan Other (specify)

8. Occupational Status

☐ Employed ☐ Unemployed

9. Level of Formal Education

☐ No Education ☐ Primary/Secondary Education (JHS&SHS) ☐ Undergraduate Education (Certificate, Diploma and Bachelor) ☐ Graduate Education (Masters, PhD and Post Doc)

10. Average monthly salary (GHC)

☐ Less than 1000 ☐ 1000-3000 ☐ 3000-5000 ☐ 5000-7000 ☐ Above 7000

11. Marital Status

☐ Single ☐ Married

12. Of the two prominent political parties in Ghana (NPP and NDC), do you have any political party affiliations?

☐ Yes ☐ No

13. How often do you pay attention to political party campaign messages?

☐ Very Often ☐ Not so often ☐ Not at all.

SECTION B: VOTER/CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR AND CHOICE

On the Likert Scale of 1 to 5, please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding statements concerning your need arousal to political party campaign messages. Tick or circle the appropriate number on the Likert Scale, with 1= Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree.

	1	2	3	4	5
I look out for new campaign messages from political parties before old ones are worn out.					
I often feel I need to know campaign messages even though I could "make do" with information I have about political parties.					
I anticipate new campaign messages even when old ones have not been executed.					
Before voting, it's not unusual for me to feel I need new campaign messages from political parties to influence my decision.					
I tend to look out for new political party messages long before my intentions about a party is informed.					
It's not unusual for me to look out for political party messages simply because I want to make a decision about them.					
I feel comfortable and more interested in a political party when I'm familiar with their campaign message.					

On the Likert Scale of 1 to 5, please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding statements concerning your information search about political party campaign messages. Tick or circle the appropriate number on the Likert Scale, with 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree.

	1	2	3	4	5
I am comfortable searching for information about political party campaign messages from discussions with friends or family.					
I source for information about political party campaign messages from Newspaper/magazine/TV/Radio.					
My search for information about political party campaign messages are usually directly from political party personnel or from discussions with party personnel.					
I am comfortable searching for information about political party campaign messages from internal political party sources.					
My search for information about political party campaign messages are usually directly from previous experience with the political party.					
I source for information about political party campaign messages that are readily availability.					

On the Likert Scale of 1 to 5, please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding statements concerning your evaluating political party campaign messages. Tick or circle the appropriate number on the Likert Scale, with 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree.

	1	2	3	4	5
I usually evaluate the campaign messages of political parties based on the perceived economic benefits that I associate with such messages.					
I consistently analyze the campaign messages of political parties from a performance-based stand-point.					
I usually evaluate the campaign messages of political parties based on the perceived social benefits that I associate with such messages.					
I usually evaluate the campaign messages of political parties based on the perceived physical outcomes that I associate with such messages.					
I consistently analyze the campaign messages of political parties from a time-wastage perspective such that they are not mere promises.					
I usually evaluate the campaign messages of political parties based on the source of such messages					

On the Likert Scale of 1 to 5, please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding statements about psychological

approach to political party campaign messages. Tick or circle the appropriate number on the Likert Scale, with 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree.

In my considerations of political party campaign messages, I do so:	1	2	3	4	5
To gain respect					
To gain popularity					
To be noticed by others					
As a symbol of prestige					
To indicate intellect					
To indicate achievement					
Because I am interested in status					
To enhance my image					

On the Likert Scale of 1 to 5, please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding statements about social approach to political party campaign messages. Tick or circle the appropriate number on the Likert Scale, with 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree.

In my considerations of political party campaign messages, I do so:	1	2	3	4	5
To help me to feel accepted by others					
To improve the way I am being perceived by others					
That I would make a good impression on others					
That other people would give me social approval					

On the Likert Scale of 1 to 5, please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding statements about personal approach to political party campaign messages. Tick or circle the appropriate number on the Likert Scale, with 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree.

In my considerations of political party campaign messages, I do so because:	1	2	3	4	5
Extraversion					
I see myself as enthusiastic					
I see myself as reserved/quiet (reversed)					
Agreeableness					
I see myself as critical/quarrelsome (reversed)					
I see myself as sympathetic					
Openness to experiences					
I see myself as open to new experiences					
I see myself as conventional (reversed)					

Voting Decision (Ngo et al. 2021)

On the Likert Scale of 1 to 5, please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding statements about voting decisions of political party of choice. Tick or circle the appropriate number on the Likert Scale, with 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree.

	1	2	3	4	5
I would never vote any political party (reversed)					
I would seriously consider voting for a political party of my choice					
I am positive towards voting for a political party of my choice					
I have the intention of voting for a political party of my choice					
I think it is a good idea to vote for a political party of my choice					