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**CONCEPTUALIZING POLITICAL CAMPAIGN MESSAGING IN AN
ELECTION - THE CASE STUDY OF THE 2016 PRESIDENTIAL
ELECTION IN GHANA**

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ABSTRACT

Political campaign messaging is acclaimed as one of the three critical success factors in winning a competitive election. With Ghana's virtual two-party political system, formulating attractive campaign message for election becomes imperative. This study undertook a review of the political campaign messages employed by the two leading political parties in Ghana, namely New Patriotic Party (NPP) and National Democratic Congress (NDC) in the 2016 Presidential elections to determine how the messages were formulated. The study applied the Grounded Theory methodology under the qualitative research approach. An in-depth interview using semi-structured questionnaire was used to collect data from twenty-four (24) respondents out of a total sample size of forty-five (45) respondents including campaign communications advisors, staffers, constituency parliamentary aspirants and journalists and media practitioners. It was discovered that '*Free SHS*' campaign message used by the NPP was the most attractive campaign message compared to '*Changing Lives, Transforming Ghana*' message used by the NDC. Results also indicate that there is no conceptual framework in the current literature that guides the formulation and design of political campaign message. The research therefore contributes to the existing literature by developing a political Campaign Messaging Conceptual Framework that outlines the processes of formulating campaign message for elections. For Managers, this study validates the use of multiple campaign messages and the effectiveness of personal selling channels as the means of disseminating political campaign messages in Ghana. Policy makers can benefit from the application of this Conceptual Framework as a guide to support political parties to design political campaign messages that focus on critical issues and promote peaceful campaign. Although the limited participation by the respondents affiliated to the NDC was a constraint, it however did not affect the outcome of this study because good amount of data was generated from respondents affiliated to the NPP as well as Journalists and Media Practitioners who participated in the 2016 campaign.

PART I

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research Background and Context

Ghana, a West African country with a population of over thirty-two million have had seven successive elections between 1992 and 2016 under its fourth Republican Constitution (Yobo and Gyampo, 2015). This research study is focused on the 2016 Presidential election campaign which brought the current President, Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo to power. The study intends to conduct an empirical analysis of how the two leading political parties, namely New Patriotic Party (NPP) and National Democratic Congress (NDC) formulated their campaign messages for the 2016 Presidential elections. The research will use Grounded Theory methodology anchored on social exchange theory to develop a conceptual framework to guide future political campaign messaging formulation for elections.

The developments, outcomes, and the trend of Presidential elections particularly since the year 2000 indicate that elections in Ghana have become competitive with the country progressively establishing a duopolistic democratic system (Nam-Katoti et al, 2011 and Ayee, 2016). Although the country has over twenty registered political parties, political activities particularly elections are dominated by two of these political parties, namely New Patriotic Party (NPP) and National Democratic Congress (NDC). Data available further shows that these two political parties have since the year 1992 won political power and formed Governments in respective years.

The dominance of these two political parties has been extended to the Parliamentary elections where very few smaller parties have had the opportunity to get elected to the National Assembly (Yobo and Gyampo, 2015). Indeed, the 2016 Parliamentary seats were all won by these two leading political parties, with majority going to the New Patriotic Party (NPP). The competitive nature of contemporary politics in Ghana is therefore obvious to many researchers hence the need for

scholarly work to identify and understand the factors that have become critical for strategic campaign decision making such as campaign message design and communications in general.

In spite of the competitive nature of the Ghanaian political environment, some scholars believe that campaign messaging play insignificant role in Ghanaian voters' choice when electing a President or a Member for Parliament (Anebo, 2001). As noted by Jonah (1998) and Jeferies (1997) and Chazan et al (1992) voters decision making processes are influenced largely by other perceived important factors such as traditional loyalty, ethnicity, party affiliation and other primordial considerations at both presidential and parliamentary elections in Ghana. In their perspective, campaign message has very little influence over the Ghanaian voters' decision making because voters tend to make selfish decisions when it comes to voting.

Some scholars however argue that Ghanaian voters voting behaviour is highly influenced by a well-crafted campaign message based on an agenda to promote community development and collective interests than seeking to achieve certain ideals or rights which are far remote from the collective needs of the people in general (Ninsin, 1993; Austin, 1975 and Owusu, 1970). The existing literature indicates that Ghanaian voter decision is highly influenced by the collective interest which includes seeking improvement in the whole society's material conditions such as lack of hospitals and poor road networks than the individual selfish interest. In some cases, the individual problems that require Government intervention aggregate to become the collective problems of the whole society.

Gyampo et al (2017) on the other hand argued that the "ordinary Ghanaian voter is influenced by party identification model in deciding who to vote for in an election" (page 29). These scholars assert that, factors other than an attractive and persuasive campaign message lead to electoral victory in Ghana's elections. While admitting that an analysis of the historical trend of election outcomes in 2000, 2008 and 2016 partially points to what Gyampo et al (2017) described as "regime fatigue" other scholars on the contrary argued that multiple factors usually account for electoral victory or

defeat in elections in Ghana (Agomor, 2019; Osei, 2013; and Brierley & Ofosu, 2014). Some of these factors include party affiliation, attractive campaign message, poor economic performance, poor branding and poor communication of party's policies and programmes, voter apathy, global political atmosphere, and other psychosocial variables (Antunes, 2010 and Lindberg 2004, Kwakye, 2013).

Other scholars however believe that elections in Ghana particularly since the year 2000 have become keenly competitive and the nature of the competition is underscored by a number of factors including the growing middle class, high media penetration, technology adaptation and the influence of Western culture (Adams and Agomor, 2015). This in essence requires political parties involve in electioneering campaigns to apply marketing communications strategies to craft attractive campaign messages in order to persuade voters for their votes.

Moreover, other contemporary studies indicate that the Ghanaian voter is becoming more individualistic, especially the urban middle class and the educated elites hence is more likely to make decision not grounded on community interest and other primordial considerations as earlier indicated, but their decisions have the tendency to be influenced by personal and selfish parochial interest such as access to Government contract, commercial transaction, proximity to the ruling political class among others (Anebo, 2001; Dun, 1975; Chazan, 1987; and Austin, 1964; Yobo and Gyampo, 2015).

As already indicated earlier, the current political dispensation and environment is characterized by voters with high level of education, the influence of western culture, high media penetration and access to sophisticated technology that increases access to political, economic, and social information and communication materials. Since this category of voters can be classified as *'Influencers'* or *'Intermediary Elites'* who act between the candidate and the citizens, it has become more pertinent for political campaigns in Ghana to formulate attractive campaign message targeted at this segment of the voters' population (Ayee, 1998).

The competitive nature of elections in Ghana particularly the rivalry between the New Patriotic Party (NPP) and National Democratic Congress (NDC) as well as their dominance of the Ghanaian political environment have led to the two-party system duopoly. This phenomenon has further compounded the challenge political communications strategists face when formulating their campaign messages since the average voter in Ghana has a binary choice to make when electing a President.

In light of the above, the choice of the voter is likely to be influenced by a candidate's campaign message that clearly outlines his or her agenda for development and resource allocation that appears to be relatively better positioned and more persuasive in improving the socioeconomic lives of the electorates and other members of the society (Gyima-Boadi & Debrah, 2008; Yobo and Gyampo, 2015; and Adams and Agomor, 2015). Such an agenda must be crafted in a message or through communication stimulus that appeals to the voters' sense of judgement using appropriate communications techniques. This can be effectively done using a conceptual framework that has been developed using a rigorous theoretical and systematic approach.

1.2 Research Questions

There has been very little research interest in the area of political campaign messaging for elections in the Ghanaian context by both political marketing and political science scholars. Many studies of this nature have focused on the experiences of political campaigns in United States of America, United Kingdom and within other European democracies (Brader, 2006; Clinton and Lapinski, 2004; O'Cass, 2001; Baines, 2002; Goldstein and Freedman, 2002; Brady, Johnston & Sides, 2006; and Huber and Arceneaux, 2007). The limited research and scholarly works in this area relative to Ghanaian political campaigns have largely focused attention on ethnicity in politics, party structure and organization, electoral violence, campaign manifesto, agenda setting, importance of political marketing strategies, voting behaviour, and the process of electing candidates (Anebo,

2001; Hinson and Tweneboah-Koduah, 2010; Adams & Agormor, 2015; Yobo and Gyampo, 2015; Ayee, 2016; Gyampo et al, 2017; Ayee, 2016; and Agormor, 2019).

In contributing to fill the knowledge gap identified through a critical review of the existing literature in this area of political marketing and communications, it is important to outline the following research objectives:

1. *To determine how the campaign messages of the two leading Presidential candidates in the 2016 elections were conceptualized.*
2. *To examine the framing strategies used by the two leading Presidential candidates.*
3. *To analyse the themes underlying the campaign messages of the two Presidential candidates.*

Referencing the research objectives outlined above, the researcher has developed the following research questions:

1. *What were the main campaign messages of the two leading Presidential Candidates in the 2016 election?*
2. *What mechanisms were used to select relevant issues that informed the design of the campaign messages by the two leading Presidential Candidates?*
3. *What themes underpinned the campaign messages of the two Candidates during the election campaign?*

1.3 Purposes and Scope of the Research

The overall goal of this study is to develop a conceptual framework to guide political campaign message design or formulation. The two dominant campaign messaging strategies, namely competitive messaging and substantive messaging requires that campaign strategists design messages that significantly appeal to the voting population and essentially leads to electoral victory

for participating candidates or political parties (Flowers, Haynes and Crespin, 2003; Scammel, 1999; and Bowler and Farrell, 1992).

In order to achieve this, there is the need to follow a systematic process which outlines critical steps, factors, and key elements to consider when formulating a political campaign message. Prior studies in the area of political communications and political marketing have paid little attention to how political campaign messages are conceptualized and designed. This research is therefore not interested in analysing the impact of the campaign messages used by the NPP and NDC Presidential Candidates in their 2016 electoral campaigns but rather how these campaign messages were conceptualized and formulated.

The scope of this study was limited to the 2016 presidential election held in Ghana on December 7th, 2016, involving a total of six presidential candidates representing six political parties and one independent presidential candidate. The sample population used for this study consist of the members of the campaign teams of both the Presidential Candidates of New Patriotic Party (NPP) and National Democratic Congress (NDC) during the 2016 presidential election campaign. In addition to the campaign teams of the two Presidential Candidates selected for this enquiry, the target of the research population also focused on media practitioners and journalists who reported or covered the activities of the campaign during the period. The members of the campaign teams were made up of politicians, professionals and volunteers who were selected by either the Presidential Candidate or the political party the candidate is representing. In the case of the media practitioners, they are professionally trained journalists who was attached to a specific presidential candidate or reported on the activities of the campaign for the media outlet he or she works for as a routine. The period for the data collection covered six months involving about 45 respondents living in Ghana, using face to face interviews and telephone interviews. To ensure that this study meets the high standards of empirical research, theories including social exchange theory (Homans, 1958 and

Gronroos, 2000), message framing theory (Wilson et al, 1988), and theories of reasoned action (Fishbein, 1975) among other theories were applied to guide this research.

1.4 Significance of the Research

Formalization of politics in Africa in general compared to Europe and United States is only some few decades ago (Bourett, 1959; Apter, 1968; and Austin, 1964). Incessant wars and military takeovers have further weakened the practice of multi-party democracy in many African countries. Ghana, which is popularly considered or acclaimed as among the few stable multiparty democracies on the Africa continent has held only seven continuous elections between 1954 and 2016 (Jeffries, 1996; Yobo and Gyampo, 2015; and Aryee, 2016).

As a result of this phenomenon, there is limited literature on political marketing with a clear focus on Ghanaian political experiences in general as well as political campaign messaging in particular. Prior research works in relation to political marketing have significantly focused on the importance of applying marketing strategies in political campaign in Africa with no specific attention narrowed down on campaign messaging development or analysis (Hinson and Tweneboah-Koduah, 2010; and Gyampo et al, 2017).

However, there is significant evidence in the existing literature to show that campaign messages do play influential role in voters decision making when choosing a candidate (Adams and Agomor, 2015 and Gyampo et al, 2017). It is therefore obvious that a study of how campaign messaging is formulated using a case study from a developing or an emerging democracy will enrich the existing political marketing communication literature.

Since the overall goal of this study is to develop a conceptual framework to guide future campaign message formulation, political campaign strategists may apply this tool as a management technique. With Ghana emerging as an upper middle income economy, increased literacy rate,

enjoying constant increasing access to technology, and high media penetration, electoral campaign will become relatively sophisticated giving voters much opportunity to elect political office seekers with the right mix of leadership qualities. This will eventually improve the quality of governance and also increase the level of participation among the citizens particularly the youth and women in politics in Ghana.

In this regard, there is therefore the urgent need for political campaign managers to adopt more sophisticated political marketing techniques to persuade voters. Targeting the voting population with coherent, persuasive, and attractive campaign messages is likely to become an important success factor in any future elections hence developing a conceptual framework to guide this process will make significant contribution to both theory and managerial practice.

1.5 Research Contributions

Political marketing is gaining increasing popularity and application in many democracies in Africa, although most sub-Saharan African countries could be described as experiencing transitional democracies (Hinson and Tweneboah-Koduah, 2010). In spite of this growing acceptance of political marketing in Africa, scholars and researchers have paid little attention to the process of formulating political campaign messaging for elections in Ghana and Africa as a continent. This research has conducted empirical studies into how the two leading political parties in Ghana that contested the 2016 presidential elections formulated their campaign messages.

The outcome of this study will make contribution to political marketing theory by developing a conceptual framework to help the study and understanding of how political campaign messages are formulated for elections in Ghana. This area of political marketing theory is hugely underdeveloped particularly within the African context.

In terms of managerial contribution, the outcome of this research could be used as a guide by political communications strategists and consultants when designing political campaign messages. The systematic approach as guided by the application of Grounded Theory methodology to develop this conceptual framework provides a strong and rigorous analytical basis for it to be used as a decision making tool.

Finally, having a framework to guide campaign message formulation will contribute significantly to filling the information asymmetric that exists between candidates seeking political office and voters in Ghana.

1.6 Structure of the Thesis

This thesis has been structured into three Parts to adequately reflect the full content of each chapter as provided in this study. Part One presents the background, context, and a comprehensive literature review of political campaign messaging from pre-independence to the fourth republic, Part Two outlines the research design, research methodology, sampling techniques and data analysis of the primary data whilst Part Three focuses on synthesis of the data analysis, presentations of facts, and conclusions from the study. The structure and outline of each chapter are presented below:

Chapter one describes the research background and sets the context for the study, follow by the research questions and research objectives which set up the key issues to isolate for a rigorous empirical analysis. The chapter further describes the purpose and significance of the study and deep dives into research contributions expected out of this study and concludes the chapter with layout and structure of this thesis report. Chapter one essentially offers a critical review and explanation of how political campaign messaging can contribute to winning elections in Ghana, a country which practices a multiparty democracy. This chapter is important for laying the foundation for this research enquiry.

Chapter two commences the comprehensive review of the existing literature in this area of study by focusing on the analysis of political marketing in elections in Ghana using the current multiparty democratic dispensation which started in 1992. It moves on to analyse the political party system in Ghana with focus on the fourth republic which emanated from a military regime led by a group of Junior Officers from the Ghana Armed Forces in 1979 and 1982. This period ushered in the formation of many of the political parties currently engaged in the politics in Ghana which includes the two leading political parties, namely the New Patriotic Party (NPP) and National Democratic Congress (NDC). It is important to indicate that only these two political parties have had the opportunity of serving in Government since 1992.

This section of the literature review also focused on the theoretical underpinnings of the thesis by conducting a critical review of studies by other scholars and research works in the areas of marketing, communications, politics, and health campaign communications. Health communications campaigns share some similarities with political campaigns including the fact that they are all not for profit purposes, and also seek to achieve a general public good.

The chapter further describes the contemporary media structure in the country, including the dominant media platforms, sources of information and level of penetration of each media channel. Moreover, chapter two offers an explanation and a critical appraisal of political marketing in Ghana's electoral campaigns in relation to other jurisdictions before narrowing down to the role of political marketing in the 2016 Presidential election campaign which has been selected as the case study. The chapter continues with a review of framing theories in political campaign messaging, elements of campaign message, and political campaign message design theories and models developed by other researchers and scholars.

Chapter two concludes with additional review of campaign message development theoretical frameworks and models including Message Design Logics Model, Response Hierarchy Models, Message Framing Theory, Audience-Channel-Message-Evaluation (ACME) framework, and lastly,

the key elements of campaign message, and campaign message and voter turnout in Ghana. This researcher relates previous research findings and outcomes by other researcher to the research objectives to establish knowledge gaps which became the focus of this study. The thesis is thus set within Ghana's 2016 presidential election campaign of the two leading political parties, namely the New Patriotic Party (NPP) and National Democratic Congress (NDC). Finally, a critical review of the literature on voter turnout in relation to campaign message was carried out to assess the knowledge that currently exists in this area since voter turnout has become one of the most topical issues of interest among scholars who are interested in Ghanaian politics.

The next chapter of this thesis continues with the review of the existing literature, which is important in qualitative studies, by focusing on the political environment of Ghana, with an appraisal of political campaign messaging. A historical review of the campaign messages that were designed and disseminated by leading political parties who participated in the elections between 1954 (pre-independence) and 2016 was undertaken. The importance of understanding the historical context of political campaign messaging in Ghana cannot be underestimated as it offers the study an analytical rigour and rich background which informed this research design. In other words, this will include an analysis of campaign messages used during the pre-independence struggles against the British colonial rule as well as other political campaigns under the second, third and fourth republics of Ghana.

Chapter three further conducts an appraisal of these campaign messages against the outcomes of the elections and tries to relate the election results to the attractiveness of the campaign messages applied by the respective political parties. A political campaign message is deemed to be attractive when it leads to the political party or candidate that designed and disseminated the said campaign message winning that particular election. The extensive literature review under this section of the study was important to underscore how campaign messaging has evolved over time under Ghana's different political dispensations and history. It is important to indicate that, in spite of the rich history of political campaign messaging in elections in Ghana, scholars have paid little or no attention at all

to theories of political campaign message formulation or design. Another criterion used to determine the attractiveness of a campaign message is ability of the audience to recall the message, hence a review of the literature on campaign message recall was conducted in this chapter. Lastly, the chapter established a taxonomy of the major issues that influenced the design of previous political campaign messages as well as the key campaign themes applied in previous election campaigns in Ghana and in other multiparty democracies such as the United States of America and the United Kingdom.

Chapter four which begins Part Two of this thesis describes the research design and research methodology. The chapter describes the research approach and research methodology to be used to achieve the predetermined objectives of this study. The overall goal of this thesis is to develop a conceptual framework to formulate political campaign message for elections in Ghana. Chapter four also explains the qualitative methodology and why this methodology is the preferred choice to guide the conduct of this research exercise compared to quantitative methodology or methodological triangulation (mixed method) approach.

A comprehensive literature review of research methodologies was initially conducted with a focus on research paradigm, research approach and research methodology. The ontological and epistemological perspectives of knowledge are deeply examined under this chapter. The chapter continues by describing the research design which has such elements as Grounded Theory methodology, sampling technique, semi-structured interviews and in depth interviews. The chapter makes the case that the use of grounded theory methodology under the interpretivism paradigm will be more effective than other qualitative methodologies such as ethnography, phenomenology, action research, content analysis and case study. The chapter therefore concludes with detailed review and analysis of the grounded theory methodology as the methodology that will guide the conduct of this study. Chapter four ends with a critical appraisal of reflexivity in this research, which outlined the known and determined biases of the researcher in conducting this research in general and mapped out the personal issues that may lead to distortions in the research outcomes.

After the research design chapter, the next section is chapter five which examines the sampling techniques and the data collection methods suitable for the conduct of this research study. As it is commonly accepted, data collection and constant analysis of raw data is the bedrock of grounded theory methodology. This chapter therefore outlines the data collection methods and the sampling techniques in the literature and discusses their pros and cons. The chapter also examines in detail the interview methods that could be used for data collection which included in depth interview, semi-structured questionnaire, and focus group discussions. It further analyses why the research study adopted the combination of in depth interview and semi-structured questionnaires.

Chapter five in addition to the above conducts a further analysis of the sampling technique by considering the suitability or otherwise of convenience and purposive sampling techniques for this study under the non-probability sampling. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the sample frame and sample size, and why the limitations of focusing on the sample size will not affect the outcome of the study. Finally, a comprehensive description will be presented of the sample respondents and the relevance of using purposive and convenience sampling techniques to select them.

Chapter six concludes the second Part (Part Two) of this thesis report, that is the research design and research methodology part. This chapter focuses on data collection and data coding which is a key component of Grounded Theory methodology. Chapter six presents the procedure, processes and outcomes of the field data collection, the number of respondents who successfully participated in the research and explains in detail what actually took place in terms of the research work. The chapter also explains the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on the field data collection and analysis.

In addition to the above, this chapter presents a preliminary analysis of the primary data and the coding methods. It concludes with an analysis of theoretical sampling and show how data saturation will be achieved since data saturation is critical when applying grounded theory methodology and how the data will be analysed, synthesized, and presented.

The last Part of this thesis is Part Three. This outlines the presentation, analysis and conclusion sections and have been grouped into two chapters, beginning with Chapter seven. Chapter seven presents the data analysis and presentation of the research findings. The chapter further confirms that political campaign message is an important element in any campaign activity hence its design must be done in a structured manner. The chapter indicates that the two leading political parties designed more than one political campaign message but had one message as the main campaign message. The chapter dedicated significant attention to analysing the main campaign messages of the two leading political parties as well as the ability to recall these campaign messages by respondents who were all voters in the election under review.

Chapter seven also analyses the data to reveal which of the campaign messages developed for the 2016 election campaign appealed most to the respondents. A theoretical analysis was also carried out to determine the concepts used to select the campaign message themes. It was discovered through the use of coding of the data under the Grounded Theory methodology that, themes emerged and were used to design the campaign messages by the two political parties. Through the above coding and concept development, the campaign themes that underpinned the campaign messages of the two political parties in the 2016 campaign emerged as *Hope, Change and Continuity*.

The chapter continues with an analysis of the mechanisms used to select or deselect the relevant issues that will inform the design of the campaign messages. It therefore concludes the data analysis and presentation of findings on campaign messaging framing and the factors that can aid campaign message framing. The chapter finally analyses the media channels used by the two leading political parties for the dissemination of their 2016 campaign messages to the electorates.

Chapter eight ends the thesis report by outlining the key findings and conclusions and synthesizes the research outcomes with the research questions to show how the findings contribute towards closing the knowledge gaps identified earlier in the literature review. The chapter presents that the main campaign message of NPP was *Free SHS* whereas the NDC used *Changing Lives Transforming Ghana*. These two main campaign messages were among the thirteen campaign

messages identified from the primary data which were designed and disseminated by the two political parties selected for the study.

The chapter also provides evidence to buttress the conclusion that voter's ability to recall a campaign message is influenced by voter's affection for the candidate or their affiliation to the political party the candidate represents. It further contends that ability to recall campaign message is positively related to how relevant the campaign message is to the issues affecting the electorate. The chapter moreover asserts that Free SHS was the most appealing campaign message among the thirteen (13) campaign messages sampled from the 2016 election campaign. Chapter eight further reveals that the phenomenon of using multiple campaign messages in election is positive and offers advantages to both the candidate and the voters.

Lastly, the chapter provides a description of a new conceptual framework, referred to as Political Campaign Message Formulation Conceptual Framework as the thesis contribution to theory development in political marketing and marketing communications. This new framework developed out of a structured system of data collection and analysis work will assist both policy makers and communications practitioners when planning and developing political campaign messages. The chapter concludes that future research can focus on elaborating the three stage-outcome of the framework by applying other methodologies in different geographical political environment or using another methodology.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW - AN ANALYSIS OF POLITICAL MARKETING IN ELECTIONS IN GHANA

2.1 Overview

This Chapter reviews the Ghanaian political system and structure under the fourth Republic in relation to political marketing practices adopted by the political parties during electioneering campaigns. It precedes the Chapter with a brief historical narration of the transitional period between 1991 and early 1992 and indicates the structure of the political governance including the executive and legislative system being used to govern the country. The Chapter discusses the competitive forces in the political environment and how their campaign activities reflected marketing communication practices (Kotler et al, 2009). As Yobo and Gyampo (2015) found, although the smaller political parties have since 1992 not been able to win any sizable percentage of the votes, they still pose some threat to either of the two leading political parties securing electoral victory in a free and fair elections in Ghana.

The Chapter further analyses the media structure in Ghana including the types of media channels used in the 2016 campaigns, the level of usage of these channels as well as the role the media ecosystem plays in political campaigns (Daddieh, 2009; and Gyampo et al, 2017).

This Chapter asserts that the application of marketing principles in formulating political campaign message has become more critical because the relationship between a candidate and a voter in competitive election can be described as '*Transactional Relationship*' and it is tantamount to the commercial relationship between a profit seeking enterprise and a client in any market or business (Kotler & Levy, 1969; O'Cass, 1996; and Mone and Bazini, 2013). Despite the popularity of the application of marketing techniques and instruments in politics, some scholars have criticized the practice as unethical (Henneberg, 2004).

The Chapter also conducted a review of the framing concept adopted by the two leading parties in the election under review (Chong and Druckman, 2007). It analyses how the NPP framed

their campaign messages on *Change, Job Creation and Corruption* while the NDC formulated their messages on *Continuity, Good Governance, and Infrastructure Development*. The chapter further concludes the section with a discussion of the elements of political campaign management and the campaign message development theoretical frameworks. The chapter further dedicated some time to an analysis of what constitutes an attractive political campaign message in Ghana and a review of existing literature on political campaign message recall.

2.2 The Party System in Ghana under the Fourth Republic

The current democratic dispensation emerged from a military rule which until 1992 had governed this West African country for about eleven years. The military junta, Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC) overthrew a democratically elected Government which had begun the third republic in 1979 after the general elections in that same year. The elections brought Dr. Hilla Limann of the People's National Party (PNP) to power in September 1979 under a new Constitution but lasted for some twenty-seven months in power (Morrison, 2004 and Awoonor, 1990). The 31st December 1982 coup d'état ushered in the PNDC rule led by Jerry Rawlings and lasted until the beginning of the fourth republic in 1992.

The current fourth republican dispensation therefore commenced in January 1993 when the Chairman of the PNDC Government, the then military regime won the presidential elections of 1992 as the National Democratic Congress (NDC) Presidential Candidate (Aryee, 2016). The 1992 election was conducted under the guidance of the 1992 Constitution which guaranteed multiparty democracy and freedom of association including political association. The lifting of the ban on political party organization and activities thus saw the emergence of thirteen political parties for the 1992 presidential and parliamentary elections. The registered political parties were the Democratic People's Party (DPP), New Generation Party (NGP), Ghana Democratic Republican Party (GDRP), National Independence Party (NIP), Peoples Heritage Party (PHP) and Every Ghanaian Living Everywhere Party (EGLE). Others were National Convention Party (NCP), National Democratic

Congress (NDC), New Patriotic Party (NPP), People's National Convention (PNC), People's Party for Democracy and Development (PPDD), National Justice Party (NJP), and National Salvation Party (NSP).

The political party system in Ghana then could therefore be described as a multiparty system since all these thirteen political organizations had been newly formed with equal chance of winning the elections separately or in alliance with other parties (Ninsin, 1993). However, successive general elections in Ghana indicate that the party system could not be theoretically described as a *multi-party system* because data from electoral outcomes since 1992 rather support a *two-party system* (Daddieh, 2009; and Agomor, 2019). Indeed, two party system is predominant in presidential system of governance which Ghana has been practising under the fourth republican constitution (Lees-Marshment, 2001; and Brady, Johnston, and Sides, 2006). It is therefore accurate to conclude that the current political party system in Ghana is akin to a *duopolistic competitive structure* in business environment, where the marketplace is dominated by two major players (Agomor, 2019 and Sloman, 2008).

Due to the duopolistic competitive nature of the current political system in Ghana, the two major political parties must always take in to account the possible reactions of the other competing political parties. Within this context, elections in Ghana have since then become keenly competitive among the two leading political parties, namely the New Patriotic Party (NPP) and the National Democratic Congress (NDC) (Agomor, 2019 and Tweneboah-Koduah, 2010). The challenge political parties operating in such a two-party system face is the fluidity and unpredictability of the other party's reactions to actions of the other (*the reactive nature of the NPP vs NDC phenomenon*). Campaign Managers, Political Communications Experts and Strategists are therefore required to apply both qualitative and quantitative research and data analytics to determine these possible reactions.

Consequently, both NPP and NDC have been using marketing tools to distinguish their offerings to the electorates in all elections. In other words, the electorate in a two-party system stands

a better chance of benefitting from the keen competitive nature of politics and governance which should lead to improvements in their livelihoods. It is believed that policy formulation and implementation are closely reviewed by the electorates who are expected in most cases to make rational decisions in such a political system. In effect, better development is achieved in the same way consumers enjoy affordable prices for quality goods in duopolistic competitive market where players cannot collude to form cartel due to the characteristics of the market (Kotler et al, 2009). This point is reinforced by the fact that the two political parties in the current political landscape in Ghana cannot practically collude to form government (Sloman, 2008). Marketing, particularly political marketing, branding, and marketing communications have therefore become strategic tools for the two political parties in Ghana to secure maximum votes during elections before they can win political power.

On the other hand, however, some scholars have argued that although the minor political parties in Ghana's political landscape have been annihilated and have accounted for just one percent of the popular votes in recent elections including the 2016 presidential election, they still pose some competitive threat to the two major political parties in terms of securing political power (Yobo & Gyampo, 2015). They assert that classifying Ghana's political system as a two-party system may undermine the strategic approach and posture of the two leading political parties and eventually affect their competitiveness. In contrast however, a study by Agomor (2019) concluded that "although a multiplicity of parties has contested seven sets of national elections during the Fourth Republic, only the NDC and NPP have been dominant. The other political parties, whether they claim to take their origins from the former CPP and UGCC traditions, or represent some third force in Ghanaian politics, have remained fringe parties. The Fourth Republican constitutional entrenchment of a multiparty political system in Ghana has therefore been stifled by the de facto institutionalization of a two-party system in the country" (Agomor, 2019, page 80). In this regard, adopting effective marketing strategies have become imperative for the two leading parties in Ghana for running effective campaign.

Lastly, Ghana practises executive presidential system with strong legislature and judiciary. The legislators who are Members of Parliament elected to represent demarcated constituencies also go through competitive elections (Morrison, 2004). Ghana's current parliament has a composition of two hundred and seventy five (275) Members of Parliament, all belonging to the NPP and NDC. It is important to indicate that other smaller political parties as well as independent candidates have won parliamentary seats in previous elections, particularly in 1992, 1996, 2000 and 2008 (Gyimah-Boadi and Debrah, 2008; and Adams and Agomor, 2015). It is argued that Ghana's current political system is a hybrid of the American presidential system and the British parliamentary system. This has ensured active participation in the electoral politics and democracy in Ghana than many of the countries within the Sub Saharan Africa (Gyimah-Boadi and Debrah, 2008; Ninsin, 2006; and Anebo, 1997). It is worth noting however that, participation of women in politics in Ghana has not been significant. Although, it is not the subject matter under this study, women however form a significant proportion of the registered voters in Ghana hence any political marketing strategy must consider their characteristics and expectations (Gyampo et al, 2017; Ayee, 2016; and Adams and Agomor, 2015).

2.3 The Current Media Structure in Ghana

The media structure in Ghana, akin to the global media landscape has seen significant transformation. It is apparent in the existing literature that this transformation has been stimulated mainly by politics, multi-party democratic dispensation since 1992, increase in literacy rate among Ghanaians, technological innovation, and technology adaptation (Enli, 2017 and Meyer, Haselmayer and Wagner, 2017). Most sub Saharan African countries where media penetration has been low due to both internal and external factors including low literacy rate, poor technology adaptation, dictatorship, among others, have seen significant growth as a result of the introduction of multi-party democracy, market liberalization and external factors such as technology advancement and innovation in the digital space (Bruns et al, 2016; and Enli, 2017). The combined effects of these

factors have revolutionized the media landscape not only in Ghana but the whole sub region, both anglophone and francophone. In addition to these internal and external factors is the impact global multinational media organizations such as Cable News Network (CNN), the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), Al Jazeera News, Sky News among others have had on the local mass media in Ghana (Bruns et al, 2016). These global multinational media networks using their capacity, global reach and wide network are able to broadcast stories of international interest which eventually build the interests of Ghanaians, particularly the middle class, in issues and subjects happening outside Ghana. This transition in the media landscape happened alongside the changing political environment which effectively commenced in the late 1980s, when Ghana began its fourth republican democratic dispensation.

Therefore, many of the elections that have taken place in Ghana, including those under the current fourth Republic have occurred within media environment characterized by a liberal traditional mass media particularly Radio, Television and Newspaper as the mode of sending campaign communications materials and campaign messages to the electorates. Other campaign communications techniques adopted in the political campaigns in Ghana include personal selling (door-to-door visits), rallies, street-float, phone calls and bulk short message service/SMS. These channels of communication are hugely underutilized in political campaigns in Ghana largely because of inadequate access to the above mentioned communications channels especially among the electorates in the rural and peri-urban communities. Hence, political parties have relied heavily on radio, television, and newspaper channels to disseminate their campaign messages.

In addition to the other non-traditional media channels outlined above, what is generally described as '*New Media*', or '*Social Media*' played some significant role in the 2016 Presidential elections campaign in Ghana. Unlike the previous elections in the 21st Century in Ghana (namely 2000; 2004; 2008; and 2012), where there is evidence that the opposition parties especially in both 2000 and 2008 elections benefitted significantly from high mass media penetration, both political parties in the 2016 Presidential elections rather used the new media platforms as major campaign

tools (Gyampo et al, 2017; and Isbell and Appiah-Nyamekye, 2018). It was clear that the Presidential Candidate of the then ruling NDC who was relatively younger and had relatively better appreciation of technology, adopted the use of these social media platforms, especially *Facebook* as a campaign platform.

The new media or what is now generally accepted as social media has indeed transformed campaign communications in Ghana, although there is low technology adaptation and low social media penetration among Ghanaians compared to the rest of the world. The new media which is described as communication technologies that enable or facilitate user-to-user interactions and, information and news sharing currently forms a major part of the channels of communications in politics in Ghana (Enli, 2017). New media platforms which include *Newsportal*s; *Facebook*; *Twitter*; *Instagram*; *Youtube*; and *Pinterest* gained popularity somewhere in 2012 in Ghana but played insignificant role in the 2012 elections (refer to figure 2.1 below). The traditional mass media channels such as Radio, Television and Newspaper were the main channels used by the various political parties in that election (Isbell and Appiah-Nyamekye, 2018). However, due to enhanced technology adaptation, the new media has gained popularity and the penetration rate is currently high among the educated, young, and urban dwellers in Ghana, competing strongly against the traditional mass media platforms.

According to the 2018 Afrobarometer Survey, *“Most Ghanaians rely on radio and television as their main sources of news. About one-quarter get news from social media and the Internet at least a few times a month, while regular newspaper readership continues to decline. Young and well educated Ghanaians are the most frequent users of social media and the Internet, while older and less-educated citizens rely more heavily on radio as a source of news”* (page 2). This observation reinforces the earlier point that the rate of growth of social media as a news source has made it an important communications tool for political campaign in Ghana hence political parties must consider these emerging media platforms when planning their campaigns.

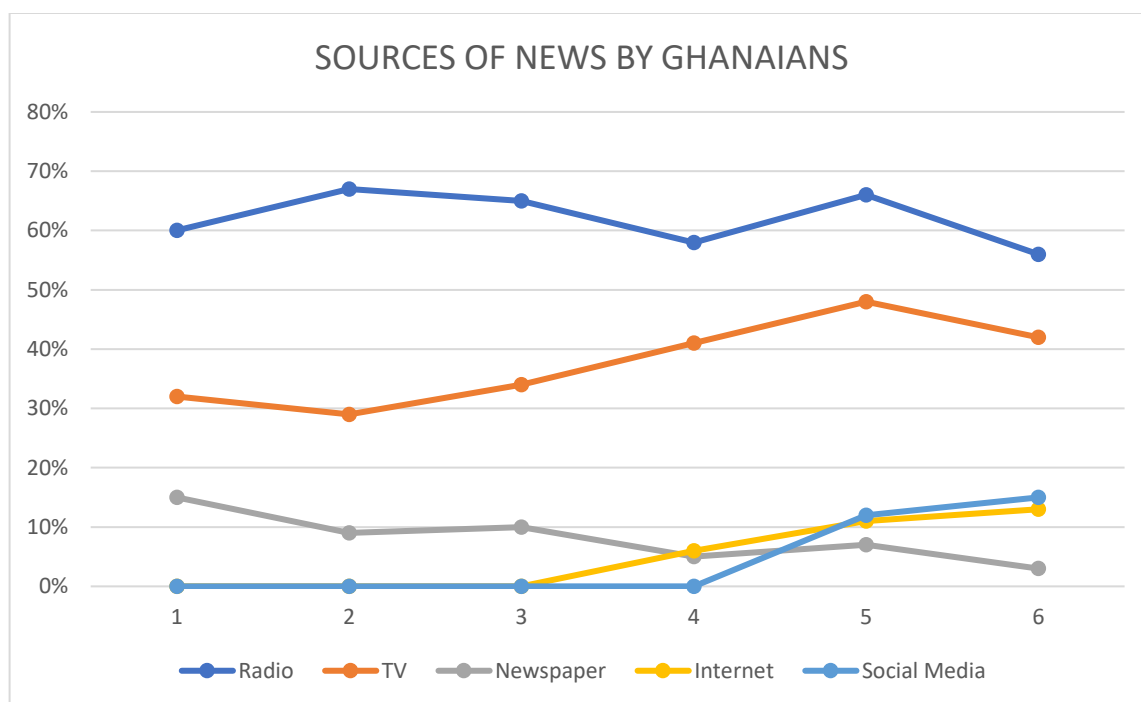


FIGURE 2.1: HOW OFTEN DO GHANAIAANS GET NEWS FROM RADIO; TV; NEWSPAPER; INTERNET; AND SOCIAL MEDIA. DATA ADOPTED FROM THE 2018 AFROBAROMETER SURVEY BY CDD GHANA.

In spite of this current trend, overall, Radio and Television still dominate access to information and news among Ghanaians (Isbell and Appiah-Nyamekye, 2018). However, the new media platforms, social media in particular appeal more to the youthful population, which forms majority of the electoral population representing about 58% and aged between 18 years and 35 years, according to available data in 2016. The social media phenomenon has therefore become a game changer and relevant to political marketing and campaign planning in any elections in Ghana. Although both Radio and TV as news sources are experiencing downward trends, it must however be indicated that the current growth of social media and internet as news sources is positively correlated to level of education, income levels and internet penetration (Isbell and Appiah-Nyamekye, 2018).

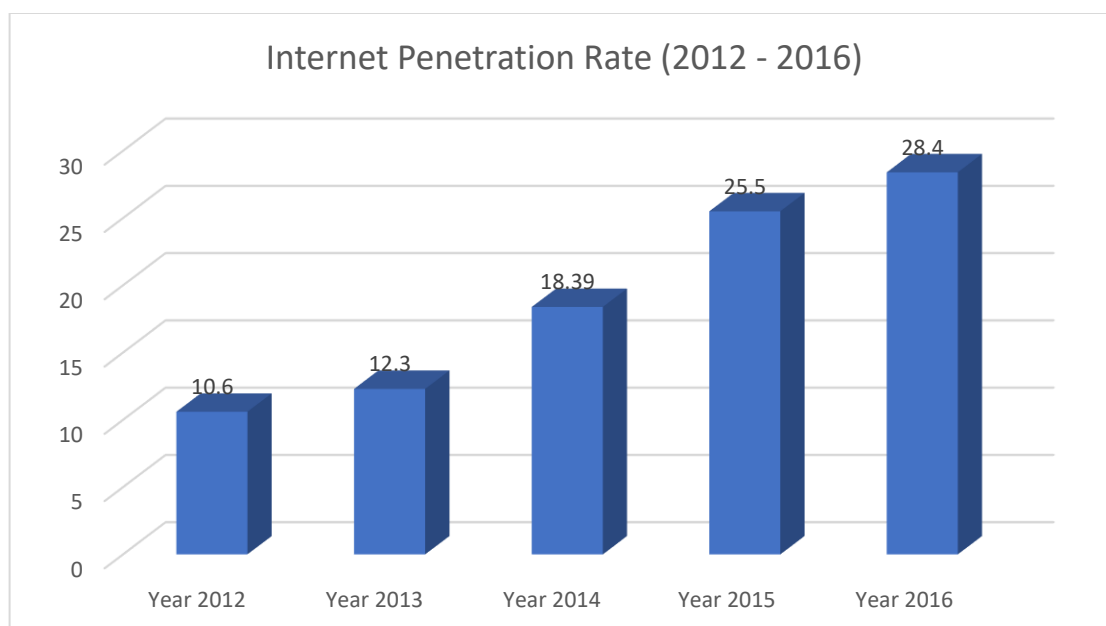


FIGURE 2.2: INTERNET PENETRATION IN GHANA

SOURCE: INTERNET WORLD STATISTICS

Internet penetration in Ghana has experienced steady growth although the growth rate of social media usage compared to the rest of the world is low (refer to figure 2.2). Between the year 2012 and 2016, internet penetration rate increased by more than 50%, giving more Ghanaians access to variety of sources for information and news (refer to the figure 2.2). In the 2016 Presidential elections, Ghanaians with access to internet stood at almost 8 million compared to the voting population of about 15.7 million representing about 51% of the voters. This means that in 2016, a good and dedicated campaign communications using the internet and its associated platforms of communications could reach at least half of the voting population. Additionally, the total users of internet in Ghana currently stands at a little below 12 million subscribers representing just 37.8% of the total population as against average penetration rate of 39.3% in Africa and 59.6% in the world in 2020 (*World Development Indicators, 2018 and Internet World Statistics, 2020*).

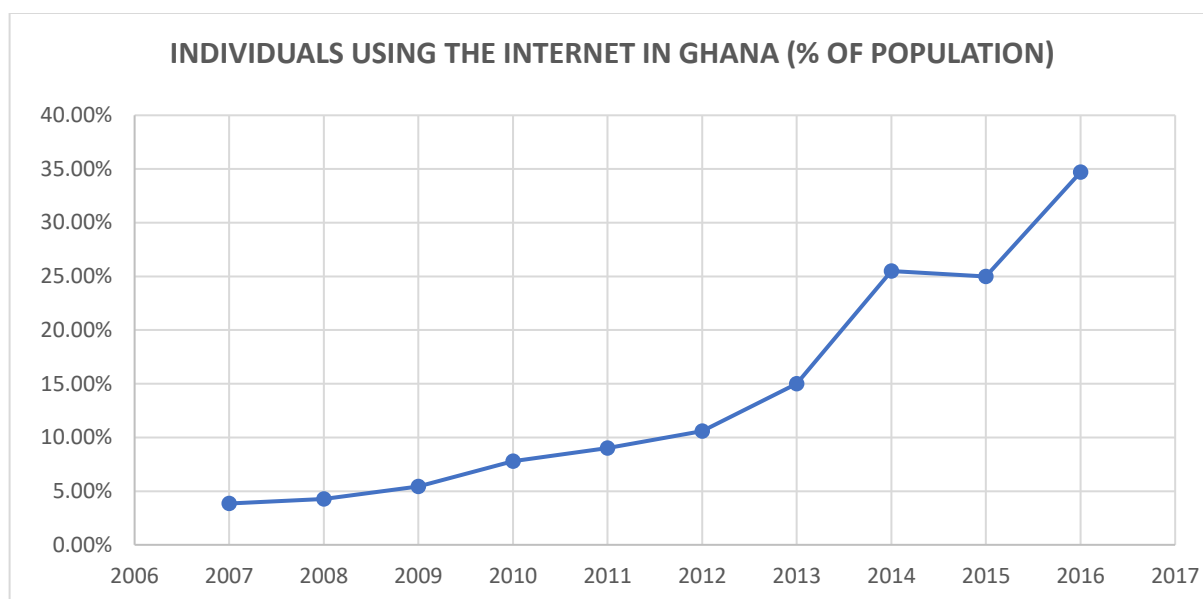


FIGURE 2.3: INTERNET USAGE BY GHANAIS VS TOTAL POPULATION

SOURCE: WORLD DEVELOPMENT INDICATORS

The above trend can mainly be attributed to low income levels, high cost of internet data and high cost of telecommunication devices. In spite of the relatively low internet penetration in Ghana, the social media platforms have become significant source of information among the youth and the middle class elites (Gyampo et al, 2017; and Isbell and Appiah-Nyamekye, 2018). This is because many influencers and opinion leaders who dominate the news landscape and influence agenda setting in the overall media environment in Ghana are users of these social media platforms (Enli, 2017 and Isbell and Appiah-Nyamekye, 2018). Political communications strategists should therefore develop effective strategies to leverage the social media platforms to their advantage. The figure below indicates the growth trend of social media platforms usage in Ghana between June 2019 and June 2020. It is clear to conclude that social media in particular is now a significant channel for campaign message dissemination in elections in Ghana hence any empirical studies must factor them into their analysis. It is also imperative to reiterate that, the social media platforms have gained popularity in setting agenda for the traditional mass media platforms such as radio, television, and newspaper. It is recommended that further research studies are conducted in this subject area.

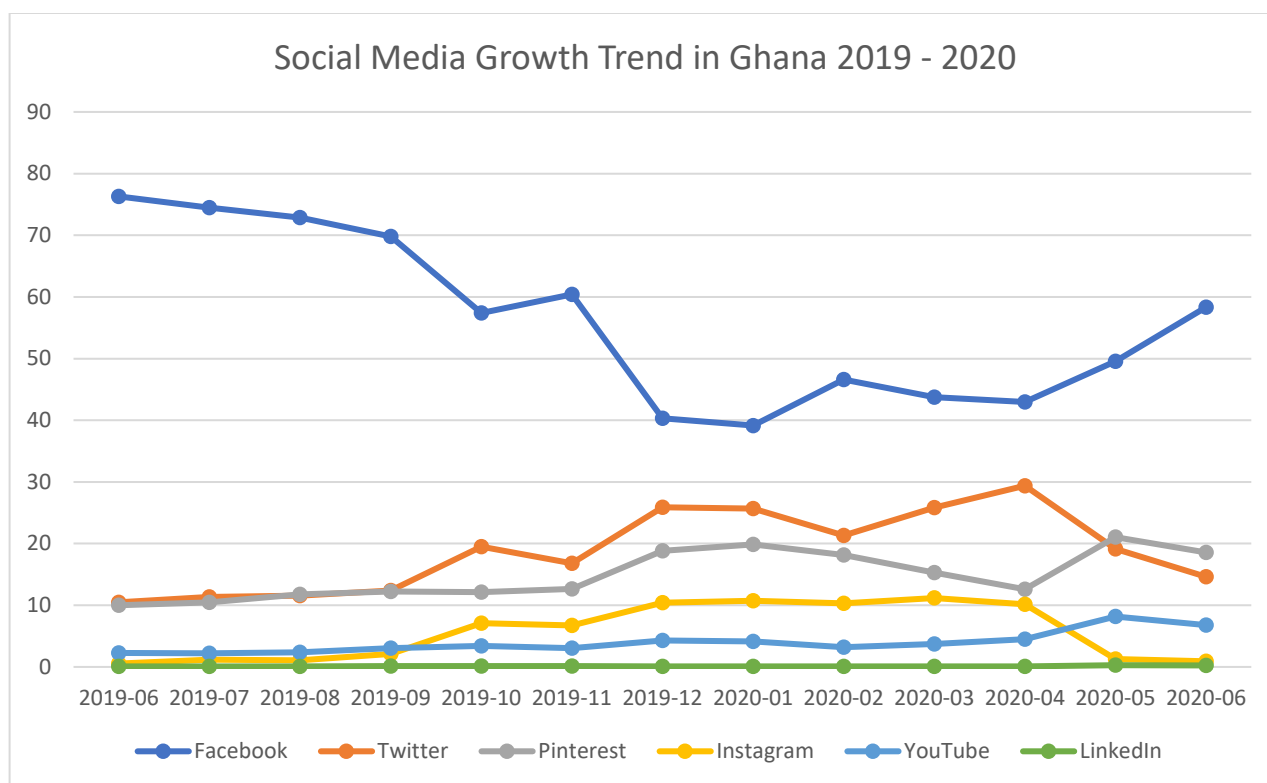


FIGURE 2.4: SOCIAL MEDIA GROWTH TREND IN GHANA

SOURCE: INTERNET WORLD STATISTICS

2.4 Understanding Political Marketing – Perspectives from Ghana’s Multiparty Democracy

The relationship between a political party or a candidate of a political campaign for example its Presidential Candidate, and the voter can generally be described as a transactional in nature (Kotler and Armstrong, 2006 and Mone and Bazini, 2013). Both parties, candidate, and the voter in this case, expect something in return for their action and behaviour. The expectation that each party must reciprocate each other’s action establishes a strong similarity with the commercial relationship between an enterprise and a customer in a typical business case (Kotler & Levy, 1969; Strömback and Kiouisis, 2010; and Mone and Bazini, 2013). The application of marketing principles therefore in political campaigns is believed to be essential for effective political campaign design and implementation (Henneberg, Scammell and O’Shaughnessy, 2009). Although political parties and by extension their representatives seeking political office do not seek profit, the benefit they seek from voters is tantamount to profit (O’Cass, 1996). In other words, this behaviour is anchored on

the social exchange theory, which means that, in return the voter expects a certain amount of satisfaction for his or her decision in voting for a particular candidate (Grönroos, 2000). In this regard, what the marketing discipline offers to political campaigns is valuable exchange of quality information that leads to better decision making or choices (Mone and Bazini, 2013).

Marketing has historically not been affiliated to politics; however, the political campaign platform provides opportunity for both candidates seeking a political office and voters interested in exercising their voting right to learn more about their respective needs and preferences within a particular period (O’Cass, 1996 and Henneberg, Scammell and O’Shaughnessy, 2009). As indicated in the figure below, product in political marketing can be a promise, for example, a promise to create jobs to reduce unemployment through the establishment of factories or commercial enterprises across the country when elected to office. A case in point is when in the 2016 Presidential election campaign in Ghana, the NPP made a promise to implement the One District One Factory (1D1F) Initiative in collaboration with the private sector (NPP 2016 Manifesto). This campaign promise among others was to facilitate the establishment of at least one medium to large scale factory in each of the 216 administrative districts of the country (NPP 2016 Manifesto). This campaign promise was to offer a solution to one of the many economic challenges facing the Ghanaian electorates, which is unemployment. The diagram below presents a pictorial view of the transactional nature of political party vs candidate and voter relationship:

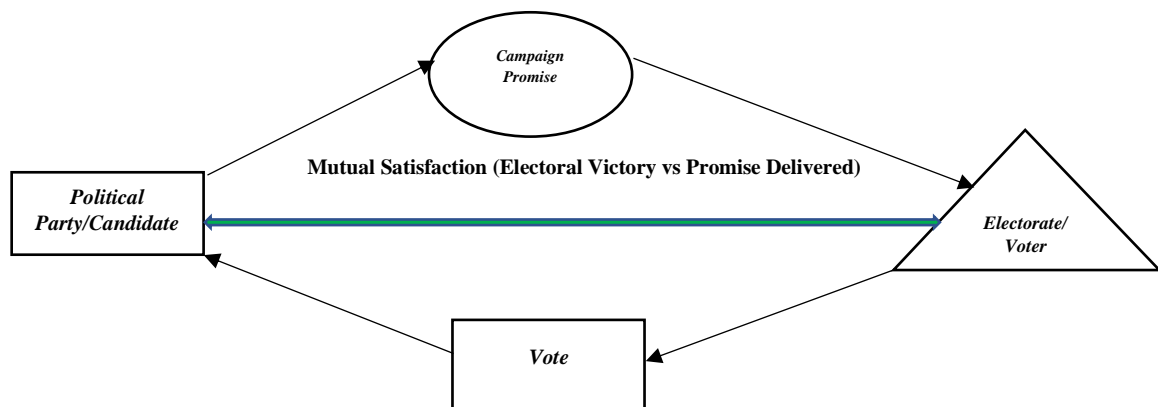


FIGURE 2.5: POLITICAL PARTY/CANDIDATE – ELECTORATE/VOTER TRANSACTIONAL RELATIONSHIP.

Source: Author

Extrapolating from the above diagram, it is therefore important to understand that political marketing is relevant to offering satisfaction to voters hence the practice of marketing in the arena of politics must be holistic. As Harrop (1990) argued political marketing is “not just political advertising, party political broadcast and electoral speeches but covering the whole area of party positioning in the electoral market” (cited in Mone and Bazini, 2013, page 400). The act thereof of providing satisfaction to others in such a relationship is relevant to marketing (Kotler and Armstrong, 2006). The political marketing practice outlines marketing functions such as product, distribution, cost, communication, and fund raising which also relate to the conventional marketing functions of 4Ps namely Product, Place, Price and Promotion (Mone and Bazini, 2013).

Ghana’s current democratic system as indicated elsewhere is relatively young but appears stable. There have been seven keenly competitive presidential and parliamentary elections, and a number of district assembly level elections in the country (Ayee, 2016). It is believed that the number of political parties and the candidates who have engaged in these elections have applied marketing techniques. Some scholars argue that the use of marketing tools have been applied ostensibly to attract the votes of those undecided and uncommitted members of the electoral register (Mone and Bazini, 2013). In a country with weak political party organization and entrenchment of political tradition, the size of the undecided electorates appears quite significant. The importance of applying marketing tools in political campaign in such a democratic system therefore becomes imperative. This view of ‘*prioritization*’ and ‘*professionalization*’ of political marketing in political campaigns has been supported by both Heath et al (2000) and Negrine & Lilleker (2002).

Although some political scientists have criticized the application of marketing instruments in politics as unethical, the practice gained significant popularity in both Europe and America during the 1990s (Henneberg, 2004 and Lilleker, 2005). According to this school of thought, the fear was that applying marketing principles and tools to politics will lead to what some scholars view as “*a quest for a common vision of the just, noble and good into the private and often irrational whimsy of consumerism*” (Henneberg et al, 2009, page 167). Other scholars, Bannon (2005) and Johansen

(2005) on the other hand have however posited that political marketing or marketing in politics have significant benefits to both voters and political institutions through developing an effective system for establishing relationships and interactions. This system is particularly important for voters who apply the rational choice theory in making their voting decisions.

Learning from the popularity political marketing gained in the 1990s by the works of Newman (1999); Wring (2005); and others, some Ghanaian scholars such as Mensah (2007) and Hinson & Tweneboah (2010) offered to provide the local Ghanaian context. However, their contributions to the literature were limited to identifying the political marketing campaign strategies. This study however seeks to understand how parties contesting elections in Ghana formulate their political campaign messages to respond to the demands or expectations of the voters. Using the Grounded Theory methodology under qualitative research approach, this thesis will develop a conceptual framework to help guide political campaign message formulation. The outcome of this study will further enrich the advocacy in support of political marketing, as similarly argued by Scammell (1995) and Butler and Harris (2009) and boost the practice of democracy in Ghana by improving information sharing and communications between political parties (candidates' campaigns) and voters, and to a large extent, improve multi-party democracy and governance.

2.5 A Review of Political Marketing Practice in the 2016 Presidential Elections in Ghana

The 2016 Presidential elections campaign in Ghana was one of the most competitively ran political campaigns under the fourth republican constitution because, the then incumbent President, John Mahama was seeking re-election although his political party had been in power for eight years while there was widespread belief that the then opposition candidate, Nana Akufo-Addo was contesting for his third and final time (Aryee, 2017). The two leading Presidential Candidates spent significant efforts in reaching out to the electorates across the country. The parties involved in the contest employed the use of marketing communication strategies to woo voters to their side of the

political divide. The idea of employing marketing promotional mix in political campaigns is to create 'like' or 'awareness' for a candidate or a political platform, and to persuade the voter to support and vote for that candidate or the said political platform. Significant among these marketing tools used in the 2016 presidential campaign in Ghana by the candidates were Advertising, Sales Promotion, Personal Selling, Direct Marketing and Public Relation.

Many scholars who have analysed the 2016 Presidential elections have concluded that the candidate of NPP won the election partly as a result of excellent campaign messaging and the effective deployment of campaign communications (Gyampo et al, 2017; and Aryee, 2017). Aryee (2017, page 321) posited that "the NPP communicated well with its crisp and segmented messages and slogans such as '*one district, one factory*', describing a programme which targeted the youth and business community; '*one village, one dam*', which targeted the rural poor; the '*USD1 million for every district*', targeting community leaders; the '*Zongo Development Fund*' for the Zongos or poor Muslim communities scattered around the country; and a message of reduced taxes for the business community. Akufo-Addo campaigned on 'change, job creation hinged on the industrialization of the economy and the modernization of agriculture' and on the 'incompetence of Mahama'. The above clearly indicates that, the NPP Campaign communications strategy also employed other marketing strategies such as market segmentation (Kotler et al, 2009). Appropriate segmentation of a target market helps marketing practitioners to better determine and understand the characteristics and needs of their customers.

Anecdotal evidence reveals that Radio and Television advertisements, printing of branded T-Shirts, printing of Campaign Posters and billboards and giving of freebies (tantamount to sales promotion) dominated the marketing aspects or practices of the 2016 campaign of both candidates, hence most of the communications budget went into these promotional elements. With a voting population of 15,712,499 scattered across 275 Constituencies in Ghana, printing and distribution of branded T-Shirts was believed to be the most expensive cost element among the above promotional mix employed during the 2016 campaign. There is further evidence that political marketing and the

use of marketing tools as indicated earlier will continue to play a major role in political campaigns in Ghana. Below are some of the marketing tools used by both the NPP and NDC Presidential candidates during the 2016 campaign.



Picture 2.1 NPP 2016 Campaign Poster of the Presidential Candidate



Picture 2.2 NPP Campaign Volunteers wearing branded 2016 T-Shirts of NPP



Picture 2.3 Campaign Poster of NDC Presidential Candidate



Picture 2.4 NDC Presidential Candidate and supporters wearing campaign T-Shirts

In addition to the millions of campaign T-Shirts and Posters deployed by both political parties, the political parties also used radio, television, and newspaper advertising to promote their

candidature. As indicated earlier, the high media penetration made it relatively easier for political campaign messages to reach millions of voters through these media platforms. Radio and television channels made the most revenue from the advertising budgets of the candidates through the use of jingles in various languages. The number of times political advertisements were played correlate to the closeness of the polling day. In Ghana, the advertising airspace is cannibalized by the two leading political parties between middle of October and November in an election year. The practice is that most enterprises and commercial ventures drastically reduce their advertising activities during this said period (Hinson and Tweneboah, 2010).

The emergence of internet in particular has significantly boosted the use of social media platforms for direct marketing. Although, the internet penetration rate in Ghana is low, political marketing campaigns target the youth and urban middle class voters. The use of Personal Selling which in the political parlance in Ghana refers to as '*Door-to-Door*' campaign is somehow being complemented for the use of social media platforms such as *Whats App* and *Facebook*. However, in the 2016 campaign, political parties formed volunteer groups who were mainly tasked to visit electoral areas to promote their respective candidates. Some of the volunteer groups that mobilized voters for the NPP 2016 campaign include Young Executives Forum; NPP Loyal Ladies; Patriotic Future of NPP; NPP Professionals Network; Friends of Nana Akufo-Addo; Friends of Alan Cash; Zongo for NPP; and V-16 Group. In the NDC 2016 campaign, the personal selling activities were essentially carried out by volunteer groups including Volunteers for Mahama; Ladies for JM; Friends of Atta Mills; Friends of JM; Zongo Caucus of NDC; and Youth for Mahama. These groups were used to complement the campaign efforts of the official party structures at the Polling Station, Electoral Area, Constituency and Regional levels. The work of these volunteer groups has been criticized by some of the official political party activists as usurping the powers of the elected officers at various levels, their contributions however in enhancing visibility for the candidates and reaching out to electorates cannot be underestimated (Gyampo et al, 2017; and Hinson & Tweneboah, 2010). It must be noted that some of these volunteer groups are formed and financed

by influential party personalities, Government appointees, party financiers and party sympathizers who believe that grassroots mobilization is essential in winning elections.

Many democracies in Africa have been criticized for a phenomenon referred to as ‘vote buying’ which involves the use of giving out freebies such as foodstuffs, clothing, household items among others to influence voter’s decision making. This phenomenon in marketing is similar to sales promotion, which can be described as giving short term incentives to persuade customers to act in a manner favourable to the company (Kotler et al, 2009). In reference to this marketing tool, the NDC’s 2016 campaign was severally accused of applying this practice in selected segments of the voting population. Allegations including distribution of vehicles to traditional rulers and religious leaders for them to endorse the candidature of the then incumbent President, Mr. John Mahama were made in the media (www.ghanaweb.com). Furthermore, favours such as educational scholarships, cash handouts to celebrities and procurement contracts were awarded to influential personalities with intention of wooing them to support the then President were also made in the media. Whiles some scholars have chastised this practice as unethical political marketing tool that essentially dilute the true choice of the people, others are of the opinion that incentives are legitimate means to persuade voters to support a candidate. Although opposition candidates are usually constraint in terms of resources, Parliamentary Candidates of these opposition parties who are resourceful have also been accused of giving out similar incentives to their electorates in order to influence their voting decisions.

Lastly, both political parties applied public relation tools as one of the means to propagate the campaign messages of their Presidential Candidates. The NPP and NDC as part of their organizational structure has Communications Units/Departments. In both NPP and NDC, the structure of their communications unit permeates Constituency, Regional and National branches. The unit is headed by a National Communications Director for NPP, a non-elected officer whiles NDC has the National Communications Officer who is elected as part of the National Executives, as its unit head. The two campaign teams as part of their public relations and outreach programmes

deployed Party Communicators and Activists to various political programmes on radio and on television across the country. Another public relations mechanism used by these political parties during campaigns include periodic press conferences and media encounters to propagate their positions on various topical issues or react to issues of national concern. The use of these public relations mechanisms was aimed at enhancing the brand image and reputation of the respective presidential candidates.

2.6 Framing Theory and Political Campaign Messages

The concept of framing is a critical tool for every communications strategist, particular in designing a political campaign message for a competitive election in a multi-party democratic dispensation. It is important because in a every electoral population there are a number of competing interest groups with varied needs and expectations. Therefore, in order to design or formulate a campaign message that appeals to the majority of the voting population and their varied interests at a particular time, the communications strategist must develop a framing tool that effectively narrows or delimits the scope of the campaign messages to the most relevant issues. As Chong and Druckman (2007) stated, framing should be premised on the assertion that the selected campaign agenda has different perspectives with vary implications for different segment of the target audience. Therefore, “framing refers to the process by which people develop a particular conceptualization of an issue or reorient their thinking about an issue” (Chong & Druckman, 2007, p.104). To buttress the above assertion by Chong and Druckman (2007), framing mechanisms are used to generate the desire results by directing the attention of the audience (ie voters) to focus on the aspects of the campaign message(s) that appears beneficial to the electorates.

Many authors within the social marketing and political marketing disciplines have applied framing theory in studying how marketing campaigns can influence the behaviour of target audiences (Andreasen, 1993; and Thaler and Helmig, 2013). These studies have aimed to, among

others, understand the expectations and interests of target audiences, evaluate the effectiveness of these campaign activities, and investigate the persuasiveness of campaign messages (Wymer, 2010). Both Arthur and Quester (2004) and Bennett (1996) concluded that message framing can be used to enhance the attainment of campaign objectives, including changing target audiences behaviour. To improve understanding of framing theory, Helmig and Thaler (2010) underscored that the predominant focus on framing are framing direction – either positive or negative messaging; framing tonality – either rational or emotional messaging; and temporal framing – either immediate or future messaging (Block and Keller, 1995; Jones and Owen, 2006; and Smith and Stutts, 2003).

These three framing approaches are relevant to developing political campaign messages for election in a multi-party democratic dispensation such as Ghana. The campaign message may be oriented towards achieving change behaviour among those voters who are either politically neutral or those who are oppose to the political orientation or policies of the candidate. In addition, the campaign message may also be oriented to reinforce the position of voters who support the political stands and positions of the candidate. Both positive and negative campaign message framing direction are known to be effective depending on the characteristics of the target audience (Dean, 2005). Campaign messaging oriented towards inculcating fear or negative messages in the voters have been successful in some democracies including the UK and US. For example, the UK referendum on leaving the European Union in 2016 and Biden's 2020 electoral victory over Donald Trump largely adopted the fear campaign message orientation. In the same vein however, Donald Trump used positive campaign message framing to defeat Hilary Clinton in the 2016 Presidential election in the US with the slogan '*Make America Great Again*'. This researcher believes that framing direction is intrinsically connected to framing tonality and temporal framing because campaign messages must reflect rational or emotional appeal whether the focus is of positive or negative orientation, and whether it seeks to influence the target audience to respond immediately or in the future (Thaler and Helmig, 2013).

As clearly posited above, the application of framing mechanism allows campaign communications strategists to make the relevant issues or agenda in an election the salient and focal point around which the whole campaign machinery and activities should evolve. A review of the extant literature indicates that both political parties in the 2016 presidential elections, namely the NPP and NDC applied marketing tools mentioned earlier to draw attention of the electorates to the salient portions of their respective campaign messages. This buttresses Entman's (1993) claim that framing as a tool in communications is basically about selection and salience. Entman further indicated that "to frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described" (Entman, 1993, page 52). In practice, the NPP campaign was mainly focused on selected salient themes including 'Change' 'Job Creation' and 'Corruption' while the then ruling NDC campaigned was anchored on 'Continuity' 'Infrastructure Development' and 'Good Governance' (Gyampo et al, 2017; and Ayee, 2017).

There were many other issues which were topical within the 2016 political environment but the two political parties under reference limited their respective campaign messaging to the salient issues enumerated above. Strategically, the NPP focused on the major socioeconomic problems facing the majority of the voting population such as *youth unemployment, inadequate access to essential social services particularly healthcare, high cost of school fees, high cost of electricity and high incidence of corruption within the public service*. It is clear that the NPP campaign messaging strategy successfully narrowed the campaign theme selection and design to major micro (household) issues that were directly affecting the individual voter hence delimited other issues such as foreign relations which had insignificant weight on the decision making of the average Ghanaian voter.

The NDC on the other hand however chose an approach that on hindsight weakened their campaign messaging by selecting campaign themes which appeared too general and not well

targeted at specific segment of the voting public. In addition, the NDC Communications Strategists selected campaign messages or themes that the then ruling Government had little positive evidence or track record as a governing party to persuade the voter that the party or the candidate can deliver on the promises. In other words, the performance of the NDC Government and to some extent, the political environment did not offer any credible proof of a superior capacity of the NDC Presidential Candidate in dealing with the topical issues relevant to the electorates. Indeed, when the NDC campaign selected *Good Governance* as one of their leading campaign themes, the incidence of corruption among senior Government officials was high and receiving high media attention. A case in point was a report by an Investigative Journalist which revealed that the then sitting President and the Presidential Candidate of the ruling NDC, John Mahama had collected a vehicle from a Road Contractor who had been awarded a government funded road project (<https://www.africanews.com/2016/06/16>). This somehow diluted what the supporters of the then governing party (NDC) believed was a superior performance of the Government in the fight against corruption.

Furthermore, as posited by Gyampo et al, 2017, the NDC did a poor work at branding and communications of their campaign messages although the party's campaign as conventional practice had deselected issues that were irrelevant to the voting populace. It is however worth noting that, the two leading political parties in the 2016 general elections applied framing theory in designing and propagating their campaign messages. A review of the existing literature indicates that, in addition to adopting a combination of media and personal framing, the two parties also applied both social and temporal framing (Thaler and Helmig, 2013; and Sheaffer and Dvir-Gvirsman, 2010). It is believed that the political parties sought to influence the temporal behaviour of the voting population who were obligated to make individual voting decisions with regards to electing a President for four years. The media framing was aimed at influencing the collective attitude of the voters by exerting influence on the choice of issues the voters should consider when making their voting decisions. Therefore, the importance of selecting the right mix of framing principles cannot

be underestimated especially when the target audience is huge and diverse, which is a characteristic of the voting population of more than 15 million in this case study.

Moreover, a study of analyzing the impact of media framing on the Israelis towards the Oslo Peace process with the Palestinians by Sheaffer and Dvir-Gvirsman (2010) concluded that “media coverage of the peace process and conflict focused on negative developments while ignoring positive ones, the media effect on public opinion was that of peace spoilers”. This indicates that adopting an effective mechanism to frame political campaign messaging can yield significant benefits to a candidate by influencing the target audience decision making process. In this regard, it is more appropriate when designing political campaign messaging to pay significant attention to media framing which has been defined as “selecting and highlighting some facets of events or issues and making connections among them so as to promote a particular interpretation, evaluation, and/or solution” (Entman, 2004: page 5). The NPP, as the outcome of the 2016 general elections indicates benefitted significantly from the effective application of media framing which ensured that the media focused majority of its attention on the socioeconomic problems Ghanaians were facing in 2016. The majority of the electorates therefore became interested in the messaging of the NPP which sought to promote policies and programmes to solve their immediate socioeconomic problems.

2.7 Elements of Political Campaign Management

As earlier stated, Ghana has since 1992 held seven presidential and parliamentary elections involving more than twelve different political parties and individuals (Adams and Agomor, 2015). These elections have largely been competitive although the country has established itself as a two party state, reflecting duopolistic competition. In other words, only two political parties namely, the New Patriotic Party (NPP) and National Democratic Congress (NDC) have won elections and formed governments (controlling large shares of the voting population) since 1992 under what is mostly referred to as the fourth republic. In spite of the duopolistic nature of competition characterizing the Ghanaian political environment, many scholars assumed in addition to

competition between the NPP and NDC that the many smaller political parties who regularly participate in the general elections also increased the level of political competition.

For the purposes of this thesis, competition is seen from the perspective of Joseph Schumpeter (1947) who defined political competition from the economic or commercial understanding of the concept. Some scholars have criticized viewing political competition in the light of voters being similar to consumers as far too narrow (Lipsitz, 2004). They assert that, making political choices goes beyond seeking personal benefit since most deliverables expected from the political leadership are public good in nature. Examples include roads, hospitals, schools, stable currency, security, immigration control, human trafficking control among others. However, this research holds the view that transactional relationship between candidates and voters is tantamount to the relationship between a profit seeking commercial enterprise and a satisfaction seeking consumer or customer in any marketplace. Therefore, Schumpeter's perspective which promotes the phenomenon of "*free competition for a free vote*" can help define the political contest in Ghana. This understanding is imperative for establishing an efficient political campaign machinery since political campaign can therefore be seen as organized endeavors seeking to manipulate targeted voters decision making to one's advantage.

The competitive political environment as described above means that, politicians seeking political leadership have the responsibility to market themselves in a similar fashion to the electorates and allow the electorates the free will to choose the best candidate in a particular election. In the light of the above, political campaigns must be designed to reflect the contemporary political ecosystem prevailing at the time. The political ecosystem typical of any ecosystem in any sector of an economy provides the enabling environment that supports smooth operations and functioning of an organization, in this case political parties or political campaigns (Moore, 1993). So, candidates interact with voters by directly and indirectly seeking their votes, but this interaction extends to other elements within the ecosystem which include stakeholders such as regulators, other political parties,

opinion leaders, celebrities, supporters, traditional authorities, religious leaders among others. These interactions define the nature of competition in a political campaign.

In order to be successful in such a competitive political environment similar to many other commercial industries such as the detergents market, Presidential Candidates and, or political parties must endeavour to identify the key elements involve in establishing an efficient campaign machinery that can beat competition. Employing commercial marketing view for political campaign helps the framers of the campaign strategy to position other marketing tools to be used to fight for more market share, which in this case means fighting for more electoral votes. In other words, the battle for votes is therefore a contest between big political parties, smaller political parties and individuals who seek political office but are not affiliated to any political organization (Independent Candidates). As noted by Scammel (1995 and 1999) whose research work in the United Kingdom concluded that, political parties who adopted marketing tools and strategies in their campaigns have been more successful in the general elections than those who have alienated marketing from their campaign operations. It is therefore important to find a way to study and understand the nature and structure of the competition, as well as apply the appropriate marketing tools or techniques to take advantage of the opportunities that prevail.

In addition to defining the campaign values and ethos that provide overarching principles for the campaign management and operations, some scholars have identified the Candidate, the Campaign Message, and the Campaign Resources (fundraising, time, and logistics) as the key elements required when prosecuting a political campaign particularly within a competitive environment as enumerated above (Sides, 2018 and Jacobson, 2015). In other words, selecting the right candidate with the right personality who appeals to the majority of the electorates is very critical whilst at the same time, formulating the most attractive campaign message will hold the key to a successful outcome for the campaign. In addition, since the implementation of campaign plans and campaign activities requires considerable amount of resources, some scholars have asserted that resource mobilization and management is also critical to any successful campaign. It must be noted

that, this research study is interested in understanding how an attractive campaign message for election can be formulated hence the thesis is focusing attention on political campaign messaging and message formulation for elections in Ghana.

Political campaign message has been used by all political parties and individuals seeking election to political office at all levels of Ghana's democracy before and after independence from the Great Britain. Some popular campaign messages (slogans) used by political parties in Ghana include the following:

- *Independence Now! by the Convention Peoples Party (CPP) in 1956*
- *Self-Government Now! by the Convention Peoples Party (CPP) in 1956*
- *Independence in the Shortest Possible Time by the United Gold Coast Convention (UGCC) in 1956*
- *Continuity and Stability by National Democratic Congress (NDC)*
- *Positive Change by New Patriotic Party (NPP) in 2000*
- *Continuity in Change by National Democratic Congress (NDC) in 2000*
- *Hwe Wo Asetenamu Na To Aba No (Examine Your Economic Circumstances and Vote Accordingly) by New Patriotic Party (NPP) in 2000*
- *Vote for Change, Agenda for Jobs by New Patriotic Party in 2008*
- *Vote for a Better Ghana by National Democratic Congress in 2008*

These sample campaign slogans were formulated with the view of attracting voters to vote for the Candidates representing the campaign messages above. The campaign messages whether in a form of campaign slogan or Manifesto theme, are used to persuade voters or influence voters decision making. They are usually transmitted to the target audience (voters) through media channels such as radio, television, billboards, newspaper, t-shirts, and other paraphernalia. Many Scholars interested in studying Political Marketing in Ghana and sub-Saharan Africa have paid more attention to elements of political campaign relating to campaign financing, fund raising, ethics in campaign

management, campaign communications in general, advertising among others, paying less attention to the campaign message design itself (Agomor, 2019; Gyampo et al, 2017; Adams & Agomor, 2015; and Anebo, 1997). This research is therefore interested in how these and other campaign messages were formulated in order to design a conceptual framework to guide future political campaign message formulation.

2.8 Political Campaign Message Design

A marketing oriented political campaign depends heavily on obtaining market intelligence to understand the problems voters face, their expectations, and aspirations (Philips, Reynolds, and Reynolds, 2010). Knowing the demographics of voters as well as understanding their expectations help in developing the right campaign messages better than competing political parties (Bernhard, 2012; and Huber and Herrman, 1999). Understanding voters and voters decision making is a complex exercise which must be undertaken carefully. Political campaign managers therefore need conceptual frameworks, political marketing tools and other analytical tools to help them to successfully create campaign messages. Some scholars have developed theoretical frameworks and models to aid understanding of the complexities involve in designing political campaign messages.

These scholars have done some amount of research works in the area of political campaign message design, but their attempts have largely focused, selectively on advanced political dispensations particularly the United States, Canada, United Kingdom, and few other countries within the European Union (Philips, Reynolds, and Reynolds, 2010; Reynolds and Olson, 2001; and Scammel, 1999). These scholars have applied traditional marketing concepts and techniques such as segmentation and targeting to identify and define the characteristics of the electorates. Segmentation and targeting are very important tools in political campaign strategy design because, the campaign must use the correct offerings and stimuli to target the appropriate groups among the larger voter population (Hirst, 2001; and Kotler et al, 2009).

In other words, the application of market segmentation technique is to identify and group registered voters (target market) into smaller units of groups using factors such as attitudes,

behavioural patterns, and other psychographic features (Philips, Reynolds, and Reynolds, 2010; and Kotler et al, 2009). In many cases, the overall voter population consists of many individuals with distinct characteristics, expectations as well as aspirations. Designing marketing stimuli like campaign message to such a heterogenous group becomes ineffective. Hence, there is the need for campaign messages to target the appropriate segment of the population since, for example, a campaign message that will appeal to a young graduate will not necessarily appeal to a pensioner (Bernhard, 2012; and Gyampo et al, 2017). In addition, one cannot target a conservative Christian voter who is anti-gay (anti same sex) and social democratic voter who is pro-gay (pro same sex) with the same campaign message. Therefore, the application of the traditional marketing techniques such as market segmentation and targeting are critical to designing attractive and appealing campaign message for campaigns in a competitive election.

A further review of the existent literature revealed that the attempts made by earlier scholars have resulted in theoretical models including the Message Design Logics, Message Framing Theory, Message Tailoring Theory, Response Hierarchy Models, Audience-Channel-Message-Evaluation (ACME) framework and Theory of Communication in Political Campaigns. Some of these communications models seek to help campaign managers in general understand their customers decision making correctly and be able to design appropriate campaign messages to influence them. Whiles as some of the communication models including Response Hierarchy models seek to evaluate how the target audience will response to the campaign message, others help to develop the campaign message (Kotler et al, 2009; and Rothman and Salovey, 1997). In addition, other contemporary communications frameworks have also focused broadly on designing an overall campaign communications strategy by embedding campaign message development into the said overall campaign framework (Noar, 2012; and Kotler et al, 2009).

2.8.1 Campaign Message Development Theoretical Frameworks

MESSAGE DESIGN LOGICS MODEL

Message design logics originally developed by O’Keefe in 1998 presents a set of assumptions about how communication works, and the model concerns how individuals think in terms of producing and interpreting message stimuli. As earlier noted, every campaign message whether by profit making enterprises or not-for-profit making organizations such as political parties, is designed to achieve certain specific objectives. In other words, whilst the political party organization’s overarching goal is to seek more votes to win an election, that of the profit making company is to maximize profit by attracting more customers (Kotler et al, 2009).

The concept of message design logics was therefore created to help campaign managers design campaign messages to achieve such specific campaign communication objectives in the most effective manner. This model explains how individuals create messages to achieve defined set of goals and help frame individuals’ perception and understanding of different communication messages. When these communications goals are clearly defined, the Message Design Logics model guides the development of specific messages to respond to specific goals (Caughlin, 2016).

Furthermore, the developers of message design logics framework linked it closely to the constructivism paradigm, which provides justification as to how the target audience can distinguish between communication stimuli (Caughlin, 2016; and Burleson, 2007). As outlined by the constructivist paradigm, research on message design logics model has been focused on explaining the factors underlying effective and sophisticated campaign messages in relation to others. In addition, other rationale goal-based communications theories in relation to message design logics, does not explain why in a given situation with predetermined objectives, campaign managers can generate different messages to respond to different target audience.

However, message design logics offers the opportunity to campaign managers to craft different campaign messages to target different groups among the overall target audience (Caughlin, 2016; and O’Keefe, 1988). Such disparities in formulating different campaign messages are common

in complicated target market such as electoral college or a national voter population, where competition for market share in terms of votes are keen. This therefore requires that campaign managers develop different campaign messages that can appeal to the different segments of the target audience in order to achieve the predetermined or specific objectives.

Although message design logics model attempted to provide three distinct belief systems which indicate how campaign messages should be designed and interpreted, the model did not provide campaign managers with a holistic framework that originates the campaign message design from conception to outcome (behaviour/response). The three different message design logics systems namely, expressive design logics, conventional design logics, and rhetorical design logic have been ranked according to their level of sophistication (O'Keefe 1988). These distinct types of message design logics provide the campaign manager an opportunity to understand how messages should be designed in response to different situations (Hullman, 2004; & Caughlin, 2016).

There is therefore the need for an improved conceptual framework that provides a practical step by step processes of formulating campaign message linked to how the final message can be disseminated to the right target audience. Lastly, since the message design logic does not adequately address the process of campaign message design, and how messages can be used to influence the decision making, there is the need to develop a conceptual framework that fills this knowledge gap. In spite of these significant contributions message design logics model has made to the literature of campaign message design, some scholars have also criticized the model as not comprehensive enough.

RESPONSE HIERARCHY MODELS

Political marketing has adopted many techniques from the traditional marketing field and one of such techniques is taken from marketing communications. Political parties and candidates contesting elections have relied heavily on communications to inform, persuade and to a large extent improve their brand visibility among the voters (Kotler et al, 2009; Nunes and Merrihue, 2007;

Thompson and Hamilton, 2006). Through marketing communications mix for example, political parties can now easily reach their target audience with different political campaign messages and stimuli. It must be noted that, in the same way commercial enterprises have developed mechanisms to evaluate how customers response to their marketing stimuli, political parties require similar techniques to determine how voters will respond to their messages.

It is against this background that the Response Hierarchy Models have gained popularity among marketing communications practitioners and political marketing experts. Response hierarchy models simply explain customers and consumers behaviour in response to marketing communications stimuli. The response hierarchy models which emanated from the micromodel of consumer responses assume that the customer or the target audience passes through a cognitive, affective and behavioural stage when deciding to buy or consume a product (Kotler et al, 2009). The most popularly used response hierarchy models include the AIDA model (Attention, Interest, Desire, and Action); the Hierarchy of Effects model; Innovation Adoption model; and Communications Model.

Many scholars have indicated that, the hierarchy response models are not focused on campaign message design rather they are interested in how the campaign message will influence the audience against how the audience will react to the campaign message (Cappella 2006; and Kotler et al, 2009). These response hierarchy models are effective in shaping the development of the overall communications campaign because they offer insights into each stage of the decision making process of the target audience so that an appropriate communication stimulus can be developed. Whereas these response hierarchy models are important in campaign communications strategy formulation, they do not focus on or offer deeper understanding of the target audience when designing campaign messages for election. Designing effective campaign message requires clear understanding of the target audience and the factors that define their personality, demographics, and psychographics. A better insight into the voter population will lead to developing appealing campaign message than what the competing political parties may offer.

MESSAGE FRAMING THEORY

Message framing theory is one of the most popularly used message development theories, especially in social marketing. Message framing is essentially organizing and structuring a campaign message without necessarily changing the content the message seeks to convey. Communications practitioners have used message framing theoretical framework to shape the perceptions and behaviour of the target audience (Rothman and Salovey, 1997).

In a study to understand compliance to health recommendations through communications, Wilson, Purdon and Wallston (1988) identified three types of message framing associated with managing one's health, namely gain, loss and fear. The application of such message framing theory positively impacts on campaign message design and implementation. For example, framing campaign messages using fear may have a potent persuasive effect on the target audience since when the audience determines that the consequence of his or her behaviour may lead to negative effects on his or her life as well as other members of his society. What message framing does is that it helps communication practitioners to draw distinctions and use message design to persuade the target audience while maintaining the original content of the message.

A case in point is that framing a campaign message using the 'gain framing method' would mean that one enjoys a benefit when one behaves in a certain way as advocated by the campaign (Wilson et al, 1988). So, a gain frame message in relation to a campaign to promote healthy lifestyle will appear "*exercising will increase your chances of keeping your blood pressure under control*" while as a loss frame will read "*not exercising will decrease your chances of keeping your blood pressure under control*" (Wilson et al, 1988, page 162). Message framing as noted earlier can be applied in many communications campaigns including for profit making enterprises. In political marketing, message framing has become important element when formulating campaign message for elections particularly in a multiparty democracy, but this theory has not been popularly used in

political campaigns in Ghana. The message framing theory will therefore help this research work to study previous campaign political messages.

MESSAGE TAILORING THEORY

In politics general, both the governing political party and the parties in opposition are constantly engaged with citizens in general or voters in particular propagating their positions on important national issues. Governing parties (i.e incumbent political party in charge of the management of the economy) therefore need constant communications to market their programmes, policies and projects as well as educate the citizens on important national issues. For example, when the NPP gained political power in 2017, the Government converted its campaign message of providing every administrative district in the country with at least one factory into an industrial development programme. In implementing such a programme obviously required a frequent and sustained communications with the relevant stakeholders including private sector operators and entrepreneurs, and financial institutions. Political marketing will play a critical role in this scenario because the communications strategy design will have to employ message tailoring and message framing after appropriately applying segmentation technique to cluster the target audience into appropriate segments. For the purposes of this thesis, the researcher adopts the definition of message tailoring by Latimer, Brawley & Bassett (2010) which states that “customizing information to be adapted to one or more psychological, demographic, or behavioural characteristics of the recipient or population to which the message is intended” (Pope et al, 2017 page 1).

The importance of message tailoring has been underscored by many scholars including Pope et al (2017) and Gyampo et al (2017) and Kotler et al (2009) in both commercial and non-commercial communications designs. When studying messaging strategy for sustained behaviour change in health, Pope et al (2017) noted that “identifying the most effective way to communicate health promotion information is, therefore, of considerable importance to ensuring that people not only attend to these messages, but also connect with and internalize the information conveyed within

them” (Pope et al, 2017, page 1). Gyampo et al (2017) supported this assertion when analysing the outcome of the 2016 presidential elections by concluding that, the NDC lost the elections because the Presidential Candidate and the governing party failed to design effective communications to target the important voting blocs within the country. This means that a general approach to communication in a keenly competitive market is not likely to yield the desired results. Message tailoring is therefore seen by many scholars as having the most effective means of persuading audience to behave in a certain manner (Lustria et al, 2013; Latimer et al, 2010; Rothman & Salovey, 1997). Many theories including the Theories of Reasoned Action (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975), Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1986) and Planned Behaviour (Ajzen, 1991) believe that personal factors have significant weight on peoples’ choices hence proper targeting with the relevant message that meets the expectations of audience, in this case the voter, should occupy an important space when designing political campaign message.

In this regard, the process of fitting the campaign message to the individual’s or a group’s needs, expectations or idiosyncrasies requires a conceptual framework to guide communications practitioners (Latimer, Brawley & Bassett, 2010). Political parties spend substantial amount of resources to campaign but there is inadequate literature and research to support them in formulating their campaign messages to target the appropriate segment of the voting population (Haines, Kuruvilla & Borchert, 2004). As noted earlier, failure to target the audience with the right message will adversely affect the outcome of the campaign. Message framing and message tailoring are therefore important theories in the message design literature, but these two strategic frameworks have been underutilized in the political campaign message design literature for elections in Ghana. The limited application of the message tailoring theory has been restricted to the health behaviour communications and health promotion literature in developed countries.

Moreover, a further review of the literature indicates that, relying on single theory to formulate campaign message will yield little or no results (Myers, 2010). The need to learn from other theories to inform message design that can effectively achieve behavioural change has been

strongly advocated for by many scholars (Pelletier et al, 2017; and Myers, 2010). This thesis is therefore seeking to close the knowledge gap by learning from message tailoring and message framing theories to develop a conceptual framework that can guide communications practitioners and political campaign strategists when formulating their campaign message.

AUDIENCE-CHANNEL-MESSAGE-EVALUATION (ACME)

FRAMEWORK

Mass media campaigns have been used in many sectors of many societies including for commercial and non-commercial purposes, particularly for the promotion of health, peace, multi-party democracy, and in political campaigns. In a study of health communications campaign, Noar (2012) asserted that, in order “to maximize the potential of campaigns, campaign developers and evaluators should use the sets of principles and generalizations for guiding effective campaign design” (Noar, 2012, page 481). Some scholars have earlier found out that majority of campaigns do not benefit from the application of theoretical frameworks which in some cases could be used to guide the formulation of the campaign message itself (Noar, Palmgreen, & Zimmerman, 2009; and Randolph & Viswanath, 2004). The failure to apply theoretical frameworks or set of principles in communications campaign design in general have resulted in ineffective campaign. In some instances, campaigns have overspent its budget or spent significant amount of resources on wrong target audience because there was no framework or theoretical model which guides how the whole campaign is framed. In this regard, application of the traditional marketing communications principles as earlier indicated has become critical to designing and implementing an effective communications campaign.

The audience-channel-message-evaluation (ACME) framework was accordingly developed to fill the gap where there is no connection between the principles that guide campaign design,

allowing campaign designers to choose which principles they view as critical while downplaying other principles (Noar, 2012). This unfortunate phenomenon has negatively impacted on communications campaign design and implementation not only in the health sector but other sectors including politics and elections. The review of the current literature on marketing communications and health programmes communications campaigns indicates that, majority of mass media or communications campaigns have not yielded the intended results (Noar, Palmgreen, & Zimmerman, 2009; Randolph & Viswanath, 2004; and Snyder et al, 2004). Some scholars have attributed these inefficiencies to poor applications of key guiding principles whilst others believe that many of these campaigns do not rely on formative research (DeJong, 2002; Cappella, 2006; and Noar, 2012). In addition, and quite significantly, there is inadequate literature on campaign message design as a separate component of marketing communications campaign frameworks and models as already stated, particularly for political campaigns in Ghana.

However, in response to this literature gap, the ACME framework which sought to close this gap failed to focus attention on the set of principles that guide campaign message design but rather concentrated attention on designing a communications campaign framework that focuses on the whole campaign communications strategy with critical emphasis on post campaign communication implementation evaluation. As Noar (2012) concluded, “although evaluation is often treated as a topic separate from campaign design, the ACME framework is inclusive of evaluation and is thus able to make transparent the important linkages between design, implementation, and evaluation aspects of campaigns” (Noar, 2012, page 482). The framework provided for all the relevant components of a communications campaign design including audience, channels and campaign message and introduced evaluation, as a new addition to track the implementation of the campaign communications. However, the attention in the existing literature as indicated earlier has not been focused on political campaign message design itself, and the ACME framework also failed to focus on it as well.

Although, the ACME framework made some attempts by posing relevant and critical questions to guide campaign managers when designing their campaign messages, the over concentration on post implementation evaluation lent itself to criticisms. This is obvious from the framework, in that, apart from evaluation been a component that uses a sensitive design tool to determine whether the campaign had achieved its intended impacts, the framework advocates that evaluation is carried out during the formative stages of the campaign communications design (Noar, 2012). It is indeed an effective way to achieve efficiency in campaign implementation. It must however be noted that this is one of the strengths of the ACME framework since the ability to carry out process evaluation may lead to efficiency. In spite of this advantage the framework offers, communications managers require a conceptual framework dedicated to assisting them to formulate their campaign message which may include monitoring and evaluation (Randolp & Viswanath, 2004). This research study therefore seeks to focus attention on designing a conceptual framework to guide the formulation of political campaign message for elections in Ghana.

2.9 Key Elements of Campaign Message

Political Campaign messages have been used by political parties, aspirants and candidates seeking political office to inform, educate, and persuade voters about specific issue or issues in connection with an election. In designing campaign messages, communications practitioners have relied on theories and research to ensure that their campaign messages effectively capture the attention of the target audience (that is voters or delegates), and the message does not require any further action or activity to explain for the target audience to understand and recall. In addition, political campaign messages, similar to other social and commercial campaign messages, are also used to persuade or influence the behaviour of the target audience (Kotler et al, 2009; and Baines, Harris and Lewis, 2002). These are the overarching goals of any campaign message hence they must inform the design of the campaign message.

An effective campaign message may be a single overall campaign message with underlining sub campaign messages targeting different set of target audiences within the larger population. It is believed that the overall target population consist of different segments of people with varying interests, beliefs and, or objective. For example, a typical voting population in any country will have voters with different age, gender, educational qualifications, income level, occupation, tribe, religion, and marital status. These factors are likely to influence their expectations in participating in an election. In this regard, when formulating a campaign message, communications practitioners must ensure that their final campaign message meets certain key elements and is also designed to address the varying interests of the different voting blocs (Gyampo et al, 2017; and Kotler et al, 2009). It is therefore advisable to design sub campaign messages to complement the overall campaign message by using the sub campaign messages to address the separate individual expectations or interests of the target audience.

Some scholars have advocated that an effective campaign message, whether designed to influence the target audience decision making in order to achieve high profit or designed by an organization that seeks welfare of the general population, or any other results that is not commercial, the campaign message must satisfy certain key elements. These elements include but not limited to the goal or objective of the campaign message (*the Ask*); the reason for the campaign (*the Why*); what if the campaign fails to achieve the predetermined results (*what is at Stake*); and the action or behaviour required or expected from the target audience (*the Action*). It can be deduced that an effective campaign message is a message that has been crafted to meet all the above key elements.

The researcher finds these key elements relevant when formulating any conceptual framework to guide the design of campaign messages for elections in a multi-party democracy. However, the scholar completely ignores an important component when it comes to campaign message design, which is the cost estimate that will be required to implement the communications plan which can be framed as '*the How*' to complete the elements of a campaign messaging framework. Knowing how much the campaign message will cost to execute in terms of the

communications channels to be used to disseminate the campaign message and the type of messengers to recruit to disseminate the message, will influence some aspects of the campaign message design. It is therefore important to indicate that identifying and understanding the key elements of campaign messages will enrich any attempt to design a conceptual framework to help the formulation of political campaign message for elections.

In addition to the above, an attractive political campaign message must reflect certain core criteria and conditions which according to the literature available include core values and beliefs of the target voters, their personal and collective security, their standard of living, financial guarantee for their lives, their job security, the morality of the candidate and by extension that of the leadership of the campaign as well as prospects for the future generation (Baek, 2009; Ashworth, 2007; and Baines, Harris and Lewis, 2002). These core factors when properly imbedded in a political campaign message, will make the campaign message resonate and appeal to the voters. At the core of designing an attractive political campaign message is also a clear understanding of the voters. Understanding voters goes beyond analysing their demographic features such as age, gender, educational background, occupation, and ethnicity but it involves identifying their values, beliefs, perceptions, and desires (Baek, 2009; and Ashworth, 2007). The diagram below depicts the factors that should be considered when designing a political campaign message that will appeal to the voters.

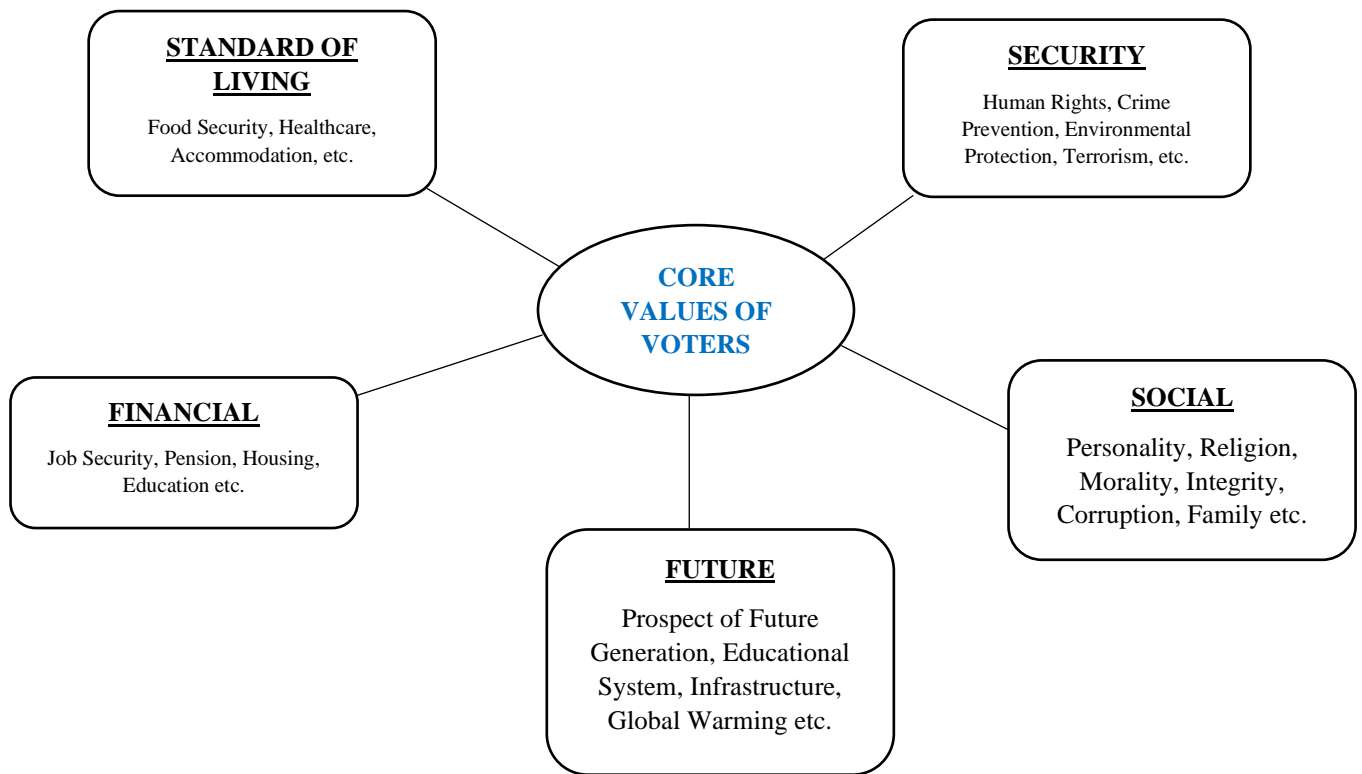


FIGURE 2.6: DIAGRAM SHOWING THE INTERPLAY OF THE CORE FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE AN ATTRACTIVE CAMPAIGN MESSAGE

It is believed that a clear understanding of these factors will significantly enhance the ability of the campaign team to design a campaign message that positions the candidate favourably in the minds of the voters. Such a political campaign message will inspire voters and push them to support and own the campaign. As indicated by Downs (1957), voters’ behaviour and decision making are anchored on their perceptions, expectations, and desires. These perceptions and desires are formulated or influenced by the belief the voters hold that the candidate is in a better position to improve their standard of living, the candidate offers them personal and collective security, the candidate guarantees them social protection, will ensure financial safety, and also the candidate will develop the country such that the future of the next generation is protected (Ashworth, 2007; and Baek, 2009; and Ayee, 2016). These are the cardinal principles which can guarantee that a political campaign message will resonate and appeal to a significant proportion of the voters. In effect, a campaign message which considers and imbed these variables is likely to inspire voters, influence

their decision making positively and attract them to bear part of the responsibility of the campaign as Obama successfully did in United States of America during the 2008 Presidential elections campaign.

As shown in previous and other historic political campaigns such as Abraham Lincoln’s campaign in 1860s, John F. Kennedy’s campaign exactly hundred years after Lincoln’s groundbreaking campaign as well as Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana’s campaign in the 1950s, timing and inclusiveness are also important in designing attractive political campaign messages. Timing for example determine the choice of words to use to disseminate the campaign message. Lincoln for example in both the 1860 and 1864 campaigns used the horse as the metaphor to speak to the voters during that time when he used the slogans below:

<i>1860</i>	<i>“Vote yourself a farm and horses”</i>
<i>1864</i>	<i>“Don’t change horses in midstream”</i>

The Lincoln campaigns respectively reflected timing in crafting their campaign messages as the reelection bid message was clear and distinct about the progress made and the fact that Americans needed to keep faith with the Lincoln administration because they have delivered on their promises. In the same vein, one can detect that, the message appealed to majority of the voters because it was inclusive at the time by drawing into the campaign an important voting bloc who were mainly farmers and property owners. The use of horse in the campaign slogan appealed to the core conservative values of hard work, property owning and aspiration which were important values farmers and horse owners cherish. In the current dispensation however, issues such as jobs, technology innovation, freedom, education among others may be more appealing to majority of the voters compared to horses.

2.10 Political Campaign Message Recall

Both conventional and political marketing practitioners aim to achieve high campaign message recall for placing an advert or executing a campaign stimulus. This is because of the belief

that the audience's ability to recall a marketing stimulus has a strong relationship with the behaviour the audience is likely to exhibit. In other words, a positive recall will enhance the likelihood that the audience or the customer will react positively to the stimulus under reference. It is imperative to indicate that, campaign message recall can be used to determine attractiveness of a campaign message. In effect, a high message recall will mean high acceptability of the message by the target audience hence the campaign message can be deemed attractive to the target audience. This means that, the audience are able to internalize not only the campaign message but the concept or the theme the campaign message is disseminating.

Some researchers have indicated that message recall can be influenced by many factors including the frequency with which the campaign message or the stimulus occurs, the creativity behind the stimulus, endorsements by celebrity, the format use to present the message, and the media channel use to disseminate (Pedreño-Santos and Garcia-Madariaga, 2022; Mays, Villanti, Niaura, Lindblom & Strasser, 2017; and Till and Baack, 2005). These factors exert varying influence on the target audience and the audience's ability to recall the campaign message. With the interest in elections in Ghana by many scholars in general, there has been some amount of scholarly work done on this subject matter by relating campaign message recall to other areas including voter turnout and winning elections (Gyampo et al, 2017).

For example, a study to determine the "effect of varying electronic cigarette warning label design features on attention, recall, and product perceptions among young adults", the researchers concluded that elements such as the background colour of a stimulus affect not only the attention likely to be paid to the stimulus but message recall (Mays, Villanti, Niaura, Lindblom & Strasser, 2017). In another assignment, Till and Baack (2005) discovered that creativity behind the campaign message stimulus will affect message recall. They asserted that "creative advertisements generate significantly greater brand and execution recall on an unaided basis. This advantage dissipates when product category prompts are given as an aid to recall. This effect was found for both immediate and one-week delayed recall. In addition, creative advertisements in our study did not have an effect on

purchase intent or attitude toward the brand. For the recall results, the literature suggests a possible explanation for this difference between groups” (Till and Baack, 2005). Whilst a high ability of the target audience to recall campaign message or a stimulus is a positive indicator, some past research has shown that they do not necessarily translate into desired behaviour. It is therefore imperative for practitioners to look beyond campaign message recall and develop other stimuli to move target audience from affection (like) to act in a manner that meets the campaign objective (action).

Learning from the above studies on this subject matter therefore requires that, when seeking to design a conceptual framework that can be applied by campaign communications practitioners to formulate their campaign message, researchers should consider elements that can enhance recall and at the same time influence the target audience to behave. In this case, the application of aided and unaided campaign message recall is an important element for consideration. It is important for researchers to understand that the difference between aided recall and unaided recall is critical when designing research method. Political campaign message recall, whether aided or unaided, is therefore very important yardstick in political campaign communications and in winning elections in a keenly competitive environment. The ability of a political campaign to achieve high stimulus recall will be beneficial to the success of that campaign. In order to successfully achieve this, electorates to a large extent will need to be constantly reminded with the image of the candidate or the logo of the political party or the colour of the party, and the campaign message being used for the campaign must be frequently aired. This is referred to as aided recall (Paddilla-Walker and Poole, 2002) which is more useful in a competitive political environment such as the two party dominated democracy being practised in Ghana. It is important to note that, despite the benefits of aided recall strategy, some authors have criticized the use of aided recall as being less challenging and does not show the creativity behind the campaign stimulus or message being used (Till and Baack, 2005).

This criticism is prudent in theory, but it does not make commercial sense for a campaign or a stimulus not to achieve its intended objective by refusing to aid the target audience in order to recall the stimulus particularly if that will lead to the desired outcome or a positive behaviour. In

other words, whilst this criticism is valid in terms of methodology, in practice, marketing practitioners are in a better position to aid their target customers, audience or electorates to recall their stimulus since some researchers have found a positive relationship between message recall and behaviour towards a stimulus (Ang and Low, 2000). This is the more reason why political parties should spend heavily on campaign communications including the use of new media platforms, traditional media channels as well as merchandizing materials to embed their candidate or the party's symbol in the minds of the voters. It must be indicated that, commercial enterprises are also engaged in this practice through the use of product placement advertising, subliming advertising as well as the use of traditional mass media advertising to gain large share of voice within the market including employing tactics that exert influence on the customer at the point of decision making (Kotler et al, 2009).

Campaign message recall is therefore important element to consider, both theoretically and practically when formulating any conceptual framework to guide the design of marketing campaign message. As indicated by other scholars, influencing customers decision making process requires multiple actions on the part of marketing practitioners. In effect, these multiple actions must reinforce or complement each other in order to have full effect on the customer. The application of the marketing mix tools, namely Product, Price, Promotion and Place (the 4Ps) should be conducted with the clear objective that the customer will respond positively to the stimulus that has been specifically developed to influence the customer. Therefore, consumer behaviour models such as AIDA model should be applied in conjunction with other marketing models and frameworks to aid campaign message recall that leads to positive action (Kotler et al, 2009; Mays, Villanti, Niaura, Lindblom & Strasser, 2017). This positive action should help the marketing practitioner achieve the desired results predetermined by the campaign and at the same time increase customer satisfaction. To be explicitly clear, within the context of political marketing, the desired results is winning the elections and more importantly forming Government in order to implement the campaign message.

CHAPTER THREE LITERATURE REVIEW: POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT OF GHANA

3.1 Overview

The Chapter provides a critical review of the various campaign messages and slogans used by leading political parties who have been involved in elections in Ghana since 1954 when the then Gold Coast was a colony of the British empire (Bourett, 1959 and Austin, 1964). The Chapter clearly outlines that the formalization of politics in Ghana which commenced with the inauguration of the United Gold Coast Convention (UGCC) in 1947 and the Convention Peoples' Party (CPP) in 1949 (Apter, 1968; and Austin, 1964).

Campaign messaging in the pre independence and immediate post-independence era was framed on optimism, aggression, self-rule now by the Convention People's Party (CPP) as well as a cautious optimism, and self-rule in the near future propagated by the other political party, United Gold Coast Convention (UGCC). However, the 1969 general election similar to others thereafter have anchored their campaign messages on themes such as *Hope* and *Fear*, with central thematic areas being economic welfare, good governance, freedom, unity, corruption, rule of law, poverty, and development. It is important to note that two new and popular themes emerged under the fourth Republican dispensation namely, *Change* and *Continuity*. This phenomenon emerged from the stability of the fourth Republic due to the fact that the incumbent party will always campaign to continue the so-called good developmental works while as the opposition party(ies) will campaign on change to offer relatively quality leadership to the citizenry.

The Chapter also presents the electoral performance of all the elections held between 1969 and 2016 including the total number of votes earned by the respective political parties as well as the percentage scored by same. The chapter further established the taxonomy of the major issues that influence and drive political campaign messaging design in Ghana as well as the key campaign themes that have been used in the political discourse in Ghana and other multiparty democratic

dispensations. An attempt was made to conduct an analysis of previous scholarly works in relation to how political campaign message influence voter turnout.

3.2 Political History of Ghana – A Review of Political Campaign Messages (1954 – 2016)

The political history of Ghana dates as far back to the fight against colonial rule which intensified during the late 17th Century. Before the arrival of the Europeans to the Western Coast of Africa, political organizations across the territories were however structured or anchored on interest of families, tribe, and community (Bourett, 1959). The territories were fragmented based on ethnicity, tribal, communal living, and kingdoms. In other words, there was no formalization of political groupings in the then traditional territories until the British rule festered into the 19th Century (Apter, 1968; and Austin, 1964). Anti-colonial activism emerged but was still functional on tribal and ethnic lines since it was viewed as a struggle to protect one's family control, properties, and heritage.

Researchers believe that the formalization of British colonial rule on 6th March 1844, referred to as the Bond of 1844 between some Chiefs from the coastal belt of the Gold Coast territory and the British Government laid the foundation for formal political organization in the new territory called Gold Coast (Kimble, 1963; Birmingham, 1998; Awoonor, 1990; and Agyei, 2018). The Chiefs, Family Heads, Clan Heads and Tribe Leaders led political groupings and associations, and the political struggles and activities that ensued against the British colonial rule in the Gold Coast.

The above phenomenon was common across other African territories sub of the sahara (Bourett, 1959; and Elischer, 2008 Nam-Katoti et al, 2011). The path to join political groupings and associations in most African states was essentially through one's tribal, and or ethnic affiliation until the late 19th century when the European colonialization expanded educational opportunities for very limited African families, mostly the members of the royal families (Dowse, Robert and Hughes, 1975; Morrison, 2004; and Harkness, 2018).

In the Gold Coast, the formalization of political party system started with the emergence of the *Aboriginal Rights Protection Society* in 1898 which is linked to the formation of the *United Gold Coast Convention (UGCC)* in 1947 and subsequently the *Convention People's Party (CPP)* in 1949 as the two major political parties (Apter, 1968; Austin, 1964; and Fobih, 2010). It is imperative to emphasize that the origins of UGCC were directly connected to two important political organizations, namely the Aboriginal Rights Protection Society of 1898 and the *Congress of British West Africa* of 1920 (Chazan, 1983 and Fobih, 2010). These political establishments were formed to spearhead the struggles for the decolonialization of the Gold Coast territory from the Dutch, the German and lastly the British occupation and imperial rule (Kandel, 1956; Saaka, 1994; Otoo, 2006; and Morrison, 2004).

In the extant literature, there has been much attention on political party organization and management; branding in politics; agenda setting; political duopoly; party financing; manifesto review as well as campaign management (Saaka, 1994; Elischer, 2008; Fobih, 2010; Nam-Katoti et al, 2011; Ayee, 2016; and Agomor, 2019). This research work is however interested in conducting an empirical analysis of campaign messaging and the conceptualization of campaign narratives of the two main political parties during the 2016 general election campaign, namely New Patriotic Party (NPP) and National Democratic Congress (NDC).

In pursuit of this overarching objective, this study is conducting a literature review of the campaign messages of the major political parties that participated in all the democratic elections in Ghana since 1954. This includes the two main political cleavages namely UGCC and CPP which fought the first two democratically organized general elections during the struggle for independence in the then Gold Coast (Morrison, 2004 and Agomor, 2019). It is the belief of this Researcher that key campaign messaging themes and trends would be identified to inform the formulation and management of the current political dispensation with regards to campaign messaging and political communications. Furthermore, the focus will be to understand how campaign messages were

designed and what key factors influenced the selection of these campaign themes and messages between 1954 and 2016.

3.2.1 An Analysis of the 1954 and 1956 General Elections Campaign Messages

Although the struggle for independence ushered in the formation of the Aboriginal Rights Protection Society and Congress of British West Africa, the struggle however gathered significant momentum in the late 19th Century when some educated elites, traders and traditional authorities supported the formation of UGCC and later the CPP, which was a break way offshoot of UGCC (Austin, 1964; Oquaye, 2004; and Agyei, 2018). It is important to underscore that the struggle against colonial rule by these two major political parties involved the use of significant amount of communications and propaganda materials which lend themselves for empirical analysis.

A review of the existing literature indicates that the CPP adopted the most aggressive and effective communications campaign using attractive campaign messaging and strong propaganda to persuade the electorates for their votes (Apter, 1968, Birmingham, 1998 and Morrison, 2004). The party stood for full and immediate independence from the British colonial masters. The CPP was viewed more as a populist and mass political organization led by a charismatic leader, Kwame Nkrumah who had great experience in grassroots mobilization (McBrown, 1953, Kimble, 1963, Saaka, 1994 and Nam-Katoti et al, 2011). The CPP, according to most scholars and Historians, understood the political environment of the then Gold Coast as against the more liberal UGCC led by the educated class with J. B. Danquah as the leader (Manu, 1993, Birmingham, 1998 and Morrison, 2004). The key question relevant to this study is to what extent did the political orientations of these two dominant parties influence the formulation and dissemination of their political campaign messages?

In addition, an extensive review of the existing literature indicates that the CPP campaign messages were largely anchored on populist ideals and were attractive to the masses of the population who were mainly Factory Workers, Labourers, Farmers, Teachers and had little or no

property in their own names (Dowse, 1975 and Fobih, 2010). The party's campaign messages were used to instill hope and confidence in the people about self-rule as well as inculcate in them an inspiration that the Black man was capable of managing his own affairs (McBrown, 1953). It was therefore not surprising that the central theme of the party's campaign message was *Self-Government Now!*

A hopeful campaign theme has somewhat lived the test of time in all democratic competitive electoral systems across the globe. An inspiration and hope to electorates in many contemporary political campaigns across the world had achieved tremendous successes. Barack Obama's 2008 election victory was anchored on Hope, with a slogan '*Yes We Can*'. In 2016 Presidential elections campaign in the United States of America, Donald J. Trump campaigned on '*Make America Great Again*' and he won while in France, the younger Emmanuel Macron in 2017 won the French Presidential elections by campaigning on positive message and opportunities for all. Some scholars argued that the John Kufour's electoral victory in the 2000 general elections in Ghana was as a result of his campaign message of Positive Change (Yobo & Gyampo, 2015 and Agomor, 2019).

The UGCC, a more liberal party on the other hand, adopted a campaign approach that was largely seen as more cautious, uninspiring, and unattractive to the electorates (Manu, 1993 and Morrison, 2004). The party's campaign theme was '*Independence in the Shortest Possible Time*' which failed to resonate well with the voters (Morrison, 2004). The success of the CPP campaigns in both elections have largely been attributed to the party's ability to define the expectations of the electorates and formulated appropriate communications strategy. The CPP's political socialization and mobilization thrived more on mass movement and left-wing political orientation using propaganda campaign messaging. The UGCC which was the territory's first major professionally organized political party adopted a more cautious approach in dealing with the British colonial masters (Saaka, 1994, Blais, 2000 and Morrison, 2004). The party was made up of educated conservatives who favoured a more transitional approach to achieving independence and taking over the governance of the territory against the more radical approach adopted by the CPP. Morrison

(2004) referred to the UGCC of J. B. Danquah and Kofi Busia as “reflected the moderate, liberal, western-oriented interests of its class” (Morrison, 2004, pg. 423). This indeed supports the argument indicated above by this Researcher. It is therefore clear that in campaign message formulation and dissemination, the CPP adopted a more aggressive but inspiring campaign and sought more prepared to liberate their people from the colonial rule.

Since these two major parties formed the initial political cleavage in the new country called Ghana, this research has selected their campaign messages for further analysis. Indeed, the two political systems have lived and transformed somehow into the current political dispensation which is also dominated by the New Patriotic Party (NPP) which is historically linked to the Danquah-Busia’s UGCC while the National Democratic Congress (NDC) appears to align its populist orientation to the Nkrumah’s CPP (Oquaye, 2004 and Yakohene, 2009).

Furthermore, it is imperative to underscore the fact that some few other minor political organizations existed during the struggle for Ghana’s independence. These political groupings were formed on either religious line or tribal affiliations. They therefore could not feature at the national level of political competitions. The political competition was therefore a struggle between the CPP and the UGCC. The struggle that ensued between these political parties essentially focused on ability to develop and disseminate attractive campaign messages in order to gain the most votes. In this regard, the overarching campaign theme adopted by Nkrumah’s CPP during the independence struggle ‘*Independence Now*’ was apt and resonated extremely well with the voting population compared to the liberal campaign message of the UGCC. The outcome of both the 1954 and 1956 elections validates this claim since majority of the electorates supported the idea of *Independence Now!* and voted overwhelmingly for the CPP.

As indicated by Dean (2004), average voter’s decision making is premised on factors which predominantly include a sense of hope or fear. The concept of achieving self-rule as advocated by Nkrumah’s CPP inculcated in the citizens a sense of hope and aspiration for self-reliance and proud people capable of determining their own destiny (Austin, 1964). The theme can also be said as

inspiring the 'Blackman' or the 'African' to view his future by himself and for himself. Some also believe that the sense of becoming the first black nation in the Sub Saharan Africa to achieve independent from the white colonial master acted as a huge motivation to the voters. The lesson here is that formulating or conceptualizing campaign message requires that one needs to determine both the exogeneous and endogenous variables that are relevant to the target audience (O'Hair et al, 1996 and O'Cass, 2001).

A further review of the literature indicates that, the demographics of the voting population in both 1954 and 1956 elections had a higher proportion of male and was youthful. This therefore reveal that campaign message design must reflect the demographics of the target audience. Many scholars in the field of Communications and Psychology believe that audience personal characteristics have significant influence on their interpretation of the communication stimuli (Brady, Johnson & Sides, 2006 and Cockcroft et al (2014). It is widely acknowledged that voter's choice of a candidate is greatly influenced by other variables including Political Ideology; Economic Policy; or Political Orientation (Downs, 1957, Lonsdale, 1994, Young, 2002 and Boafo-Arthur, 2003). However, many voters' behaviour is also influenced by their demography such as ethnicity, age, gender, level of educational and income level (Young, 2002, Dean, 2004 and Ayee, 2016). According to some researchers, high income earners appear to lean towards candidates or political parties with Capitalist (Free Market) political orientation towards governance. The CPP was seen as a party with left wing socialist ideologies while the UGCC leaned more towards the Capitalist orientation (Otoo, 2006 and Morrison, 2004).

It is therefore not surprising that the CPP won because an analysis of the electorates who participated in both the 1954 and 1956 general elections in Gold Coast revealed high level of poverty and the territory was largely underdeveloped with very minimal level of social and economic infrastructure and amenities. The poor and the working class are more likely to be supportive of a strong central control of governance that provides welfare support to the citizens. Some scholars further argued that because the proportion of citizens with formal education was extremely low, with

literacy rate in the then Gold Coast among both male and female being low (Kandel, 1956 and Foster, 1965), a higher percentage was likely to accept a campaign message that sought to promise a better living conditions.

All these demographic data indicate that the voting population in both elections was not sophisticated hence there was a high propensity of these voters being more susceptible to political propaganda. In addition to the above, many of the citizens believed that achieving political freedom was the surest means to achieving economic freedom since there was widespread assertion that the British colonial masters were exploiting the natural resources of the territory (Gold Coast) for the development of European countries (Birmingham, 1998, Morrison, 2004 and Agomor, 2019). It was therefore strategically prudent, although politically expedient, for the CPP Communications Strategy to adopt campaign communication theme that sought to appeal to the emotions of the majority of the electorates who were more interested in dealing with their immediate problems of economic hardship, poor infrastructure and low level of education (Jeffries, 1996) in addition to the hatred against the white imperialists.

The electoral victories of the CPP in the two consecutive elections were therefore anchored on a clear understanding and appreciation of the expectations of the electorates and what variables affected their interest. Some researchers argue however that, the two leading political parties had similar campaign messages and campaign themes (Manu, 1993, Morrison, 2004 and Ayee, 2016). For example, the UGCC which lost the two consecutive elections to the CPP campaigned on '*Independent in the Shortest Possible Time*'. This campaign message automatically created room for the CPP propaganda machinery that the UGCC leadership was not committed to attaining independence immediately for the Gold Coasters. The campaign message therefore failed to reflect the expectations of the electorates.

An in depth analysis of the literature indicates that, the failure of the UGCC campaign message to reflect the expectations on the ground fed into the belief that the UGCC was politically closed to the British Empire hence the leadership was perceived to have a tendency to negotiate for

a longer transitional arrangement that was likely to prolong colonial rule in the territory and deprive the ordinary citizens of their political and economic freedom (Birmingham, 1998, Manu, 1993 and Morrison, 2004).

However, the campaign message of CPP which was anchored on *Independent Now!* resonated well with a greater majority of the electorates of the election under reference. It is quite clear that the CPP campaign strategy designed a message that met the expectations and aspirations of the electorates. It stands to reason that the party carefully analyzed the demographic characteristics of the electorates as well as the political environment particularly the expectations of the people. Upon hindsight, some researchers argued that the UGCC Communication Strategy should have partly focused on defusing the propaganda that it was likely to grant the British Colonial masters some more space and time to exploit the nation's natural resources further. It is apparent that these factors are among other important factors that are relevant and carry significant weight hence should be considered when formulating political campaign message in an election.

Conceptualizing political campaign messaging in an election within the Ghanaian political dispensation has not been empirically studied. Many research works have been conducted extensively on a review and analysis of the development of political parties and campaign management in the pre and post-independence eras, but focused has been on politics, tribalism in party politics, political party organization and management, democracy, recruitment of party leaders, party financing, military and politics, agenda setting, manifesto reviews among other important areas (Saaka, 1994, Jeffries, 1996, Morrison, 2004, Otoo, 2006, Elischer, 2008, Fobih, 2010, Ayee, 2016 and Agomor, 2019). In spite of the significant contributions towards the development of literature in the area of political campaign management however, there is little evidence in the existing literature on how political campaign messaging has been conceptualized in Ghana. This thesis therefore seeks to use the 2016 Presidential elections in Ghana to conduct a Doctoral study on conceptualizing political campaign messaging.

In order to achieve the overall research objective, it is important to understand how political parties in the pre independent era conceptualized their campaign messages. The above review exercise has been focused on the two main political parties namely, CPP and UGCC since they were the dominant political parties during the struggle for independence using the number of popular votes accumulated in both 1954 and 1956 elections in the then Gold Coast (McBrown, 1953, Austin, 1964, Apter, 1968 and Morrison, 2004). The next section of this literature review will analyse the campaign messages in the subsequent democratic election in Ghana, which took place in 1969, after the overthrow of the CPP regime of Kwame Nkrumah in February 1966.

3.2.2 A Critical Review of Political Campaign Messages in the 1969 General Elections in Ghana

The first republican constitutional government led by the Convention Peoples Party (CPP) was truncated by the first Military coup d'état in Ghana led by British trained Ghanaian soldiers and some senior police officers in 1966 (Birmingham, 1998). The take-over of the governance of the newly independent country by a combined group of Military and Police forces paved the way for another democratic elections in 1969 (Arhin, 1993; Saaka, 1994; Morrison, 2004; and Harkness, 2018). The ban of political activities after the 1966 coup d'état was lifted in May 1969 in order to grant permission for the formation of political parties for the multi-party democratic elections (Awoonor, 1990, Gyimah-Boadi & Debrah, 2008 and Agyei, 2018). However, evidence available in the extant literature clearly indicates that all political parties affiliated to the Kwame Nkrumah's CPP regime were banned from participating in the 1969 general elections (Morisson, 2004 and Agomor, 2019). In spite of above, the general election campaign was incredibly competitive with five political parties and an independent candidate contesting. This election therefore lends itself to academic and empirical studies at the Doctoral level.

As indicated above, with many political parties and an independent candidate contesting in the general elections under reference, with many different campaign messages, this research study will focus on the campaign messages of the two leading parties, namely Progress Party (PP) and the National Alliance of Liberals (NAL).

The Progress Party which became the victorious party with about 59% of the total votes (Manu, 1993, Nunley, 2006, Morrison, 2004 and Agyei, 2018) campaigned on *Progress, Unity, Liberty and Justice*. The other leading political party in the said election was National Alliance of Liberals (NAL) led by K. A. Gbedemah who won 30% of the popular votes with 29 Parliamentary seats (Nohlen et al, 1999). The party's main campaign message which was anchored on *Liberty, Equity and Rule of Law*, will be critically analysed. The other political parties included the United Nationalist Party (UNP) of Joe Appiah; United Action Party (UAP) of Imoro Ayarna; and All People's Republican Party (APRP) led by de Graft-Johnson. Refer to Table 1: Results of the 1969 General Elections in Ghana. The intensity of the campaign during the 1969 election campaign period was said to be keen although most of the minor parties lacked adequate resources and personnel to disseminate their campaign messages (Gyimah-Boadi & Debrah, 2008 and Agyei, 2018).

The Progress Party which campaign message theme centered on the importance of multi-party democracy, civil liberty and rule of law is believed to have formulated a message that reflected the happenings of the Ghanaian political environment. The country had emerged from a system of One-Party rule and a Military regime that had initially banned all political activities. Many of the electorates then, accordingly, cherished and valued social and political freedom (Morrison, 2004 and Otoo, 2006). The Busia's Progress Party, from which elements including Busia used the Commission for Civic Education Board, which he was the Chairman to listen to the views and opinions of the Ghanaian Citizens across the country helped the party to analyse and identify some relevant issues that aided the design of their campaign message. The above assertion is reinforced by the fact that the second placed political party in the elections under reference, the National

Alliance of Liberals (NAL), campaigned on Liberty, Equality before the law and the Consent of the governed. It is important to emphasize that their campaign message shared some similarities with that of the Progress Party which placed first (Morrison, 2004).

Although there is no evidence in the available literature that National Alliance of Liberals conducted or had any opportunity to undertake a scientific process of understanding the electorates before the launch of their 1969 campaign, they might have picked lessons from the general political atmosphere and, or from the Progress Party which had earlier launched its campaign platform. These two parties promised the electorates freedom from tyranny and abuse of power, offered hope, and equality in their national lives (Agomor, 2019).

Indeed, this indicates that campaign message formulation requires a mechanism to gather and analyze the views and opinions of the target audience (Lees-Marshment, 2001 and Kotler et al, 2009). In other words, all things being equal, other political parties that did not get the benefit of employing scientific mechanism to understudy the electorates could not formulate campaign messages that resonated with the majority of the electorates hence failure to meet their expectations (Adams and Agomor, 2015). It is imperative to state that, it is not the position of this paper that other factors including but not limited to ethnicity and religion did not influence the decisions of the voters. Indeed, this Researcher strongly believes that other factors play significant role in the voting decision of the electorates (Dean, 2004, Adams and Agomor, 2015). However, the practice of scientifically understanding the voting public is not peculiar to Ghana since it has become a basic practice that Communications Strategists conduct baseline studies to analyse and understand the idiosyncrasies and expectations of the electorates (target audience) before formulating messages has gained worldwide acceptance (Kotler and Roberto, 1989). In fact, this practice has become fundamental to the formulation of any competitive political campaign messages.

As illustrated by Agyei (2018) that the minority parties lacked adequate resources to prosecute their campaign in itself supports the assertion that they could not mobilize resources to

develop an effective campaign communications plan. This research study is interested in understanding how effective this phenomenon is used in formulating campaign messages in the contemporary Ghanaian elections, particularly by the NPP and NDC.

TABLE 3.1: RESULTS OF 1969 ELECTIONS IN GHANA

POLITICAL PARTY	No. OF VOTES	PERCENTAGE GAINED	NO. OF PARLIAMENTARY SEATS
Progress Party	877,310	58.3	105
National Alliance of Liberals	463,401	30.8	29
United Nationalist Party	57,652	3.8	2
People's Action Party	51,125	3.4	2
All People's Republican Party	27,328	1.8	1
Independent	27,216	1.8	1
Total	1,504,032	100	140

Source: Nohlen et al, 1999

3.2.3 A Review of Campaign Messages in the 1979 General Elections in Ghana

The previous section of this literature review examined the political campaign messages of the two main parties in the 1969 political contest. This section looks at the 1979 general elections which was won by a party affiliated to the Kwame Nkrumah’s leftwing Convention Peoples Party (Ninsin, 1993, Morrison, 2004 and Agomor, 2019). Similar to the 1969 elections, the 1979 contest was supervised by the military regime after some eight years of another Military coup d’etat in December 1972 led by I. K. Acheampong which toppled the Busia government (Awoonor, 1990 and Agyei, 2018) and two Military take overs by General Akuffo in 1977 and Flt. Lt. John Rawlings in 1979 (Chazan, 1983 and Oquaye, 2004).

The 1979 general elections occurred within a very tensed atmosphere. Some scholars assert that, the Supreme Military Council (SMC) regime had made all the necessary arrangements for the elections to be held on June 18th, 1979, but the junior ranks of the Ghana Armed Forces toppled the regime in what is described as a revolution on June 4th the same year, some two weeks before the elections (Jeffries, 1980 and Awoonor, 1990). The change from one military regime to another led to massive upheavals including widespread killings, looting of shops and seizure of properties. This created unsafe environment across the country for any meaningful political campaign (Jeffries, 1980 and Oquaye, 2004).

However, there is enough evidence that all the political parties and their respective candidates had earlier campaigned vigorously across the country and were therefore ready for the elections as scheduled. It is important to state that, the Military regime postponed the elections for some few months and did not interfere with the arrangements and organization of the said elections, giving room for all political campaign activities including dissemination of campaign messages (Legon Observer, 1978, Lumsden, 1980, Jeffries, 1980 and Awoonor, 1990). The presidential ballot was held twice since none of the ten presidential candidates including four independent candidates in the first run of polls secured a majority votes (Nunley, 2006).

The election was competitive with all the political parties and independent candidates actively participating in the first run of polls, including the two, namely People's National Party (PNP) led by Dr. Hilla Limann and Popular Front Party (PFP) represented Lawyer Victor Owusu. There was another strong party, United National Convention (UNC) led by a former Minister in the previous Busia government who placed third in the race (Yakohene, 2009). It is believed that these three parties were ideologically linked to the two major political parties formed for the struggle for Ghana's independence (Fobih, 2010, Nam-Katoti et al, 2011 and Agomor, 2019). Whiles the Peoples National Party (PNP) shared the leftwing socialist ideology with the CPP, both the PFP and UNC

were believed to be aligned to the UGCC's center-right capitalist orientation of governance (Adams and Agomor, 2015).

A review of the available literature indicates that the campaign focused on issues of economy, social development, and agriculture by applying propaganda means to disseminate campaign information. This research will therefore focus on the campaign messages of these three parties, since their combined share of the total votes cast in the first run of the poll was about eighty percent of the popular votes (Jeffries, 1980 and Nunley, 2006). The campaign messages of the leading parties did not significantly change in the second run of voting.

The other political parties that took part in the election under review and their candidates were Action Congress Party (ACP) led by Frank Bernasko; Third Force Party (TFP) of Dr. Bilson; and Lawyer Ibrahim Mahama's Social Democratic Front (SDF). In addition to these candidates who represented political parties, four Independent Candidates contested the presidential elections during the first run of polls but gained insignificant number of votes (refer to Table 2). These minor parties and the independent candidates did not present any attractive campaign messages worthy of critical review at this level of research (Lunsden, 1980). Moreover, their share of votes clearly indicates that the electorates did not find their campaign messages and platforms attractive.

Interestingly, some researchers argue that PNP was not elected on any specific campaign message or policy platform (Jeffries, 1980) and did not craft any distinct campaign message. These scholars therefore conclude that the victory of PNP was more as a result of its grassroots network and organization than an attractive campaign message (Agomor, 2019). In addition to this however, the PNP campaign applied tailor made propaganda messages which were localized in selected geographic areas of the country (Lumsden, 1980 and Oquaye, 2004). These propaganda messages were designed to influence the local electorates with stimuli they were familiar with.

It is imperative to note that, other scholars discovered that PNP campaigned on themes such as *national unity, state enterprises development and promotion of cooperatives* (Manu, 1993 and Agomor, 2019). It is clear that although the PNP campaign was victorious in the said election, the campaign could not formulate any attractive campaign message or theme. Compared to the CPP in 1954 and 1956 elections, the PNP was however poor in drafting an attractive campaign platform. It must therefore be noted that, political parties in Ghana may not necessarily have to rely on attractive and persuasive campaign messages to secure electoral victory.

On the other hand, the Popular Front Party (PFP) was also criticized for having weak campaign communications outreach programme and no identifiable campaign message to recall (Manu, 1993 and Morrison, 2004). According to Agomor (2019) the PFP mainly drawn its campaign messages from its mother party, the Progress Party of Busia. The PFP designed campaign messages based on civil liberties and media freedom as the main guiding themes (Manu, 1993). As argued by some scholars, the PFP campaign failed to develop campaign message to attract new voters, particularly the youth and first-time voters who obviously had little memory or recall of the values of the Progress Party.

Furthermore, it is important to ensure that formulating campaign messages reflect issues that are relevant to the target audience (i.e. voters) since the preferences, expectations, interests and, or priorities vis a vis the electoral population are naturally dynamic not static (Adams and Agomor, 2015). Although significant work has been done by previous researchers on election campaigns in Ghana, there is little evidence of any scholarly work with focus on conducting empirical analysis of campaign messaging from 1954 to the 2016 general elections in Ghana. This research therefore seeks to fill this literature gap, using the 2016 presidential elections as the case study to study how campaign messages are conceptualized.

TABLE 3.2: RESULTS OF 1979 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS IN GHANA

POLITICAL PARTY	FIRST ROUND		SECOND ROUND			
	No. OF VOTES	PERCENT (%)	No. OF VOTES	PERCENT (%)		
People's National Party	631,559	35.3	1,118,305	62.0		
Popular Front Party	533,928	29.9	686,097	38.0		
United National Convention	311,265	17.4				
Action Congress Party	167,775	9.4				
Social Democratic Front	66,445	3.7				
Third Force Party	49,104	2.7				
R. P. Baffour/Independent Candidate	8,812	0.5				
Kwame Nyanteh/Independent Candidate	8,480	0.5				
Mark Diamond Addy/Independent candidate	5,959	0.3				
Imoru Ayarna/Independent Candidate	4,874	0.3				
Total	1,788,201	100			1,804,402	100

(Source: Nohlen et al, 1999)

3.2.4 Analysis of Political Campaign Messages in Ghana’s Fourth Republican Democratic Dispensation (1992 – 2016)

As indicated earlier, this thesis seeks to conceptualize campaign messaging in an election using the Presidential election of 2016 in Ghana as the case study. Political campaign messaging has played significant role in competitive elections in many democratic jurisdictions (Manu, 1993; Anebo, 2001; Dean, 2004; Brady, Johnson & Sides, 2006; and Gyampo et al, 2017). Some researchers argue that voters’ choices are influenced by many stimuli including manifesto promises, campaign message, educational qualification of the candidate, candidate’s personality, religion, tribe, gender, and race (Anebo, 2001, Brady, Johnson & Sides, 2006 and Adams and Agomor, 2015).

These factors can be categorized under the sociological theory posited by Converse (1944) and others; or psychosocial model advanced by the Michigan School (Dalton, 2013); or the rational choice perspective advocated by Downs (1957) and later by Fiorina (2002). Although election outcome cannot be fully explained by one model, in many democratic societies, victorious candidates are those whose campaign message(s) are found to be persuasive and attractive to the electorates. A good campaign message can be said to be at the center of any political campaign, therefore, an effective marketing of political campaign messages in any competitive election is important but what is most critical to many electoral campaigns has been how these campaign messages are designed and formulated. This means that, it is important to design campaign message that reflects the expectations of voters. This important task can be achieved when there is a scientifically designed framework to conceptualize campaign message.

In spite of this critical role campaign message plays, little attention has been paid to theoretical analysis of political campaign messaging in Ghana. Meanwhile, political candidates, since the pre independence era elections to the contemporary fourth republic, have been campaigning using such communications platforms as Rally, Town Hall Meeting, Billboards, Radio, Television, Newspaper, Posters, Fliers etc. The overall objective of this research therefore is to contribute to the extant body of knowledge from this perspective.

The beginning of the fourth republic in Ghana saw the lifting of the ban placed on political party activities in 1992 by the Provisional National Defense Council (PNDC) military regime led by Jerry John Rawlings (Kwesi, 1998 and Bofo-Arthur, 2006). This promulgated into being the 1992 Constitution which ushered in Ghana's 1992 democratic transition. The renaissance of political party activities in Ghana saw the formation of thirteen (13) political parties with varying sizes and different ideologies. The leaders of the defunct political parties in the third republican dispensation seized the opportunity to organize their supporters to revive old political party traditions to regroup for political power under the new Constitution (Gyimah-Boadi, 2001 and Agomor, 2019). These thirteen political parties registered to contest the 1992 general elections and included the National

Democratic Congress (NDC), the New Patriotic Party (NPP), People's National Convention (PNC), National Independence Party (NIP), People's Heritage Party (PHP), National Convention Party (NCP) and Democratic People's Party (DPP).

Some of these political parties trace their roots to the political traditions which emerged during the pre-independence and immediate post-independence eras (Awoonor, 1990 and Ninsin, 2006) while others were newly composed political parties with little or no affiliations to any political tradition or personality (Yobo & Gyampo, 2015 and Agomor, 2019).

Lindberg & Morrison (2005) asserted that the NPP traced its root to the UGCC of the pre-independence era through to the United Party; the Progress Party of the late 1960s; and the Popular Front Party of the late 1970s. All these political parties, although existed in different eras (UGCC in 1954; PP in 1969; PFP in 1979; and NPP which started in 1992), were believed to have campaigned on the Conservative Liberal Free Market principles of governance. The NPP was therefore not different. The NPP's lead campaign for the 1992 presidential election message was *'Development in Freedom'* which had as part of its fundamental principles, a belief in civil liberties and rule of law. The party's Presidential Candidate, a History Professor, and a critic of the then PNDC Military junta promised freedom and economic revitalization by using local private enterprises and industries to produce for local consumption and export (Anebo, 2001). The message was targeted at both the young and the old and was to inspire them to achieve their dreams in a free society.

Compared to the NDC and its Progressive Alliance during the 1992 campaign, the NPP lacked campaign resources for propagating its campaign message. As the country was emerging from military rule, and quite significantly, with the Chairman of the ruling military junta's PNDC presenting himself as the Presidential Candidate, it was practically difficult for the NDC to avoid the use of state resources especially the national media network to disseminate its campaign messages (Nam-Katoti et al, 2011). This automatically granted the NDC Presidential Candidate relatively more and easy access to the electorates than the other competing political parties, which is referred to in the literature as incumbency advantage. While the then opposition NPP had crafted

what they described as an attractive campaign message, the party lacked adequate and requisite resources to disseminate same. Indeed, this is one of the emerging issues that require further theoretical analysis, that is whether there is a correlation between availability of communication logistics, and a good campaign message in an election.

As has been argued earlier using the 1969 election campaign, Busia who eventually won the said election benefited significantly from the use of state resources to aid his campaign including marketing his campaign messages through personal selling as the Chairman of the National Civic Education (Chazan, 1983, Manu, 1993, Agyei, 2018 and Agomor, 2019). Jerry Rawlings seems to have similarly benefited from the use of state resources to promote his campaign message in the 1992 election (Frempong, 2008 and Boafo-Arthur, 2006). With these cases and other examples in other African democracies such as in Uganda, Nigeria, and Rwanda, it can be concluded that attractive campaign message alone may not lead to electoral victory. Furthermore, Yobo and Gyampo (2015) asserted that campaign resource availability is a contributory factor in securing electoral victory in many democracies. In the United States for example, a Candidate's ability to raise funds to fuel his or her campaign is a key determinant of winning any competitive elections (Brady, Johnson & Sides, 2006).

The NDC, whose Presidential candidate eventually won the elections, campaigned on '*Continuity and Stability*'. The party designed a campaign message that signified to the electorates that the party was already doing good work hence there was no need for a change. By extension, the political history of Ghana had experienced significant number of instabilities caused mainly by military coup d'états (Oquaye, 1991).

However, the coming into office of the PNDC regime had brought about some level of political stability, for about ten years. Furthermore, there was evidence that some Ghanaians cherished that sense of stability although some were against the military rule which had taken most of their freedoms away. Therefore, this consistency in messaging with all other relevant components of an election campaign such as being led by the incumbent President as the Candidate, offered the

NDC a lot of advantages (Gyimah-Boadi, 2001 and Arthur, 2017). For the avoidance of doubt, the party's candidate was the leader of the military regime (the ruling PNDC) which had executive power and control hence it was a simple continuous of executive authority but within a different dispensation. In addition to this, most of the party's Parliamentary candidates and functionaries across the country were members of the PNDC regime. The party's message which was simply anchored on continuity of their style of governance, policies and programme was appropriate and it avoided creating any doubt as well as contradictions in people's mind. This is an important element in marketing communications since decision making is strongly influenced by perception (Kotler et al, 2009).

TABLE 3.3: RESULTS OF 1992 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS IN GHANA

POLITICAL PARTY	No. OF VOTES	PERCENTAGE GAINED (%)
National Democratic Congress	2,323,135	58.4
New Patriotic Party	1,204,764	30.3
People's National Convention	266,710	6.7
National Independence Party	113,629	2.9
Peoples Heritage Party	69,827	1.8
Invalid Votes	149,811	
Total	4,127,876	100
Registered Voters/Turnout	8,229,902	

Source: Nunley, 2006

The 1996 election was relatively competitive. The NPP presented a new Presidential candidate, John Kufour, a lawyer, and an experienced politician, having served as a Member of Parliament and a Deputy Minister under Busia, as well as a Minister under Rawlings' PNDC regime in the early 1980s (Frempong, 2008; and Agyeman-Dua, 2003). In addition, the sitting Vice President, Kow Nkensen Arkaah who was the Vice Presidential Candidate to the NDC's Presidential Candidate in the 1992 had left the Progressive Alliance to join the NPP Candidate to form what

became the Great Alliance for the 1996 contest as Kufour’s running mate (Jeffries, 1998 and Agomor, 2019). Unlike the 1992 parliamentary election which was boycotted by the opposition parties, the 1996 election was different since all the leading political parties contested the 200 Parliamentary seats across the country (Larvie & Badu, 1996; Bratton & Van de Walle, 1997; and Ninsin, 2006).

With the NDC’s massive victory in the 1992 general elections and absolute control over both Parliament and the Executive arms of government, couple with the sitting President seeking re-election, the NDC stayed on its 1992 campaign message of *Continuity and Stability*. On the other side however, the NPP’s new candidate campaigned on a new campaign message anchored on a promise of *economic prosperity and well-being*. The party designed a message which was fronted by the slogan "*Hwe wo asetenamu na to aba no*" which translation into English is "*examine your economic circumstance and vote accordingly*". With this campaign message, the NPP unsuccessfully tried to attribute the economic hardship in the country to the Rawlings and his NDC regime. The campaign message sought to challenge the average voter to vote the NPP into Government for better economic development and prosperity (Anebo, 1997).

TABLE 3.4: RESULTS OF 1996 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS IN GHANA

POLITICAL PARTY	No. OF VOTES	PERCENTAGE GAINED (%)
National Democratic Congress	4,099,758	57.4
New Patriotic Party	2,834,878	39.7
People's National Convention	211,136	3
Invalid Votes	120,921	
Total	7,266,693	100
Registered Voters/Turnout	9,279,605	

Source: Nunley, 2006

The general elections in the year 2000 was a critical one in the political history and multi-party trajectory of Ghana. The outcome of that election saw transfer of political power for the first

time in the history of the country between two different political parties (Anebo, 2001). Existing literature indicates that there is limited information on campaign messages of political parties who have participated in elections in Ghana. In fact, Anebo (2001) stated that “literature on elections in Ghana is voluminous but not all altogether tidy” (Anebo, 2001, page 76). As indicated in earlier section of this work, more scholarly attention has rather focused on examination of voting behaviour in Ghana (Anebo, 2001; Lindberg and Morrison, 2008; Ichino and Nathan, 2013; and Harding, 2015). Indeed, there is no evidence in the existing literature pointing to a theoretical study of the campaign messages of political parties in Ghana.

However, some mention is made of campaign slogans adopted by the two leading political parties in the 2000 general elections, namely the NPP and the NDC. Some researchers argued that during the 2000 general elections, the NPP and the NDC campaigned on similar economic programmes and policies hence had similar campaign message (Agomor, 2019). Such situations are likely to confuse the electorates, particularly those with low educational level which is a significant characteristic of most sub-Sahara Africa countries. An analysis of the available literature indicates that the NPP campaign theme was *‘Positive Change’* while the incumbent NDC campaigned on *‘Continuity in Change’*. The *‘change’* theme in the two campaign messages indeed lends a lot of evidence which buttresses those who argue that the two political parties in the said election had similar campaign messages.

Although, the two parties were seeking the same strategic objective, which was electoral victory in the 2000 elections but there were some inherent differences with regards to their dispositions. The NDC was the governing party whose leader had exhausted his constitutional mandate of eight years hence the party had to present a new candidate for the elections under reference (Gyimah-Boadi, 2001). In spite of the fact that the new candidate was the then sitting Vice President of Ghana, the party needed to design a campaign message that communicated change in many aspects. It is believed that the NDC party needed a repositioning and rebranding in order to distance itself from the PNDC junta.

In addition, the then sitting President, Jerry John Rawlings who had been the Head of State of the country since 1982 was largely seen as a dictator (Boafo-Arthur, 2006; Oquaye, 2004; and Jeffries, 1996). They assert that the tenure of the Rawlings regime was undemocratic and was apparently used to cause a lot of human right violations against many Ghanaians. It was therefore imperative for the NDC Communications Strategists to present the NDC and its new candidate as different and a more refined party from its past. The campaign message which sought to blend ‘*Change*’ with ‘*Continuity*’ was however hard to sell since apart from its Presidential Candidate, most of the leading faces and personalities during the campaign were members of the old PNDC military junta and close associates of the NDC constitutional era government (Gyimah-Boadi, 2001).

Moreover, the party’s grassroots campaign operations were largely led by the same operational heads whose attitude and behaviour did not reflect the campaign message the party had formulated and commissioned. But some analysts argued that the NDC needed to campaign on the records of achievement of incumbent government of Jerry Rawlings hence the need to somewhat emphasis the ‘*Continuity*’ mantra (Smith, 2002; and Adams and Agomor, 2015). In as much as it was a prudent strategy to formulate a campaign message that reminded the voters of the positive records of achievement of a previous administration which is affiliated to the contesting candidate, it is always advisable to empirically assess the true popularity of this approach. Also, strong consideration should be given to other exogenous variables which exert some influence on the same electorates (Strömback and Kionsis, 2010). It is therefore important to underscore that a campaign message can be effective when it is well in syn with the other components and structures of the whole campaign management structure, including the selection of those who disseminate (*Message Credibility vs Messenger Credibility*) the message to the electorates (Smith, 2002; and Brady, Johnston and Sides, 2006).

Lastly, when the NDC’s message of ‘*Continuity in Change*’ is analyzed against its lead competitor’s message of ‘*Positive Change*’ in the 2000 elections, the issue of message credibility becomes a relevant yardstick of assessment that every average voter will apply (Strömback and

Kionsis, 2014). Anebo (2001) concluded that the average voter in Ghana is able to distinguish between the political party and the party's candidate – *Party's credibility vs Candidate's credibility*. By extension, it is believed that the Ghanaian voter has the capability to evaluate the candidate's own credibility separately from the political party the candidate represents. Indeed, the political party's credibility is collective in nature while the candidate's is singular, accumulated by his or her involvement in public and private engagements over time within his or her community. This phenomenon has been validated in Ghana's electoral system over time. However, evidence indicates that some candidates at the constituency level (i.e. parliamentary elections) who for one reason or the other broke away from their political parties during elections have won as independent candidates (Gyampo and Yobo, 2015). This phenomenon is however yet to occur at the presidential electoral level. It is important to state that, the victory of these '*independent*' candidates cannot only be attributed to their personal credibility since there are many other factors that could account for the outcomes of such elections (Kelly and Bening, 2013).

In view of the significant weight voters place on candidate credibility when voting, the NDC was seen as a party with little reputation of keeping campaign promises since 1992, although the Presidential Candidate was held in high esteem (Anebo, 2001 and Fiorina, 2002). Since political party organization and in many cases across the world, the campaign teams metamorphosed into Governments, the credibility of the messengers (NDC officials and volunteers) affected the credibility of their campaign message which was '*Continuity in Change*' in the minds of the voters.

The NPP led by John Kufour was relatively new and fresh with a change message that reflected the expectations of the people. Extant literature indicates that many Ghanaians wanted new political leadership and a departure from the eighteen years of the same Jerry Rawlings leadership with little socioeconomic development and prosperity to show (Gyimah-Boadi, 2001 and Ayee, 2016). This presented an obvious opportunity for the NPP to leverage by formulating a campaign message to fill this void. Therefore, the combination of the two attractive words – '*POSITIVE*' and '*CHANGE*' in such a simple campaign message or slogan was a strategic move which as the

evidence indicates yielded significant results in the elections under reference (Smith, 2002 and Nunley, 2006).

Furthermore, many of the NPP campaigners had had little association with the then PNDC-NDC political regime and other past military regimes. Most of the Members of Parliament who were fronting the campaign at the constituency level were youthful, accomplished and seen as well connected in the global arena. According to Anebo (2001) “if there were any real issue differences between the two major candidates (Vice President Atta-Mills and John Kufour) for the presidential slot, it was that the incumbent Vice President Atta-Mills campaigned side by side with ex-President Rawlings (Rawlings sometimes overshadowing him) on the NDC’s slogan of *Continuity in Change*, while John Kufour called for a *New Team* that stands for *Positive Change*” (page 73). It is fair to assert that the NPP campaign relatively benefitted from message and messenger consistency since the party’s campaign message was largely carried or disseminated by credible messengers. Although some scholars have indicated that due to the low political knowledge and sophistication of the average Ghanaian voter, little attribution is given to campaign message that defines policy and programme issues in elections in Ghana. This assertion cannot however be conclusive since the elections under the fourth republican constitution in Ghana have clearly shown changes in voters’ behaviour that led to change of Government (Allah-Mensah, 1998; Smith, 2002; Lindberg and Morison, 2008; Adams and Agomor, 2015; and Agomor, 2019).

TABLE 3.5: RESULTS OF 2000 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS IN GHANA

POLITICAL PARTY	FIRST ROUND		SECOND ROUND	
	No. OF VOTES	PERCENT (%)	No. OF VOTES	PERCENT (%)
National Democratic Congress	2,895,575	44.5	2,750,124	43.1
New Patriotic Party	3,131,739	48.2	3,631,263	56.9
People's National Convention	189,659	2.9		

Convention People's Party	115,641	1.8		
National Reforms Party	78,629	1.2		
Great Consolidated Popular Party	67,504	1.0		
United Ghana Movement	22,123	0.3		
Invalid Votes	104,214		77,616	
Total	6,605,084		6,459,003	100

Source: Nunley, 2006

The 2004 general election was a rehash of the 2000 elections mainly between John Kufour of the NPP, now the incumbent President and John Atta-Mills of the NDC. The massive electoral defect suffered by the NDC in the 2000 election led to some fundamental electoral reforms in the internal processes of the party between 2001 and 2003. In furtherance to the above, the NDC reasserted itself as a Social Democratic party and promoted transparency and internal competition for party leadership positions across all levels of the party structures (Gyimah-Boadi & Debrah, 2008 and Carbone, 2007). The party however maintained its presidential candidate in the 2000 elections but introduced a new campaign message anchored on what the party's communications strategists described as '*A Better Ghana*'.

The new campaign message sought to focus more attention on how the 'new' NDC had formulated new economic and social programmes guided by social democratic principles. These programmes designed by the party sought to inform and persuade the average Ghanaian voter as the best roadmap to economic prosperity. The party is believed to have formulated a campaign message that promised the voter a qualitative improvement in his or her wellbeing. Indeed, NDC strongly posited that "*A Better Ghana*" means more jobs — jobs. "*A Better Ghana*" means existing businesses will survive, with new and bigger ones springing up. "*A Better Ghana*" means reducing the cost of living. "*A Better Ghana*" means investing more in the education of Ghanaians. "*A Better Ghana*" means improved infrastructure. "*A Better Ghana*" means reduced crime rate. "*A Better*

Ghana” means an efficient health care delivery system. “A Better Ghana” means greater emphasis on issues concerning women, children and the physically challenged. “A Better Ghana” means using our rich resources responsibly and effectively to benefit all our people now and in the future (NDC Manifesto, 2004). The campaign significantly moved from personality issues and attacks to issues based.

The governing NPP on the other hand formulated a campaign message based on their 2000 election campaign theme, *‘Positive Change’* (Ayee, 2016). The party created a message that simply sought for a renewal of their political mandate in order to continue with the implementation of their socioeconomic policies and programmes which they believed had improved the socioeconomic lives and wellbeing of all Ghanaians. The party therefore campaigned on *‘Positive Change Chapter 2’*. According to the Communications Strategists of the party, their clarion call was to ensure that the economic development programmes and policies the party had implemented are able to impact the Ghanaian life and accelerate their livelihoods under atmosphere of freedom.

The party’s campaign message targeted the Micro, Small and Medium scale entrepreneurs and sought to put them at the center of national development. Some scholars believe that this was consistent with the party’s ideology of free market economy and liberal democracy. The party believed that its performance in the past four years have clearly indicated that it needed another term in office to complete the implementation of many of the laudable programmes and policies being implemented across the country. Some critics however assert that there is little difference between the economic policies and programmes of both NPP and NDC when in government hence voters who vote based on Rational Choice Theory find it difficult to distinguish between the two political parties (Downs, 1957 and Fiorina, 2002).

A critical theoretical theme that emerged during the literature review of the 2004 election campaign was the multiple campaign slogans. The issue of multiple campaign slogans emerged during the 2004 general election campaign mainly from the NDC campaign. For example, the NDC campaign team launched another campaign message *‘Sankofa’* which translates into English as *‘Go*

back and fetch it'. Although the NDC wanted to convince the average Ghanaian voter that his or her economic life was better during their previous regime (ie between 1992 and 2000) and had been made worse by the NPP administration of between 2001 and 2004 (Daddieh, 2011). Unfortunately, this granted advantage to the NPP campaign team to launch rebuttal campaign messages that recalled most of the human rights violations and atrocities during the previous PNDC/NDC regime. It is believed that this caused a lot of disaffection for the NDC candidate since he was a Vice President during the reign of the NDC. It is therefore important for any communications practitioner to conduct indepth analysis to establish how campaign message will be viewed or perceived by the target audience before it is launched.

Another interesting theme that emerged according to extant literature is that the 2004 elections campaign presented the unique opportunity for the two leading competing parties who had served in government in the past to compare their records of accomplishments. This provided enough political content for those with responsibility of formulating campaign messages for both parties. It also offered the voter an opportunity to compare the true and actual performance of these two leading parties in government. Many scholars have found that voting behaviour is complex (Converse, 1944 and Adams and Agomor, 2015). In spite of this, Ghanaian voting behaviour can be explained by the Sociological theory and, or by the Psychosocial perspective or based on the Rational Choice assumption (Roth, 1998). It must be understood that whichever theoretical perspective that is used to explain the voting behaviour or pattern of the Ghanaian electorate cannot isolate the influence of campaign messages. These factors include economic, social and environmental variables that exert some amount of influence on the average Ghanaian in his or her choice of candidate in an election. On the other hand, however, formulation of the campaign message must be influenced by these factors that influence the voter's decision making. This will assist the campaign message to meet the expectations of the voter.

TABLE 3.6: RESULTS OF 2004 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS IN GHANA

POLITICAL PARTY	No. OF VOTES	PERCENTAGE GAINED (%)
New Patriotic Party	4,524,074	52.45
National Democratic Congress	3,850,368	44.64
People's National Convention	165,375	1.9
Convention People's Party	85,968	1.0
Invalid Votes	188,123	
Total	8,813,908	100
Registered Voters/Turnout	10,354,970	

Source: Electoral Commission of Ghana, 2004

Also, the 2008 Presidential election has been described by many as having some similarities with the 2000 election (Faanu & Graham, 2017 and Gyampo et al, 2017). These similarities include the transfer of power between an opposition party and an incumbent party which had not been common in Africa for many years. However, in the case of Ghana, the 2008 presidential election was the fifth consecutive election under the fourth republican dispensation. Another issue was the fact that former Vice President John Atta-Mills, who was the candidate of the NDC was contesting the presidential election for the third time but against a Foreign Affairs Minister, Nana Akufo-Addo who led the NPP to the 2008 elections (Arthur, 2009). Many observers believed that the 2008 presidential election was one of the most keenly contested elections in the country since independence. Although there were six other political parties who presented candidates at the polls, the race was clearly between the candidates of the NPP and NDC (Faanu & Graham, 2017).

The existing literature indicates that, for the first time in the political history of the country, a Danquah-Busia affiliated party, the NPP had had the benefit of governing the country for eight uninterrupted years (Agomor, 2019). It is believed that the party undertook some significant socioeconomic developments during this period and laid strong foundation in some sectors of the economy. In this regard, the party designed a campaign message that reflected these major achievements to showcase to the Ghanaian voter that it is the NPP that can develop the country better. The NDC on the other hand crafted a campaign message that indicated that the NPP had done

little in terms of the socioeconomic development for the country. The national campaign was therefore fought on ‘*Moving Ghana Forward*’ vs ‘*Building A Better Ghana*’ by the NPP and NDC, respectively.

The social media revolution which started somewhere in 2003 from the developed world was not popular in many developing countries, particularly in Africa. This phenomenon was due to many factors including low computer literacy, low internet penetration and high cost of internet data (Ndavula (2014). In contrast to the 2016 campaign, the messages of the two leading parties were largely disseminated to the voting population through the mass and traditional media. The NPP campaign message essentially sought to inform and persuade the Ghanaian voters to grant the party an opportunity to lead the development agenda of the country again to a higher level. The campaign message was therefore anchored on the party’s developmental achievements during her previous eight years of governance with a promise to make Ghana a modern country with all the requisite facilities and amenities of a twenty first century economy. The NDC on the other hand promised the Ghanaian voter what the party’s Communications Strategists described as the better Ghana, which will invest in people and the economy. With high media penetration particularly Radio, Television and Newspaper in Ghana then, marketing these campaign messages became relatively easy and more exciting. This added to the competitive nature of the 2008 Presidential elections. This research is therefore interested in understanding how such campaign messages were conceptualized and designed by the two political parties under reference.

TABLE 3.7: RESULTS OF 2008 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS IN GHANA

POLITICAL PARTY	FIRST ROUND		SECOND ROUND	
	No. OF VOTES	PERCENTAGE GAINED (%)	No. OF VOTES	PERCENTAGE GAINED (%)
National Democratic Congress	4,056,634	47.9	4,521,032	50.23
New Patriotic Party	4,159,439	49.13	4,480,446	49.77
Convention People's Party	113,494	1.34		

People's National Convention	73,494	0.87		
Democratic Freedom Party	27,889	0.33		
Independent	19,342	0.23		
Democratic People's Party	8,653	0.1		
Reformed Patriotic Democrats	6,889	0.08		
Invalid/Blank Votes	205,438		92,886	
Total	8,671,272	100	9,094,364	100
Registered Voters/Turnout	12,472,758	69.52	12,472,758	72.91

Source: Electoral Commission of Ghana, 2008

The 2012 general elections campaign was a unique one. In Ghana, elections are conducted in December every four years. Unfortunately, in July 2012, Ghana lost the sitting President, Prof. John Atta-Mills who was also the Presidential Candidate of the NDC for the December general election. Although the President had been visibly unwell for some time, he had campaigned for the Presidential elections after his party's primaries for about six months into the year. After his death in July 2012, the NDC selected the Vice President, John Mahama, who was the running mate to the late John Atta-Mills as their Presidential Candidate for the said election (Kelly and Bening, 2013). Therefore, the main candidates were Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo of the New Patriotic Party and John Dramani Mahama who was representing the ruling National Democratic Congress (NDC). There were five other flagbearers representing other political parties including Dr. Kwesi Nduom of the Progressive Peoples Party (PPP) and Dr. Abu Sakara for the Convention Peoples Party (CPP); and Jacob Osei Yeboah, a Business Executive contested as an Independent Presidential candidate. The death of the sitting president impacted on the campaign activities of all the candidates, however the campaign heated up some few weeks to the voting day (Ichino and Nathan, 2013 and Fridy, 2012).

The peaceful alternation of political power between the two leading political parties in Ghana in 2009 had cemented the country's multi-party democracy (Huntington, 1993). With this seeming democratic maturity, the nature of the campaign albeit for a short period focused on developmental issues (Bleck and Walle, 2013). It appeared that significant proportion of the voting population were

beginning to vote based on what Downs (1957), Key and Cummings (1966) and Fiorina (2002) referred to as Rational Choice Theory. Between 2007 and 2011 Ghana experienced relatively high economic growth boosted by the discovery of oil and gas in commercial quantities which the country started commercializing in 2010. This led to increased public sector spending which created job opportunities leading to expanded middle class. To reach this class of voters require sophisticated and persuasive campaign messages (Baek, 2009 and Strömback and Kiouisis, 2014). The two leading parties therefore had no choice but to focus more attention of their campaign message on key economic and social issues that were important to the average voter.

The NPP campaign message was *'Transforming Lives, Transforming Ghana'* while the NDC campaigned on *'Advancing the Better Ghana Agenda'*. Since the NDC was seeking re-election for its second term, its communication strategy focused on consolidating the achievements chalked so far. But the NPP was campaigning on a change agenda hence marketed a campaign slogan *'Change Now! Move Ghana Forward'*. The party formulated a campaign message that sought to convince the voter that their economic lives have not changed for the better as claimed by the NDC Government hence they should vote for the NPP which has developed programmes and policies that could transform their lives from poverty to prosperity. On the other hand, the NDC campaign slogan was culled from a popular commercial advert of a telecommunication company operating in Ghana. The slogan *'Edey bee k3k3'* was entertaining and became immensely popular particularly among the youthful voters. The slogan simply means *'it is very well'* in English. Since Ghana has a youthful population, this slogan helped NDC campaign and eventually the NDC won the elections.

A campaign with an attractive slogan attracts popularity for the candidate and the party (Strömback and Kiouisis, 2014) but does not necessarily translate into votes. This means a candidate seeking electoral victory needs to translate their popularity into votes. Additionally, in many jurisdictions, both social and economic factors affect voter's choice (Devries et al, 2011 and Vicente, 2014). Kelly and Bening (2013) identified five key variables that were relevant in the 2012 election. These variables are a *northern president; the death of President Mills; the Yaa Naa affair; other*

traditional rivalries; economic matters; and the Rawlings factor. It is assumed that these factors influenced the campaign messages of both NPP and NDC in the 2012 presidential election. Whether these parties undertook painstaking analysis of the factors above when formulating their campaign messages cannot be answered by this researcher. It is however important to state that any campaign message design that does not undertake indepth analysis of current situational and environmental factors is liable to miss the opportunity of formulating a campaign message that is likely to achieve its overarching objective of electoral victory (Brady, Johnson and Sides, 2006 and Baek, 2009).

TABLE 3.8: RESULTS OF 2012 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS IN GHANA

POLITICAL PARTY	No. OF VOTES	PERCENTAGE GAINED (%)
National Democratic Congress	5,574,761	50.7
New Patriotic Party	5,248,898	47.74
Progressive People's Party	64,362	0.59
Great Consolidated Popular Party	38,223	0.35
People's National Convention	24,617	0.22
Convention People's Party	20,323	0.18
Independent	15,201	0.14
United Front Party	8,877	0.08
Invalid/Blank Votes	251,720	
Total	11,246,982	100
Registered Voters/Turnout	14,158,890	79.43

Source: Electoral Commission of Ghana, 2012

The peaceful and orderly nature of the 2016 general election further consolidated Ghana's matured democracy. The election led to another transfer of political power from the incumbent NDC to the opposition NPP and became the third successive alternation of power under the fourth republican constitution (Gyampo et al, 2017 and Agomor, 2019). This election has been selected as the case study election for this research work for a number of reasons including the fact that it is the most recent presidential election hence many of the key actors are available for primary data

collection. Secondly, the contrasting campaign messages used by the two leading parties lend themselves to theoretical analysis at the doctoral level. Thirdly, it was the first time in the history of the country that a sitting President seeking reelection was defeated by an opposition presidential candidate (Gyampo et al, 2017). Lastly, some researchers have identified many factors that influence voter behaviour in elections in Ghana, and prominent among these factors is campaign message (Gyampo et al, 2017; Anebo, 2001; Roth, 1998; and Brady, Johnson, and Sides, 2006).

Moreover, in a paper on the outcome of the 2016 general elections, Gyampo et al (2017) argued that the monumental defeat of the NDC was partly due to “a more appealing campaign message of hope from the main opposition party and poor branding and communication of NDC’s campaign promises and ideas” (Gyampo et al, 2017, page 24). This means that marketing, in terms of campaign message design and dissemination (Marketing Communication) as well as Branding have become imperative for a successful political campaign in Africa (Brady, Johnson and Sides, 2006). This research study has therefore selected the campaign messages that were formulated by the NPP and NDC for their 2016 elections campaign for this theoretical analysis.

The incumbent NDC and the opposition NPP obviously formulated contrasting campaign messages since the NDC was seeking re-election for a third continuous term while the NPP was making attempt to return to power after losing the 2008 general elections. The NDC’s campaign message was anchored on a continuity theme. The party clearly designed a communications strategy to convince the Ghanaian voter for a mandate renewal in order to keep implementing what the party claims to be good programmes and policies aimed at improving the economic well-being of Ghanaians. The party therefore rolled out ‘*Forward Ever, Backwards Never*’ campaign message with ‘*JM Toaso*’ (which is translated into English as ‘*JM Continue*’) as its slogan. JM is the ‘nickname’ or the short form of the NDC’s Presidential Candidate, John Mahama.

Alternatively, the opposition NPP campaign aimed at bringing the party back into government formulated ‘*Ghana Must Work Again*’ campaign message with ‘*Arise for Change*’ as the campaign slogan.

These contradictory campaign messages of the two political parties were formulated within the context described earlier. Therefore, this research project is interested in determining how these two different campaign messages were formulated. It will also examine the framing strategies used, as well as analyse the themes underlying the campaign messages of the two leading Presidential candidates. Despite the important role campaign message plays in voter's decision making in Ghana, attention of scholars have narrowly focused on general factors that led to the defeat of the Presidential Candidate of NDC in the 2016 elections (Gyampo et al, 2017). Others have also studied voting behaviour in general in previous elections (Anebo, 2001; Lindberg and Morison, 2008; Kelly and Bening, 2013; Alidu, 2014; and Adams and Agomor, 2015). Some attempt has also been made by other scholars including Boafo-Arthur (2003) and Gyampo & Asare (2015), but their studies were limited to the role of the media, civil society and state institutions in Ghana's democracy. Furthermore, Ayee (2016) conducted an analytical studies of campaign manifestos of leading political parties in Ghana, but the analysis was limited to the manifesto themes and did not relate to campaign message formulation or design. The attempt by Hinson and Tweneboah (2010) was also focused on political marketing strategies which was a general analysis of how the two leading political parties in Ghana, namely NPP and NDC used political marketing strategies in their 2008 campaign. This research is different in many ways particularly the study is focused on political campaign message design for the 2016 presidential election in Ghana using data generated from primary participants of the two leading political parties, the NPP and NDC and their roles in the campaign.

As will be shown in Chapters Four and Five, the research will adopt qualitative methodology with in-depth interview using semi structured questionnaire (Collis and Hussey, 2013). A purposive sampling technique will be applied to select key informants and respondents who played significant roles in the 2016 campaign of the two respective political parties (Saunders et al, 2016).

TABLE 3.9: RESULTS OF 2016 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS IN GHANA

POLITICAL PARTY	No. OF VOTES	PERCENTAGE GAINED (%)
New Patriotic Party	5,755,758	53.72
National Democratic Congress	4,771,188	44.53
Progressive People's Party	106,092	0.99
Convention People's Party	25,552	0.24
People's National Convention	22,214	0.21
National Democratic Party	16,935	0.16
Independent	15,911	0.15
Invalid/Blank Votes	167,349	
Total	10,881,083	100
Registered Voters/Turnout	15,712,499	69.25

Source: Electoral Commission of Ghana, 2016

3.2.5 Taxonomy of Major Campaign Message Issues and Drivers

As noted by some scholars, every campaign, whether designed and executed by a commercial enterprise who seeks to maximize profit or not for profit making institutions, organizations and bodies such as health, and environmental organizations and government agencies pursuing a particular course of action including reducing smoking among teenagers, climate change or fighting pandemic, rely heavily on campaign message (Wilson, Purdon, and Wallston, 1988; Gyampo et al, 2017; Brader, 2006; and Brady, Johnston & Sides, 2006). The objectives of these campaigns cannot be conveyed or communicated to the target audience if there is no content or message.

In this regard, every campaign develops a campaign message that carries the content that the promoter of the campaign seeks to disseminate to the target audience. Available literature indicates that, political communications campaigns rely on themes that drive the concept and content design of the campaign message (Butler and Collins, 1999; and Bernhard, 2012). For example, the hugely successful ‘Obama for President 2008’ campaign in United States of America relied heavily on the ‘HOPE’ theme. Some campaigns in other countries or political environments have relied on some

of the following campaign messaging themes, *Prosperity, Equality, Deprivation, Marginalization, Freedom, Poverty, Human Rights, Violence, Protection, Inequality, Corruption, Salvation, Development, and Oppression*. In order to effectively mapped out and adopt a campaign theme that will underline the campaign message, it is important for political communications strategists to first identify the major issues driving political and social debate, discourse, and political conversations in that political environment. As earlier indicated, this can be done through the application of research and market insights (Kotler et al, 2009).

A review of the political communications and campaign messages literature since the first republican dispensation in Ghana outlined some of the following issues as the key factors influencing voters decision making hence relevant for political campaign message design, *independence, freedom, colonialism, racial segregation, war, human rights abuse, corruption, religion, chieftaincy, land insecurity and security, ethnicity, unemployment, petroleum prices, roads, hospitals, school buildings, inflation, cost of school fees, cost of health, interest rates, public sector debt, and sanitation* (Bourett, 1959; Boafo-Arthur, 2003; Adams and Agomor, 2015; Ayee, 2016; and Gyampo et al, 2017). These were the main issues driving political discourse and could be identified as issues influencing the decisions of voters between 1950 and 2000. It must be established that, in addition to the above issues, other factors that could arguably be stated as irrelevant to the politics and social cohesion in Ghana, and indeed most African countries emerged in the twenty first century. These issues include same-sex marriage or same-sex relationships in general, climate change, fair trade, immigration, discrimination, and sustainability. Recently however, these factors have become more relevant to many voters in Ghana mainly as a result of globalization, internet penetration and technological advancement (Adams and Agomor, 2015; Ayee, 2016; and Gyampo et al, 2017). The relevance of these issues has led to their adoption into many of the political parties' manifestos in recent elections in Ghana.

The taxonomy of these critical issues that are of interest to the target audience therefore becomes an important strategic input for political communications specialists to consider when

developing their campaign messages since voters' decision making are largely influenced by some of these factors. As noted by McBrown (1953), Bourett (1959) and supported by Birmingham (1998) majority of voters who participated in the pre independence elections as well as the immediate post-independence elections in Ghana were influenced by different issues and factors. The voters who participated in those elections were more interested in issues in relation to colonial rule, freedom, racial discrimination especially on their own land, war, land ownership and chieftaincy.

It must be noted that the level of education, infrastructural development, technology, and exposure to international issues were extremely limited during the period (Kimble, 1963; and Saaka, 1994). Voters were therefore limited to considering a few and mostly local issues in their decision making (Ayee, 2016; and Gyampo et al, 2017). For example, due to technological advancement, global connectivity and high internet penetration, the campaign by '*Black Lives Matter*' Movement which started by some American activists in the United States of America in May 2020, gained global prominence and spread across all major cities of the world including Sydney in Australia, London in United Kingdom, Cape Town in South Africa, Osaka in Japan, Hong Kong, China, and Tunis in Tunisia. The factors enumerated above have become catalysts to spreading attractive political campaign messages which essentially thrive on the content of the campaign message designed by the communications specialist who considers the issues relevant to the target audience at the time.

This research thesis is arguing that, an appropriate mechanism or framework is required by political marketing practitioners when designing a political campaign message. Such a conceptual framework will be relevant in mapping out and selecting the critical issues that are relevant to the majority of voters. the conceptual framework will also help to classify the issues into proper categories and layers of importance since some of the issues may be more important and critical compared to others. As it has been established by some leading scholars in the area of political marketing and marketing communications, some key issues which have been broadly defined such as education, race, religion, and income level are constant factors that should be considered when

designing political campaign message (Chong & Druckman, 2007; Brady, Johnston & Sides, 2006; and Entman, 1993). Therefore, when applying a theoretical framework to build a taxonomy of issues relevant to a campaign, communications specialists are advised not to overlook certain generic variables as the ones outlined above.

Some scholars argue that, although multiple factors do influence voters decision making and therefore agree that generic issues must be considered when designing a political communications campaign message. They however contend that, voters are increasingly becoming fixated with few issues that are personal to their livelihood and survival rather than issues that are more communal in nature (Gyampo et al, 2017 and Aryee, 2016). In essence, voters are becoming more individualistic and are tilting more towards immediate issues critical to their survival and welfare. Voters with such orientation are likely to offer opportunity to political parties and candidates who are bold enough to design campaign messages that touch on specific individual issues such as abortion rights, climate change, same sex relationship, high wages, and less taxes.

The adoption of this individualistic and self-centered approach in campaign message design might have accounted for the successes in recent elections in United States of America and United Kingdom by candidates who disseminated such extreme self-centered messages. These candidates campaigned against issues which could be described in general as more strategic and beneficial to the greater and collective good of the whole country and indeed the whole world. These campaign messages include the campaign against climate change and Brexit by Donald Trump of US and Boris Johnson of UK respectively. According to the extant literature, candidate Donald Trump campaigned strongly against certain important issues that *'normal'* politician seeking high political office such as the President of the United States will avoid. According to a BBC report, *What does Trump actually believe on climate change? - BBC News*, the then President clearly indicated his opposition to the general scientific assertions on climate change. Trump asserts that climate change is “mythical, nonexistent, or an expensive hoax”. Indeed, during a global event organized by the World Economic Forum in Switzerland, the then President reaffirmed this position and discounted

the scientific analysis conducted by respected scientists. This view gained popularity because most conservative Americans believe that climate change is being used to reduce their economic productivity levels particularly in the areas of oil and gas and manufacturing, eventually affecting ability of firms and enterprises to operate at optimal capacity. The implications on employment, income and consumption eventually affect the individual right to more wealth and life choices.

On the other hand, is the campaign message designed and used against the United Kingdom's membership of the European Union (EU) led by Boris Johnson in 2019. The Eurosceptics side within the Conservative Party of Great Britain designed campaign message that clearly indicated that, Britain remaining in the European Union will mean more immigrants coming from relatively poor Eastern European countries who are members of the EU to live and work in United Kingdom at the detriment of British nationals. Such a negative campaign message which defies ethical and moral standards and do not promote inclusion has gained popularity in the politics of twenty first century because many more voters have become selfish. The outcomes of these two elections in these two different democratic dispensations clearly indicate that the voters are becoming more self-centered and are more concerned about issues that promote their personal welfare. It further means that they are influence to a large extent by factors that affect their individual lives hence it must inform how the issues are identified and selected when designing a campaign message. An effective way to undertake this exercise is to consider the taxonomy or classification of all issues that have the tendency to influence voters decision making (Kotler and Roberto, 1989; and Lees-Marshment, 2001).

The challenge of classifying these issues into ones that are more relevant and ones that are relevant but do not carry significant weight on the decision making of a significant proportion of voters can be addressed by the use of research and data analytics. It is advised therefore that political communications specialists do not predetermine the factors that are very relevant and assume a certain taxonomy for them but rather undertake objective exercise to determine these issues. It is interesting that, an issue such as the refusal by the President of Ghana to remove or dismiss a cabinet

minister who had abandoned her job for some time and was living in the United States is relevant factor that citizens who participated in a research exercise identified when a research was conducted to determine the popularity of the President in the said period (*Adwoa Safo's absence in Parliament is affecting government business - John Boadu admits - MyJoyOnline.com*).

Subjectively, any political communications consultant will assume that since the President had earlier delegated another senior minister in the same cabinet to take charge of that portfolio, this issue will not be considered as a relevant issue when voters are taking decision. Indeed, it may wrongly be assumed that just one cabinet minister abandoning her role should not be an issue especially when another minister is acting but many voters considered it as relevant when deciding on the popularity of the President of Ghana (*Adwoa Safo's absence in Parliament is affecting government business - John Boadu admits - MyJoyOnline.com*). How such an issue which without the use of research or data analytics may be considered as irrelevant can affect the outcome of an election indicates that when designing a political campaign message, communications specialists must undertake rigorous and objective analysis of the political environment to understand the psychology of the target voters.

In determining how to categorize these issues into different taxonomy or groups, it is believed that the prevailing political environment do play a role in establishing the weight voters place on each of the issues identified. For example, during the pre-independence era in Africa, most voters were concerned about their individual freedom as well as the collective freedom of their countries from their colonial masters (McBrown, 1953; Saaka, 1994; and Boafo-Arthur, 2003). This was important because the colonial masters had come from their respective countries including Britain, Germany, Belgium, Portugal, and Spain and were amassing the natural resource endowments as well as enslaving the productive members of African population (Bourett, 1959). The struggle therefore was first to achieve freedom, but personal freedom was the ultimate for most if not all citizens. In this regard, any political party seeking the votes or the support of the majority of the voters then needed to design campaign message that appeals to their expectation of freedom

from enslavement. In the same vein however, voters in the current dispensation are more preoccupied and concerned with issues to do with consumerism and individual freedom to choose from the abundant goods and services. Interestingly, the personal freedom that is expected by the current voter population has nothing to do with freedom of movement, freedom of association, freedom to own property but unlike those voters in pre-independence era, the expected freedom is the free will to have access to numerous contemporary consumables, hence economic freedom.

A juxtaposition of these two remarkably different issues but almost the same narrative, shows that circumstance or the political environment plays a significant role in determining the relevant issues that affect voters decision making (Gyampo et al, 2017). Indeed, in all African countries, a political campaign message that preaches freedom from slavery targets no voter because all countries in Africa have achieved their political independence. However, where a political communications specialist intends to design message on freedom, the target should be that the political party or the candidate seeking their vote will develop the country such that voters will have access to variety of economic choices or prosperity. Therefore, such issues that may be worth considering include skills development and job creation which will empower the voters economically to make their own live choices. Voters will therefore be attracted by a campaign message that positions the candidate as the one that has the competency and capacity to provide the solution of economic empowerment and freedom.

On the other hand, a review of the literature indicates that, other post-independence democratic elections conducted in Ghana, specifically between the first and the fourth republican dispensations had similar issues driving the design of the campaign communications and messages (Boafo-Arthur, 2003). In the immediate post Kwame Nkrumah era election of 1969, the lead campaign issues used by the political parties who took part in the election included political freedom, media freedom, freedom of association, chieftaincy issues, and corruption. There is abundant literature in Ghana's political history that indicates that, under both the immediate post-independence government and the first government under the first republic, access to freedom was

significantly curtailed by the government of Kwame Nkrumah (Austin, 1964; Awoonor, 1990; Oquaye, 1991; Jeffries, 1996; and Fobih, 2010). There were reports of rampant arrests of political opponents and critics that led to many Ghanaians seeking political asylum in United States of America, Europe, and other friendly African countries (Saaka, 1994; Awonoor, 1991; and Otoo, 2006).

Such political oppression similar to what many Ghanaian advocates and activists for Ghana's independence suffered under the colonial masters were apparent under their own black man leadership. The leadership of the security services including the Ghana Armed Forces and the Ghana Police Force in 1966 staged a coup d'état to remove the then President of the first republic Dr. Kwame Nkrumah using reasons such as economic hardships and human rights abuse (Austin, 1964; Awoonor, 1990; Oquaye, 1991; and Fobih, 2010). It became important for the political parties that took part in the elections after the fall of the regime of President Kwame Nkrumah in 1969 to design campaign messages that offered assurance to the citizens that the new government will grant them ample freedom and respect their rights as free citizens (Jeffries, 1996).

Similarly, during the other ensuing elections particularly the third democratic elections that gave birth to the third republic, the country was emerging from another prolonged military rule which had been characterized by economic mismanagement, human right violations and corruption (Awoonor, 1990; Oquaye, 1991; Boafo-Arthur, 2003; and Fobih, 2010). The country experienced two military take overs within a span of ten years yet the economic situation in the country was deteriorating while as individual freedoms were curtailed. This led to some political agitations that pushed the military rulers to accept a transition into a civilian democratic regime. The formation and emergence of political parties in the late 1970s brought back political activism similar to those witnessed during the pre-independence and immediate post-independence eras (Jeffries, 1980; and Nohlen & Bernhard, 1999).

A review of the literature established that, political communications played significant role during the political agitations that led to the removal of the two military regimes. The demonstrations

relied heavily on campaign messages that attracted a lot of citizens particularly the youth, students, professional bodies, and organized labour. As indicated earlier, the central factors that drove these agitations and demonstrations were economic hardships, corruption, and human rights violations. In this regard, the political campaign messaging was anchored on these factors which were very attractive to the target audience hence it helped the organizers of these political activities to mobilize more people in support of the agitations. It was therefore clear that during the 1979 presidential and parliamentary elections, all the three leading political parties, namely People's National Party (PNP), Popular Front Party (PFP) and United National Convention (UNC) had their campaign messages drafted to provide solutions to the crisis occasioned by the economic mismanagement by the military leaders as well as define measures to prevent human rights violations (Jeffries, 1980; Awoonor, 1990; Saaka, 1994; Jeffries, 1996; Nohlen & Bernhard, 1999; Boafo-Arthur, 2003; Oquaye, 2004; Otoo, 2006; and Ayee, 2016). In fact, it is clear in the existent literature that, there was very little or no campaign message distinction between the leading political parties who were competing in the 1979 elections.

In conclusion, voters, and the political communications specialists in the pre-independence era and the current 21st century dispensation are all aiming at maximizing their freedom, however, their actual expectations must be defined and categorized appropriately using the right taxonomy. This is because, while as many voters in the first, second and third republican dispensations were mainly concerned with political and economic freedom, voters in the fourth republican dispensation are more preoccupied with economic freedom that grants them unfettered access to variety of choices (Gyampo et al, 2017).

3.2.6 Taxonomy of Key Campaign Themes

Ghana is seen as practising a multiparty democracy characterized by keen competition mainly between two political parties, namely the NPP and NDC (Adams and Agomor, 2015). Using the successful elections of both political parties at the polls especially in 2000, 2008 and 2016 as a

yardstick, one can assume that the voter behaviour of most Ghanaian voters can be analysed using the rational choice theory (Downs, 1957 as cited in Gyampo et al, 2017). Thus, the Ghanaian voter is influenced largely by economic factors which access to information plays a critical role. The information to be used to pursue these voters must therefore be crafted in a form of a campaign message in order to make it easy to disseminate as well as be comprehensible by voters. In designing such a campaign message, it is believed that an overarching theme must be identified to drive the campaign message design. The most common themes used in designing political campaigns include *Hope, Fear, Change, and Continuity*. Even in the era where democracy across the world had not advanced and many countries, territories and societies were being ruled by families or monarchs, political campaigns were largely driven by messaging anchored on specific themes. Selecting the right campaign theme for a political campaign message provides clarity and understanding. Popular political campaigns such as the campaign that brought John F. Kennedy to the White House in the early 1960s thrived on optimism and hope with a catch '*a new generation American*'. This campaign offered the American voters' excessive optimism about their future and entrusted in them a sense of self belief hence designing campaign message in such a context becomes clear and easier. Everything about *JFK* campaign was about hope, a brighter future for Americans and how great America will become.

In the then pre-independence Gold Coast (now Ghana), the theme for the victorious President Kwame Nkrumah's campaign was also hope and self-belief as captured in the slogan '*Self Government Now!*' which was aimed at achieving freedom from the colonial masters without any further delay (Bourett, 1959; and Saaka, 1994). In essence, the campaign messages employed by the Nkrumah campaign as against the campaign of the Danquah group sought to achieve the same objective of independence, but the two campaigns adopted different campaign messaging approaches. While Nkrumah campaigned for self-government now Danquah's group sold a message of gradual cessation from colonial rule (Bourett, 1959; Saaka, 1994; and Otoo, 2006). The hope theme drove Nkrumah's campaign better than Danquah's message which lacked the needed optimism and

charisma. In this case, the political campaign theme was the same for the two leading political parties since they were all campaigning for a change, but one offered clarity and a better sense of purpose than the other. Theoretically, these dynamics are very important for researchers, scholars, and practitioners because there is the need to understand the strategic orientations of political candidates seeking elections in order to be able to appropriately define how the campaign message is framed.

The above clearly depicts that, in the literature of Ghanaian political campaign communications, there have been instances where the opposing political parties, have campaigned on the same campaign theme and, or the same campaign message but using different campaign slogans (Bourett, 1959; Jeffries, 1980; Awoonor, 1990; Saaka, 1994; Jeffries, 1996; Nohlen & Bernhard, 1999; Boafo-Arthur, 2003; Oquaye, 2004; Otoo, 2006; Ayee, 2016; and Gyampo et al, 2017). This is quite apparent in many transitional democracies where there is a thin line between the political and socioeconomic orientations of the political parties as well as the voters themselves, such countries include Ghana. It must be noted that, unlike the advanced democracies such as in the UK and US where political parties and voters themselves have divided orientations usually based on philosophies such as conservatism, social democracy and, or liberal democracy, transitional democratic countries have little or no differences in terms of their political and socioeconomic beliefs. In effect, in transitional democracies campaign messages by political parties are always not clearly distinct as a result of the little or no differences their philosophical orientation. In other words, both the candidates seeking the political power and the voters share similar beliefs and norms about topical issues such as the structure of governance, corruption, taxes, abortion, climate change, marriage, and same-sex relationship, among others.

In the United Kingdom for example, the dynamic political campaign that gave Rt. Hon. Tony Blair (a former Prime Minister of Great Britain) a landslide electoral victory in 1997 general election was anchored on hope which led to the redefinition of the Labour Party, as '*the new Labour Party*' (*The Guardian view on the 1997 Labour landslide: not what it seemed | Editorial | The Guardian*). Similar to the campaigns of Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana (also a former President of Ghana) in 1956

and that of John F. Kennedy of United States in 1960, hope and optimism were the hallmarks of their campaign messages (Saaka, 1999; and Otoo, 2006). According to the available literature, these campaigns emerged with the hope messaging theme at a time in their respective countries or democracies, when the voters who were the target audience had lost hope in the political class and had become despondent. In this regard, filling such gaps with a communications strategy that offers hope for the future becomes the most attractive way to win majority of the votes in any competitive elections (Ayee, 2016; Adams and Agomor, 2016; Kotler et al, 2009; and Baines, Harris, and Lewis, 2002). A critical point that must be examined properly by campaign managers or communications specialists is that, by the use of the hope theme to underscore the campaign message, politicians normally go out of their way and make promises that become difficult and challenging to fulfil when granted the political power (Gyampo et al, 2017; and Ayee, 2016). Such cases of the inability of politicians to fulfil such campaign promises is very evident in many democracies in Africa including Ghana. This creates the recycling of political parties in many jurisdictions.

Another example which is most recent is the 2008 campaign that made Senator Barack Obama the 44th President of United States of America and indeed, the first African American to be President of United States after some two hundred years of democracy, was anchored on hope, with the catchy slogan '*Yes We Can*'. It is believed that the Obama campaign team identified that the level of hopelessness among a significant majority of the voting population in America particularly among the youth and first time voters was enough to win an election in 2008. It will be recalled that, the George W. Bush presidency was ending at a time when the global economy was faced with severe financial crisis occasioned by greed, unfairness, and corporate corruption (Duffie, 2019). This led to significant job losses in American, United Kingdom and many European Union member countries as well as other institutions and private companies located in Africa and Asia whose operations depended on the financial institutions of advanced countries (Janis and Cheryl, 2020). The Obama campaign therefore seized this opportunity and crafted a simple campaign message anchored on hope and a promise of a brighter future where everybody will have a share. The

campaign theme of hope became popular globally and many campaigns outside the United States such as the one in Ghana in 2008 by the National Democratic Congress (NDC) candidate adopted the hope theme. The NDC party and the presidential candidate campaigned strongly on a slogan '*Better Ghana*' which essentially promised to deliver Ghanaians from the then economic hardship caused by the global economic crisis (Ayee, 2016).

These campaigns all achieved their victories by taking advantage of the despondency of the voters and offered them hope for a better future. In designing campaign message which is anchored on hope in effect will mean that there should be an inherent or underlying message content that signal to the voters that, failure to accept the proposals being offered on the platform of hope, will lead to a gloomy future for themselves and their families.

In practice therefore, the mirror opposite of the campaign theme '*Hope*' is the '*Fear*' campaign theme. Fear as a political communications weapon has been used in many campaigns, both political election purpose driven campaigns and non-election campaigns such as the ones in public health communications, environmental campaigns, and population control measures campaigns (Jacobson, 2015; Wattenberg and Craig, 1999; Wilson, Purdon and Wallston, 1988; and Reid, 1988). The strength of fear as a campaign theme when apply in election driven political campaigns relative to hope campaign theme has not been studied empirically. However, anecdotal evidence suggests that hope appears to be more attractive to voters when they are given the opportunity to make a choice.

Moreover, in non-election campaigns such as the ones enumerated above, the fear theme appears more effective and has significant chance of success. For example, the application of fear as the campaign theme at the peak of the fight against the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) infection and Acquired Immuno Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) global pandemic as well as the recent Corona Virus (COVID-19) pandemic worked quite effectively (Wilson, Purdon and Wallston, 1988). There are similar examples in the health communications literature where communications

campaign strategy is formulated based on the fear theme. In addition, in promotional campaigns in support of climate change, campaigners have applied the fear campaign theme to propagate that human existence rests on the survival of the environment. Slogans such as *'when the last tree dies, the last man dies'*; *'Save the Earth, Save Yourselves'*; *'Wipe out pollution before it wipes you out'*; *'Conserve what our children deserve'*; and *'Love to breathe, save the trees'* have all been designed to inculcate fear into the target audience. It is therefore clear that the appropriateness of the use of a political campaign theme must be accurately measured by the communications specialists when designing campaign messages.

Another campaign theme that has gained significant application by political marketing practitioners and campaign communications specialists in designing political campaign message is *'Change'*. Unlike the *'fear'* campaign theme, the suitability and application of the *'change'* theme is popular in political campaigns where opposition candidates seek to win control of a political office. In many cases, the change theme is predominantly applied by opposition candidates or parties that are seeking to overthrow the incumbent party. Such campaign messages seem to offer alternative solutions to the policies and programmes being implemented by the incumbent candidates or parties.

The change theme is popular in Ghana's fourth republic dispensation and interestingly, appears to be used alternatively by both the two leading political parties namely NPP and NDC. Since 1992, when Ghana conducted its first democratic election under the current political dispensation, the opposition political parties have all pushed the change campaign theme at different times (Gyampo et al, 2017; and Ayee, 2016). The NPP used it significantly to its advantage during the 2000 general elections and won, while as the NDC in 2008 general elections campaigned on a change theme and became victorious. The reoccurrence use of the change theme offers scholars an interesting research area to conduct in depth studies especially when the use of the change theme under the fourth republic has worked successfully for the two leading political parties. Any further academic studies to be conducted in this areas must also consider the changes in governments under

the fourth republic in Ghana, which has so far alternated between these two political parties and why other political parties are unable to break through (Yobo and Gyampo, 2015).

The last campaign theme according to the existing literature is '*Continuity*'. Governance experts have advocated for a system of governance that ensures that there is continuity in governance in an event of a catastrophe (Oquaye, 1991; Ninsin, 1993; and Gyimah-Boadi, 2001). Citizens stand to enjoy many benefits when a country's political system has instituted a robust system of continuity in governance. Such a system prevents breakdown of law and order as well as continuous delivery of essential government services particularly to the vulnerable and the poor in society. This laudable phenomenon, which aims to ensure that critical operations and essential services are provided for the citizenry are done uninterrupted, is sometime hijacked by a section of the political class to perpetuate their stay in political office. They use this in many ways including propagating that a change in government will have negative consequences on the living conditions of the voters thereby instilling fear in the voters to persuade them for their votes.

In political campaign message design however, voters are assumed to maximize their welfare hence any message that is crafted to propagate that a continue stay in office by a particular political party or group of individuals will benefit the voters is likely to gain popular support. In the contrary however, evidence from the literature indicates that, many governments in Africa have performed abysmally in terms of improving the wellbeing and welfare of their citizens (Aryeetey & Kanbur, 2017; Ayee, 2016; and Adams and Agomor, 2015). In view of the assumption that voters seek to maximize their welfare, the continuity campaign theme has therefore been quite unpopular in some jurisdictions particularly in countries in transitional democracies such as Ghana. Due to what can be termed as underperformance by incumbent political parties and candidates serving in government during the time of the election, the campaign to continue to stay in office for a renewed term has somehow been difficult (Gyampo et al, 2017; Ayee, 2016; and Adams and Agomor, 2015). The failure by the incumbent political parties (that is political parties in government) or candidates representing them to fulfil their campaign promises partly accounts for this phenomenon. In some

cases, the candidate representing the incumbent political party may be different from the incumbent serving Head of State or Leader of the government who is about to complete his or her term in office as it happened in Ghana in both 2000 and 2008 general elections. In such situations, the new candidate representing the incumbent political party may suffer collateral damage or gain benefits, or both.

Another factor worth considering is regime fatigue where voters and citizens in general cultivate a feeling of disaffection for the incumbent regime due to the fact of staying in power for a considerable number of years. As indicated by Gyampo et al (2017) in *Ghana's 2016 General Election: Accounting for the Monumental Defeat of the National Democratic Congress (NDC)*, “the acme factor that accounted for the NDC’s defeat in the 2016 polls is regime fatigue. After being in government for eight years, Ghanaians were simply tired of the NDC and wanted a change. Indeed, the history of elections in Ghana since 1992 is a history of a two-term regime cycle of change. This has been consistently demonstrated since the inception of the Fourth Republic in 1992”. The above assertion should portray to any communications specialist designing campaign message for a political party seeking reelection and hence campaigning on the continuity theme that the voter must be offered a message that can persuade them that the new regime will do things differently. In order to mitigate the adverse effects of regime fatigue, other major factors such as the candidate which also plays a significant role in voters decision making must be considered carefully. For example, it may be prudent for the incumbent party to consider a new candidate who can bring some freshness to the campaign message which is being anchored on the continuity theme. Inability to select a new candidate who brings on board some freshness may negatively affect the chances of winning the election.

It must be stated that, the continuity campaign theme has benefited some political parties or candidates especially those in some Asian countries including Singapore, Japan, South Korea, and Malaysia. However, when designing a political campaign message using the continuity theme for a political party in Africa, the application of the theme must be carefully analysed due to the intensity

of the competition in a multi-party democracy. Learning from the rational choice assumption as described by Downs (1957), where voters decisions are made based on economic choice and not based on social factors and, or political party affiliation, continuity campaign theme can succeed when the incumbent party has discharged its previous campaign promises adequately. In effect, political marketing practitioners must carefully analyze the political environment when selecting the type of campaign theme to apply for their campaigns.

3.3 Campaign Message and Voter Turnout in Ghana

In every multi-party democracy, the exercise of voting is at the center of or critical to the foundation of the said democracy (Baek, 2009). It must be noted that the right to vote is granted only to those citizens who register with the Electoral Commission of Ghana at their preferred Polling Station. After the registration, the right is then granted to citizens to elect or select their political leaders through the act of voting, and these leaders are only granted the authority to exercise their political power to govern which involves the right to allocate resources to enhance the welfare of these voters. In commercial or traditional marketing, the act of casting a ballot or voting in an election cement the transaction between the voter and the candidate (the aspirant) since the actual exchange takes place when the voter trusts the candidate aspiring for a political office by voting for him or her as against the other candidates.

In effect, a voter who votes for a particular candidate does so with the belief that the candidate will allocate resources better to for example boost access to public goods such as electricity, water, roads, cheap credit, healthcare services, and education (Aldrich, 1993). The utility derives by a voter can therefore be measured in the same way the utility derives by a buyer of a detergent from a manufacturing company is measured. These two customers (ie the voter and detergent consumers) seek to maximize their welfare and it is therefore believed that they will make rational decisions.

In this regard, the application of marketing principles in generally, the 4Ps (namely Product, Price, Promotion and Place) can be effective in political marketing in a developing economy like Ghana, where there is the ecosystem to support the deployment of new marketing tools. In effect therefore, if marketing practitioners employ these marketing mix (marketing elements) to achieve high profit, in the same vein, a political party which is deemed to be successful when the party is able to win relatively more votes in elections must consider using these marketing tools to its advantage (Kotler et al, 2009). Moreover, one of the desire outcomes in a democracy is high participation in the electoral process which the act of voting is an important yardstick or benchmark (Kuenzi & Lambright, 2007). In other words, a higher voter participation can be used to define how successful the democratic system is. Those authors who assert that a higher voter turnout is an important indicator of a successful democracy believes that the more ordinary citizens participate in the voting process, it shows that a high proportion of the citizens do not only believe in the democratic process of governance but also trust that it is the best system of governance compared to the other system of governance such as military rule. Such countries are able to leverage this accolade to attract many collateral benefits such as Foreign Direct Investments (FDI), high skilled labour (both local and foreign), tourists, high investor confidence, among others.

Many factors drive voter turnout in many jurisdictions, these include the candidates and their campaign messages on one side (internal factors) and other factors which are considered to be external to the campaign such as education, age, income, gender of the voters; and the cost of voting on the other side, all influence the number of people who participate in election (Anaman, 2016; and Goldstein and Freedman, 2002). Many researchers have concluded that the level of education among citizens and its closely associated factors income level, class and occupation of citizens are more likely to significantly influence a citizen's decision to participate in the voting process compared to the other factors identified above (Anaman & Bukari, 2020; Baek, 2009; Kuenzi & Lambright, 2007; and Aldrich, 1993).

In addition to the above, Baek (2009) in a comparative analysis of political communication systems and voter turnout using seventy four (74) countries, discovered that easy access to campaign communication materials or “electioneering communication” will lead to high voter turnout. In effect, aided campaign message recall is beneficial to the political party that employs it effectively to attract majority of their support base to vote during the voting day. This phenomenon which is described in the political literature of United States of America as ‘Get Out The Vote’ (GOTV) is very popular is driving out political party’s supporters to the voting booth on the election day. This drive makes significant use of both grassroot campaign mobilizers and media platforms. In many emerging democracies with high media penetration, political parties have relied on the traditional and social media channels to increase voter participation. Some scholars have also argued in support of this conclusion that, the media in Ghana have played significant roles in attracting registered voters to vote in previous elections (Gyampo et al, 2017; and Anaman & Bukari, 2020).

Historical data shows that voter turnout in Ghana since 1992 is among the highest over one hundred countries practicing multi-party democracy in the world. The eight successive elections since the beginning of the fourth republic in Ghana has an average voter turnout of 72%, achieving the highest turnout of 85.1% in 2004. This compares better to voter turnout in matured democracies such as the United Kingdom (UK), the United States (US) and the European Union (EU). For example, the voter turnout during the parliamentary elections in UK in 2017 and 2019 were 68.8% and 67.3% respectively, whilst Ghana achieved 68.6% and 78.9% in 2016 and 2020, respectively. In the same vein, the US voter turnout in the presidential elections of 2016 and 2020 were just 54.8% and 66.1% respectively. The table below (Table 3.10) presents details of voter turnout in Ghana between 1992 and 2020:

TABLE 3.10: HISTORICAL VOTER TURNOUT IN GHANA 1992 - 2020

YEAR OF ELECTION	POPULATION	REGISTERED VOTERS	TOTAL VOTES CAST	TURNOUT RATE (%)
1992	15,959,000	8,229,902	4,127,876	50.2
1996	17,958,000	9,279,605	7,257,984	78.2
2000	20,212,000	10,698,652	6,605,084	61.7
2004	20,757,032	10,354,970	8,813,908	85.1
2008	23,434,573	12,472,758	9,094,364	72.9
2012	24,652,402	14,031,793	11,246,982	80.2
2016	26,908,262	15,712,499	10,781,917	68.6
2020	29,340,248	17,027,641	13,432,857	78.9

Source: Author

The graph below shows the voter turnout trend in Ghana since 1992, when Ghana started the fourth republic Constitution which ushered in the new multiparty system:

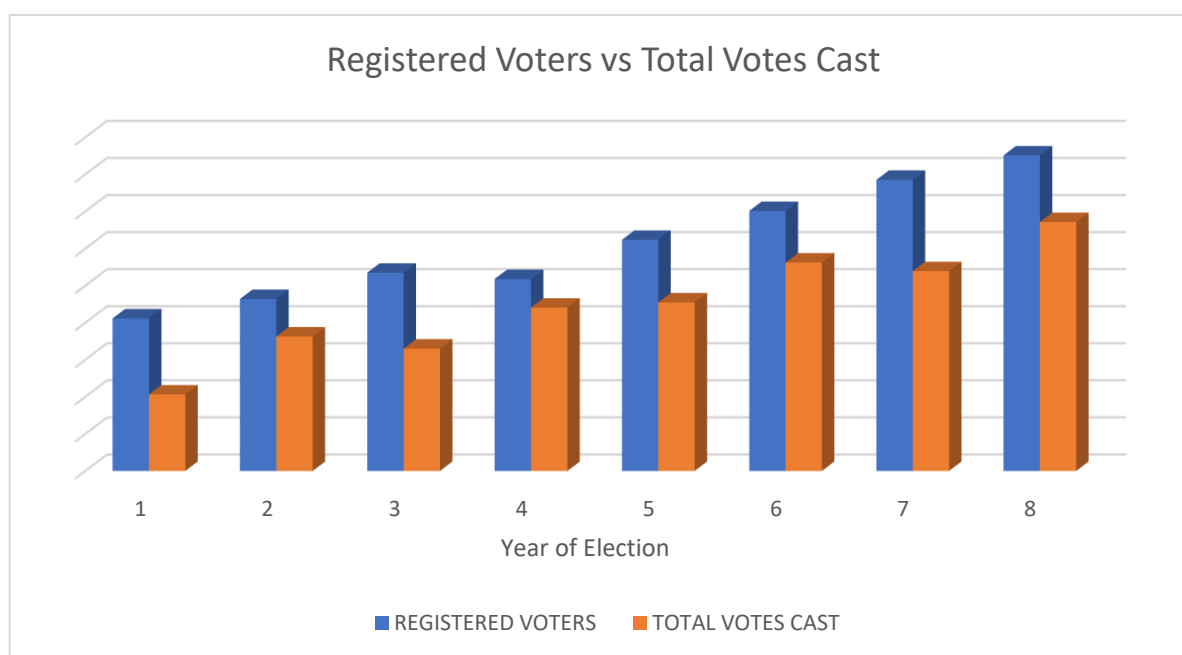


FIGURE 3.1: GRAPH SHOWING REGISTERED VOTERS VS TOTAL VOTES CAST BETWEEN 1992 AND 2020. SOURCE: AUTHOR

The figure below also presents a pictorial view of voter turnout as a percentage of citizens who registered to participate in the elections in each voting year since 1992:

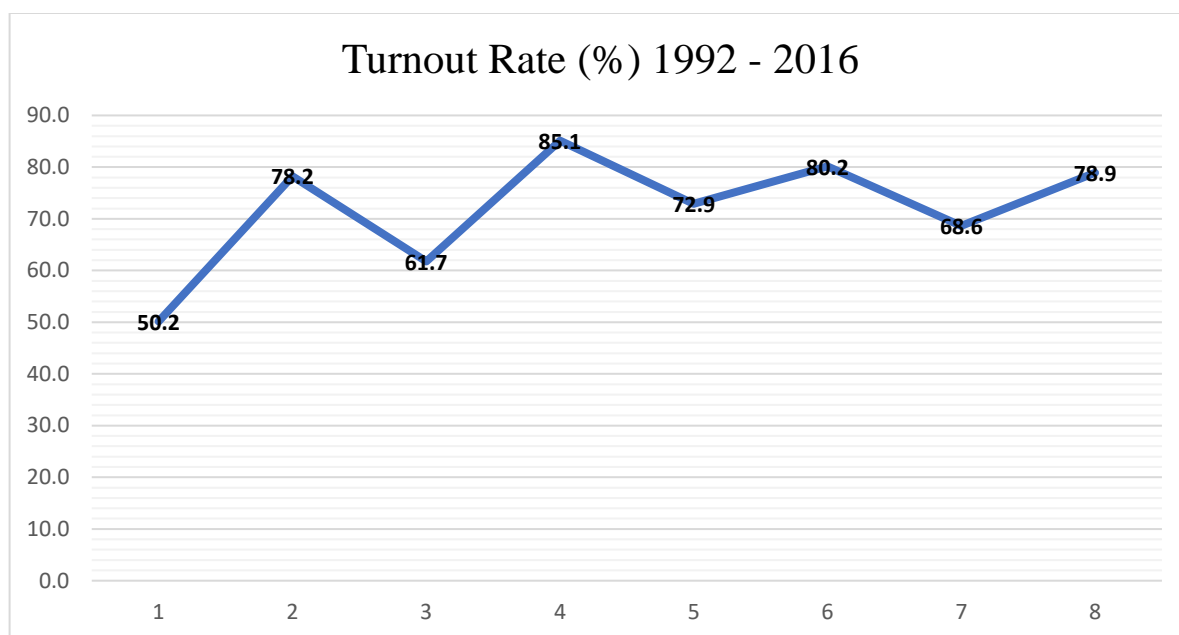


FIGURE 3.2: TREND IN VOTER TURNOUT EXPRESSED IN PERCENTAGE BETWEEN 1992 AND 2020. SOURCE: AUTHOR

A trend can be deduced from the above graph which establishes that voter turnout increases significantly when the incumbent Head of State is seeking re-election. As the data shows in the above graph, voter turnout increased by about fifty-six percentage (56%) from 1992 to 1996 while the turnout increased by thirty-eight percentage (38%) when the incumbent Head of State in 2004 sought re-election. Although the rate of increment dropped substantially in subsequent election years of 2012 (an increase of 10%) and 2020 (an increase of 15%), the rate of increment in these election years relative to other election years when the incumbent is not seeking re-election is still high. In a mirror opposite however, voter turnout dropped whenever the Head of State is exiting government and a new presidential candidate is selected to represent the incumbent political party, as clearly exhibited in graph above. A more comprehensive and empirical study in future will have to be conducted to establish the underlining factors driving these trends.

Although other factors such as the ones enumerated earlier do play significant roles in increasing voter turnout in Ghana, campaign communications including the campaign message and the intensive use of the various media platforms to disseminate the campaign message may lead to increased voter turnout (Goldstein and Freedman, 2002). Some scholars believe that voter turnout is

driven largely by the use of positive advertising. These researchers who make this assertion believe in the demobilization hypothesis which states that negative commercials or attacking campaigns adversely affect voter turnout, particularly among the so called 'independent' or what is loosely referred to in Ghana as *'floating voter'* (Ansolabehere et al, 1994; and Ansolabehere and Iyengar, 1995). They claim that positive campaign advertising tends to attract more electorates to vote since their experiment resulted in the fact that as the political campaign tone becomes nastier and more negative, the voter is alienated from the electoral process and is highly likely to be influenced to stay away from voting.

However, a number of researchers, who performed similar studies have raised issues with the outcomes of the study by Ansolabehere et al (1994) in terms of the theory behind the study and the methodology applied in relation to the demobilization hypothesis (Bartels 1996a; Finkel and Geer 1998; Freedman and Goldstein 1999; Kahn and Kenney 1999; Wattenberg and Briens 1999). Those scholars who oppose the demobilization hypothesis assume that negative advertising leads to high voter turnout in elections. They support their argument by indicating that negative campaign messaging receives the most attention by the media (high media exposure in many cases unpaid for by the candidate). This is likely to expose the candidate involved in the campaign and generate interest by the electorates to engage in the political process. With this exposure, the electorates may discover significantly new information which may be able to address their concerns and attract them to participate in the voting process, thereby increasing the turnout. The trend in voter turnout in the US presidential elections of 2012 (53.8%) 2016 (54.8%) and 2020 (66.1%) presents a picture in support of those who believe in the mobilization hypothesis which is anchored on negative campaign messaging. It is widely assumed that the entry of Donald Trump into the US presidential electoral campaign significantly increased negative campaign or attacking campaign. In spite of the series of campaign attacks launched in both the 2016 and 2020 campaigns, voter turnout in both elections were higher than that of the 2012 presidential election.

The above analysis clearly positions campaign messaging as an important element in political campaign in any democracy especially since one needs a campaign message before one can engage voters when campaigning, which in marketing communications they say, ‘an advertising must carry a message’. Campaign message therefore provides the content to be advertised or to be disseminated to the electorates which should, all things being equal influence them to participate in the election. The ability of campaign managers to design or formulate campaign messages that can appeal to the electorates and financiers should become an important yardstick of an effective campaign. With high media penetration including social media, political campaigns stand to benefit from the use of a theoretical framework that can assist them to formulate appealing campaign messages. This thesis is therefore seeking to add to the existing literature by undertaking a study to conceptualize a campaign message formulation framework for election in Ghana.

PART II

CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH DESIGN

4.1 Overview

The Chapter focuses on developing research methodology to achieve the predetermined objectives of this project. As indicated earlier, the overall goal of this research is to develop a framework to conceptualize political campaign message for elections.

The previous chapters have been used to review the campaign messages and slogans applied by political parties in previous elections in Ghana. A review of existing literature indicates that formulation of various campaign messages and slogans used in previous elections in Ghana do undergo some processes (Gyampo et al, 2017; Hinson & Tweneboah, 2010; and Mensah, 2007). However, there has not been a theoretical appraisal of this so-called process or processes to be established as a conceptual framework for formulating political campaign messages. In light of the above academic or theoretical gap, the methodology Chapter has been used to design the most appropriate research approach and methodology to undertake this project.

The Chapter after careful analysis of the two commonly used research methodologies namely, quantitative and qualitative methodologies, adopted the qualitative methodology under the interpretivism paradigm as the foundation for this research assignment (Guba and Lincoln, 1994).

The Chapter specifically focused on the ontological and epistemological perspectives of knowledge acquisition; provides the strategic framework for the research design; outlined the key methodological approach; and discussed the ethical considerations and imperatives relevant for the conduct of this research study.

The conclusion of this Chapter outlines the research strategy adopted for the overall research and indicates that Grounded Theory methodology is the most appropriate methodology to carry out this assignment (Charmaz, 2006; Myrick and Walker, 2006; Gioia et al, 2012; and Saunders et al,

2016). Grounded theory allows researchers to systematically develop theory using data collected from actors who were directly involved in the phenomenon under study.

4.2 Research Paradigm

This research thesis adopted the qualitative research methodology and was guided by the interpretivism paradigm. The fundamental ontological and epistemological issues had been analyzed in order to lay the foundation for a sound and clear academic construct for the phenomenon under study (Guba and Lincoln, 1994). This led to the understanding of the form and nature of the worldview of the researcher as well as establishing the basic belief about the process of acquiring knowledge. The two most commonly used paradigms in Business and Management research which are positivism and interpretivism were comprehensively reviewed in this chapter (Collis and Hussey, 2009) to establish not only the pros and cons of each school of thought but their suitabilities in guiding this process of enquiry.

4.2.1 Ontological and Epistemological Perspectives of Knowledge

The ontological perspective is very important in conducting any research studies, particularly in guiding the framing of the researcher's understanding of the nature of the world and the nature of knowledge (Angeles, 1981). A researcher's world view can be based on a subjective or an objective ontology – that is, either the nature of the world can be understood through the cognitive social construction of the individuals involved or the belief that reality exists, and that reality can be understood better by using an independent objective inquiry (Bryman and Bell, 2011). Researchers who hold the subjective view of ontology assume that political actors involved in political campaigns for example, are better placed to share information that can lead to the conceptualization of or understanding what entails in formulating political campaign messages than adopting an independent process of understanding that nature of reality, if it even exists (Arndt, 1985).

The objective ontology assumes that there is the true nature of reality out there to which knowledge can be known through the application of an independent verifiable process of inquiry (Bryman and Bill, 2011; Wittgenstein et al, 2009; and Guba and Lincoln, 1994). This school of thought contradicts the subjective view of knowledge of reality because it believes that social or political phenomenon can be explained through a verifiable independent process of inquiry to understand the phenomenon being studied and yet offer a better understanding or conceptualization. This research aims to conceptualize political campaign messaging in an election by examining the framing strategies and themes of previous election campaign messages in Ghana. Reflecting on the research questions underpinning this thesis, the researcher believed that adopting the subjective ontology as the theoretical foundation to this research design which follows the research methodology used by some previous researchers in undertaking similar qualitative inquiries is in the right direction (Brand 2009; Easterby-Smith et al, 2008; Creswell, 2007; and Guba and Lincoln, 1994).

In view of the above, conducting a qualitative investigation to understand the conceptualization of political campaign messaging in an emerging democracy such as Ghana will not require the categorization of variables into dependent and independent variables as it would have been the case in an objective ontology. In other words, there is no need to establish relationships between variables in a study of a phenomenon where the objective is to gain understanding and deeper insight. Therefore, the subjective ontology has been chosen because it affords the researcher an opportunity to gather relevant data and materials for analysis from the perspectives of the respondents who usually have had personal experiences with the phenomenon under study (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2003; Stanlein and Panoho, 2011; and Saunders and Bezzina, 2016).

Although the subjective view of knowledge has been criticized by some quantitative researchers as lacking the verifiable analytical rigour that can be used to better explain for example, the relationships between marketing stimulus and the behaviour of social actors. Gioia et al (2012) underscored that researchers applying the inductive approach (subjective ontology) to inquiry can

design ‘systematic conceptual and analytical discipline’ which can anchor a credible research outcome. They further argued that “the single most profound recognition in social and organizational study is that much of the world with which we deal is essentially socially constructed” (pg. 16, Gioia et al, 2012). In studying the conceptualization of campaign messaging in a political campaign may not require the need to count the number of measurable events but instead to study the personal experiences of the major actors in the campaign message formulation hence the application of subjective ontology (Berger & Luckmann, 1966 and Schutz, 1967 cited in Gioia et al, 2012). It is therefore believed that by employing the subjective ontology to guide the conduct of this research, the outcomes can be defended as meeting the high standards of analytical rigour.

Epistemology, which according to Hallebone and Priest, (2009), is defined as how one can determine what knowledge exists and the exact nature of the knowledge that exists. Understanding the true nature of knowledge can be viewed from many lenses, including Intuitive, Empirical, Logical and Authoritarian. The theory of knowledge – how can we know what we do not know – is critical in every research design. Epistemology, which in other words can be described as what is acceptable in knowledge or what constitutes knowledge, and what do not constitute knowledge (Bryman and Bell, 2011) helps researchers to draw intellectual boundaries when conducting enquiry. Epistemology is therefore concerned about the nature, sources, possibilities and limitations of knowledge in a discipline or a subject matter. These were critical in aiding this research especially in formulating the research design and answering the research questions which have been outlined earlier. Furthermore, epistemology guides researchers to understand their worldview in terms of the processes of acquiring the knowledge of how the world is socially constructed.

Understanding the processes of acquiring knowledge of the world is particularly critical in social science research because what is relevant to social scientists is gaining understanding (knowledge) through personal experiences instead of the frequency of occurrence or otherwise of variables within the phenomenon being studied (Saunders and Bezzina, 2015; Gioia et al, 2012; and Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2003).

The epistemological paradigm has two main groups as in the case of ontology, which are Interpretivism and Positivism. Those scholars who believe in interpretivism assumes that researchers should frame research design to understand human actions but not to explain those actions while the positivism school of thought, however, believes that social behaviour of social actors can objectively be measured, tested, or validated using empirical process of investigation and analysis (Whyman et al, 2009 and Remenyi et al, 1998).

Although the positivist epistemology has been criticized as being reductionist and lacking the ability to answer ‘the why questions’ in research, it is imperative to state that this approach when applied competently allows the research findings to be generalized and replicated (Saunders et al, 2012). Another advantage of employing the positivism approach by researchers particularly those undertaking quantitative inquiry is that they are able to include variables that can be observed and exclude those that cannot be observed using empirical methodology for testing and validating relationships (Galtung, 1972; Stablein and Panoho, 2011; and Sekaran and Bougie, 2013). Thus, the outcome will define what constitutes knowledge and what does not hence valuable contributions can be made to the extant body of knowledge through this research approach. This research paradigm is however not suitable for this research since conceptualizing how the campaign messages were formulated by the two leading Presidential Candidates in the 2016 General Elections campaign in Ghana will require subjective mechanisms of generating data from actors who were key players during the said campaign. This the researcher believes is most appropriate technique to answering the research questions.

Moreover, the positivist epistemology has been criticized as adding marginal knowledge to the existing amount of knowledge since in many cases, the research procedures are known in advance (Guba and Lincoln, 1994 and Bryman and Bell, 2011). Furthermore, logical empiricism which is seen as the dominant force in both social and natural sciences has also been criticized by some researchers who believe in the interpretivist paradigm as always exaggerating the research outcomes and also, the believe that positivist epistemology approach to research has been the

dominance approach in these disciplines mentioned earlier is overstated since it has indeed lasted some few years (Burrell and Morgan, 1979; Anderson, 1983; and Crotty, 1998). In spite of the above shortcomings attributed to the positivist school of thought, a careful review of the extant literature (Ashley et al, 2011; Lee et al, 2011; and Wittgenstein et al, 2009), supports the fact that, the positivist approach to understanding knowledge – social interaction and social choice – has been employed in some previous studies and enquiries in the social sciences discipline (Grey, 2010). However, it is imperative to note that, this research will benefit greatly from the application of interpretivist epistemology and the grounded theory methodology to study how the campaign messages used by the two leading Presidential Candidates were conceptualized as well as to determine what messaging themes underpinned these campaign messages formulation (Gioia et al, 2012).

4.2.2 Research Paradigm: Interpretivism vs Positivism Research

Theory development is premised on research paradigm, which influences the basic beliefs or the worldview of the researcher. In other words, a researcher's perspectives of a phenomenon or a subject matter and how interconnected the various parts are or the nature of the critical boundaries that exist between these parts are all shaped by the research paradigm (Guba and Lincoln, 1994 and Saunders et al, 2016). It is therefore appropriate to define research paradigm as the basic theoretical mechanism that helps to frame and guide the research process to achieve the predetermined research objectives. The research paradigm is closely connected to ontology and epistemology in the study of or understanding of a phenomenon.

As stated earlier, Guba and Lincoln (1994) defined ontology as the 'form and nature of reality' and epistemology as the 'basic belief about knowledge and the focus is on the process of knowing'. The selection therefore of the type of research methodology, which clearly identifies how knowledge is gained through the assembly of data and analysis of the data collected, is fundamentally influenced by the researcher's perspective of the world (Gioia and Pitre, 1990).

Qualitative research is generally framed using three most popular research paradigm, namely positivism, interpretivism and critical theory. These three paradigms respond to both the ontological and epistemological enquiry of seeking knowledge and understanding. They seek to establish whether knowledge and understanding are better sought using an objective or subjective method of generating and analyzing data (Collis and Hussey, 2009). The outcome of the decision at this juncture naturally influences the selection of the research approach (qualitative or quantitative or triangulation) as well as the type of methodology to be used in conducting the research.

Researchers who believe in the positivism paradigm assume that reality ontology is superior hence reality is objective and external in seeking knowledge about a phenomenon while those scholars who belong to the interpretivist school of thought adopt a subjective perspective of reality and knowledge, and understanding that phenomenon should be seen through the subjective lenses of the individual participants or social actors involved in the subject matter under studied (Brand, 2009; Creswell, 2007; and Guba and Lincoln, 1994). This research applied the interpretivism paradigm since it fits relatively better in understanding campaign messaging formulation and how to determine the marketing communications concepts or strategies that anchored those messages.

Furthermore, positivists scholars strongly argue that science outlines the best approach in seeking the truth about a phenomenon and to understand its nature of existence as well as to be able to predict its behavioural tendencies (Krauss, 2005). Others however criticized the use of objective paradigm as lacking the adequate procedural framework that generates the best data from the subject matter to properly understand the phenomenon (Gioia et al, 2012 and Saunders et al, 2016). In addition to the above, some researchers, especially those who support the use of interpretive approach have criticized the positivist view to gaining knowledge and understanding as having the tendency to exclude relevant participants and including non-essential participants through the use of so-called scientific methods collecting data such as the probability sampling. Swingewood (1984) however stated that the positivism school of thought was the “dominant methodological orientation of nineteenth century” (page 129) in spite of the above criticism. This means that the interpretive

paradigm was not an effective approach in answering research questions, but the positivism methods were seen by many researchers as the appropriate paradigm to understand human society and human behaviour.

In contrast to the interpretivism paradigm, the scholars who believe in the positivism approach to research assumes that human subjects are external to the phenomenon under study hence it does not integrate the idiosyncrasies of human elements in the methodological framework that guides the research. Thus, the positivism research paradigm will not be appropriate to conceptualizing the campaign messages and how the framing concepts that were used to design the campaign messages can be determined.

According to Denzin and Lincoln (1994) and also Saunders et al (2016), the positivism paradigm advocates for scientific methods that can satisfy the four criteria identified under it, namely internal validity; external validity; reliability; and objectivity. The positivist deductive researchers believe that a method seeking to answer research questions must first of all meet the above criteria in order to satisfy the high standards of scientific inquiry. They strongly argued that the interpretivist inductive research paradigm does not meet the above high scientific standards of inquiry hence it is not rigorous enough (Bryman, 1988; Goldthorpe, 2000; and Popper, 2002).

However, the application of the interpretivism inductive approach to research received a significant boost recently by Gioia et al (2012) in a seminal paper “Seeking Qualitative Rigor in Inductive Research: Notes on the Gioia Methodology” which concluded that other studies should make use of qualitative and inductive research to study phenomenon in order to generate new theories and concepts. It is believed that the interpretivism paradigm promotes data saturation which is very relevant in conducting an enquiry of this nature where the participants’ perspectives are a rich source of data. Although the positivist deductive approach has the advantage of measurability and generalization, the interpretivists inductive researchers assume that not everything is measurable

or can be counted in order for it to gain theoretical rigour (Gioia et al, 2012) and also, a qualitative methodology premised on inductive research can be replicated in many cases.

Moreover, the interpretivism school of thought is much concerned about understanding the behavioural traits of social actors from the viewpoints of the participants hence this research believes that the interpretivists approach is more appropriate in answering the research questions. In other words, the interpretivist paradigm will offer the best framework in designing the techniques and processes of understanding the phenomenon under study. Furthermore, the interpretivist advocates for methodologies that grant full and unfettered access to the social actors (Weber, 2004 and Hammersley, 1992) so that the research process can generate rich data for analysis (Easterby-Smith et al, 2008).

In conclusion, in order to mitigate the effects of small sample size, this research adopted the practice of researchers who believe in the interpretivism paradigm whereby multiple methods are used to gather data and, in most cases, repeatedly and widely from relevant informants using in-depth interviews to benefit from data saturation. The positivist researchers according to existing literature however collect data from small sample sizes but results are often generalized or used to validate theories hence lacking the capacity to explain the underpinnings anchoring the statistical inferences made out of the data collected from the small sample sizes (Deshpande, 1983).

4.3 Research Strategy

The overall research design for this inquiry is represented by the figure below:

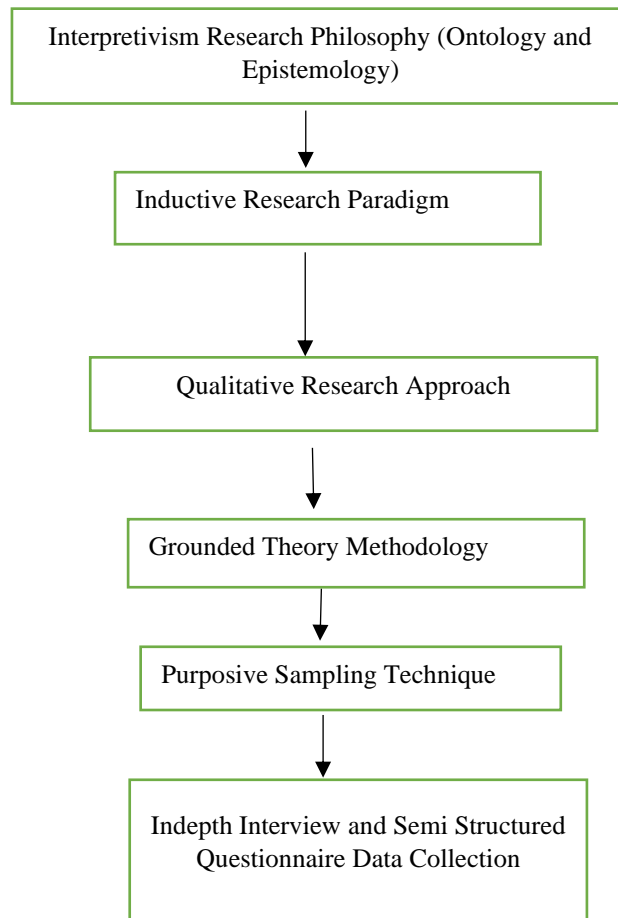


FIGURE 4.1: THE METHODOLOGY FLOW CHART

Source: Saunders et al, 2016

4.4 Research Approach

4.4.1 Qualitative Methodology

Under a positivism paradigm, researchers are more obliged towards the objective independent methodologies that detach the researcher from the phenomenon under study (Guba and Lincoln, 1994; Creswell, 2007; and Brand, 2009). For such inquiries, statistical methodologies that allow or the application of quantitative methods including hypotheses testing and controlled experiments are commonly used. The deductive nature of these methodologies became popular in social science research among both European and North American scholars and academics (Crotty,

1998 and Saunders and Bezzina, 2015). This dominance by the positivists who believe in the superiority of the quantitative methodologies have however not been quite effective in building theories as compared to the interpretivists who rely heavily on qualitative methodologies.

The qualitative methodology, which in contrast to the quantitative methodology encourages the application of research design that makes use of observation studies, in-depth interviews among others to collect data for analysis and interpretation (Collis and Hussey, 2013). Due to the fact that the objective of this research is seeking to understand how the campaign messages of the two leading Presidential Candidates in the 2016 General Elections in Ghana were conceptualized, the employment of qualitative methodology under the interpretivism paradigm was more appropriate. In a study of pharmaceutical education, Anderson (2010) applied qualitative methodology and concluded that qualitative investigation is an appropriate approach when the purpose of the inquiry is to understand a particular phenomenon more comprehensively or exhaustively, usually a social phenomenon, contrary to a quantitative approach which is more suited for making standardized comparisons and accounting for linear relationships among variables. The application of the qualitative methodology unlike quantitative methodology will allow for the use of analytic-inductive approach to building theory as well as the extensive use of in-depth interviews to collect data for analysis and interpretation (Brand, 2009 and Bryman and Bell, 2015). This position sits well with this research study because among other objectives, it seeks to understand the framing strategies employed to design the political campaign messages in the 2016 General elections in Ghana.

Furthermore, as advocated by Gioia et al (2012) qualitative methodology can lead to generating research outcomes which could be validated particularly when the process follows a systematic method of enquiry. In buttressing this point, Ghauri and Gronhang (2010) also stated that research is “comprising systematic data collection and interpretation of data, being based on logical relationships rather than beliefs” (cited in Saunders and Bezzina, 2012, page 5). This strengthens the view that qualitative methodology is also a rigorous process of seeking knowledge thus can be said

to be a scientific process of studying a phenomenon or conducting enquiry whose outcomes can be defended at the highest level of academic platform.

It is imperative to indicate however that, some previous studies have raised issues about the reliability and validity often associated with quantitative research while qualitative research has also been criticized as biased and lacking the required analytical rigour (Collis and Hussey, 2013; Saunders et al, 2016; and Smith and Noble, 2015). These critics of both qualitative and quantitative methodologies advocate for mixed methodology or methodological triangulation approach to conducting inquiries. But those scholars who believe in the interpretivist paradigm also indicate that qualitative research when conducted properly can be rigorous and generate valid, reliable, and credible results (Gioia et al, 2012). Validity in research, as defined by Anderson (2010) refers to the degree to which the research findings truthfully represent the phenomena which they are set out to represent. To check the validity and credibility of a qualitative study, Anderson (2010) recommended the use of triangulation of contradictory evidence; respondents' validation; and constant comparison to ensure acceptance. Triangulation refers to the use of multiple methods or multiple or difference data sources to test the validity of a phenomenon (Carter et al. 2014). With respondents' validation, the research respondents are given the opportunity to review the researcher's interpretation of their responses and provide feedback. Constant comparison entails comparing data collected from ongoing research to data collected from a previous study and analyzing them together (Anderson 2010).

Brantlinger et al. (2005) also suggests collaborative work; engaging other researchers in designing the study and interpreting the results as a means of reducing researcher biases in addition to acknowledging any possibility of biasness in selecting the sample. It is however worth noting that the aforementioned measures of credibility are not generally applicable to all qualitative studies. Some including this research are exclusively conducted and therefore do not require a credibility measure to demonstrate rigour.

In other words, Brantlinger et al. (2005) also defined qualitative research as a systematic approach to understanding behaviour, or a phenomenon within a particular context. Despite the flexibility in implementing qualitative research, relative to quantitative research, previous studies have characterized qualitative research as scientific, based on its systematic approach to empirical inquiry and scholarly rigor (Guest et al. 2005; Bodgan and Bilken 2003). According to Hoepfl (1997) the distinction between qualitative and quantitative research lies in their inquiry paradigm. She further indicated that qualitative research is “using a naturalistic approach to understand phenomena in context specific setting” and quantitative research as “using experimental methods to test hypothetical generalizations”.

Guest et al. (2005) also postulates that qualitative and quantitative research differ in the analytical objectives; while quantitative research seeks to measure variation and forecast causal relationships, qualitative research aims to describe variation and explain the reasons for such variation or relationships. They also highlight the distinction between closed ended or fixed questions posed in quantitative research and open-ended questions posed in qualitative research. Other scholars including Guest et al. (2005) noted that one of the key differences between the two research methods is flexibility. Qualitative methods are generally more flexible, thus, gives a more naturalist element and at the same time create room for adaptation during interaction between the researcher and respondents. Quantitative research however is less flexible; it requires that respondents be asked the same questions in the same order. The known benefit of this rigidity is that it allows the researcher to compare and contrast the responses from research participants which is not relevant for this research.

While quantitative research techniques are popular in the physical sciences, qualitative research techniques have also risen to prominence in the social sciences in recent years (Brantlinger et al 2005). However, the decision to apply qualitative or quantitative methodology in research is determined by the purpose of the study which has guided the selection of qualitative research

methodology in conducting this research. Under the qualitative research approach, there are various types of methodologies which may be suitable for this research, these are:

- *Case study;*
- *Ethnography;*
- *Action research;*
- *Grounded theory;*
- *Phenomenology; and*
- *Content analysis.*

The extant literature indicates that some researchers have in the past used one or a combination of in-depth interviews, participant observation and focus group discussions in conducting qualitative research. The researcher will usually select the best method or methods depending on the one that can generate the relevant data to answer the research questions. The naturally occurring setting of a phenomenon is a key feature in collecting qualitative data, in addition to the role of the researcher as the “human instrument” for data collection (Hoepfl 1997; and Brantlinger et al (2005). In spite of these positive attributes of qualitative research methodology, some previous research studies including the study conducted by Kuper et al. (2008) concluded that the significant influence that the researcher brings to the conduct of qualitative research leads to potential biases. In their 2008 study, they underscored that the gender, social status, occupation, or ethnic background of a researcher can influence the result of the study and therefore urge that qualitative researcher must develop mechanisms to address this potential bias. One of such techniques in mitigating this impact is the use of reflexivity which will be analysed in greater detail in subsequent sections of this study.

Some scholars who believe in the pluralist perspective of research methodology have been advocating for an integrated approach to research methodologies and data collection methods in order to delimit the sharp contrast between qualitative and quantitative methodologies as well as for research studies to benefit from the merits of methodological triangulation (Saunders and Bezzina,

2015; Denzin, 2010; Taskakkori and Teddlie, 2003; and Hammersley, 1992). This will also lead to using multiple methods for data collection in order to reduce data bias. Finally, the application of qualitative research approach despite its numerous advantages which include the significant volume and the density of data collected from qualitative research respondents however make data analyses and interpretation cumbersome and time consuming for researchers particularly at postgraduate levels of studies (Collis and Hussey, 2009). The considerable impact of the researcher's skills and judgment on the quality of the research makes some researchers question the scientific basis of qualitative methodologies but the qualitative research methods have been used in analytical studies across the world and in many academic disciplines hence this research study adopted the qualitative methodology under the interpretivism paradigm (Gioia et al, 2012; Carter et al, 2014; Bansal and Corley, 2011; Langley & Abdallah, 2011; and Gioia and Pitre, 1990).

4.5 Research Methodology

4.5.1 Grounded Theory

The overarching goal of this research study is to conceptualize political campaign messaging in an election using the grounded theory. The specific research questions to be answered are *what were the campaign messages of the two leading Presidential Candidates in the 2016 election? how were the campaign messages conceptualized? what were the framing strategies used by the two leading Presidential Candidates in the election campaign? and what themes underpinned the campaign messages of the two Candidates during the election campaign?* The overall outcome of this study should contribute to knowledge and theory development as well as acting as a guide to the design of future political campaign messages in general (political and non-political campaigns).

In order to answer the above research questions, this inquiry applied the qualitative methodology under the interpretivism paradigm as the basis of the research design (Saunders et al, 2016; and Gioia et al, 2012). After a comprehensive review of the literature under research design,

it emerged that at least six methodologies in the qualitative approach have been applied in conducting similar research studies in the past (Collis and Hussey, 2013; and Saunders et al, 2016). These qualitative methodologies include *Case Study; Ethnography; Grounded Theory; Phenomenology; Action Research; and Content Analysis* (Al Nahed, 2018; Polonski 2016; Gioia et al, 2012; and Danso and Lartey, 2012).

Case study research methodology is described as a research study that seeks to understand phenomenon by using cases in a specific setting or context while ethnography research is applied when the goal of the inquiry is to determine an understanding of an entire cultural group, their shared and learned patterns and the overall behaviour of the group being studied (Creswell, 2007; and Collin and Hussey, 2009). Phenomenological methodology is used to study how social actors experience a certain phenomenon and seeks to set aside the preconceived assumptions about the feelings and experiences of the parties involved in the study (Creswell, 2007; and Denzin and Lincoln, 1994). Under such a study, the lived experiences of the selected social actors are collected and analysed in order to understand their behaviour or reactions to a specific situation or a stimulus.

In identifying ways to address social or societal problems and weaknesses, qualitative researchers usually adopt action research. It is referred to the application of evaluation and analytical process whereby the researchers diagnose the problem or a weakness in order to develop practical solutions to mitigate the adverse impact on the society or the group (Brydon-Miller et al, 2003). In case of Content analysis technique, it is used by making replicable and valid inferences through interpretation of textual materials, documents, images and graphics to develop understanding of a phenomenon especially among Management researchers with interest in Organizational Behaviour and Firm Competitiveness (Creswell, 2007).

Grounded theory as a research methodology originally emerged from the work of researchers Anselm Strauss and Barney Glaser who co-originated a sociological research programme. They developed a methodology that allows a researcher to systematically produce a substantive theory

based on empirical data (Charmaz 1996; and Myrick and Walker, 2006). In essence, Strauss and Glaser's concept of grounded theory in qualitative research initiated the concept of generating new theory from data, an addition to the inflexible deductive methods of testing and verifying already existing theories against data as was popular under the quantitative research approach (Birks and Mills 2015). However, in a slightly modified version of the former, they emphasized the importance of representativeness of emerging concepts and the nonexistence of anticipated concepts in qualitative research as opposed to the representativeness of persons involved in a phenomenon.

In other words, researchers use grounded theory to conceptualize phenomenon through the perspectives of the social actors who were engaged in the social process and social interaction (Strauss and Corbin, 1990). This means, grounded theory helps researchers to develop theory using data generated from the experiences of the social parties involved in the phenomenon under study (Robrecht, 1995). The application of grounded theory in conducting this study is partly to conceptualize the framing strategies behind the campaign messages and the theory that explains how the said political campaign messaging was formulated. This will be achieved by using the 2016 Presidential elections campaign in Ghana as the specific conditions where data will be generated for analysis (Strauss and Corbin 1997).

It is however worth noting that although Glaser (1992) argued against Strauss's and Corbin's (1997) adaptation of grounded theory in a similar exercise, both sides agreed on the explicit use of coding, the analytical process of constant comparison and memos in developing theory (Myrick and Walker 2006). This research study therefore applies Glaser and Strauss (1967) and Glaser (1978) grounded theory as the methodology in analyzing the content of the campaign messages of the two leading Presidential Candidates in Ghana's 2016 Presidential elections as well as to identify the marketing concepts that anchored their campaign messages.

Grounded theory is suitable for this study because it advocates for the collection of data at the beginning of the process of building theory as against developing hypothesis at the start of the

process (Charmaz, 2006). In this specific case, data will be collected from the participants of the 2016 Presidential campaign whose roles were relevant to either developing campaign messages for the candidates or disseminating the messages that were formulated. As indicated in previous studies, grounded theory combines the strengths of “qualitative interpretive traditions with the logic, rigour and systematic analysis inherent in quantitative research” (Walker and Myrick, 2006, page 548).

Moreover, coding in grounded theory begins the process of analyzing or investigating the phenomenon. This stage brings to light the prominence of the role of the researcher as a tool to influence, mediate or intercede and conceptualize data that is gathered. Here, the researcher also determines which technique is most appropriate in generating a theory from the data. In Glaser’s (1978) latter work on “Theoretical Sensitivity as an Adjunct to Discovery”, he describes the coding process in two parts, substantive, and theoretical coding (Myrick and Walker 2006). The first, substantive coding, with regard to this study on the themes that underpinned the political campaign messages during Ghana’s 2016 Presidential elections takes into account data generated from research respondents of the respective political parties, namely the NPP and the NDC.

Categories will be created using specific features of the interview responses provided by the participants. The researcher records common or recurring elections campaign messaging themes as well as deviations in the responses provided to further generate these categories. The second part which is theoretical coding occurs after trends in the research responses are identified and a core category is generated. At this point, the researcher models a theory out of the substantive codes to produce a hypothesis on the Presidential election campaign messaging. According to the Myrick and Walker (2006), Glaser’s (1978) interpretation of coding in grounded theory, the coding process is only complete when the researcher perceives the likelihood of an emergent theory, one that captures adequately the rationale of the data that have been collected.

Furthermore, in qualitative research, data collection and analysis occur simultaneously. The researcher begins conducting inductive analysis with the onset of data collection. It is therefore

inherent that both the Glaser (1978) and Strauss and Corbin (1997) accounts of the conduct of grounded theory incorporate constant comparison between categories in their analysis. In Glaser's account however, constant comparison is central to theory development (Charmaz 1996). Constant comparison with regard to substantive coding in this study entails comparing a respondent's (NPP vs NDC) perspective on the communications strategy that were formulated during Ghana's 2016 Presidential election campaign with that of other respondents to identify similarities and differences in the data. The trends and patterns that will surface are merged into categories which later constitute the foundation on which the theory is constructed.

With regard to theoretical coding, the role of the analyst is to pose neutral questions with the objective of investigating the implications of the events recorded in substantive codes on the phenomena in question. Although somewhat simple, it is imperative at this stage of data analysis that the researcher only conducts constant comparison. Glaser (1992) emphasizes this by stating that constant comparison eliminates or delimit the need for more elaborate techniques for conceptualizing data. He further explained that a thorough comparison of codes and categories generated from incidents recounted by the respondents (various sampled respondents) is enough to reveal what the social participants under the study have experienced (Myrick and Walker 2006). In essence, the recurring concepts that emerge are sufficient indicators of the phenomenon under investigation in grounded theory to warrant theory building (Corbin and Strauss 1990).

Additionally, Charmaz (2006) also identified that grounded theory practice usually relies on the components depicted in the diagram below:

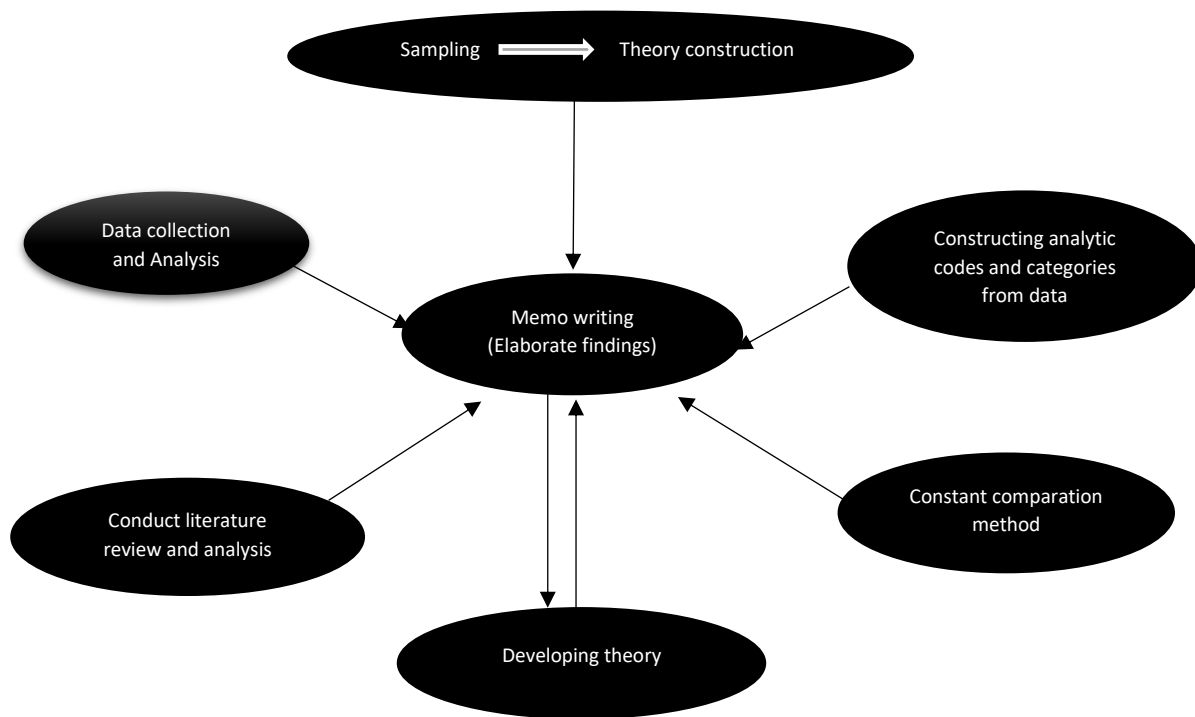


FIGURE 4.2: COMPONENTS OF GROUNDED THEORY (CHARMAZ, 2006)

SOURCE: CHARMAZ, 2006

As indicated in the diagram above, while collecting and analyzing data the researcher keeps an up to date record of the progress of the research. This up to date record is referred to as a theoretical memo and it forms an important component of establishing grounded theory in qualitative research. Writing a theoretical memo describes a system of documenting all the categories, properties, conceptual interactions, questions, and theories that surface during data collection and analyses (Charmaz, 2006; and Corbin and Strauss 1990). It is useful for keeping track of the development in concepts and for comprehensive elaboration of coding the data that have been collected. Coupled with constant comparison, theoretical memos can also be used for revision and modification of previous concepts or theories. As a vital component of grounded theory, memo writing is incorporated into a qualitative study from the onset of coding until a theory is developed as a contribution to academic knowledge.

CHAPTER FIVE: SAMPLING AND DATA COLLECTION

5.1 Overview

Chapter four was basically used to lay the methodological foundation and outline the research strategy for this research project; that is the research approach and methodology to be applied for the conduct of this thesis.

This Chapter will be used to outline the data collection method the researcher finds most appropriate to undertake this project, the sampling technique to be used to select respondents as well as the data analysis method to be applied to interpret the data and develop the theoretical framework for formulating political campaign messages for elections in Ghana. The Chapter therefore makes a comparative analysis of the various data collection tools including In-depth Interview, Semi-structured Questionnaire, Focus Group Discussions and Observation. This research adopts a triangulation method for data collection using a combination of In-depth interview and Semi-structured questionnaire (Gaskell, 2000; Opdenakker, 2006 and Collis & Hussey, 2014).

Non-probability sampling strategy is applied for this research (Gioia et al, 2012). As indicated by Collis and Hussey (2014) and Marshall (1996) a combination of purposive sampling and convenience sampling are commonly used sampling techniques under the Grounded Theory methodology. The sample frame is the members of the campaign teams (Constituency, Regional and National) of both New Patriotic Party (NPP) and National Democratic Congress (NDC) in the 2016 general elections campaign in Ghana and Media Practitioners who were actively involved in the coverage of the electoral campaigns of any of the two leading Presidential Candidates. The chapter ends with a discussion on how the researcher's prior experiences, personal beliefs, interests, associations, or commitments in many ways, including professional and political affiliations, may create biases which when not fully disclose may distort and undermine the outcomes and conclusions of this research study. In this regard, the last section under this chapter was used to analyse reflexivity in research in relation to the key personal interests, past experiences and connections

associated with the researcher that have potential of influencing the data collection, analysis of the data collected and the eventual outcome of the research.

5.2 Data Collection Method: In-depth Interview and Semi Structured Questionnaire

The academic debate of determining the framework for ensuring that inductive research is conducted in a manner that applies systematic and analytical rigour has been ongoing for some time. It is therefore important for this inquiry which seeks to use the qualitative approach to data collection and analysis, to define and design a research method that ensures that the outcome meets the high standards of qualitative rigour as espoused in the seminal paper by Gioia et al (2012) on “*Seeking Qualitative Rigor in Inductive Research: Notes on the Gioia Methodology*”.

Crossman (2019) describes qualitative research as a type of social science research that gathers and uses non-numeric data in a bid to conceptualize meaning from the data to help understand social concepts through the study of a targeted population, a place or an event. Many scholars have broadly categorized data collection methods under qualitative inquiry as observation, interviews, open-ended surveys, focus groups discussions, content analysis and oral history (Saunders et al 2012; Gioia et al, 2012; and Crossman, 2019). The extant literature indicates however that the application of interviews (both in depth and semi-structured interviews) is the most common form of data collection method when conducting a study of phenomenon using the qualitative methodology (Kvale, 1996; Gaskell, 2000; Opdenakker, 2006; and Jamshed, 2014). It is believed that researchers who apply any of these techniques under the qualitative methodology are able to generate quality and reasonable amount of data that normally leads to answering the research questions in a study.

This research specifically applied in depth interview technique using Semi-structured questionnaire to generate primary data for this inquiry (Barriball and While, 1994; and Marshall and

Rossmann, 2011). It is however important to add that, as it is in all good qualitative research, this study employed other multiple data sources including literature review for secondary data and analysis (Morgan, 1983 and Gioia et al 1994). In depth interviews involve an interviewer guiding an intensive conversation with an individual or a group of sampled respondents through clear, thoroughly prepared, and well composed questions to learn of the sampled population's perspective or experiences using carefully selected themes or narrowly defined areas of enquiry (Brouneus 2011). The questions that the researcher uses to steer the direction of interview with the selected respondents, who were members of campaign communications units of the two leading Presidential Candidates, were in semi-structured format. The selection of Semi-structured interview technique was anchored on the fact that it is most appropriate method of primary data collection since it allowed the researcher ample space and time to probe for information until data saturation was reached (Barriball and While, 1994 and Marshall and Rossmann, 2011).

Moreover, semi-structured interviews according to Saunders et al. (2016) do not dictate any strict format of questioning but, often consists of a list of themes or sub-topics that require exploration and possibly some key questions that will be covered by the interviewee during the engagement. The order in which the interviews will be executed would therefore vary among the respondents; this is important because of the variations among the selected respondents. Depending on the flow of the interviews and how the interview has been structured to meet the objectives of the research, certain questions could either be omitted or included by the interviewee during the interview. A useful feature of semi-structured and in-depth interview for exploratory research such as the one being conducted by this researcher, is that it allows the interviewer to establish the topic of interest using open-ended questions and building the rest of the conversation based on the interviewee's responses (Alejandro et al. 2012 and Collis and Hussey, 2013). This however does not imply that the interviewee dictates the direction of the interview and therefore the responses thereof. On the contrary however, Alejandro et al. (2012) emphasized that the interviewer's responsibility is

to keep the focus of the interview on the selected research questions or objectives and encourage the interviewee to respect the structure and objectives of the interview in case of digression.

Therefore, in order to understand the marketing communications concepts underlying the 2016 Presidential campaign messaging and to explore the strategies that were used to frame them, the researcher designed interview guide to draw insights and the perspectives of the sampled respondents. The adoption of the interview guide is to assist the researcher to conduct comprehensive discussions with respondents about the subject matter. The incorporation of Semi-structured interview in the research is meant to raise themes and key questions that will drive the direction of the interview.

All things being equal, it is expected that the respondents on the other hand, during the interview would reveal insightful details about their experiences during the 2016 Presidential election campaigns and based on their responses, the interviewer will ask follow-up questions and seek further clarification where necessary, to eliminate any form of ambiguity. The researcher then seeks to build understanding and make inferences from the respondent's explanations. A prominent feature of this qualitative research method is the advantage of bringing to light new themes that were unanticipated by the researcher but may be relevant to the research (Saunders et al. 2016).

In addition to the use of the interview guide, Saunders and Bezzina (2015) highlights the importance of establishing personal contact with respondents in qualitative research. In this regard, the researcher cultivated rapport with respondents which led to generating relevant data. The respondents in this study are Senior Political and well as Government officials hence data was collected using face-to-face interviews (Barriball and While, 1994; Opdenakker 2006; and Collis and Hussey, 2013). Some scholars believe that Face-to-face interview technique creates an opportunity for the selected respondents to receive feedback from the researcher and assurance about how the data collected will be used and protected. Indeed, some of the respondents felt more comfortable sharing sensitive information about election campaigns through face-to-face interviews

in relation to other data collection techniques. Through the use of Face-to-Face interview method, the pitfall which normally comes about as a result of another person who does not fall within the sample frame providing feedback is completely eliminated.

The objectives of this research thesis will lead to the evaluation of the campaign messages of the two leading Presidential Candidates who represented the New Patriotic Party (NPP) and the National Democratic Congress (NDC) during the 2016 general elections and to understand the marketing concepts and strategies that underscored the campaign messages used. To achieve this, a sample of forty-five (45) campaign officials who played strategic roles in the respective campaigns were purposively selected from the general sample frame. In order to significantly mitigate the adverse effects of sample bias, the research selected equal sample size from the two campaign teams that worked for the two leading Presidential Candidates in their respective Communications Departments (Collis and Hussey, 2009).

These respondents are senior campaign communications officials who played different strategic roles at the national, regional and constituency levels. Basic data that were collected from them included age; gender; educational qualification; political association; years of political experience; role assigned during the campaign; and location. The remaining sample of nine (9) respondents were senior media practitioners who were on the forefront of political journalism in Ghana especially during the said campaign. These consisted of two media persons from television, two from radio, four from the print media and one from an Online news portal, all from among the media landscape in Ghana.

5.3 Sampling Technique

In conducting qualitative research, it is often inefficient and somewhat impractical to consider drawing data from an entire population hence applying an appropriate mechanism to select

participants who will provide relevant data for analysis becomes imperative (Collins and Hussey, 2011; Strauss and Corbin, 1990 and Marshall, 1996).

Furthermore, both data collection and data analysis must be done to achieve certain rigour in qualitative inquiry. It is therefore appropriate for a study of a phenomenon by a researcher to adopt a sample from the relevant total population of the study in which to develop a theory or in order to establish a phenomenon. Although sampling techniques do change when using Grounded Theory to study a phenomenon, it is believed that some of the commonly used sampling techniques can be applied to this study (Morse, 2010). These techniques include Purposive sampling, Convenience sampling, Critical Case sampling and Theoretical sampling. These techniques are discussed in detail below.

5.3.1 Non-Probability Sampling

The decision to apply either a non-probability sampling; a probability sampling; or a combination of both in selecting respondents for a study is largely determined by the research questions. However, in undertaking qualitative inquiry using grounded theory, researchers are usually limited to non-probability sampling approach since it provides opportunity for data to be collected from respondents who are themselves participants of the phenomenon being studied and therefore have the ability to provide quality and relevant data (Gioia et al, 2012 and Strauss and Corbin, 1998).

Non-probability sampling has been criticized by some researchers as lacking the required analytical rigor since it does not provide adequate representative of the entire population or the sample frame. This means that not all the members of the sample population being studied has an equal opportunity of being selected for the inquiry (Saunders et al, 2009). Non-probability sampling technique is further criticized by others, particularly scholars who believe in empirical methodologies that studies adopting non-probability sampling technique suffer from ambiguous sample size. However, in order to study how the campaign messages in the 2016 Presidential

elections were conceptualized or to analyse the themes that underpinned the campaign messages of the Presidential candidates of Ghana's 2016 elections, the research requires a technique that allows the researcher to sample participants who played relevant roles or who were major stakeholders at the forefront of the political campaign during the period under study.

It is important to indicate that the main feature associated with probability sampling is that the odds of selecting each person from the population to be included in the sample is known and is often equal for each member (Saunders et al, 2009 and Field et al, 2006). According to Marshall (1996) applying a random sample (probability sampling) gives the researcher the opportunity to make inferences and generalize the findings of the study to the broader population due to its representativeness.

However, some researchers have established that, in some cases, random selection in non-probability sampling protects the sample against selection bias which may add rigor in an inductive study (Collins and Hussey, 2011 and Grefenstette, 1981). This is relevant because it mitigates the so-called risk of sample biases which some quantitative researchers use against inquiries applying qualitative methods of respondents sampling. Moreover, some studies however suggest that equal probability in sample selection is not a necessary condition to providing scholarly rigor, neither is it the most effective way of providing understanding of concepts or conceptualizing complex themes such as understanding how campaign messages are conceptualized (Marshall, 1996). Field et al (2006) affirms that probability sampling is not popularly used in social science research despite the fact that it is useful in making statistical inferences from the results of a research partly due to the large amount of data it generates. This is buttressed by Gioia et al (2012, pg. 24) who asserted that "our stance here is a strong rejoinder to the old argument that it is not possible to generalize from small samples - perhaps especially samples of one, as some believe case studies to be".

Therefore, the prerequisite for providing understanding into a sociopolitical concept such as presidential campaign messaging and their framing strategies is to adopt a sampling method that will allow the researcher extract in-depth information from insightful sources, out of an entire population.

This key feature makes the non-probability sampling method appropriate with regard to this study under the grounded theory methodology (Gioia et al, 2012; Saunders et al, 2009; and Collins and Hussey, 2011). A non-probability sampling method has the advantage of extracting relevant data from information rich sources on which the interviewer can build understanding (Saunders et al. 2016). It does so by recognizing that some informants are more insightful than others, hence deselected the arduous task of choosing randomly from a large population. Marshall (1996) likens the application of random selection instead of non-probability sampling in answering qualitative questions to asking a passer-by how to repair a broken car instead of a mechanic. The researcher explained that the passer-by might have some idea how, but a mechanic is likely to be more productive.

It is worth noting, that the sample frame would consist of members of the leading political parties who are unevenly distributed in the sixteen regions of Ghana. Considering that the research requires personal interaction between the researcher and the selected respondents, it would not be practical to draw a random sample from such a geographically dispersed population (Pedhazur & Schmelkin, 1991).

Lastly, the flexibility of non-probability sampling methods is ideal for the qualitative nature of this study. The researcher takes advantage of open-ended questions to guide the direction of conversations with the research participants. This method of data gathering implies that the research topic will be discussed exhaustively, reducing the likelihood that key elements will be left out (Parmelee, 2013). In addition to this, it creates room for the researcher to explore unanticipated themes as they emerge during the process of data collection through indepth interviews. The used therefore of non-probability sampling for the conceptualization of campaign messages in a Presidential election campaign is appropriate particularly under the grounded theory methodology (Gioia et al, 2012; O'Reilly, Paper and Marx, 2012; and Langley and Abdallah, 2011).

5.4 Sampling Method

5.4.1 Sampling Frame

In order to answer the research question, which seeks to ascertain how campaign messages are conceptualized and what themes underpinned the campaign messages of the two leading candidates or political parties who were involved the 2016 Presidential elections in Ghana, the researcher used the total number of electoral votes obtained by the respective candidates and parties in the said elections. The literature produced the results in the Table below:

TABLE 5.1: 2016 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION RESULT

Political Party	No. of Total Votes Gained	Percentage (%)
New Patriotic Party (NPP)	5,716,026	53.85%
National Democratic Congress (NDC)	4,713,277	44.4%
Progressive People's Party (PPP)	105,682	1.0%
Convention People's Party (CPP)	25,395	0.24%
People's National Convention (PNC)	22,214	0.21%
National Democratic Party (NDP)	16,878	0.16%
Independent Candidate	15,889	0.15%
Invalid Votes	166,248	-
Total	10,781,917	100%
Registered Voters/Turnout	15,712,499	68.62%

Source: Electoral Commission of Ghana, 2016

The result of the above indicates that, the two candidates/parties who obtained the most votes, namely, Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo of the New Patriotic Party (NPP) and John Dramani Mahama of National Democratic Congress (NDC) are selected as the two leading candidates/parties in the election under study. Indeed, the available data from the previous six Presidential elections between 1992 and 2012 supports the assertion that the two dominant political parties in Ghana are the NPP and NDC (Boafo-Arthur, 2008 and Ayee, 2016). The researcher then analysed the communications structure of each of the campaign to determine the elements that can

constitute the sample frame. It was identified that in each of the political party's campaign, there was a communications department consisting of different officers who were assigned different roles based on their skills, talent and, or previous professional experiences.

In addition to the above, respondents were sampled from among the media practitioners who took active part in reporting for their respective media outlets or as it is the practice by many media outlets in Ghana, journalists are assigned to specific presidential candidates during electoral campaigns. In effect, these journalists or media practitioners were the target respondents for this enquiry. For the avoidance of doubt, the sample frame for this study therefore comprises of all campaign communication team members of the two leading presidential candidates, parliamentary candidates of the political parties under this study who were part of the national communications teams, all manifesto committee members of the political parties and media practitioners who were assigned to the political parties in question. Estimated total number of the sample frame as determined by the campaign managers of the two candidates sampled for this study is 129. This sample frame is made up of 50 campaign communications team members; 25 parliamentary candidates who were part of the two political parties' national communications team; 30 members of the manifesto committees; and 24 media practitioners and journalists. Final sample of 45 respondents were selected for interviews and they were 6 Campaign Communications Advisors/Strategists; 12 Campaign Communications Team Members; 8 Parliamentary Candidates; 6 Manifesto Committee Leaders; and 13 Media Practitioners and Journalists. However, 24 respondents were successfully interviewed, namely 1 Campaign Communications Strategist; 4 Campaign Communications Team Members; 4 Parliamentary Candidates; 4 Manifesto Committee Leaders; and 11 Media Practitioners and Journalists.

As indicated by other scholars including Saunders et al (2016) and Morse (2010), the sampling technique used in grounded theory under qualitative inquiry is important to answering the research questions. This researcher therefore believes that an appropriate mechanism to analyse campaign messaging design is to collect data from the players who played key and active roles in

relation to the phenomenon under study. In this regard, the researcher selected these respondents because they were seen as active participants in their respective roles during the 2016 Presidential Campaign and their roles were found to be relevant to the phenomenon under this enquiry. It is worth noting that the selected respondents are from both the ruling party and the main opposition party as well as media practitioners with significant level of experience in political campaign in Ghana. This is a deliberate attempt by the researcher to ensure that the concepts that emerge during this study are not biased towards a particular political party or presidential candidate.

5.4.2 Purposive Sampling

The goal of this inquiry is to determine and understand how political campaign messages were designed in the 2016 presidential elections by the two leading political parties and learn from it to formulate a conceptual framework to guide the campaign message design for future elections in Ghana. The researcher sought to achieve this goal by using the 2016 Presidential elections campaign in Ghana as the source of data and the context for the research (case study). This research study adopted the use of purposive sampling method by selecting respondents whose interface during the campaign offered them access to relevant data, information, and knowledge (Saunders et al, 2016).

In conducting this study, the researcher also analysed the possibility of using other sampling methods including but not limited to convenience sampling. Convenience sampling is the technique among the non-probability sampling techniques for which the selected sample of respondents usually meet the criteria of easy accessibility and close proximity to the researcher in addition to a willingness to participate in the research (Etikan et al. 2016; Saunders et al, 2016; Koeber and McMichael, 2008; and Tansey 2007). Some scholars further emphasized that the sole purpose of convenience sampling is to collect data from respondents who are easily available to the data collector, notwithstanding their characteristics, including other peculiarities which may dilute the

data. As a result of the above, Marshall (1996) suggests that convenience sampling may in many cases generate data that cannot adequately answer the research questions hence will produce results that are not academically credible. Indeed, some scholars believe that convenience sampling is the least rigorous sampling technique under the qualitative methodology.

Furthermore, convenience sampling method which is used by some social researchers is criticized as likely to have severe hidden biases and outliers. Etikan (2016) explains that bias in the sample selection coupled with the presence of outliers, convenience sampling is likely to have a disturbing effect on the result of the sample. Some studies have also found that another disadvantage of applying convenience sampling to a study of a phenomenon is the tendency to overgeneralize the findings. It is imperative to state that, in cases where the researcher is familiar with the population under study, Koerber and McMichael (2008) underscored that the researcher might be inclined to generalize the results of the findings beyond the defined sample frame.

In a study of marketing communications framework for small political parties in developed countries, Thrasson et al, (2009) indicated that political organization has increasingly become reliant on how parties formulate their marketing strategies. Therefore, understanding what communication themes appeal to voters is key to the success of political candidates in elections. In order to achieve this understanding and be able to apply same, it is essential for research to collect data from elements whose roles are relative to campaign message formulation or communication in general. In this regard, this research adopts purposive sampling method which Sharma (2017) defines as a technique that relies on the judgment of the researcher in selecting the people, organizations, or events to be studied, as the key data sources.

In other words, purposive sampling according to Etikan (2016) is the non-probability sampling method which allows the investigator to decide what needs to be investigated and then sets out to identify and select elements from among the sample population who desire and are capable of providing relevant data owing to their knowledge and experiences relating to the phenomenon

being studied. Furthermore, Saunders (2012) reinforced this point when he indicated that “respondents can be considered to be a purposive sample comprising critical cases likely to have greater understanding of” the phenomenon being studied (cited in Saunders and Bezzina, 2015, p8). As learnt from the extant literature (Strauss and Corbin, 1990; and Gioia et al, 2012), this study used the purposive sampling method to initially identify and select respondents from within the sample frame to generate data that are relevant to understanding how campaign messages are conceptualized because the identified respondents have greater understanding of the subject matter being studied.

Although some scholars have criticized the use of purposive sampling method as being prone to researcher bias and lacking the required rigour that can lead to theoretical and analytical generalization (Saunders et al, 2009 and Collis and Hussey, 2009) particularly when compared to probability sampling techniques. Higginbottom (2004) on another hand argues that the essence of applying purposive sampling in selecting participants in research is to achieve maximum variation. He justifies this by saying that maximum variation in the sample will allow all concepts that emanate during the process of the research to be explored exhaustively, adding that exhaustive exploration is a prerequisite to qualify qualitative research as rigorous. In light of this, the researcher reasons that a disadvantage of purposive sampling is the tendency of the researcher to select a sample that is not diverse enough and therefore fails to rigorously explore the entire scope of phenomenon under study.

Additionally, in comparison to probability sampling techniques where each member of the population has even opportunity of being selected, Sharma (2017) highlights a high possibility of selection biases as a weakness of purposive sampling. Sharma (2017) underscored during a study on the advantages and disadvantages of sampling techniques that, subjective selection of a target population under purposive sampling makes the sample prone to selection biases, especially when the criterion for selection is not clearly defined by the researcher. An even worse case scenario is the possibility of a researcher deliberately selecting a sample that will achieve predetermined outcomes (Koerber and McMichael 2008).

However, when conducting qualitative inquiry using grounded theory, Gioia et al (2012) established that researcher bias as a result of judgmental or subjective purposive sampling based on a clearly defined criteria or a theoretical framework significantly eliminates the adverse effects of researcher bias. Furthermore, some previous studies agree that the guiding principle in purposive sampling is to focus on few, well informed informants that are proficient in providing data that will best assist the researcher in answering the research questions (Etikan 2016 and Tansey 2007). Moreover, an advantage of purposive sampling is the flexibility that it affords the researcher. As a sampling technique, purposive sampling neither requires any strict underlying theories nor dictates a specific number of respondents to be selected for data collection in a qualitative inquiry (Etikan 2016). In fact, purposive sample sizes are usually determined when data saturation is reached by the researcher; this is the point in data collection when the researcher determines that no new subject matter or themes are emerging from the in-depth interviews (Saunders et al. 2016 and Collis and Hussey, 2013). The process of achieving data saturation is simply through the conduct of memo writing, coding and constant analysis of the primary data generated from the respondents. Where the researcher identifies gaps in the responses or identifies a response that requires further interrogation, a new interview is scheduled with the respondent in question. The conduct of the follow up interview also goes through similar procedure as the original interview, however, the focus on the follow up data collection is limited to the specific questions and issues that have been identified. The process will continue until the researcher is fully satisfied that no new data may emerge from the respondent that will be beneficial in answering the research questions.

To answer the research questions accurately, data were collected from 24 respondents sampled from the 45 sample size based on their roles during the 2016 Presidential elections campaign in Ghana (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). As described in the sample frame, the respondents were made up of 6 Campaign Communications Advisors/Strategists; 12 Campaign Communications Team Members; 8 Parliamentary Candidates; 6 Manifesto Committees Leaders; and 13 Media Practitioners and Journalists. The researcher believes that the roles played by these individual

respondents have equipped them with relevant data which when properly harnessed will provide the required data to answer the research questions outlined earlier (Etikan, 2016 and Sharma, 2017). These respondents have some basic and common characteristics which will be beneficial in the conduct of the in-depth interview. Basic information collected from respondents are roles in the campaign, political party affiliation, occupation, gender, age, and education level.

5.4.3 Data Saturation

In qualitative research, data saturation underscores a systematic process where ample data generated and analysed offer grounds for the researcher to draw the necessary conclusions because additional data that will be collected will not add any material value to the research findings (Saunders et al, 2016 and Marshall et al, 2013). Data saturation further indicates that additional data collection will yield similar or same results and may only establish the case or conclusions drawn by the researcher out of the data previously collected. In other words, the new data collected may only underpin the emerging themes or concepts which the researcher has identified from the data already generated from the respondents of the study. Further interviews aimed at additional data collection therefore become redundant by producing only previously discovered findings which in effect delays the completion of the research project as well as waste resources (Marshall et al, 2013). Some authors believe that data saturation is achieved during qualitative research when the performance of the interviews declines because each new interviews conducted by the researcher essentially makes minor or no contribution at all to the research.

When studying how political campaign message is conceptualized by this researcher, data saturation was achieved when the same message occurred among twenty-three (23) respondents out of the twenty-four (24) respondents interviewed, which represents about ninety-five percent (95%) of the overall respondents. For example, the ninety-five percent respondent indicated that Free SHS campaign message was the main campaign message used by the NPP and further confirmed that it

was the most attractive campaign message. In this case therefore, further data collection became redundant and will only contribute marginally to the outcome of the research.

In addition to the above, data collection to ascertain the mechanisms used by the campaign communications team to select issues that are relevant to the majority of the registered voters clearly spelt out that research and brainstorming were the mechanisms used by the two leading political parties. Systematically, all respondents either indicated research and brainstorming, or research only as the mechanisms used by the campaign teams to develop their campaign message. Thus, at the point of interviewing the twenty-fourth respondent, it became unnecessary to conduct additional interviews because data saturation had been reached (Marshall et al, 2013; and Saunders et al, 2016).

Lastly, in order to identify the key concepts and themes from the research data, respondents were interviewed to provide data that can be analysed to map out such political campaign messaging concepts and themes. Data saturation in this case was also achieved when it emerged from the analysis of the twenty-fourth respondent's data that *Inspiration*, *Fear* and *Satisfaction* were the key concepts that underscored the campaign messages of the parties involved in this research. Furthermore, it was detected from the primary data provided by the same number of respondents that *Hope*, *Change* and *Continuity* were the key themes underpinning the 2016 political campaign messages of the two leading presidential candidates selected for this study. Consequently, learning from what both Charmaz (2006) and Marshall et al (2013) posited that data saturation is reached when data analysis is stretched to the point where no new or additional information can be obtained or discovered from the primary data that have been gathered from the respondents.

5.5 Reflexivity

As noted by Mruck & Mey (2007), qualitative researchers are indirectly obliged to indicate their personal experiences, interests, and beliefs in connection with data collection and data analysis in order to enhance the validity of the outcomes of their studies. Researchers are therefore expected

to explain the processes and procedures involved in undertaking their studies, and how their personal feelings, experiences, beliefs, relationships, and interactions are to be considered during both the data collection and data analysis stages of the enquiry. This is reflexivity and has been defined as “the generalized practice in which researchers strive to make their influence on the research explicit to themselves, and often to their audience” (Gentles, Jack, Nichols and McKibbon, 2014, page 1). Reflexivity in qualitative research promotes accountability and transparency, and it helps to validate the findings of the research as earlier indicated. In addition to reinforcing the validity of the research methodology, reflexivity has become part of the requirements when reporting research findings and outcomes in many fields and disciplines of study (Cohen & Crabtree, 2008).

Although the concept of reflexivity has recently gained popularity among many qualitative researchers, particularly those applying Grounded Theory methodology due to interest of funders, editors, and readers. This popularity has however been criticized by some authors who assert that the overwhelming acceptance of reflexivity as a means of legitimizing research methodology and research outcomes has led to an increasing uncritical adoption of the concept of reflexivity in research (Gentles, Jack, Nichols and McKibbon, 2014; and Pillow, 2003). These scholars are against the wholesale application of reflexivity in the areas of data collection, sample selection and data analysis which have the tendency to influence the research methods rather negatively.

The excessive application of the concept of reflexivity therefore has the potential of leading to over concentration of attention on the researcher with the tendency of shifting focus from the phenomenon under the study (Finlay, 2002; and Chesney, 2001). In addition, the practice of reflexivity by many researchers is believed to add little value to the quality of the research process and may potentially prevent the researcher from freely interpreting the data in a more creative ways with rich insights. Therefore, establishing a balance in each specific research study becomes the most critical intellectual imperative. In this regard, the use of reflexivity in research has a lot of positive effects particularly in qualitative enquiries, thus, this researcher shares the view of Stephen J. Gentles (2014) when he stated that “my own position is that there is value in sharing one’s

awareness about the situations in which researcher interactions may be consequential with one's audience, without necessarily proposing explanations to account for how these interactions might be consequential. This makes it possible for a balance to be reached in which reflexivity is employed conservatively and only as far as it serves the purposes that the researcher sets for it" (Gentles, Jack, Nichols and McKibbin, 2014, page 4). The need to establish this equilibrium and still adopt the concept of reflexivity will enrich both the research process, method, and the research findings.

In conducting a study to conceptualize how political campaign message for election in Ghana is designed, the researcher established that his personal experiences, interactions, and political association may influence the research design, data collection and data analysis. Therefore, in order to mitigate the effects of these issues raised on both the validity of the research design and eventual outcomes of the research, the researcher adopted semi structured questionnaire to limit the personal experiences and opinions during the interviews. This was to also prevent the researcher from having overbearing impact on follow up questions. In addition, the researcher shared the transcripts of the primary data collected with supervisors for review before the actual data analysis was commenced. It is important to recall that, full disclosure of the researcher's current occupation and employment as well as close affiliation to one of the political parties involved in the study were made known to all respondents before the commencement of the data collection.

In order to achieve objective interpretation of the data collected, the researcher with the support of Supervisors adopted a coding process that allowed for constant review. This in addition to the constant review procedures employed helped to alienate the researcher's personal biases from diluting the data analysis but still allowed the researcher to use his rich insights to enhance the credibility of the research findings. The data analysis technique used for this research was quite robust and had been applied in conducting similar research studies in different disciplines and in studying different phenomenon.

Finally, the researcher's influence in the selection of sampled respondents is an important element to consider when reading this thesis. As a result of the researcher's association with the politics in Ghana, some of the respondents had had prior knowledge and interacted with the researcher in the past. This is worth considering because it may have effect on the data collection and analysis. However, as indicated earlier, the coding process and supervisors review mitigated against any likely adverse effects that may emanate from this association. In any case, the use of semi structured questionnaire, transcript review by supervisors and the coding process adopted were rigorous enough to enhance the integrity of this research. It must further be stated that, the researcher used the ethical procedures established by the University of Hull and other disclosures to proof that the purpose of the research was purely academic.

CHAPTER SIX: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY - DATA COLLECTION AND CODING

6.1 Overview

This Chapter focuses on data collection and coding of the primary data generated using in depth interviews with semi structured questionnaire. This stage of the research study is important for data analysis under Grounded Theory because it allows the researcher to apply manual coding and concept development, as asserted by Strauss and Corbin (1998). Grounded Theory according to Charmaz (2006) requires systematic processes including interviews, data transcription, memo writing, coding, and concept development to develop theory. This underscores the theoretical rigour of Grounded Theory under qualitative research approach.

Data collection was conducted using both face to face interviews and telephone interviews methods. It must be indicated that although the original plan was to use face to face interview method, the emergence of Corona Virus Pandemic in 2019 (COVID-19) however shifted significant attention of the field data collection to the use of telephone interview method.

Primary data were successfully collected from twenty four (24) respondents, consisting of thirteen (13) politicians and eleven (11) media practitioners. This Chapter presents a preliminary profiling of all respondents including four (4) female participants who took part in the research. Average time spent in conducting interview per respondent was about thirty five (30) minutes using the interview guide.

The researcher encountered difficulties in accessing respondents belonging to the National Democratic Congress (NDC) but the respondents from the New Patriotic Party (NPP) and Media Practitioners who volunteered provided quality responses to the questions. Another limitation the researcher faced in relation to data collection was/is the fact that some of the respondents had difficulties to accurately recall some of the facts due to the timing of the data collection.

6.2 Data Collection

Under Grounded Theory methodology, data collection has been found to be one of the most important steps in ensuring analytical rigour (Charmaz, 2006; and Charmaz, 2002). In other words, the quality and reliability of the research outcomes and conclusions to a large extent depend on the data collection methods used by the researcher. As indicated by other scholars, researchers within the social science faculty have relied heavily on four basic methods of data collection when conducting qualitative studies, namely In-depth Interview; Observation; Participation; and Documents and Material Analysis (Marshall and Rossman, 2011). In some cases, Focus Group Discussions method, which is where a group of sampled respondents between 6-8 people are selected to discuss an identified phenomenon, is also used to generate data in qualitative research (Creswell, 2003). Although Focus Group Discussion has been used in many Political Marketing and Political Communications related qualitative studies, it was found not to be too suitable compared to in-depth interviews for this research which seeks to study how campaign messaging is conceptualized in an election (Fontana and Frey, 1994). This research study therefore adopted in-depth interviews using semi structured questionnaire to guide the interviews.

In addition to the above, in undertaking a Framework Analysis using qualitative methodology for applied policy research, Srivastava and Thomson (2009) identified five steps to achieve analytical rigour, namely familiarization; identifying a thematic framework; indexing; charting; and mapping and interpretation as a process in research that can ensure analytical rigour. Adopting such a procedural methodology lays a foundation for proper qualitative study. Furthermore, some scholars argue that quantitative research methodology does not offer sufficient answers to why a social phenomenon behaves the way it does (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). In addition to the above, Collis, Hussey and Hussey (2003) asserted that “only qualitative research in the business environment provides a stronger basis for analysis and interpretation because it is grounded in the natural environment of the phenomenon” under study (Srivastava and Thomson, 2009, page 73). In view of these scholarly works, this study applied in-depth interviews which are mostly used

in a form of conversations to collect data from selected respondents to study the social construct from the viewpoint of the subject matter under study, which are Politicians and Media Practitioners (Kvale, 1996). This procedure of gathering primary data from respondents afforded the researcher optimum time to generate enough relevant data on time to understand the perspectives of the persons participating in the research.

As indicated earlier, this study applied in-depth interview method to generate data from respondents. In-depth interview method has been found to be relatively useful in generating rich and substantial amount of data to help understand social phenomenon (Arksey and Knight, 1999). It allows the data enumerator the opportunity to ask follow-up questions during the conversation. Furthermore, since it helps to build rapport between the interviewer and the interviewee, in-depth interview method allows for a more insightful conversation between the two which allows the interviewer to probe or clarify issues that may emerge during the interview. Although in depth interview is time consuming and costly compared to other qualitative data collection methods, this study however found it more useful since the subject matter under study involved politically sensitive issues. The use of in-depth interview method therefore, accorded this study the opportunity to apply high quality respondents sampling technique and flexibility to select respondents which helped in reducing data bias.

The researcher interviewed politicians who played some significant roles within the Communications Units of the two leading Presidential Candidates in the 2016 general elections campaign as well as selected Media Practitioners who covered the political activities associated with the said campaigns. Although there was no limitation on the number of minutes to be used for the interview, the interviews lasted for an average of one hour thirty minutes. The interviewer focused on how campaign messaging is conceptualized in an election using the 2016 general election as the reference point. As envisaged during the research design phase, interviews were conducted face to face and via phone. The face to face interviews took place at mutually agreed venues namely in the

respondents' offices and some cases the interviewer's office. Respondents were not offered any token or incentives for the interviews.

Planning for the conduct of the interviews followed the agreed format suggested by Collis and Hussey (2009) and Gillham (2005) which reflects the diagram below:

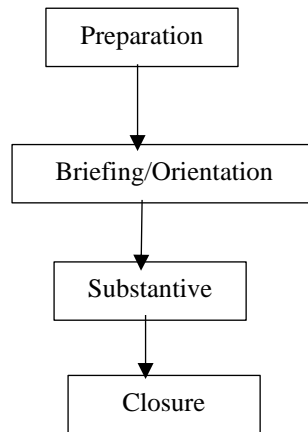


FIGURE 6.1: IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW PLANNING PROCESS

SOURCE: ADOPTED FROM GILLHAM (2005)

The researcher prepared an interview guide which was used to structure the conversation with respondents. The interview guide offered the researcher opportunity to focus on the relevant and key issues for the research objective (Charmaz, 2002 and Charmaz, 2006). However, respondents enjoyed flexibility in order to widen the scope of the data and also enhance data saturation. The face to face interviews were all conducted under conducive atmosphere and both the interviewer, and the interviewee obeyed the Corona Virus (COVID-19) Pandemic protocols, particularly the wearing of Face Mask and the use of alcohol based hand sanitizer (www.who.int). The interviews conducted via phone as well as face to face were all recorded with the explicit consent of the respondents and later transcribed for coding and analysis. In addition, field notes were taken during the interviews and respondents were offered the opportunity to close the interviews with any additional information on the subject matter.

The researcher followed a simplified process of primary data collection by conducting interviews with sampled respondents as earlier indicated, transcribing the primary data collected, which required utmost attention to detail, before proceeding to Memo Writing and eventually preparing the data for coding and data analysis. Although coding has been established as a critical component of developing theory under grounded theory, this researcher found Memo Writing as another critical element of data analysis when using grounded theory methodology (Charmaz, 2002). Through Memo Writing which entails sorting and analysing the raw data, researchers applying grounded theory methodology are able to discover the social elements that are emerging from the phenomenon under study (Charmaz, 2002 and Collis and Hussey, 2013). This process has been depicted in the diagram below:

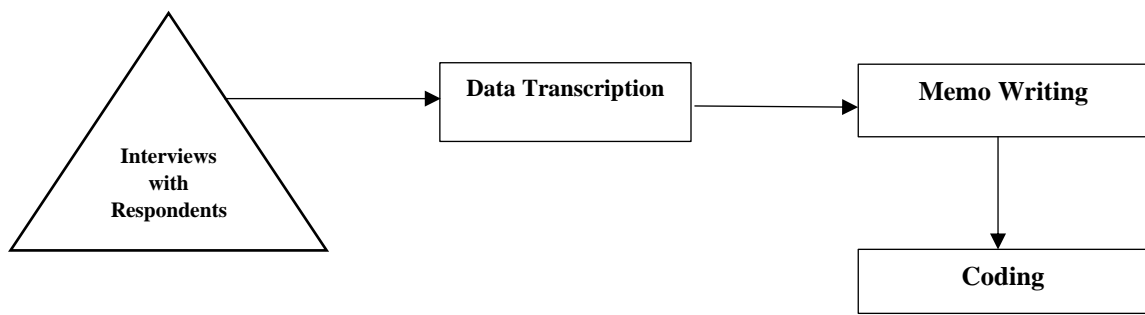


FIGURE 6.2 – DATA CODING PROCESS

SOURCE: CHARMAZ, 2002

6.3 Sampling Technique

The aim of this research inquiry is to conceptualize a framework to guide the formulation of political campaign message for elections in Ghana. This research study therefore applied expert sampling under the purposive sampling technique to select respondents who have knowledge of the phenomenon for the primary data collection. Many scholars have found purposive sampling technique relevant because it identifies respondents whose opinions and knowledge of the subject matter under study are relevant to the research objectives (Patton, 2002; Hanses et al, 1999; and

Strauss and Corbin, 1990). The application of the purposive sampling method was useful in generating data from respondents who played key and critical roles during the 2016 presidential elections campaign in Ghana for the two leading Presidential Candidates, Nana Akufo-Addo and John Mahama. The primary data collected is used to develop theoretical categories.

A sample size of 32 respondents were purposively selected from the sample frame which consist of political communications practitioners and officers who were associated with the two leading Presidential Candidates during the 2016 general elections. In addition, 13 respondents were sampled from Media Practitioners who played active roles during the 2016 general election campaign as Reporters or Journalists from electronic, print, and new media. These respondents were selected with clear understanding of their common features and uniform peculiarities (Collis and Hussey, 2009). The assumption that these respondents share rich knowledge of the critical processes and issues that influenced the decisions with regards to the campaign messages used by the two leading Presidential candidates formed the basis of this study. Personal data including gender, age, educational level, and marital status were also collected in addition to the main research questions.

The in-depth interview method with questionnaire guide was used to collect data from the sampled 45 respondents, made up of 32 Political Communications Officials and 13 Media Practitioners. In order to achieve the overall research goal of conceptualizing a framework to formulate political campaign messaging in an election, the researcher premised the design of the interview guide on what the main campaign messages of the two leading Presidential candidates in the case study election were; *what themes underpinned the campaign messages; what framing strategies used; and what mechanisms were used to select the relevant issues that informed the design of the campaign messages*. Furthermore, the interviewer discussed more specific issues such as campaign slogan, manifesto promises, manifesto headlines, procedures of ascertaining the mood of the audience, the topical political issues during the 2016 campaign and the level of experience of communications team members who were engaged in the campaign communications by both political parties.

6.3.1 Profiling of the Respondents

This research study projected to interview 45 Respondents. However, twenty four (24) respondents were successfully interviewed, consisting of thirteen (13) from the Political group and eleven (11) from the Media Practitioners sample frame. Data collected from all the twenty four (24) respondents have been analysed. Out of this number, only four representing seventeen percent (17%) were female while the remaining twenty (20) or eighty three percent (83%) were male. An analysis of the marital status revealed that majority of the respondents sampled, representing about sixty three (63%) were married while twenty five percent (25%) or six (6) indicated that they were single. A further analysis indicated that one (1) was divorced and the other respondent was a widower.

The overall average age of the twenty four (24) respondents interviewed so far is 40.1 years. This is broken down into 43.2 years for the Political group and 36.5 years for the Media Practitioners.

TITLE: BASIC INFORMATION OF THE RESPONDENTS

POLITICIANS							
S/No.	CODE NAME	GENDER	AGE	MARITAL STATUS	CURRENT POSITION	EDUCATIONAL LEVEL	YEARS OF POLITICAL EXPERIENCE
1	NPP/2016/SA/MCL04	MALE	52	MARRIED	BOARD MEMBER	UNIVERSITY	24
2	NPP/2016/SA/MCL06	FEMALE	50	MARRIED	FORMER MP	UNIVERSITY	23
3	NPP/2016/SA/CS02	MALE	36	MARRIED	COUNSEL TO THE PRESIDENT	UNIVERSITY	12
4	NPP/2016/SA/MCL01	MALE	52	MARRIED	MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT	UNIVERSITY	18
5	NPP/2016/SA/CS08	MALE	39	MARRIED	MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT	UNIVERSITY	15
6	NPP/2016/SA/MCL10	MALE	46	MARRIED	MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT	UNIVERSITY	10
7	NPP/2016/SA/CO01	MALE	38	MARRIED	MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT	UNIVERSITY	14
8	NPP/2016/SA/MCL09	MALE	38	MARRIED	MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT	UNIVERSITY	10
9	NPP/2016/SA/CO02	MALE	32	MARRIED	RESEARCH AND MONITORING	UNIVERSITY	12
10	NPP/2016/SA/CO06	MALE	36	MARRIED	GOVERNMENT SPOKESPERSON	UNIVERSITY	13
11	NPP/2016/SA/C003	MALE	45	MARRIED	MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT	UNIVERSITY	25
12	NPP/2016/SA/CO07	FEMALE	49	DIVORCED	DEP. DIRECTOR GENERAL OF NCA	UNIVERSITY	20
13	NDC/2016/SA/CS01	FEMALE	48	MARRIED	SPECIAL AIDE TO FORMER PRESIDENT JOHN MAHAMA	UNIVERSITY	10

MEDIA

S/No.	CODE NAME	GENDER	AGE	MARITAL STATUS	ROLE/ POSITION	EDUCATIONAL LEVEL	NAME OF MEDIA ORGANIZATION
1	MP/2016/SA/TV02	MALE	28	SINGLE	JOURNALIST/NEWSCASTER	UNIVERSITY	JOY FM
2	MP/2016/SA/TV03	MALE	30	SINGLE	BUSINESS JOURNALIST /MAGAZINE SHOW HOST	UNIVERSITY	GBC
3	MP/2016/SA/TV01	MALE	42	MARRIED	HEAD, PRODUCTION AND COMMUNICATION ADVISOR	UNIVERSITY	OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
4	MP/2016/SA/NP03	MALE	29	SINGLE	SENIOR REPORTER	UNIVERSITY	GHANAIAN TIMES
5	MP/2016/SA/NP04	MALE	33	SINGLE	DEPUTY EDITOR	UNIVERSITY	CRUSADING GUIDE
6	MP/2016/SA/R03	MALE	39	MARRIED	LECTURER/MEDIA COMMENTATOR	UNIVERSITY	FREELANCE WRITER
7	MP/2016/SA/OL01	FEMALE	34	SINGLE	REPORTER	UNIVERSITY	JOY FM
8	MP/2016/SA/RO1	MALE	38	SINGLE	ASSISTANT NEWS EDITOR/ PRESIDENTIAL CORRESPONDENT	UNIVERSITY	JOY FM
9	MP/2016/SA/RO2	MALE	35	MARRIED	PRESIDENTIAL CORRESPONDENT	UNIVERSITY	CITI TV/FM
10	MP/2016/SA/NP02	MALE	38	MARRIED	REPORTER	UNIVERSITY	DAILY GRAPHIC
11	MP/2016/SA/TV04	MALE	56	WIDOWER	REPORTER	POLYTECHNIC	UTV

SOURCE: PRIMARY DATA

6.3.2 Theoretical Sampling and Data Saturation

To be able to successfully apply Grounded Theory in conducting qualitative research, researchers need to inculcate theoretical sampling as an integral element in the research methodology (Strauss and Corbin, 1990). In addition, the theoretical sampling should be derived from the data that have been generated from the sampled respondents but not prior to the data collection. As further asserted in some earlier studies that applied Grounded Theory methodology, when theoretical sampling is applied to the data collected, the research study is better able to identify gaps in the data and develop means to fill those gaps in order to achieve data saturation (Glaser, 1978 and Charmaz, 2006). This process continues until a theory emerges from the data collection and analysis.

It is imperative to note that in conducting a study to conceptualize campaign messaging in an election, this research applied Constant Comparative Method, Coding, and Category Development (*refer to figure 6.2*) to facilitate theoretical sampling. As a result, the researcher was able to identify particularly important data sources from among the same sample frame which significantly helped in achieving data saturation.

In this qualitative study, it is important to establish that the idea of conceptualizing a campaign message in an election was critically and theoretically analyzed by sampling respondents not premised on the ability to control respondent's behaviour. However, the interest of this research is using concepts derived from the earlier data generated from the respondents to identify the gaps in the data with regards to the emerging concepts. This also guided which respondents to be selected for further data collection in order to achieve data saturation (Glaser, 1978 and Collin and Hussey, 2009).

The theoretical sampling technique is important for a number of reasons, particularly it helps generate the relevant and continuous data to fill a material gap that has been identified until the research cannot generate new data from the respondents. As earlier indicated, achieving data

saturation is critical in qualitative research when applying grounded theory because it facilitates concept and theory development.

Some scholars have argued that under qualitative research, methodologies should gear towards answering variety of questions. According to Ritchie and Spencer (1994), the questions can be structured according to contextual, diagnostic, evaluative and strategic categories. The initial sampling of respondents for this research study was guided by general approach to the study instead of relying on a predetermined theoretical interpretation of conceptualizing a campaign message in an election (Glaser, 1978; and Srivastava & Thomson, 2009). In conducting this study therefore, the researcher commenced the preliminary stages of primary data collection without any clearly defined theoretical underpinnings as the guide to data gathering (Charmaz, 2014). Since in depth interview is one of the major methods of data collection under grounded theory methodology, the researcher developed a flexible interview or questionnaire guide to aid the data collection as well as to facilitate achieving data saturation.

For example, the interviewer asked all respondents the same set of questions as indicated in the questionnaire guide. However, respondents were granted enough flexibility of raising other matters or issues which led to ensuring that no more new data is generated (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). The interview guide was developed in a way that all respondents, that is respondents sampled from both the political group and the media practitioners, were asked broader questions on the onset of the interviews before narrowing the questions down to very specific areas that reflected the research objectives outlined in this study.

In addition, this procedure of using a comprehensive questionnaire guide and in-depth interview method of data collection offered the researcher the opportunity to generate good amount of quality data on each issue under study from each respondent for data analysis thereby achieving data saturation through theoretical sampling (Glaser, 1978; and Collis and Hussey and Hussey, 2003). It is important to indicate that, data saturation was achieved through a process whereby the

researcher selected specific issues of interest which have emanated from earlier interviews and data analysis through constant comparison and change them by reformulating new questions for subsequent interviews with relevant respondent(s). These respondents were selected from among the earlier respondents who were interviewed in order to fill the gap identified from the preliminary data analysis. This process continued until no new data was emerging from the sampled respondents.

The researcher however found this approach of achieving data saturation cumbersome, time consuming and challenging particularly where the sample frame consisted of high profile political figures and individuals belonging to the two leading political parties under the study who played leading roles during the keenly competitive political elections in Ghana (Silverman, 2000; Saunders et al, 2016; and Gyampo et al, 2017).

PART III

CHAPTER SEVEN: DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION

7.1 Overview

The overall goal of this research study is to develop a conceptual framework that can be applied or used by political campaign communications strategists to formulate political campaign messages for elections. As argued by both Faucheux (1993) and Herrnson (2004) political campaign messages should be considered as essential and strategic element in any political campaign activity, particularly in multiparty competitive democratic dispensation as it pertains in Ghana. Political campaign message in this context is defined as a political slogan or a manifesto theme or a campaign promise designed and disseminated by a candidate or a political party during an election campaign to persuade voters for their votes. In fact, in truly democratic elections, policy positions, developmental objectives as well as socioeconomic programmes and projects to be implemented by a candidate seeking political leadership in any jurisdiction is usually, if not always expressed in explicit communication messages. The importance of campaign message is also underscored by the assertion made by Morris (1999) that political communications specialists should spend enough time to formulate their campaign messages because it is the tool that can be used to influence the voters decision making. In simple words, a candidate's winnability can be judged to some extent by the candidate's campaign message.

For this research to effectively achieve its overarching goal, the following research objectives were developed:

- 1. To determine how the campaign messages of the two leading Presidential candidates in the 2016 elections were conceptualized.*
- 2. To examine the framing strategies used by the two leading Presidential candidates.*
- 3. To analyse the themes underlying the campaign messages of the two Presidential candidates.*

These research objectives have been developed to bring out the critical elements involved in the processes of political campaign message formulation. In this regard, the first task of the researcher is to identify the main campaign messages used by the two leading Presidential Candidates in the case study election of 2016 in Ghana. The second task is to map out the processes the Presidential candidates or their Communications Specialists undertook to formulate the said campaign messages while as the third task is to analyse the framing strategy as well as the key elements that influenced the selection of the campaign messages that were used during the 2016 electoral campaign by the two political parties.

The data analysis was conducted manually under the qualitative research approach using the Grounded Theory methodology. The data indicate that thirteen (13) campaign messages were formulated and disseminated by both NPP and NDC to persuade voters for their votes in 2016 general elections. It emerged that Free SHS or Free Education campaign message designed and disseminated by the NPP was the most popular and most appealing message to the Ghanaian electorates who took part in this study. Coincidentally, the free SHS campaign message had the highest recall rate by the respondents as all the twenty four (24) respondents who were interviewed could recall that message. On the other hand, however, changing lives, transforming Ghana campaign message by the NDC was identified as the main campaign message of the NDC although respondents identified other campaign messages used by the NDC for the said election. The two leading political parties anchored their campaign messaging on *Hope*, *Fear* and *Continuity* as the main driving themes for message formulation. Respondents identified eighteen (18) media channels available in the media ecosystem for campaign message dissemination. The data further indicates that majority of Ghanaians source their news from radio, television, newspaper, and social media platforms, and same were used by both NPP and NDC campaigns.

7.2 Main Campaign Messages in the 2016 Presidential Elections Campaign

As noted by Dean and Croft (2001), voters are known to make rational and irrational decisions in any competitive elections. It is therefore appropriate that candidates seeking to occupy elected office design communications strategy that reduces the extent of irrational voting decisions by electorates. In furtherance to this assertion by Dean and Croft (2001), some marketing specialists believe that effective political party organization and management particularly in a multiparty democracy depends largely on political marketing (Thrassou et al, 2009). In this regard, the application of traditional marketing tools such as advertising, segmentation, targeting, positioning, and branding when planning political communications strategies has become imperative, for both established democracies such as the US, UK and EU as well as in transitional democracies such as Ghana, Nigeria and Kenya.

Although, it is established that many African countries are experiencing what some political scientists described as transitional democracies, the application of some of the traditional marketing tools outlined earlier have become apparent (Hinson and Tweneboah, 2010 and Gyampo et al, 2017). Moreover, for these traditional marketing principles to be applied effectively in this context, there is the need for rigorous analytical study to be conducted for the outcomes to lay strong foundation for their application. This research work therefore seeks, partly, to determine how best political campaign messages can be formulated for elections in Ghana and to a large extent in similar political environments in Africa and beyond.

For the purpose of this research, campaign message is defined as the campaign slogan and, or the campaign manifesto theme of the NPP and NDC whose Presidential candidates participated in the 2016 general elections in Ghana. In practice, campaign slogans have dominated political campaign communications in Ghana since the onset of political party formation for political power through competitive elections. Overall, twenty four (24) respondents, made up of political activists, political advisors and media practitioners responded to the question ‘what were the main campaign

messages of the two leading presidential candidates in the 2016 general election?’ The data collected indicates that each respondent identified more than one campaign message as the main campaign message for either the NPP or the NDC presidential candidate. However, some could not recollect the campaign messages or slogan of the NDC. The data further shows that respondent’s affinity or affiliation to a candidate or to a particular political party is likely to help him or her recall the campaign message of the said candidate or the said political party. It is clear from the data that although the sampled respondents were politically exposed individuals, they however lacked understanding of what constitute a campaign message.

The table (Table 7.1) below presents the primary data collected during the field work and identified the feedback collected from the interactions with the twenty four (24) respondents:

TABLE 7.1: MAIN CAMPAIGN MESSAGES IN THE 2016 ELECTION

S/No.	RESPONDENT	ROLE/POSITION	MAIN CAMPAIGN MESSAGES
1	<i>NPP/2016/SA/MCL04</i>	<i>Member, Manifesto Committee</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Promise of 1D1F</i> • <i>Free Education</i>
2	<i>NPP/2016/SA/MCL06</i>	<i>Member, Manifesto Committee</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Free Education</i> • <i>One District One Factory</i>
3	<i>NPP/2016/W/CS02</i>	<i>Communications Strategist for Social Media Team</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Campaign of change</i> • <i>Free SHS</i> • <i>One District, One Factory</i> • <i>Battle is still the Lord's</i> • <i>An Agenda for Jobs</i>
4	<i>NPP/2016/SA/MCL01</i>	<i>Member, Manifesto Committee</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Free education</i> • <i>1D1F</i>
5	<i>NPP/2016/SA/CO06</i>	<i>Member, Manifesto Committee</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Agenda for Jobs</i> • <i>Battle is still the Lord's</i> • <i>Free education</i>

6	<i>NPP/2016/SA/CO07</i>	<i>Campaign Communications Officer</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Unite for Change</i> • <i>Free SHS</i> • <i>One District One Factory</i> • <i>Battle is still the Lord's</i>
7	<i>NDC/2016/SA/CS01</i>	<i>Deputy Minister of State & Member of National Campaign Team</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Continuation (Toaso)</i> • <i>Changing lives and Transforming Ghana</i>
8	<i>NPP/2016/SA/C003</i>	<i>Parliamentary Candidate</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Free SHS</i> • <i>One district, One factory</i>
9	<i>NPP/2016/SA/CS08</i>	<i>Parliamentary Candidate</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Arise for Change</i> • <i>Battle is still the Lord's</i> • <i>Edey bee k3k3</i> • <i>1 district 1 factory</i> • <i>Free SHS</i> • <i>1 ambulance per constituency</i>
10	<i>NPP/2016/SA/CO06</i>	<i>Member, Campaign Communications Team</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Change</i> • <i>Agenda for jobs</i> • <i>One District One Factory</i> • <i>Free SHS</i>
11	<i>NPP/2016/SA/CO01</i>	<i>Parliamentary Candidate</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Battle is still the Lord's</i> • <i>Free SHS</i>
12	<i>NPP/2016/SA/MCL09</i>	<i>Parliamentary Candidate</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Arise for change</i> • <i>Free SHS</i> • <i>1 District 1 Factory</i> • <i>1 Village 1 Dam</i>
13	<i>NPP/2016/SA/CO02</i>	<i>Social Media Team Member</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Battle is the Lord's</i> • <i>Change to transform Ghana</i> • <i>Free SHS</i> • <i>Agenda for jobs and prosperity</i> • <i>1D1F</i>
14	<i>MP/2016/SA/TVO2</i>	<i>Journalist/Newscaster</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Battle is still the Lord's</i>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Free SHS</i> • <i>1 district 1 factory</i> • <i>1 constituency 1 million dollars</i>
15	MP/2016/SA/TV03	<i>Journalist & TV Host</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Change</i> • <i>Free SHS</i> • <i>1D1F</i>
16	MP/2016/SA/TV01	<i>Media Consultant</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Change and agenda for jobs</i> • <i>Edey bee k3k3</i> • <i>Free SHS education</i> • <i>JM toaso</i>
17	MP/2016/SA/NP03	<i>Newspaper Reporter</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Change for jobs</i> • <i>Edey bee k3k3</i> • <i>the Battle is the still Lord's</i> • <i>JM toaso</i> • <i>1D1F</i> • <i>1 Village 1 Dam</i> • <i>Free SHS</i> • <i>1 District 1 Warehouse</i>
18	MP/2016/SA/NP04	<i>Deputy Editor</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Free SHS</i> • <i>One Village One Dam</i> • <i>1 Constituency 1 Million Dollars</i> • <i>JM toaso</i> • <i>1D1F</i>
19	MP/2016/SA/TV04	<i>TV Reporter</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Battle is still the Lord's</i> • <i>NPP was Change and an agenda for jobs</i> • <i>NDC was Changing lives and transforming Ghana</i> • <i>Free SHS</i>
20	MP/2016/SA/CO02	<i>Media Consultant</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>1 District 1 Factory</i> • <i>Free SHS</i>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>1 village 1 dam</i> • <i>Changing Lives Transforming Ghana NDC</i> • <i>Edey bee k3k3</i> • <i>Forward ever, backwards never</i>
21	<i>MP/2016/SA/OL01</i>	<i>Online Reporter</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>NPP I think Free SHS</i> • <i>1 village, 1 dam</i> • <i>NDC I don't really recall</i>
22	<i>MP/2016/SA/R01</i>	<i>Radio Journalist</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Free SHS</i> • <i>1 district 1 factory</i> • <i>1 village 1 dam</i> • <i>1 million per constituency</i> • <i>Progressive Free Education</i>
23	<i>MP/2016/SA/R02</i>	<i>Radio Journalist</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Change</i> • <i>Free SHS</i> • <i>JM toaso</i>
24	<i>MP/2016/SA/NP02</i>	<i>Newspaper Reporter</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>For the NPP it was the Free SHS</i> • <i>1 Village 1 Dam</i> • <i>1 District 1 Factory</i>

SOURCE: PRIMARY DATA

The above matrix indicates that the twenty four (24) respondents who participated in the research assignment were able to collectively identify seventy three (73) campaign messages or thirteen (13) different campaign messages which were formulated and employed by the two leading Presidential candidates in the 2016 general elections in Ghana. Further analysis of the data shows that out of the number of respondents interviewed, twenty three (23) respondents representing ninety six percent (96%) believe that *'Free SHS or Free Education'* was the main campaign message of the New Patriotic Party (NPP) whilst seventeen (17) respondents interviewed, or seventy one percent

(71%) indicated that ‘*One District One Factory (IDIF)*’ was the main campaign message of the New Patriotic Party (NPP) in the 2016 general elections. On the other hand, only nine (9) respondents who participated in the study, representing thirty eight percent (38%) identified ‘*Changing Lives Transforming Ghana*’ as the main campaign message of the National Democratic Congress (NDC) in the 2016 general elections whilst four (4) of the respondents or seventeen (17%) percent of those who took part in the research believed that ‘*Edey bee K3k3*’ was the main campaign message of the NDC during the 2016 general elections in Ghana. In conclusion, some respondents identified other campaign messages including ‘*the battle is still the Lord’s*’ and ‘*Arise for Change*’ as campaign messages of the NPP whilst others believed that slogans such as ‘*JM Toaso*’ was the lead campaign message of the NDC in the 2016 presidential elections.

Furthermore, in response to the *research question one*, when the data is analysed to determine the number of campaign messages used during the 2016 general elections between the two leading political parties, sampled respondents indicated that a total of thirteen (13) campaign messages were used by the two political parties. The New Patriotic Party (NPP) formulated and used seven (7) campaign messages whereas the National Democratic Congress (NDC) designed and employed six (6) messages in the same election (*refer to Table 7.2*).

The table below (Table 7.2) presents a direct comparison of the main campaign messages or slogans identified by the sampled respondents during the data collection exercise:

TABLE 7.2: NPP vs NDC MAIN CAMPAIGN MESSAGES IN THE 2016 GENERAL ELECTIONS

NEW PATRIOTIC PARTY (NPP)	NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC CONGRESS (NDC)
<i>1. Free SHS</i>	<i>1. Progressive Free Education</i>
<i>2. One District One Factory</i>	<i>2. Forward ever, backwards never</i>
<i>3. One Village One Dam</i>	<i>3. JM Toaso</i>
<i>4. One Constituency One Million Dollars</i>	<i>4. John 3:16</i>
<i>5. Arise for Change</i>	

6. <i>Change, an Agenda for Jobs</i>	5. <i>Changing Lives Transforming Ghana</i>
7. <i>The Battle is Still the Lord's</i>	6. <i>Edey bee k3k3</i>

SOURCE: PRIMARY DATA

The selection of the above thirteen (13) main campaign messages used by the NPP and NDC emanated from the primary data collected as indicated in sampled extracts from the transcripts of the interviews with selected respondents below:

Interviewer: *So, I will like to find out from you if you can tell me about the main slogan used by your presidential candidate in the 2016 election?*

Respondent MCL04: *The main slogan was per what I know we had a list of programs that the incoming NPP administration had designed to implement if they won political power so the most obvious was the Free SHS promise in addition to other, but this was one singular recognizable promise of the then presidential candidate and then we had 1 district 1 factory as another very prominent promise.*

Interviewer: *So, do you recall the main slogan used by the NPP in the 2016 election?*

Respondent MCL06: *Well, it wasn't a slogan per say. It was a message that was given to the Ghanaian electorates in 2012 which was not well bought into and consequently moved to 2016; and that was the "Free Education".*

Interviewer: *Will you be able to tell me the main campaign slogans that were used in the 2016 election campaign?*

Respondent CS02: *The main campaign slogan, the topmost of them was Free SHS but we had others like the **One District, One Factory**. For instance, the **One Village, One dam**, we also had a planting for jobs program, we had the **One District, One Warehouse**, we had the **One million per constituency**.*

Interviewer: *Okay. So, Sir what was the main or the lead campaign promise?*

Respondent MCL01: *That was the Free Education. That was the Free SHS.*

Interviewer: *The focus is on conceptualizing political campaign messages in an election, and the case study is on the 2016 campaign in Ghana. So, would you be able to share with me the main campaign messages used by the presidential candidates during the 2016 election?*

Respondent CO06: *In terms of NPP, our message was largely hope or a transformed Ghana. The NDC if I recall was preaching a message of continuity in development. NPP also focused on Education, free education which became sort of a slogan. And there was also the focus of industrialization, what we called the industrialization agenda. I can't recall most of them, I think in 2016, the NDC's main slogan was "Changing lives, Transforming Ghana". I think that was the NDC's main slogan.*

Interviewer: *Tell me the main campaign slogan used by your Presidential Candidate in the 2016 general elections.*

Respondent CD07: *Unite for change, the battle is the Lord's. Free SHS and One District One Factory.*

Interviewer: *Can you share with me the campaign messages used by your presidential candidate during the 2016 Presidential election?*

Respondent CS01: *In 2016 NDC campaign message was Changing Lives, Transforming Ghana. We had various other slogans, if you recall, we had the "Toaso" which was basically continuation. The campaign was targeted at the re-election of John Dramani Mahama as Ghana's President.*

Interviewer: *So, can you share with me the main campaign messages used by your presidential candidate during the 2016 elections.*

Respondent C003: *"Free SHS". So the Free Secondary School Education was the caption that took over the theme of the Manifesto. So it's the free SHS that sold the candidate in the 2016 election.*

Respondent TV02: *For the NPP I remember the Battle is still the Lord's. For the NDC I do not really remember. But you know the NPP they had several slogans one of the main one is the Battle is still the Lord's.*

You know for the NDC the promises were very scattered, so it was very difficult to pick up on one but for the NPP they had the Free SHS; 1 district 1 factory; and 1 constituency 1 million dollars you know that one slogan that really caught on with people. But with the NDC they had promises but were not all that vivid in the mind.

Interviewer: *Can you recall some of the campaign messages that were used by the presidential candidates of NPP and NDC during the 2016 elections.*

Respondent TV03: *Okay I think for the slogans the NDC had a lot of slogans in 2016 and on the side of the NPP the theme was nearly one premised on change. On the side of the NDC there were a lot of slogans like putting 'People First'. I think these are the key ones I can remember. Everything about the NPP message and campaign activities were premised on change and the NDC were premised on enhancing human capacity to capital mostly you hear putting People first.*

Interviewer: *Okay do you recall the main campaign slogans or themes that were used by both the NPP and the NDC in 2016 their Presidential candidates*

Respondent TV01: *I think that of the NPP was change and agenda for jobs that of the NDC I think it was transforming Ghana I do not really recollect but what I know is that I remember 'edey bee k3k3' that I remember as the campaign slogan basically, but I clearly remember that of the NPP that is change and agenda for jobs.*

Interviewer: *So what was the main campaign slogan used by the NDC?*

Respondent R01: *For the NDC, 2016 there wasn't really a pointed message, most of them were reactions to what the NPP offered, for example they said they would do the progressive Free SHS and also, they agreed that they wanted to create more regions so like I said there wasn't a pointed message that they could be identified with. Their message was more of a reaction to what the NPP had promised.*

It must be noted that a campaign message becomes the main campaign message for a particular campaign if the message satisfies certain criteria, which may include but not limited to how the message is positioned by the candidate as part of the overall campaign narrative, the attractiveness of the message, how easily the message is recalled by the target audience, and how popular the message is among the target audience (Baines, Harris and Lewis, 2002). The primary data as shown in the above quotes clearly indicates that except one respondent who could not indicate Free SHS as the main campaign message for the NPP, all respondents mentioned Free SHS as the main campaign message. In other words, more than ninety five percent of the respondents who participated in the study believed that Free SHS was the main campaign message for the NPP's Candidate. In the same vein, the main campaign message used by the NDC was also among the top three messages mentioned by majority of respondents. It can therefore be underscored that in conceptualizing a campaign message for election in multiparty democracy, one must set it against some clearly defined criteria including the ones enumerated above.

7.3 Ability to Recall Campaign Messages

The ability to attract voters' attention to a stimulus such as a campaign message or a political slogan depends on a number of factors (Baines, Harris and Lewis, 2002; and Hinson & Tweneboah, 2010). Political Communications Strategists have made significant efforts through the application of marketing principles in formulating campaign messages not only to attract attention of voters but to enhance their ability to recall the said stimulus especially when making the decision to vote for a candidate in an election (Hinson & Tweneboah, 2010). Thus, embedding a campaign message in a voter is an important exercise because it can influence his or her to vote for a particular candidate, similar to making a decision to buy a detergent from a Supermarket.

It is therefore extremely important to achieve high level of stimulus recall by target audience (voters) as it leads to voter behaviour (Laming, 2021). The challenge in this context is that "while attention to a stimulus is at the participant's disposal, the consequent entry into memory is not" (Laming, 2021, page 2440). In other words, the challenge Communications Strategists are confronted with is to formulate campaign messages that can attract the attention of the voter as well as aid the voter's ability to recall. Such campaign messages must therefore meet certain key requirements which should be factored into the process of campaign message formulation.

Moreover, voter's ability to recall a political stimulus such as a campaign slogan or a candidate's name is relevant because as indicated by Dean and Croft (2010) and Diesfeldt (2017) voters can make rational and irrational decision in selecting a candidate in an election, particularly when the election is keenly competitive, and candidates involved are spending significant resources in communications. In Ghana, Presidential elections are held every four years hence mitigating the level of irrational decisions among voters is imperative for national economic development. Secondly, a greater proportion of Ghanaian voters are among the less educated people hence there is the high tendency for them to be malleable and susceptible to political propaganda stimuli (Ayee, 2016 and Hinson & Tweneboah, 2010). It is therefore critical that persuasive campaign messages

are formulated to aid voter's ability to recall positive or relevant campaign messages which will invariably influence their voting decisions in a competitive election.

As the data collected reveals, greater proportion of the respondents interviewed had high ability of recalling some of the political slogans employed by the two leading parties in 2016. As indicated earlier, a total of thirteen (13) political campaign messages were designed and employed by both the NPP and NDC during the 2016 general elections. Table 7.2 above presented the list of these campaign messages. A further review of the data indicates that NPP had a total of seven (7) political campaign messages and NDC employed a total of six (6) campaign messages during the 2016 general elections, according to those who took part in this study.

Furthermore, an analysis of the data collected also indicates that all the eleven (11) sampled respondents from the Media Practitioners group could recall at least one of the NPP campaign slogans whereas only five Media Practitioners out of the total number of respondents sampled, representing forty five percent (45%) was able to recall some of the NDC campaign slogans. It was also established that one's ability to recall a political stimulus is positively related to one's affiliation to the political party or likeness of the Presidential Candidate. In addition, the data revealed that only one (1) respondent identified herself with the National Democratic Congress (NDC).

A manual analysis of the transcript clearly indicates that the level of unaided message recall was positively influenced by the level of education of the sampled respondents. The primary data further indicates that the lowest level of educational qualification of the sampled respondents who participated in this study was an Undergraduate degree, with majority of them having Postgraduate university qualifications. This positive relationship established between the level of education and voters' ability to recall a campaign message or campaign stimulus should feed into campaign communications planning. In other words, when formulating campaign communications message, the level of education of the total registered voters (the target audience) must reflect in the final campaign message in order to enhance message recall. In practice, this must influence the choice of words and length of the message so that less educated and illiterate may be able to recall the

campaign message. Examples of such concise and easy to recall campaign slogans include ‘*New Generation American*’; ‘*Self Government Now!*’; ‘*New Labour*’; ‘*Yes We Can!*’; ‘*Better Ghana*’; ‘*Free SHS*’; ‘*Change for Jobs*’; and ‘*Jobs for the People*’.

Moreover, understanding the level of education of the target voters and relating it to the nature of campaign message to be employed has critical implications for achieving electoral victory. An implication for example is that, in a constituency or a polling station where a higher proportion of the voter population has high level of education, there may be little effort on the part of the campaign communications of the political party or the candidate to aid voters’ ability to recall the campaign message or the campaign stimulus. In such cases, the campaign will be successful if less attention and resources are placed on aiding the voters in that area to recall the message through the use of campaign promotional materials. On the other hand, however, in polling stations or constituencies where a higher proportion of the voter population has low level of educational qualification, the campaign communication will be required to dedicate more efforts to aid the voters to recall the campaign message or the campaign stimulus especially at the point of voting. This can be achieved through the placement of promotional materials close to the polling centers, or a more dedicated and personal attempt to reach out to the voters just before making their voting decisions. The use of social media, personalized messages, phone calls among others may be effective in reaching out to influence a campaign message recall.

It will therefore be prudent for future research to consider undertaking research on campaign message recall by grassroot voters. Below are the portions of the transcript selected in support of this conclusion:

Interviewer: *So, do you recall the main slogan used by the NPP in the 2016 election?*

Respondent MCL06: *Well, it wasn’t a slogan per say. It was a message that was given to the Ghanaian electorates in 2012 which was not well bought into and consequently moved to 2016; and that was the “Free Education”. (Education Qualification: University Degree)*

Interviewer: *Will you be able to tell me the main campaign slogans that were used in the 2016 election campaign?*

Respondent CS02: *The main campaign slogan, the topmost of them was Free SHS but we had others like the **One District, One Factory**. For instance, the **One Village, One dam**, we also had a planting for jobs program, we had the **One District, One Warehouse**, we had the **One million per constituency**. (Education Qualification: Postgraduate University Degree)*

Interviewer: *Okay. So, Sir what was the main or the lead campaign promise?*

Respondent MCL01: *That was the Free Education. That was the Free SHS. (Education Qualification: Postgraduate University Degree)*

Interviewer: *Tell me the main campaign slogan used by your Presidential Candidate in the 2016 general elections.*

Respondent CO07: *Unite for change, the battle is the Lord's. Free SHS and One District One Factory. (Education Qualification: University Degree)*

Interviewer: *Can you recall some of the campaign messages that were used by the presidential candidates of NPP and NDC during the 2016 elections.*

Respondent TV03: *Okay I think for the slogans the NDC had a lot of slogans in 2016 and on the side of the NPP the theme was nearly one premised on change. On the side of the NDC there were a lot of slogans like putting 'People First'. I think these are the key ones I can remember. Everything about the NPP message and campaign activities were premised on change and the NDC were premised on enhancing human capacity to capital mostly you hear putting People first. (Education Qualification: University Degree)*

Interviewer: *Okay do you recall the main campaign slogans or themes that were used by both the NPP and the NDC in 2016 their Presidential candidates*

Respondent TV01: *I think that of the NPP was change and agenda for jobs that of the NDC I think it was transforming Ghana I do not really recollect but what I know is that I remember 'edey bee k3k3' that I remember as the campaign slogan basically, but I clearly remember that of the NPP that is change and agenda for jobs. (Education Qualification: University Degree)*

Interviewer: *So what was the main campaign slogan used by the NDC?*

Respondent R01: *For the NDC, 2016 there wasn't really a pointed message, most of them were reactions to what the NPP offered, for example they said they would do the progressive Free SHS and also, they agreed that they wanted to create more regions so like I said there wasn't a pointed message that they could be identified with. Their message was more of a reaction to what the NPP had promised. (Education Qualification: University Degree).*

Lastly, respondents who participated in the study had high recall rate of *'Free SHS'* campaign message of the NPP than the other campaign messages, including the promise of implementing a *'One District One Factory (1D1F)'* programme which became second with 17 respondents identifying it as the main campaign message. For the NDC, respondents easily recalled the campaign slogan *'Changing lives, Transforming Ghana'* in relation to the other campaign messages formulated and deployed by the same political party. In addition, the change theme resonated well with the Free SHS campaign message as indicated in majority of respondents' quotations above. Respondents who could recall the main campaign messages of both Candidates further indicated the campaign message theme associated with the Candidate.

7.4 The Most Appealing Campaign Message in the 2016 General Elections

There is the general belief that voters cast their vote for a candidate in an election for various reasons including a more appealing campaign message and attractive branding of campaign promises (Gyampo et al, 2017 and Kotler and Roberto, 1989). Indeed, using Voter Behaviour theory to underpin a study to determine the factors that led to the monumental defeat of the National Democratic Congress (NDC) in the 2016 general elections, Gyampo et al (2017) identified the inability to formulate and disseminate appealing campaign message and poor branding as some of the key factors that caused the defeat of the NDC's Presidential Candidate.

In this study therefore, respondents were asked to identify the most appealing or attractive campaign message employed by the two leading presidential candidates. The table below (Table 7.3) indicates that seventeen (17) respondents representing seventy one (71%) believed that the *'Free SHS'* was the most appealing campaign message while as just about six (6) respondents representing twenty five (25%) of those who participated in this study identified the One District One Factory (1D1F) as second most appealing campaign messages. These messages were part of the political campaign messages formulated and disseminated by the NPP candidate. It is clear from

the available data that only one (1) representing just four percent (4%) believe that the NDC campaign message was the most appealing to the electorates. It is however clear that the two political parties who participated in the 2016 applied the similar process of formulating their campaign messages. Analysis of the data therefore reinforces the work done by Gyampo et al in 2017 which concluded that the NDC’s campaign communications strategy and branding were poor.

TABLE 7.3: THE MOST APPEALING CAMPAIGN MESSAGE

CAMPAIGN MESSAGE	NO. OF RESPONDENT
1D1F	6
FREE	17
CHANGING LIVES	1
EDEY BEE K3K3	0

SOURCE: PRIMARY DATA

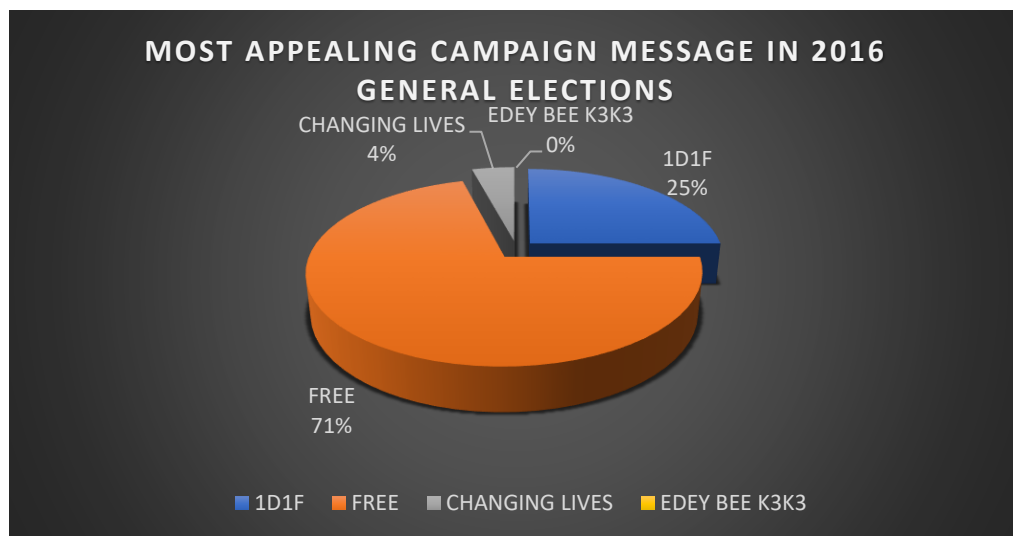


FIGURE 7.1: MOST APPEALING CAMPAIGN MESSAGE IN 2016

SOURCE: PRIMARY DATA

The above diagram presents a pictorial view of the campaign messages that appealed most to the electorates who participated in the 2016 general elections, using the primary data collected under this study.

A further analysis of the raw data revealed that many of the respondents who participated in the study were of the belief that multiple campaign messages were employed by the two leading Presidential Candidates during the election under study. The data further indicates that a single campaign message cannot appeal to every segment of the voting population and in some cases, one campaign message may be necessary to reinforce or complement the other campaign message. In addition, a new campaign message may be specifically formulated to target specific segments of the voting population. The data below revealed that whilst the 'Free SHS' campaign message targeted at young parents and parents with kids of school going age, the 'One District One Factory (1D1F) programme' campaign message was specifically or directly targeted at unemployed and underemployed youth. Lastly, these two campaign messages employed by the NPP complemented each other across the electoral population. Extracts from the transcripts of the questionnaire administered by the researcher below provide some more clarification:

Interviewer: *Okay with respect to all the issues that you mentioned which one of these campaign messages do you believe appealed most to your readers around that time?*

Respondent NPP/2016/SA/MCL04: *I think the Free SHS policy appealed to more Ghanaians, especially Women. Women turn to have effect on education in rural Ghana quite a number of parents basically the fathers do not take care of their children and it turns out to be the responsibility of most of these women so the announcement of the Free SHS policy turned to have convinced a lot of women to vote for the NPP at the time. The other thing I should also say is the agenda for jobs was also very key. It was also at the time where because of the 'light out' problems that we use to have in this country several small scale manufacturers were closing down as a result of the power crisis and all, so it turned to have influenced quite a number of people in their voting pattern. So today as we speak, I find it very difficult to understand how perhaps people are really going to take this particular electioneering campaign because of the effect of 2016 and the results that were basically achieved at that time the number of people including the youth that have been employed. I don't know that influence with which that election really had on them, but I think the results of the next election will really determine whether these achievements are realistic or not.*

Interviewer: *Which of these main campaign messages do you believe appealed most to the electorates?*

Respondent NPP/2016/W/CS02: *Appealed most to the electorate I think, 1 District 1 Factory was very loud because it addressed the unemployment challenge in the system. Free SHS was loud, but people were still skeptical as to whether it was feasible or possibly to do it but if you look at 1D1F as a policy it was to partner the private sector and the private sector truly embraced it.*

Interviewer: Which of these campaign messages do you believe appealed most to the electorates or voters?

Respondent NPP/2016/SA/MCL01: I think, the work we did after the elections showed that the message of free education was caught on with massively. It resonated massively with the electorates

Interviewer: Which of these campaign messages do you believe appealed most to the electorates or voters?

Respondent NPP/2016/SA/C003: I think largely it was about the Changing lives. I think we were looking at changing lives in terms of infrastructure and we had four main thematic areas in terms of our manifesto. We had one that was about putting people first, and largely it was more of social interventions and what have you. We also had a second part of our campaign Manifesto, which was about our economic transformation, we also had one that was about our Agriculture, Health and what have you. So, I think largely those were the three thematic areas. And when we talk about putting people first, it took care of all the social and infrastructural development that we had in mind such as Education, Hospitals, Road Infrastructure, etc. Then off course we also wanted to look at a strong and resilient economy for jobs and transformation. So largely, we linked all of our four thematic areas to the subject of Transformation.

Interviewer: Okay so which of these campaign messages appealed to your readers and listeners at that time?

Respondent NPP/2016/SA/MCL09: Oh 1 District 1 Factory, 1 Village 1 Dam or you want me to mention just one.

Interviewer: Just the most popular one that was used in the 2016 elections.

Respondent MP/2016/SA/NP04: It was the Free SHS.

Interviewer: Free SHS?

Respondent NPP/2016/SA/CS08: You would also realize that the reason was partly because Free SHS had featured in the NPP 2008 and 2012 campaigns, so it had now resonated very well with everybody across the country. You would also realize that the NDC spent instead of drumming home their message they spent time criticizing the Free SHS message so that tells you that it resonated very well with people.

Interviewer: Okay which of these campaign messages do you believe appealed most to your readers?

Respondent NPP/2016/SA/NP04: I think the Free SHS appealed the most.....

It is quite clear from the above quotations that many respondents were resolute about the campaign message that they believe appealed most to the electorates. Consequently, the popularity of the Free SHS campaign message during the 2016 general election campaign also became apparent from the primary data when respondents were asked to indicate which of the messages, they believe was most appealing to the electorates. As indicated in the above, the Free SHS campaign slogan was selected by majority of the respondents as the most appealing campaign message. The consistent popularity of Free SHS message which was formulated by the NPP ran through different questions posed by the researcher. This shows that when a campaign message is properly conceptualized or formulated, the said message will have features that will make it popular, appealing, and or easy to recall.

7.4.1 Achieving Data Saturation

Achieving data saturation is important in qualitative research because data collection as well as data analysis is stretched to the point where no new or additional information can be obtained or discovered from the raw data generated (Charmaz, 2006). This enriches the research by ensuring that ample data is collected from all relevant respondents before data analysis is carried out. Conclusions, concepts, or themes that emerge from the primary data will therefore be grounded on a systematic and rigorous research carried out under a qualitative research methodology. In this study, data saturation was achieved through the conduct of series of interviews with the respondents selected for the exercise until it became apparent that no new information could emerge from the data analysis. As a case in point, the process of achieving data saturation using theoretical sampling in this research study can be enumerated below per the transcript of one of the interviewees:

Researcher: *Can you share with me the main campaign messages that were used for the 2016 Presidential election in Ghana?*

Respondent NPP/2016/SA/CS02: *The 2016 Presidential election, the campaign was a campaign of change! The country had been under the leadership of the NDC for the past 8 years and there was no progress; so many hardships and the economy had been run down by the NDC Government, and people were just tired, so people wanted change.*

Researcher: Will you be able to tell me any of the campaign slogans that were used by the political parties during the campaign?

Respondent NPP/2016/SA/CS02: The main campaign slogan, the topmost of them was Free SHS, and that has to do with our Education Policy which we had been championing since 2008. It seemed to resonate very well with the people in 2016. So, Free SHS was the main campaign message, but we had others like the **One District One Factory**, which were informed by traveling around the country and the needs of people around the country. For instance, the **One village One dam**, we also had a **Planting for Food and Job program**, we had the **One District One Warehouse**, we had the **One million per Constituency** to be able to do special projects in the constituencies, thus, constituency specific and a few others.

Researcher: Would you say that your Party did set up a team to develop the slogans?

Respondent NPP/2016/SA/CS02: Absolutely! There is always a Communications Team and within the Communications Team, there are regular meeting where they brainstorm to come up with some of the slogans but most of these slogans were inspired on the campaign trail. Wherever you went or wherever the Presidential Candidate went, how people were reacting to the message and the needs of the people around wherever he went inspired the campaign messaging.

Researcher: What was the lead manifesto point?

Respondent NPP/2016/SA/CS02: Free SHS

Researcher: Did the Campaign Team conduct any research to access the mode of the electorates?

Respondent NPP/2016/SA/CS02: Absolutely! There is a lot of research that goes on in an election year. We poll to find out what people are thinking, we do focus groups to find out what people are thinking and saying around the country that is of interest to you. We put them all together, we collate them and then we aggregate to find which are the most frequent ones (issues). In 2016, the most frequent one was jobs. People wanted jobs, education was also a frequent issue that came up, the economy was also one, **Dumsor** which is power

outages and blackouts was also a frequent subject that came up from our research and polling and Focus Group Discussions. So those were the main issues.

Researcher: *Was it just the Focus Groups that the Campaign Team used, or you had other ones?*

Respondent NPP/2016/SA/CS02: *Not only Focus Group Discussion but polling. We polled as well in the various Constituencies and areas to find out exactly what people are talking about.*

Researcher: *What informed the choice of the campaign messages?*

Respondent NPP/2016/SA/CS02: *Like I said, most of them were inspired by the ground and the reactions by the electorates. Free SHS had always been the Presidential Candidate's sort of desire or policy since 2008, he said it in 2012 and again in 2016 and finally Ghanaian people gave him the nod in 2016. The overall theme of his campaign, the underlying theme was industrialization. Education feeds into industrialization, the **One District One Factory (IDIF)** also feeds into industrialization. So, industrialization was the underlying theme. But in a country, such as ours, you cannot have a campaign slogan that says industrialization. It will not resonate well with the ground people so you pick the various aspects that sort of connect to make an industrialized nation which includes education, the raw materials by industries, the industries themselves, the storage for the industries and the kind of economy that will be created as a result of having industries across the country, so that was what we did.*

Researcher: *Can you recall some of the events leading to the choice of the final campaign messages?*

Respondent NPP/2016/SA/CS02: *For instance, at a rally in the Western Region after consultation between the then Presidential Candidate and the now Minister for Trade and Industry, the idea was pitched that during the previous NPP Government, there was a lot of data that were collected around the country on establishing factories in the districts, so why should we not make that as a promise, because we already have the data, to enable us deliver on that. We just need to freshen up on the data or get updated data to be able to roll it out. The then Presidential Candidate was happy about it and on the campaign platform he*

announced the policy ‘One District One Factory’ and there it was. So, I think that was how some of these campaign messages were selected.

Researcher: *If I can recall, you made mention of the fact that in 2016, the electorates or the voters were very particular about jobs, the economy and what not, then obviously there are some factors and other things you may also look at in couching or conceptualizing your campaign messages. So how were you able to narrow it down to the key factors that you focused on?*

Respondent NPP/2016/SA/CS02: *When you go into an election, you must be very specific as to what you want to do and how specific you are is informed by the kind of research that you do on the ground. So, having done all this research, we knew that these are the issues that people were interested in. So, if you look at our 2016 Manifesto for instance, the headline was ‘Change’ and the sub headline was ‘An Agenda for Jobs’. If you read through the 2016 Manifesto, everything in the 2016 Manifesto is sort of pointing at job creation.*

The process of constant comparison led to the identification of concepts and categories. Further data collection was carried out that focused on specific areas to fill the data gaps. Below was transcribed from a very quick and specific follow up interview with one of the respondents to fill in a data gap identified:

Researcher: *So, what were some of your sources of information during this?*

Respondent NPP/2016/SA/CS02: *The people*

Researcher: *Obviously, the people, yes is key, but how can you sort of describe it, so the people, some were complaining, we had some that were content, you also conducted research?*

Respondent NPP/2016/SA/CS02: *So, we started with the people, obviously all politics is grassroots based so you go down to the ground. You get to a place to have a meeting. You know our culture, when you get to a place, they ask you “What brought you here?” So, you tell them what brought you there and they tell you what their issues and problems are. Every*

politician has to take that into account and take the notes, so direct engagement with the people, you have a fair idea of what each locality needs.

This process continued to the extent where there was no relevant data from the sampled respondents hence data saturation was achieved. The above illustration relates to the first research objective, which is *'to determine how the campaign messages of the two leading Presidential Candidates in the 2016 elections were conceptualized'*. The interactions between the researcher and the respondents therefore focused on campaign slogan, campaign promises, major issues that influenced the formulation of the final campaign messages and the sources of information used in designing the campaign messages.

7.4.2 Coding and Concept Development under Grounded Theory

Continuing from figure 6.2 which depicts a process of primary data collection, the data generated from the respondents interviewed went through a carefully designed process of data analysis which included coding and categorization (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; and Strauss and Corbin, 1998). The researcher therefore adopted the data analytical framework indicated in the figure 7.2 below to code and develop theoretical concepts:

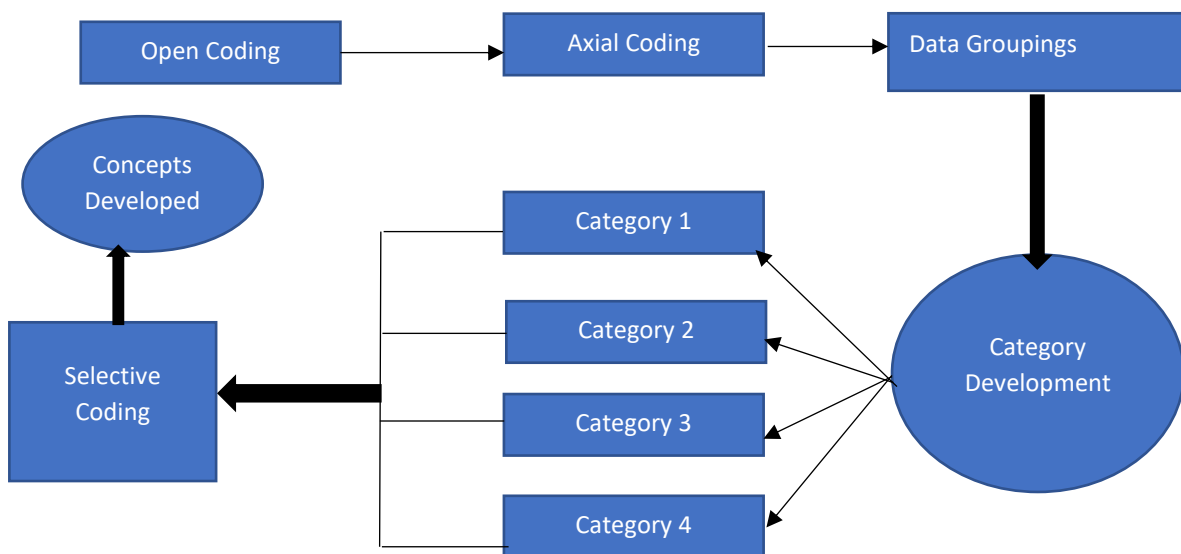


FIGURE 7.2: DATA ANALYSIS FRAMEWORK (ADOPTED FROM GLASER AND STRAUSS, 1967 AND STRAUSS AND CORBIN, 1998).

SOURCE: PRIMARY DATA

The data analysis and presentation of this study followed a systematic process which began immediately after each data collection exercise using coding and constant comparison. This approach offers the study the strength and the rigour required under a qualitative research methodology (Charmaz, 2006 and Denzin and Lincoln, 1994). The systematic procedure adopted further ensured that the researcher spent quality time to carefully review the data by first transcribing the interviews, mapping out the issues through memo writing, coding, data grouping, before developing categories. Concepts were developed out of the various categories that have been created from the data set using selective coding and constant comparison (Corbin and Strauss, 1990).

As recommended by some earlier studies which also used the grounded theory methodology (Charmaz, 2006 and Corbin and Strauss, 1990), intense and systematic coding are critical. This study therefore commenced data analysis by first defining the data set according to categories from the interview transcripts and field notes. By applying open coding, which was used to break the transcribed data into discrete parts, the researcher was able to define the various components of the study according to the research objectives. This stage became relevant because the researcher was able to identify the data gaps and continue the process to achieve data saturation. At this point, it became easy for the researcher to determine how to collect the required data to fill the gap identified. The following open coding illustrates how the above framework was applied:

Interview quotation:

For the NPP it was about the Free SHS, it was also about 1 District 1 Factory, 1 Village 1 Dam, \$1 Million 1 Constituency.

*For the NDC, 2016 there wasn't really a pointed message, most of them were reactions to what the NPP offered, for example they said they would do the progressive Free SHS and also, they agreed that they wanted to create more regions so like I said there wasn't a pointed message that they could be identified with. Their message was more of a reaction to what the NPP had promised. (**Respondent with code MP/2016/SA/R1**)*

Key point: *Ability to remember NPP campaign message*
Indicator: *Attractive campaign message is easy to recall*

Respondent MP/2016/SA/TV02 also indicated as follows:

Interview quotation: *For the NPP I remember the Battle is still the Lord's. For the NDC I do not really remember. But you know the NPP they had several slogans one of the main one is the Battle is still the Lord's.*

Key point: *Inability to recall the slogan(s) of NDC*
Indicator: *NDC slogan(s) were not well designed*

The following interactions occurred between the Researcher and Respondent **MP/2016/SA/NP02**:

Interview quotation: *I'm trying hard to recollect. It was eerh. NDC too I've forgotten their slogan. For the NPP it was the Free SHS, 1 village 1 Dam, 1 District 1 Factory. For the NDC wow. Not that clear.*

Key point: *The difficulty in recollecting the campaigns of NDC was obvious.*
Indicator: *NDC slogans did not resonate well with the electorates.*

After the initial open coding and constant comparison, a second set of the sampled respondents selected from those interviewed earlier were mapped out for the follow up interviews and data collection. The follow up data collection exercise was conducted with the same respondents in order to confirm whether an attractive campaign message aids electorates' ability to recall the said campaign message. In order to validate the application of Grounded Theory methodology, the respondents who were selected for the follow up interviews were all part of the preliminary data collection exercise. Below were pulled out from the follow up interviews:

Researcher: *which of the campaign messages was most attractive?*

Respondent MP/2016/SA/NP02: *Free SHS*

Researcher: *do you think these campaign messages were relevant to the electorates including yourself?*

Respondent MP/2016/SA/NP02 : Yes

The central categories identified from the data gathered were the campaign messages; how attractive the campaign messages used in the 2016 presidential election by the two leading political parties namely, the NPP and NDC were; and ability to recall the said campaign messages. In reference to this, the researcher applied axial coding by drawing connections between the two campaign messages of the two leading presidential candidates under the study. Data collected from respondents *MP/2016/SA/R01* and *MP/2016/SA/TV02* analysed using coding and constant comparison confirmed the concept that the ability to recall campaign messages relates to how attractive the campaign message is and how relevant the content of the campaign messages are to the electorate (viz the target audience).

In order to draw out theories, the researcher sought to establish the relationship between *campaign message (in this case, Campaign Slogan)* and *ability to recall campaign message or slogan*. Coding of the data and constant comparison were therefore applied to determine the relationship between the codes (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). Furthermore, Constant Comparison which formed integral part of grounded theory methodology as evidenced in many qualitative research studies was applied (Strauss and Corbin, 1998). The researcher therefore continuously compared the codes developed from the data to the codes from the same interview and from the codes isolated from other interviews to develop a concept.

This led to the concept '*Ability to Recall*'. As a result, the researcher developed two propositions which can be tested through further data collection using different set of respondents and data collection methods (Charmaz, 2006; and Collis and Hussey, 2013).

The two developed propositions are therefore stated below:

- **Proposition One:** *Attractive campaign message aids electorate ability to recall.*
- **Proposition Two:** *Ability to recall campaign message relates to how relevant the campaign message is to the electorate.*

7.5 Campaign Themes That Underpinned the Campaign Messages of the Two Leading Candidates in the 2016 Elections

In formulating political campaign messages, it is important to define an underlying theme that captures the mood of the electorates in order to design a message that will resonate with them (Dean, 2005; and Gyampo et al., 2017). A campaign theme may inspire electorates for immediate brighter future ahead or instill fear in them of an impending gloomy future that can have devastated consequences on their livelihood and country as a whole. For example, the current debate about climate change across the world appears to be grounded on a gloomy future ahead of the citizens of the world if global leaders do not take immediate action or response.

Another case in point is the 2020 Presidential elections campaign in the United States of America, where Joe Biden, to a large extent painted a gloomy picture of America if voters retain the Donald Trump presidency. The fear of ‘destabilization under another Trump Presidency’ was the lead campaign theme. On the other side however, Conservatives who believed in Donald Trump adopted similar campaign themes in their campaign messaging against Joe Biden by categorizing him as a Socialist who will curtail the freedom, liberty, and rights of many Americans. This underscores the importance of developing campaign themes that drive the formulation of political campaign messages for any competitive electoral campaign.

Under this research study, respondents were asked to identify the type of campaign themes adopted by the two leading Presidential Candidates. The extracts from the transcripts of some of the respondents are presented below:

Interviewer: *Okay Sir, so the last but not the least, I would like to find out the theme that the campaign team finally selected. Would you say it was the theme that was projecting hope, fear or it was both hope and fear for the voters or electorates?*

Respondent NPP/2016/SA/MCL04: *Well, the theme brought a lot of hope to the people. The promise to create jobs and pay children school fees I think motivated a lot of people to follow Nana Addo. You know things were hard for a lot of Ghanaians and people were suffering.*

Interviewer: So, what was the emotional theme about the campaign? Was it about Hope or Fear? Is like let the people know that if they vote for the NDC again their future is going to be hopeless, If they vote for the NPP there is a brighter future. What was the one that drove it? Was it the two of them at the same time or one particular one was focused on?

Respondent NPP/2016/SA/MCL06 : Hmm! At a certain point in the country, the Ghanaian people themselves realized that voting for the NDC again will be a disaster. Hope was what we the NPP sold to the voters, and they bought it.

Interviewer: Would you say that the overall theme for the NPP was hope, fear or it was a combination of the two?

Respondent NPP/2016/SA/CS02: When people preach change, they inspire hope and not fear. You can compare with Barack Obama; he had a change campaign in 2008 and it was also hope based campaign.

Interviewer: Okay, what would you say was the overall campaign theme for the NPP? Was it for Hope, fear or it was for both?

Respondent NPP/2016/SA/MCL01: The overall campaign theme for the NPP was it for hope? Yeah, it was for the hope of transforming the nation into something and then there was the, I almost forgot, the industrialization drive, which was the promise of 1 district, 1 factory which inspired a lot of people.

Interviewer: So, what was the overall campaign theme, would you say it was hope, fear or both?

Respondent NPP/2016/SA/CO06: The theme was one of Hope.

Interviewer: How did the campaign team select the themes that finally informed the formulation of the design of the campaign messages that were used?

Respondent NDC/2016/SA/CS01: Our main outlook was that we wanted a campaign that allowed us to change lives and to transform Ghana. We were going to change lives largely by putting people first, which was going to be through the social interventions in terms of all the interventions we were making for young people, for adults and what have you.

Interviewer: What would you say was the overall campaign theme? Was it hope or fear or both?

Respondent NDC/2016/SA/CS01: I think it was hope.

Interviewer: Okay alright so what was the main campaign theme was it about hope or fear or both how did you push the campaign theme was it supposed to bring hope to the people or make them be afraid of what will happen if they vote for NDC again? So did you campaign on hope to give them eerrmmm?

Respondent NPP/2016/SA/CO01: *It was hope, we told the voters that Nana Akuffo Addo is coming to change the country bla bla bla.*

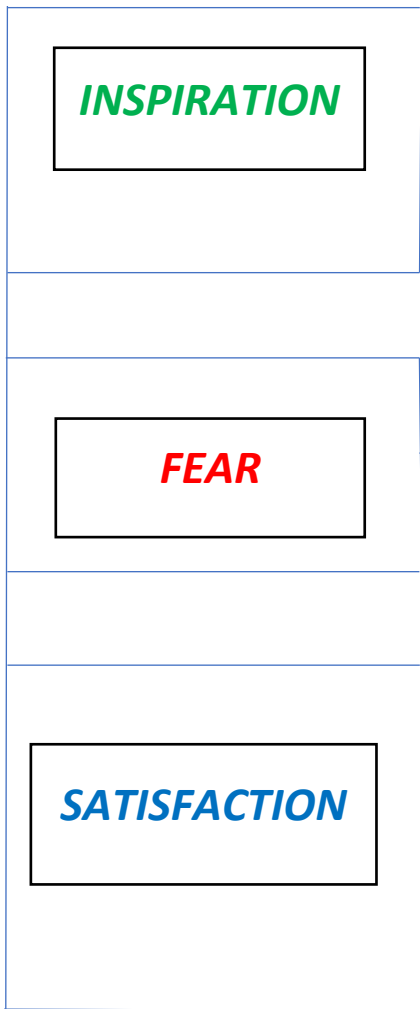
A linear process of identifying the campaign themes from the raw data collected was adopted in this research study (Kuziemy et al., 2007). The linear process may appear too simplistic in identifying the themes from the primary data; however, the data analysis was complex since the researcher had to comb through hundreds of key words and relevant phrases manually and carefully from the raw data to arrive at the emerging trends before using in vivo coding as typically applied under grounded theory methodology in previous studies to identify the main themes (Feng et al., 2010 and Myers, 2013). The outcome of the analysis of the raw data is presented in *Figure 7.3* below:

CODED DATA

well-being of the citizens; endemic challenges at the time; unemployment and the collapse of the NHIS; hope to the people; Hope; People were ready for change; soul, spirit, body and everything in the country was ready for change; youth unemployment; Hope; Campaign of change, people were just tired; change; inspire hope and not fear; change message; Dumsor (electrical power fluctuations); Hope; Message of hope; message of continuity; corruption, Dumsor and jobs; Unit for change; electricity crises (dumsor); high cost of living; corruption; Hope; Continuation (Toaso); Changing lives and Transforming Ghana; Hope; unemployment; the needs of the people; hope, not for fear; Arise for Change; Hope; Change; cost of living; corruption; Hope; unemployment situation; corruption; electricity issue; Hope; Arise for Change; Hope; Change to transform Ghana; Dumsor; Corruption; Insecurity; high cost of living; Hope Campaign; Agenda for jobs prosperity; fresh solutions to issues; Change; Scandals; Change and agenda for jobs; serious energy crisis; Continuation 'JM toaso'; Corruption; job creation; NPP was for change; JM toaso; Change for jobs; Continuation 'JM toaso'; NPP was Change and an agenda for jobs; NDC was Changing lives and transforming Ghana; Changing Lives Transforming Ghana; Hope; Change of government; Change; Continuation 'JM toaso'; Dumsor. promising employment; and the promises influenced people.



CONCEPTS



THEMES



FIGURE 7.3: THEMES THAT UNDERLINED THE CAMPAIGN MESSAGES OF NPP AND NDC IN THE 2016 ELECTIONS

SOURCE: PRIMARY DATA, 2022

Further analysis of the data revealed that respondents who participated in the study indicated that voters who were inclined towards '*Change*' were greater than those who were satisfied with the performance of the then regime led by the NDC Presidential candidate. Those respondents who were satisfied wanted '*Continuity*'. A numerical coding of the key words revealed that twenty (20) respondents out of the total twenty four (24) respondents sampled for the study recalled that the word change was the theme of the NPP campaign message. On the other hand, however, only six (6) respondents representing twenty five percent (25%) recalled continuity as the theme for the NDC campaign in the 2016 general elections.

Moreover, another theme that emerged from the data analysis is '*Hope*'. As asserted by Dean (2005), campaign messages can inspire hope or fear. Hope communicates a brighter future that a candidate or a political party seeking election offers to electorates and seeks to persuade them that there is a better future ahead, only when that candidate or that political party he or she represents gets the opportunity to implement its programmes or projects. Overall, fifteen (15) respondents believed that the NPP campaign message represented '*Hope*' for the future. This also reinforces the assertion by Gyampo et al., (2017) that the NPP developed better communications messaging for the 2016 general elections campaign than the NDC.

In addition to the above, a review of the primary data revealed that other marketing communications concepts which can generate campaign communications themes also emerged. These according to the data were Transformation, Unity, and Insecurity. However, it was further identified that these were latent and therefore were not popular among the respondents when compared to the concepts of Fear, Inspiration and Satisfaction which emerged strongly from the data.

It was further established that both the NPP and NDC campaigns pushed a transformation agenda, although NDC made transformation a central concept in their 2016 campaign messaging formulation. The NPP on the other hand however, appeared to have quietly pushed the message of

transformation in that they designed campaign messages that portrayed that their programmes and projects were aimed at transforming the lives of the citizenry and the country in general. The concept of transformation, especially economic transformation should naturally be important to voters in developing economy because as indicated by other scholars, many developing economies including Ghana, are characterized by poor infrastructure, low standard of living, high unemployment particularly among the youth and insecurity (Aryeetey & Kanbur, 2017). It is expected that any political campaign in Ghana that seeks to build its campaign messaging on a transformation agenda is expected to enjoy positive outcomes. This is because a socioeconomic transformational campaign communications theme will appeal to significant proportion of the electorates living in underdeveloped economic environment.

In this regard, a candidate or a political party who anchors campaign message on transformation should, all things being equal, enjoy relatively large share of voice in the media space during the campaign. It should be noted that the credibility of the message and the messengers will somehow impact on the outcome of the election. Learning from the above assertion, it was revealed that the promise to transform the lives of many voters by the NDC could not attract a lot of attention according to the respondents who participated in this study since their campaign slogan of Changing Lives Transforming Lives received less message recall relative to that of the NPP campaign slogans of Free SHS and One District One Factory. As an incumbent governing Party, the NDC had a difficult time persuading many voters with their transformation message. However, among the campaign messages designed by the NDC, the message which was anchored on transformation concept gained more popularity compared to other slogans developed by the party in the 2016 elections campaign.

The concept of *Unity* also emerged according to the primary data. The desire for unity even at the high political leadership level has been quite a popular concept in the Ghanaian political discourse since independence (Anebo, 1997; Adams and Agomor, 2015; and Gyampo et al, 2017).

This phenomenon may be due to the diverse ethnic and tribal disposition of the country Ghana as well as the post-independence military disruptions of Ghana's democratic establishment. There is a strong perception that unity among Ghanaians may lead to improvement in the economic development of the country. In view this, many political parties have used the concept of unity to develop their campaign messages for elections since independence. The promotion of unity using political campaign is therefore seen positively and such messaging resonates well with the electorates and even political campaign financiers.

It can be established that during the 2016 campaign, both the NPP and NDC made attempts to employ the concept of unity to underline their main campaign messages. According to the data gathered, about twenty nine percent (29%) representing 7 respondents out of the total number of twenty four (24) respondents indicated unity as a relevant concept for political campaign message formulation. However, only one (1) respondent representing about three (3%) percent recalled '*Unit for Change*' as the main campaign message used by the NPP in the 2016 campaign (*refer to table 7.1*). This means that the two leading political parties preferred either inspiration, fear, or satisfaction as the main driver of their campaign message compared to unity.

Another key communications concept that emerged from the analysis of the primary data was *Insecurity*. There was a general sense of both economic and social insecurity among many electorates according to respondents who participated in the study. This phenomenon was underscored by high unemployment, poor standard of living, and inadequate access to social services. The level of economic hardship then according to the literature was high and it fueled the perception of insecurity among voters.

According to the data, all the twenty four (24) respondents who were interviewed during the study identified at least one major economic problem or social challenge confronting significant number of the voting population. This sense of insecurity according to the data however underscored the concept of fear more explicitly than the concept of insecurity itself. In other words, analysis of

the data collected indicated that respondents saw the concept of insecurity as a subset of fear. The term fear although appears less elegant in such political campaign discourse, it was found however to be commonly used term by many of the electorates in expressing their sentiments in this context.

Another interpretation is that, although the NPP campaigned for change whilst the NDC pushed for continuity, both the NPP and NDC connected their main campaign messages to insecurity and fear. The two leading Presidential Candidates took advantage of the general sense of uncertainty, anxiety among the youth as well as the threat of losing one's self-esteem due to unemployment or economic deprivation to design their campaign messages. It must however be established that, respondents believed that there was general sense of political stability.

Lastly, *Prosperity* emerged as one of the campaign communications themes upon which the two leading parties could have formulated their campaign messages. The concept of prosperity emanated strongly from the two campaigns because the two political parties communicated strongly to the voters to the effect that their programmes and policies will usher them into a state of wellbeing and peace. According to the respondents who participated in this research, the average Ghanaian was looking for a Presidential Candidate who offered a credible alternative to the then incumbent John Mahama led NDC government. Since the share of voice of the other minor and smaller political parties was extremely small, the NPP automatically became the best alternative to create wealth and prosperity among the citizenries.

As earlier indicated, the challenges of unemployment, electrical power instability, high cost of living, among others inculcated in many voters' hopelessness and despondency. The campaign message the voters were therefore waiting for was a message that will inspire them and offer them confidence that their future will be bright under that Presidential Candidate. However, it can be deduced from the data that only one respondent from the total number of twenty four (24) respondents representing (3%) explicitly indicated prosperity as a campaign concept or as a theme for one of the political parties under the study. In this regard, the concept of inspiration was relatively

stronger than that of prosperity when analysed as a concept, hence the use of inspiration as one of the leading communications concepts for the 2016 campaign messaging by the two campaign groups.

In conclusion, the respondents who participated in this study indicate that the electorates who were inspired by the message of hope and were afraid of the future under the then government led by the NDC Presidential candidate bought the message of change offered by the NPP and its Presidential candidate. However, those who were content with the performance of the NDC were comfortable to ensure continuity of the programmes and policies of the then government hence voted for NDC. In other words, and as depicted in Figure 7.3 above, fear of a gloomy future led to change as well as those who believed in the hope message of NPP were also inspired for change.

7.6 Mechanisms Used to Select Relevant Issues That Informed the Design of the Campaign Messages

It is evident from the data that both the NPP and NDC campaigns relied on data and research to arrive at most of the critical decisions in connection with campaign communications activities. The data further indicates that both campaigns had some sort of a structured mechanism of managing their campaign communications activities, although many of the respondents who took part in this research could not precisely outline the key components of the campaign messaging structure which were used by the respective Presidential Candidates. For example, when respondents sampled from the political sample frame were asked if the campaign team conducted research to assess the mood of the electorates, there were no unanimous answer in the affirmative. Moreover, many of the respondents could not indicate whether the said research was part of a formalized and coherent system aimed at generating empirical data to support critical campaign communications decisions.

Some of the interactions between the researcher and some of the respondents culled from the transcripts below share some more light:

Researcher and Respondent NPP/2016/SA/CS02:

Researcher: *Did you conduct any research to assess the mood of the electorate?*

Respondent NPP/2016/SA/CS02 : *Absolutely! There's a lot of research that goes on in an election year. We poll to find out what people are thinking, we do focus groups to find out what people are thinking and saying around the country that is of interest to you.*

Researcher and Respondent NPP/2016/SA/MCL04:

Researcher: *Okay Sir so would you say that the campaign team conducted research to assess the mood of the electorate during this period?*

Respondent NPP/2016/SA/MCL04: *I think the campaign team was rather sincere because it was targeted at the existing problems in the country which the party or presidential candidate could help in improving the well-being of the citizens. So, it was a need base campaign promise.*

Researcher and Respondent NPP/2016/SA/MCL01:

Researcher: *Okay, so did the team conduct any research to assess the mood of the electorate before coming up with those messages?*

Respondent NPP/2016/SA/MCL01: *I wouldn't say that was done but I'm sure based on the mood in the nation, what had happened in Parliament and also, you know when you go on campaign initially, like at constituency level for instance you get a good sense of what the issues people relate to and respond positively to, so it might not be a formal sort of research.*

Researcher and Respondent NPP/2016/SA/CO06:

Researcher: *Is it that you conducted research to be able to tell that it did really resonate well with the people?*

Respondent NPP/2016/SA/CO06: *Yes, we always have a research team before and after the election.*

Researcher and Respondent NPP/2016/SA/CD07:

Researcher: *Did the Campaign team conduct any research to assess the mood of the electorate?*

Respondent NPP/2016/SA/CD07: *Yes*

Researcher: *How was this done?*

Respondent NPP/2016/SA/CD07: Research Officers in the various district were tasked to feed the central campaign team with issues affecting their various constituencies.

Researcher and Respondent NDC/2016/SA/CS01:

Researcher: Did the Campaign team conduct any research to assess the mood of the electorates?

Respondent NDC/2016/SA/CS01: Certainly, every time there is market research. So, then you are able to determine what people want and how they want you to go in terms of the campaign and what the slogan should be.

As noted by some scholars and researchers, understanding the needs of the target audience is critical to formulating social campaign messages that are consistent with their needs and expectations (Kotler and Nancy, 2008; Benckendorff, 2008; and Hyman et al., 2020). This can be employed in political communications strategy since in politics, establishing relationship with the target audience (in this case the electorates) is effective in mobilizing for change, which as indicated in earlier sections of this thesis underpinned the situation in Ghana in 2016. It is therefore imperative that the outcome of this research should aim at developing a conceptual framework that clearly defines the key components and a structured mechanism for campaign message formulation.

This research study further sought to establish whether having a professional communications team can generate any advantage to a campaign when formulating campaign message. The analysis of the data collected indicates that both political parties employed the services of experience professional marketing communications experts to design their campaign messages. It however emerged that because the campaign messaging formulation did not follow a systematic structure, the influence of these professionals was neutralized to a large extent by non-professional members and political associates of the whole campaign team. In addition, as it is typical in many political parties across Africa and even beyond, some characters have overbearing influence on political decisions during campaigns. This usually affects the influence of the professional team members especially those whose political connection to either the candidate or the political party is not strong.

As clearly supported by the primary data gathered during the period, all the thirteen respondents who took part in this research from the political sample frame confirmed that Marketing and Communications professionals were used by both political parties during the 2016 campaign. Some comments by selected respondents who participated in the study are presented below:

Oh certainly, I believe at the time the campaign had Consultants, and the Consultants were largely from Marketing or Advertising and Communications background. (NDC/2016/SA/CS01).

Well, I mean I met the communication team in the eastern region at Mampong and the team had people from all kinds of business background and Marketing background and Communication. (NPP/2016/SA/CS08).

Sure, I know there's a Communications and Media Advisory Group. Yes, that group has been there and included Oboshie Sai Koffie and Gabby. (NPP/2016/SA/CL10).

The next phase of the data analysis focused on the mechanism applied by the two case study political parties in the 2016 general elections campaign. It should be recalled that the overall aim of this research study is to conceptualize political campaign messaging in an election. In view of this, the researcher sought to establish the mechanisms applied by the political party communications campaign to select the relevant issues that should influence the final campaign message. In order to determine the mechanisms or frameworks the two campaign teams adopted in designing the final campaign messages for their respective campaigns, the researcher requested respondents to recall or describe the process that their respective teams used to select the relevant issues that in the end determined the specific campaign messages.

An analysis of Respondent *NPP/2016/SA/CO06*, who was sampled from the Campaign Communications Team of NPP indicates below:

Researcher: *Can you share with me some of the processes your campaign team used in arriving at some of the final campaign messages?*

Interview Quotation: *we usually would have what you call a retreat where the various issues were summarized into subheadings, the main issues and once we had the issues*

summarized, we began to evolve messages along the lines of the issues that had been identified in two folds.

The firstly one was to make sure that the message captures the problem that the people's concerns echoed.

Secondly, to assure the people that the party and the campaign have the competence to deliver solutions to those problems that they are facing.

And then we are also thinking about the message being the slogan or the message being catchy enough and then also we're concerned about it not being too much of a mouthful so three or four words, five words, once it captures everything, the content, the attractiveness, the catchy nature, once it captures all of that, it becomes the slogan or the message.

We then shortlist a number of them and then we'd eventually tweak, add, subtract, put some together, then we're able to arrive at the top campaign slogans.

We then test them as well, we get the Party Communicators to start testing them, we get Social Media Team to start testing them, and then once you realize that the people are holding on a particular message, it becomes sort of like an organic one whereby the people themselves determined the slogans.

Sometimes also on the initial campaign rounds from people's comments and questions you are able to pick some slogans or some message that you fine-tune and add to the messaging.

Key Point:

Designing campaign messages for every election requires that a systematic process is defined to guide the operations of the team.

Indicator:

NPP Communications Team adopted a systematic approach in designing its campaign messages.

It is clear from the above that the process of selecting the campaign slogans used by the NPP 2016 Presidential Candidate went through a rigorous and systematic process guided and managed by a team of professionals. In modern political communications, it is advisable to employ the use of technology and data analytics tools and techniques to manage campaign messaging.

As indicated by Lumsden (1980) and Thaler & Helmig (2013), framing political campaign messaging requires that the framer defined a mechanism to identify the issues that influence the behaviour of the target audience (registered voters). Marketing research including media tracking and media content analysis have become relevant sources of data for such exercise. In Ghana, the phenomenon of '*Serial Calling*', '*Phone ins*' into live radio and live television programmes and '*Comments on News Articles*' on Web based News portals by ordinary Ghanaians, are critical platforms where citizens share rich information. Political communications strategists therefore may rely on these sources of data to inform the design or formulation of their future campaign messages for elections in countries practising multi-party democracy in Africa.

7.7 Framing Approach: Factors that framed the selection of the 2016 NPP and NDC Campaign Messages

Learning from both Anthropologist Gregory Bateson (1972) and Erving Goffman (1974), the researcher sought to determine how the campaign messages used in the 2016 general elections were framed. Strategic framing is critical in delimiting the scope of the issues that have potential to influence voters decision making particularly in a keenly contested election such as the one in 2016 (Blackwell, 2008 and Kees, 2011).

The literature review carried out earlier for this study indicated that Ghanaian voters were faced with many critical issues bothering on good governance, cost of living, security, immigration, poor infrastructure, cost of education, unemployment, among others (Gyampo et al, 2017). In addition to these national and cross cutting issues, there were issues that were local or peculiar to

sections of the voting population either by geographic location or socioeconomic class. It therefore became obvious that in order to formulate campaign messages that will effectively respond to these issues, one needed to identify and focus on those issues that were most relevant to the majority of the voting population in Ghana. In this regard, respondents who were sampled from among the politicians were asked to identify the major public interest issues running in the media landscape between June and November 2016 or six months before the presidential election in December 2016.

Data was collected from twenty four (24) respondents made up of political activists of both NPP and NDC, senior political Advisors to the two leading Presidential Candidates and media practitioners who were active participants in the 2016 general elections campaign. An analysis of the primary data revealed that, nine (9) issues were most relevant to the electorates between June and November 2016. These issues were corruption, unemployment, health insurance, education, electricity situation, infrastructure, security, same sex marriage and cost of living. The table below (Table 7.4) provides the list of the topical issues and their frequency of occurrences:

TABLE 7.4: TOPICAL ISSUES BETWEEN JUNE AND NOVEMBER 2016

TOPICAL ISSUE	FREQUENCY
CORRUPTION	5
UNEMPLOYMENT	9
HEALTH INSURANCE	2
ELECTRICITY SITUATION	4
INFRASTRUCTURE	3
EDUCATION	6
SECURITY	1
SAME SEX MARRIAGE	1
COST OF LIVING	6

SOURCE: PRIMARY DATA, 2022

A further analysis of the raw data indicates that, out of the thirty seven number of times respondents were able to identify the issues as being topical during the said period, unemployment appeared most important issue to the voters with twenty four point three percent (24.3%) followed jointly by education and cost of living with sixteen point two percent (16.2%) each while as security and same sex marriage were the least important issues to the sampled respondents. In addition, the issue of corruption (13.5%) and electricity situation - the erratic power supply (10.8%) were also topical issues that required the attention of campaign managers when formulating campaign messages for the 2016 election. The diagram below presents a pictorial view of the result of the research:

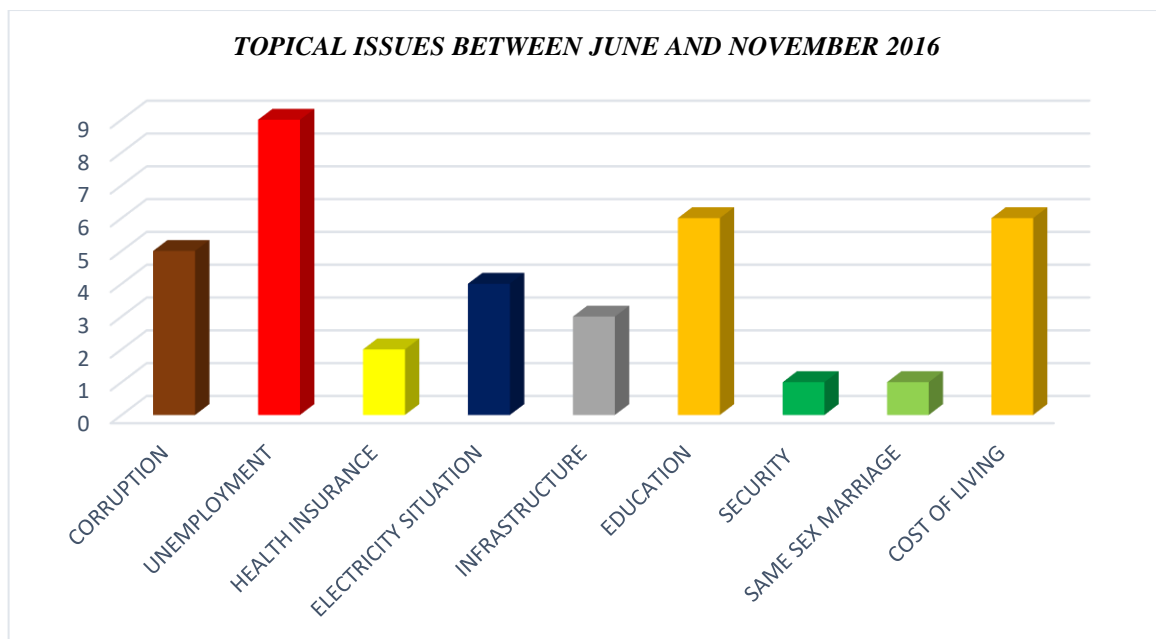


FIGURE 7.4: TOPICAL ISSUES BETWEEN JUNE AND NOVEMBER 2016

SOURCE: PRIMARY DATA, 2022

In conclusion, by identifying these nine (9) topical issues, the campaign message formulation process can narrow down on these issues which appear to be relevant to the electorates and design campaign messages to reflect them or to respond to them. Through framing strategy as defined by Goffman (1974), Communications experts have a tool to throw more light on the right spot in what

may appear to be a jungle of hundreds of issues. In this regard, the NPP campaign message of change was anchored on job creation and economic transformation. The party also focused enormous attention and communication resources on education as indicated in earlier sections of this chapter as well as the fight against corruption by the promise to establish an office of Special Prosecutor. NDC on the other hand also focused on job creation, progressively free education, and infrastructural development to alleviate the economic hardship faced by the citizens. A juxtaposition of the various campaign messages by the two leading political parties against the outcome of this study as depicted by figure 7.4 shows that the campaign messages of both political parties reflected the expectations of Ghanaian voters in the 2016 general elections. In other words, significant number of the registered voters were more interested in a candidate or willing to support a political party that was prepared to solve the problem of unemployment, high cost of living challenges and access to education difficulties.

7.8 Analysis of the Media Channels Used in the 2016 General Elections

Campaign

The media landscape in Ghana is dominated by radio, television, print and recently social media platforms, according to a study conducted by the Center for Democratic Development (CDD) in 2018. The research revealed that majority of Ghanaians source their news from radio and television platforms although the social media platforms have become attractive to the middle class and citizens with high level of education (at least the literates which stands at over seventy percent). As indicated earlier, an attractive campaign message that does not reach the target audience will have no impact on the outcome of any competitive election. Against this background, any communication strategist who seeks to persuade voters in order to win their votes must as part of the overall strategy identify the communications channels available within the political communications ecosystem so that the messages can reach their target audience.

For the purposes of this research, which seeks to conceptualize how political campaign messages are formulated, respondents were asked to identify the communications channels that were used in the 2016 elections by the two leading parties. Overall, thirteen (13) respondents sampled from only the political group and campaign advisors who participated in this section of the research. Respondents identified eighteen (18) communications and media channels that were used by the two Presidential candidates to disseminate their campaign messages to the electorates. These media channels are political rallies, radio, television, personal selling (house-to-house), social events, billboards, newspapers, posters, bulk SMS, voice note, fliers, social media, word-of-mouth (whispering campaign), community information centers, social events (funerals, wedding, religious events, etc), serial calling, internet, and branded materials.

It is interesting to note that majority of the respondents believed that personal selling (house-to-house) is the most reliable medium in reaching electorates in Ghana with your campaign messages. It is indeed important for further research to deep dive into how political parties can leverage their strong network of branches, supporters, and sympathizers on the ground to engage voters with their campaign messages. The demerit of applying this method of communication is that the candidate will not be able to reach out to significant number of voters personally or directly especially in nationwide election involving millions of voters. Furthermore, the surrogates and the representatives of the candidate or the political party may not enjoy the same charisma or may not have the same level of experience to deliver the campaign message compared to the Presidential candidate.

Lastly, the respondents further asserted that using a single channel of communication will not be effective in reaching out to the target audience. They therefore indicate that a combination of all media channels enumerated above is the most effective way of reaching the voters. It must however be noted that such an approach although practical and mostly used, has a lot of implications for budgeting and resource allocation. The important point to note is that resources should be

allocated to the most popularly used medium of communication in order to have access to majority of the voting population.

The analysis of the data collected also indicates that in 2016, the two leading presidential candidates, namely Nana Akufo-Addo and John Mahama relied heavily on the traditional media especially radio, television, and newspaper in propagating their campaign messages. These traditional media platforms have become the most trusted news sources for many Ghanaians. It further emerged from the data analysis that, due to the high penetration rate of the internet in Ghana and the attractiveness of social media platforms such as *Whatsapp* and *Facebook* to both educated and not too educated Ghanaians, the result may not be the same in the subsequent electoral campaigns in 2020 which the two candidates were also contestants.

CHAPTER EIGHT: KEY FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

8.1 Overview

This chapter synthesizes the research outcomes and findings with the gaps identified in the literature with the view of helping to close the knowledge gap in this area of study. As have been posited by many scholars including Hinson and Tweneboah, (2010); Gyampo et al, (2017); and Thrasson et al, (2009), campaign message is one of the three most important pillars of any successful political campaign in many multiparty democracies across the globe. This clearly underscores the importance of campaign message in an election hence the overarching goal of this research study is to develop a Conceptual Framework to assist campaign managers and communications practitioners to design and formulate attractive campaign messages that can connect voters to candidates contesting election. The basic goal of any political campaign is to win by attracting relatively more votes than your competitors hence the application of attractive campaign message is imperative in any political campaign.

As indicated in the Literature Review chapter, no conceptual framework has been developed through a systematic and rigorous analytical process that can be used by Communications specialists and campaign managers when designing political campaign messages in Ghana. In addition, the analysis of the primary data further supported this assertion.

In view of this literature gap, this study embarked on a rigorous process involving the conduct of interviews with key actors in both NPP and NDC 2016 campaign as well as media practitioners who participated actively in the 2016 presidential elections, to establish how the campaign messages used by these two leading political parties were formulated. The study has therefore designed out of the extensive research work, underpinned by qualitative research methodology, a Political Campaign Message Formulation Conceptual Framework that can be applied by political parties and candidates seeking political office to design their political campaign messages. It is envisaged that this conceptual framework can be used not only by

political parties seeking political leadership in Ghana but across other transitional democracies in Africa.

The chapter concludes with the findings of the research and offers contribution to the extant knowledge in political marketing and communications in general. In summary, the chapter further provides the contributions by this study in terms of how Managers of political parties, candidates seeking political offices as well as Managers of political programmes and interventions can apply the outcomes of this thesis to enhance the effectiveness of their campaign messages. This chapter concludes with the identification and analysis of the limitations, and recommendations thereof for future academic work or research in this area.

8.2 Key Findings

8.2.1 Research Question One

MAIN CAMPAIGN MESSAGES IN 2016 GENERAL ELECTIONS

Some scholars have established that factors such as ethnicity, traditional loyalty to political parties and religion play important roles in voters' decision making in selecting a candidate in a competitive election (Anebo, 2001 and Dun, 1975). However, some contemporary studies have concluded that, in multiparty democratic dispensations such as the Ghanaian political environment, with growing number of sophisticated voters, attractive campaign message as well as an effective dissemination of the campaign message are more critical to winning elections (Adams and Agomor, 2015 and Gyima-Boadi and Debrah, 2008). In this regard, the first research question under this research study was to identify the main campaign messages of the two leading Presidential Candidates who contested in the 2016 election.

The research concluded that the main campaign message formulated and disseminated by the New Patriotic Party (NPP) and its Presidential Candidate was *Free SHS* while as the National Democratic Congress (NDC) and the Party's Presidential Candidate used *Changing Lives Transforming Ghana* as their main campaign message during the said elections.

Using the grounded theory methodology, the researcher identified that, the NPP's number one response to dealing with the economic hardship faced by many Ghanaian adults was to find the most important expenditure item of an average Ghanaian household and formulate a campaign message around. The Party's analysis concluded that most Ghanaian parents found the payment of secondary school fees for their kids as the most important expenditure item that when taken care of by a government institution can improve the future opportunity for their kids. The Party therefore assumed that, formulating a campaign message that sought to respond to this critical need of the majority of the voters in 2016 will attract more votes to the Presidential Candidate and the Party. This therefore became the foundation on which the vision of the candidate who represented the Party anchored.

On the other hand, however, the same grounded theory methodology under the qualitative approach used by this research revealed that, the NDC which was the governing Party during the 2016 general elections and had enormous control over the national resources of the country. The party and the Presidential Candidate therefore had to send a signal to the electorates that, their economic lives were constantly being improved with the implementation of the good policies and programmes that were on going across the country. Working on the assumption that a foundation had already been laid by the Presidential candidate of the Party, their main campaign message was to offer assurance to the Ghanaian voters that, their lives were being changed and that will lead to the transformation of the country.

Another key finding under this thematic area was that respondents were of the strong belief that, an attractive campaign message was critical to winning election in a multiparty democracy.

This means that the process of formulating a campaign message required that the vision of the candidate contesting the election must be crystalized within the context of what is most relevant to the majority of the electoral population. In this case, the application of grounded theory methodology became quite important since it allows for the systematic process of studying a phenomenon through collection and analysis of series of data. What campaign message does in this context is that it helps the electorates to arrive at the decision with regards to selecting the candidate or political party which will best respond to their critical need in the most appropriate manner.

It must be indicated that, the vision of the candidate in an election should be strongly connected to the needs of the electorates that the candidate is seeking to persuade for their votes. This research can conclude that, the critical needs of many of the electorates are related to everyday economic, social, and political issues affecting their livelihoods. The complexity involved in distilling these critical issues affecting everyday lives (everyday survival of citizens) of the electorates requires that, campaign Communications Specialists must depend on conceptual frameworks that have the capacity to objectively assess and identify these critical issues. Some of these economic, social, and political issues identified during the data collection exercise are unemployment, cost of health services, cost of electricity, corruption, and insecurity.

In conclusion, any candidate that seeks to connect to the electorates must therefore envision strategies in terms of programmes and projects to solve these critical challenges. Since the NPP Presidential Candidate's campaign message of Free SHS was perceived as the main campaign message that led to their victory, it can be concluded that the campaign message responded to the most relevant issue affecting the majority of the electorates.

CAMPAIGN MESSAGE RECALL

Laming (2021) underscored the importance of campaign message recall in determining the success of a campaign message. It is assumed that a high level campaign message recall positively associates with a favourable action by a voter, all things being equal. In other words, the voter's ability to easily recall a campaign message such as a slogan, a programme intervention, a campaign promise, or a manifesto pledge will positively influence the voter's decision when casting his or her ballot. This thesis therefore sought to establish the level of campaign message recall using grounded theory methodology.

This research concludes that a voter's ability to recall a campaign stimulus such as a campaign slogan or campaign promise is influenced by the voter's likeness or affection for the Political Party and, or the Presidential Candidate. This means that the attractiveness of the Political Party or the Presidential Candidate in an election may lead to high proportion of the electorates who are likely to remember the campaign message of the said Presidential Candidate and, all things being equal positively influence their decision to vote.

Secondly, the research established that a voter's ability to recall a campaign message is connected to how relevant the campaign message is to the electorate. It was discovered that although a total number of thirteen (13) campaign messages were designed by the two leading political parties for the 2016 general elections, it emerged that respondents were more familiar with *Free SHS, 1D1F and Changing Lives Transforming Ghana* campaign messages compared to the remaining ten (10) campaign messages. These included *The Battle is the Lord's, Arise for Change, Forward Ever, Backward Never, Progressive Free Education and One Constituency One Million US Dollars*. It is believed that the top three campaign messages resonated with the electorates because the issues of unemployment, high cost of living and payment of school fees among others were more relevant to the electorates.

Moreover, this research study found out that, there is a positive relationship between a Political Party's main campaign message and voters' ability to recall campaign message. It was established that all the respondents who participated in this study could recall the main campaign messages of the two leading political parties in the case study election. It can therefore be deduced that Political Parties and Presidential Candidates spend more campaign resources on their lead campaign message. This is consistent with effective and efficient use of campaign resources especially when a systematic mechanism has been applied to formulate a campaign message that responds to the important needs of the majority of the electorates. Future research in this area of academic enquiry may wish to interrogate whether main campaign messages of political parties' indeed benefit from allocation of more campaign resources.

MOST ATTRACTIVE CAMPAIGN MESSAGES IN THE 2016 GENERAL ELECTIONS

It is important to indicate that a campaign message must be attractive to the majority of electorates in order to deliver electoral victory. As it is commonly believed when a political party or a candidate in an election is able to formulate and disseminate his or her campaign message effectively, the said candidate is likely to achieve positive results. This study discovered that, the '*Free SHS*' campaign message formulated and used by the Presidential candidate of NPP was the most appealing campaign message in the 2016 general elections. The Presidential candidate of NPP indeed won majority votes in this case study election, however, this thesis is not seeking to attribute the victory exclusively to the Free SHS campaign message.

In such a competitive political atmosphere, a candidate needs a campaign message that resonates with the majority of the electorates. A classical case is President Obama's '*Yes We Can*'

campaign slogan which catapulted him to political limelight and eventual victory to become the 44th President in the 2008 Presidential elections in United States of America.

A similar example can be cited in the Ghanaian political marketing experience when in the year 2000 general elections in Ghana, the '*Aseho*' campaign slogan used by the then Presidential Candidate of NPP, John Kufour turned the political tide in his favour against the then incumbent Vice President and the Presidential Candidate of the governing NDC party. These two classical examples were campaign slogans that significant proportion of the respective electorates could easily connect to hence attracted them to vote for the candidates who represented that message. In conclusion, this research can reveal that, there is a positive relationship between an attractive campaign slogan and winning elections in Ghana.

THE USE OF MULTIPLE CAMPAIGN MESSAGES

The phenomenon of using multiple campaign messages in political campaign has gained popularity in many democracies. This is underscored by the fact that every electoral population (i.e total number of registered voters in an election) consist of different subset with varying interests as well as different expectations when engaged in voting decision. It means that one specific campaign message may not have all the elements that can appeal to the whole electoral population. It is against this background that this research sought to find out the number of campaign messages formulated and used by the two leading political parties during the 2016 general elections.

The research concludes that, the two leading parties and their respective presidential Candidates deliberately formulated and used multiple campaign messages. Profiling of the 2016 electoral population revealed that the youth aged between 18 years and 35 years formed the majority of the voters, but the adult population had more influence on their decisions. In terms of gender, majority of the registered voters were female representing about fifty two percent, although the

minority male population appear to have more influence on the voting decision making of female. It is therefore important to point out that other factors can be identified to define the various segments of the total population in the 2016 general elections.

In addition to the above, it emerged that the payment of school fees and unemployment were the two most critical issues majority of the electorates were concerned about. Hence any political campaign message that sought to ignore these critical issues may lack the required content attract the votes of the majority of the population. Another important factor which is worthy of note is that some factors such as high cost of borrowing which directly affects insignificant number of the electorates may have a stronger ripple effect on the majority of the population and therefore deepen the problems affecting the majority of the electoral population.

Against this background, this study established that both the Presidential Candidates of NPP and NDC in the 2016 election campaign applied multiple campaign messages targeting different segments of the voting population. The study can further conclude that, the objectives of these campaign messages were to complement and reinforce the main campaign messages of the two leading political parties under reference, which were '*Free SHS*' for NPP and '*Changing Lives Transforming Ghana*'.

In political communications as noted by Dean and Croft (2001), Communications Specialists must understand that voters have the capacity to make irrational decisions by voting for wrong candidates. This may be due to the use of propaganda materials by candidates contesting elections as well as the voter's desire to overlook factors such as ethnicity, religion, and race. This clearly shows that the phenomenon of the application of multiple campaign messages in election is positive and must be developed as a part of the overall communications strategy when formulating political campaign messages.

The data revealed that, the Presidential Candidate of NPP had more campaign messages targeting different segments of the voting population than that of the NDC hence the resounding

victory chalked by the NPP in the 2016 general elections may positively related to their strength in designing and communicating more campaign messages.

8.2.2 Research Question Two

The overarching campaign theme that drives any campaign message whether for commercial or noncommercial purpose is critical. A campaign theme drives the overall communication campaign strategy because it is at the center of all other campaign communications activities as well as the prime focus of other relevant elements in the campaign. In other words, individual campaign activities should be developed and executed to ensure that there is consistency and complementarity among all the parts of the campaign communications as well as the overall campaign. It is against this background that the researcher sought to determine the campaign themes that underpinned the campaign messages of the two leading Presidential Candidates during the 2016 general election campaign. It should be recalled that the governing Party was the NDC while as the NPP was the leading opposition party. Ordinarily, the role of the party in the nation's political system (ruling party vs opposition party) should influence the type of campaign theme to be adopted to anchor a campaign message.

As it has already been indicated in an earlier Chapter, the formulation of most political campaign messages has anchored on either *Hope or Fear and Change or Continuity* in many multiparty democracies, particularly the United States and the United Kingdom. The recent cases include Trump's 2016 campaign and Brexit campaign which were all anchored on fear as compared to the Obama's 2008 campaign which was significantly connected to the hope theme. In Ghana, political campaign messaging has also adopted similar trends in terms of campaign themes. In the 2000 general elections, which has been acclaimed by many scholars as one of the most competitively fought elections in the fourth republic, is a classical case. Interestingly, the two leading parties all

campaigned on hope and fear. The NPP however brilliantly combined the two campaign themes by designing messages that offered hope for a better future under their leadership while at the same time sending messages that depicted a gloomy future if the electorates do not vote for change of leadership. The NDC also campaigned on hope and the campaign messages applied by the party were all geared towards instilling hope into the electorates that the party was in a better position to meet their aspirations.

This research study can affirm that the 2016 general election campaign messages adopted by the two leading Presidential Candidates were anchored on three campaign messaging themes, namely *Hope*, *Change* and *Continuity*.

The *Hope* campaign theme created an inspirational feeling for the overall campaign and was able to attract positive vibes from the various segments of the electorates. The campaign messages which were anchored on hope provided the electorates with the belief that when the Candidate is elected, he has the capacity to improve the living standards of a significant number of the citizens. The important thing is that all campaign activities were connected to this theme hence there was consistency in the messaging across all sections of the electorates.

For the Presidential Candidate of NPP, the Free SHS campaign slogan that was used in the 2016 general elections was designed to boost the confidence of parents, particularly, single parents and young school children, that the best way to prosperity in future for them, is through higher education. It is believed that with high education, the job prospect is better and will therefore enhance one's ability to earn better income in future. In the same vein, the Presidential Candidate of the NDC a party formulated a campaign message that offered hope to the electorates. The Changing Lives, Transforming Ghana campaign message designed and disseminated by the party to the electorates informed them that, the NDC government was in the process of improving their lives and can do more to change the lives of many and the whole country for the better. Their campaign message was largely connected to a number of then ongoing infrastructural projects across the

country. Such an inspirational approach to campaign message formulation is useful in keenly competitive elections. The target audience will be receiving competing messages from competing candidates hence, when inspirational campaign message is adopted, it will compel voters to make rational choice among the competing offers.

The application of Hope as the underlining campaign theme in the elections under review, inspired voters to participate in the elections and to some extent led to the relatively higher voter turnout of almost seventy percent (70%) which favoured the Presidential Candidate of the NPP. In other words, voters tend to vote for a candidate who inspires them and clearly offers assurance about dealing with their critical problems. It is therefore the responsibility of campaign communications specialists to ensure that the main campaign messages are always aligned to the campaign theme that resonates with a larger proportion of the voters.

In effect, a hope campaign theme may attract both old and new voters to a candidate or a political party, but this research cannot affirm that the use of the hope campaign theme by the NPP Presidential Candidate in 2016 attracted significant number of new voters. In spite of the inability of this research to conclude that the use of a hope campaign theme leads to attracting new voters or advancing a political change agenda, it is fair to indicate that, a hope campaign theme can significantly reduce voter apathy. In conclusion, this research study revealed that a hope campaign theme creates a positive buzz around a candidate and offers inspiration that may persuade a higher proportion of the electorates to participate in the election as depicted by Figure 8.1 below:



FIGURE 8.1: OUTCOME OF A HOPE CAMPAIGN THEME

SOURCE: PRIMARY DATA, 2022

Another campaign theme that emerged from this thesis is Change, which was used by the NPP Presidential Candidate. The findings of this research indicated that Change was a strong campaign theme that attract votes to the candidate of NPP party. An interesting finding that emerged is that a Change theme can anchor on either fear or hope. It was discovered that when the NPP Communications campaign successfully instilled fear of the unknown with regards to general economic hardship, particularly unemployment, into the majority of the electorates, it increased the NPP Candidate’s popularity and share of voice in the political campaign communications space.

In addition, the NPP Presidential Candidate also got high believability from the electorates as a result of the campaign communications team inculcating fear into the electorates. Thus, many of the people became convinced that the NPP Presidential Candidate was in the better position to meet their socioeconomic needs hence considered voting for change. It must be stated that the concept of fear used as a campaign communications tool should be carefully analysed since fear may not commonly favour candidates affiliated to incumbent political parties seeking re-election or seeking an extension of the political mandate through a new candidate.

As indicated above, this thesis affirmed that the use of fear resonated well with Change as a campaign communication theme, and it helped in gaining some votes for the NPP Presidential Candidate. However, the question of how significant the concept of fear boosted the Change agenda of the NPP communication strategy vis-à-vis the hope communication theme was not specifically analysed by this research. In other words, there was no comparison between Hope and Change but the researcher can conclude that fear led to change. As clearly indicated in figure 8.2 below, the fear concept attracted some voters who had become convinced that retaining the NDC Presidential Candidate in power will lead to more economic hardship, to vote for change:



FIGURE 8.2: FEAR CONCEPT CREATED A CHANGE THEME

SOURCE: PRIMARY DATA, 2022

In addition, the outcome of this research revealed that, Continuity was a communication campaign theme adopted only by the governing NDC Presidential Candidate. For messaging consistency, the NDC campaign needed to persuade the electorates to vote to grant another opportunity to the incumbent President to continue with the work he was doing. The study therefore revealed that, voters are likely to vote for incumbent candidates when they are satisfied with their performance. Indeed, the study further revealed that the NDC communication campaign invested some amount of resources in propagating the ‘*JM Toaso*’ campaign slogan (i.e JM continue with your work as the President).

Although, the Continuity campaign communication theme achieved a significant share of voice within the media space during the campaign, it failed to attract the needed votes for the NDC Presidential Candidate. This is because majority of the electorates were not convinced that the NDC Candidate had performed satisfactorily. The study therefore concluded that, for a Continuity theme to succeed, the party interested in adopting it must ensure that the Presidential Candidate the party is presenting to the electorates will be able to convince the majority of the targeted voters that the said candidate has performed. The study presents the figure below (Figure 8.3) to show that satisfaction can be used as a political communication concept to create Continuity theme:

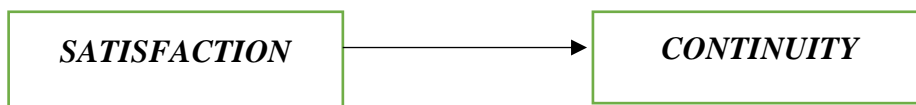


FIGURE 8.3: SATISFACTION LED TO CONTINUITY THEME

SOURCE: PRIMARY DATA, 2022

8.2.3 Research Question Three

FRAMING THE ISSUES FOR CAMPAIGN MESSAGE DESIGN

The study sought to outline the tools and mechanisms applied to segregate the key issues relevant to the electorates which were considered when formulating the campaign messages. It was

assumed that the voter population was a composite of many segments of an adult population with different demographic features, varying sociocultural characteristics, wide variety of interests and expectations. Hence, understanding the electorates and the factors that are likely to influence their behaviour is important. Knowing their different characteristics becomes important to formulating a successful campaign message particularly in a multiparty democracy. As earlier indicated, the 2016 general election was keenly contested by the two leading political parties under reference.

Data analytics and research have been identified as important tools to understand the electorates. In order to respond to the question of what mechanisms were used to select relevant issues that informed the design of the campaign messages employed by the two leading Presidential Candidates, the study can conclude that the two leading parties applied some amount of data analytics and research. It was found that the parties relied on both internal and external experts to conduct the research and data analysis which fed the communications team with important inputs into their decision making. Research was therefore used to identify critical issues relevant to the electorates, and how best to respond to these issues. It was further discovered that the parties believed that research is relevant to formulating attractive political campaign messages.

Another finding of this thesis was that both the NPP and NDC employed the services of professional and experienced communications team to lead their communications operations during the 2016 electoral campaign. It was noted that they were employed to help design communications strategy for the respective campaigns. However, the research could not establish the level of expertise of these communications team members as well as their terms of engagement. But it was ascertained that these professionals and communications experts helped to develop the mechanisms used to isolate the issues relevant to the political discourse during the campaign.

In addition to the use of research to identify the key issues relevant to the electorates, it emerged that the NPP communications team employed the use of brainstorming sessions in a form of retreat to formulate their messages. It must be established that these brainstorming sessions relied

heavily on the data gathered through research hence the connection between research and other mechanisms in identifying the relevant issues was strong. It can therefore be concluded that the NPP Communications team adopted a more structured and systematic approach to formulating campaign messages.

This research can further conclude that there are other general public platforms where rich data can be gathered to help isolate the issues relevant to the electorates during a campaign. The study identified '*Serial Calling or Phone ins*' and '*Comments on News Articles*' published by other electronic media platforms. The phenomenon of Serial Calling or Phone ins has become an important feature of political campaign communications system in Ghana and can therefore be leveraged to gather rich data.

After successfully identifying and isolating the relevant issues, campaign communications should move to adopting mechanisms to frame these issues in order to limit the scope. This is because it is challenging for the campaign communications group to design a single campaign message that can effectively respond to all the relevant issues identified. In this regard, the final campaign message to be employed in a keenly competitive election must be responsive to the most important issues which have significant weight on the decision making of the majority of the voters. With this as one of the guiding principles when formulating a political campaign message, the researcher can conclude that strategic framing was applied by both the NPP and NDC Presidential Candidates in the 2016 elections in Ghana.

Moreover, the research identified that unemployment, education, and high cost of living were the top three most important issues according to majority of the voters who were ready to participate in the 2016 Presidential elections. This therefore connects well with both the NPP and NDC's campaign communications team's approach to formulate messages to response to these issues. Recall that the main campaign message of NPP was *Free SHS* while as that of the NDC was *Changing Lives Transforming Ghana*. Whilst NPP formulated specific campaign message targeted

at high cost of education, the NDC framed the general high cost of living as the key issue for the electorates and designed messages around it.

As earlier elaborated, the two leading candidates also designed other campaign messages to respond to other relevant issues framed above. The *One District One Factory (1D1F) Initiative* was used by the NPP to respond to the issue of unemployment whilst the *Progressive Free Education* campaign message designed by the NDC was targeted at mitigating the high cost of education in Ghana. In addition, other campaign messages were also formulated to respond to other issues outside the top three issues identified including corruption, erratic electricity supply, high cost of health services and poor infrastructure. It was found out that these messages were anchored on their respective campaign themes of *Hope, Change* and *Continuity*.

CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATIONS

This study identified eighteen (18) media channels as the means through which the two leading political parties disseminated their messages to their target audience. These were radio, television, newspapers, billboards, rallies, social media, house-to-house, social events, word-of-mouth, posters, bulk SMS, fliers, internet, branded promotional materials, community information centers, serial calling/phone ins, focus groups and voice notes. The two leading Presidential Candidates employed a mixture of these communication channels to sell their campaign messages to the target audience (the registered voters).

The findings further revealed that radio, television, and social media were the most attractive mass media channels of political communication in Ghana. Whilst radio is most popular among all segments of the voter population, social media platforms were gaining traction especially to the middle class and voters with some reasonable level of formal education. In addition, although television was found to be an important channel of communication to significant number of the

voters in 2016, it was discovered that access to television relative to radio was difficult. Indeed, one respondent clearly indicated that, while as he was able to listen to radio in his farm, he cannot do same when it comes to television. Also, the two Presidential Candidates employed the major traditional channels since they were found to be more trusted sources of information. This means that the allocation of campaign communications resources should factor in these outcomes.

In conclusion, Personal Selling channels (Interpersonal Communications Channels) were identified as the most effective channels of political communication in Ghana. This may be linked to the social character of the Ghanaian society (the communal living) where personal relationship such as family or tribe ties is important to people as compared to other advanced democracies where individualism is the order.

In summary, it was established that, a victorious campaign must design a framework to assess the mood and map out the expectations of the electorates and use them to shape the vision of the Candidate. An experienced team of political communications specialists then employ strategic framing mechanism to delimit the scope of the critical issues so that the campaign message can be crystalized to respond to the most relevant issues in a concise manner. The Managers of the campaign must ensure that the appropriate channels of communications are identified and used to reach out to the targeted audience at the most efficient manner.

8.3 Research Contributions

8.3.1 Contribution to Knowledge

Although political marketing has evolved overtime, there is limited knowledge in the existing literature where structured theoretical frameworks have been developed using a rigorous qualitative methodology to guide campaign message design for elections in Africa. The existing theoretical models such as the audience-channel-message-evaluation (Noar, 2012), message

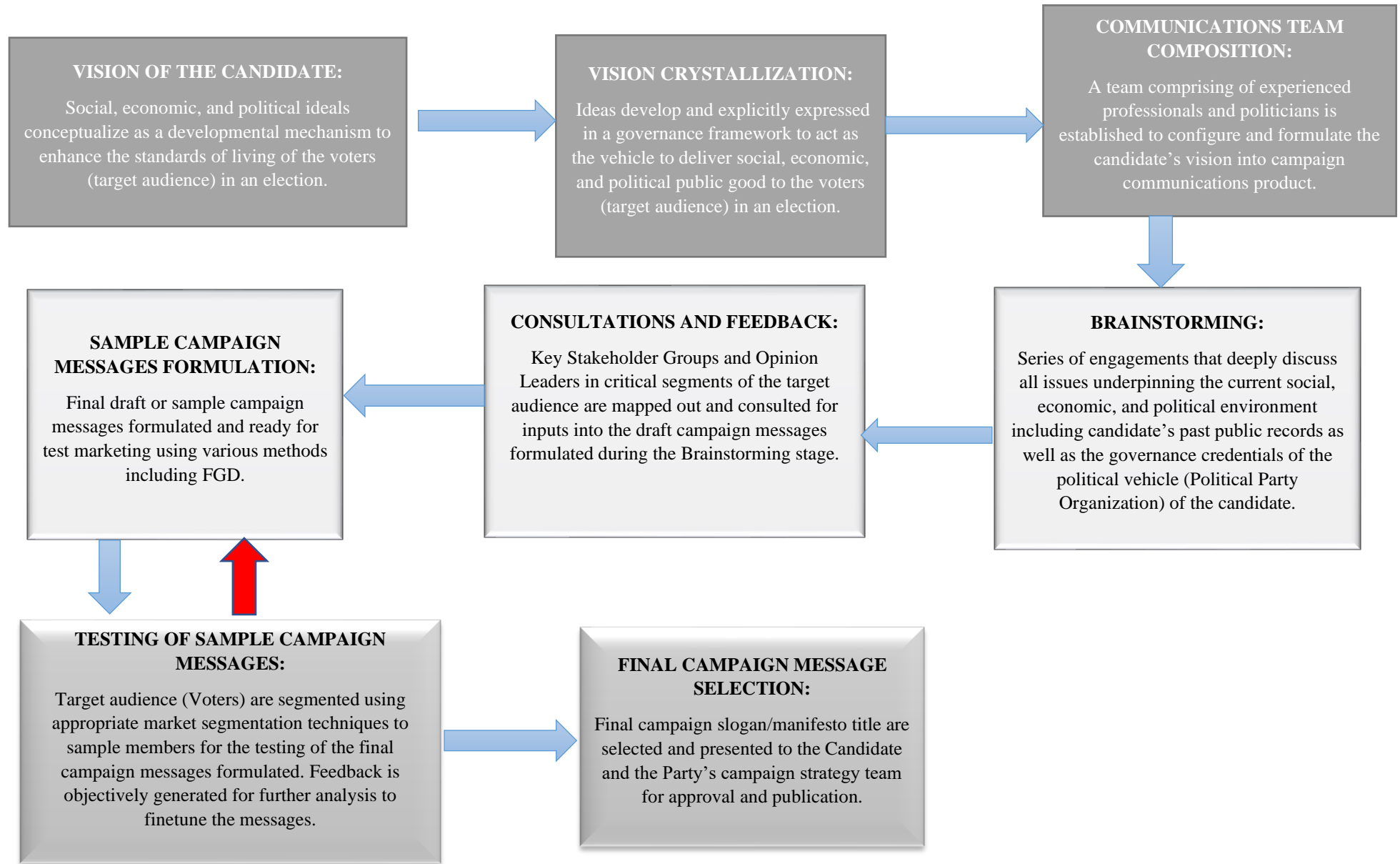
design logic (Edwards et al, 2008), the response hierarchy models (Strong, 1925), and model of predictive measurements of advertising effectiveness (Lavidge and Steiner, 1961) have mainly focused on general message design. Thus, this thesis therefore focused attention on developing a framework or a model that can be used to guide the design or formulation of political campaign message for elections. The study assumes that campaign message formulation is as important as selecting the right Presidential Candidate to represent a party in an election. It was identified that candidate's vision and the expectations of the voting population must reinforce each other. In other words, there should be mutual benefit (gain) for the exchange between the two parties involved in the election – the candidate and the electorate. This research therefore seeks to design a conceptual framework to formulate campaign message to ensure that the two parties benefit from this exchange (Homans, 1958). The theoretical contribution of this study is therefore the proposed campaign message formulation framework which has been captioned as a 'Political Campaign Message Formulation Conceptual Framework' (*refer to Figure 8.4 below*) to fill the knowledge gap identified in the literature.

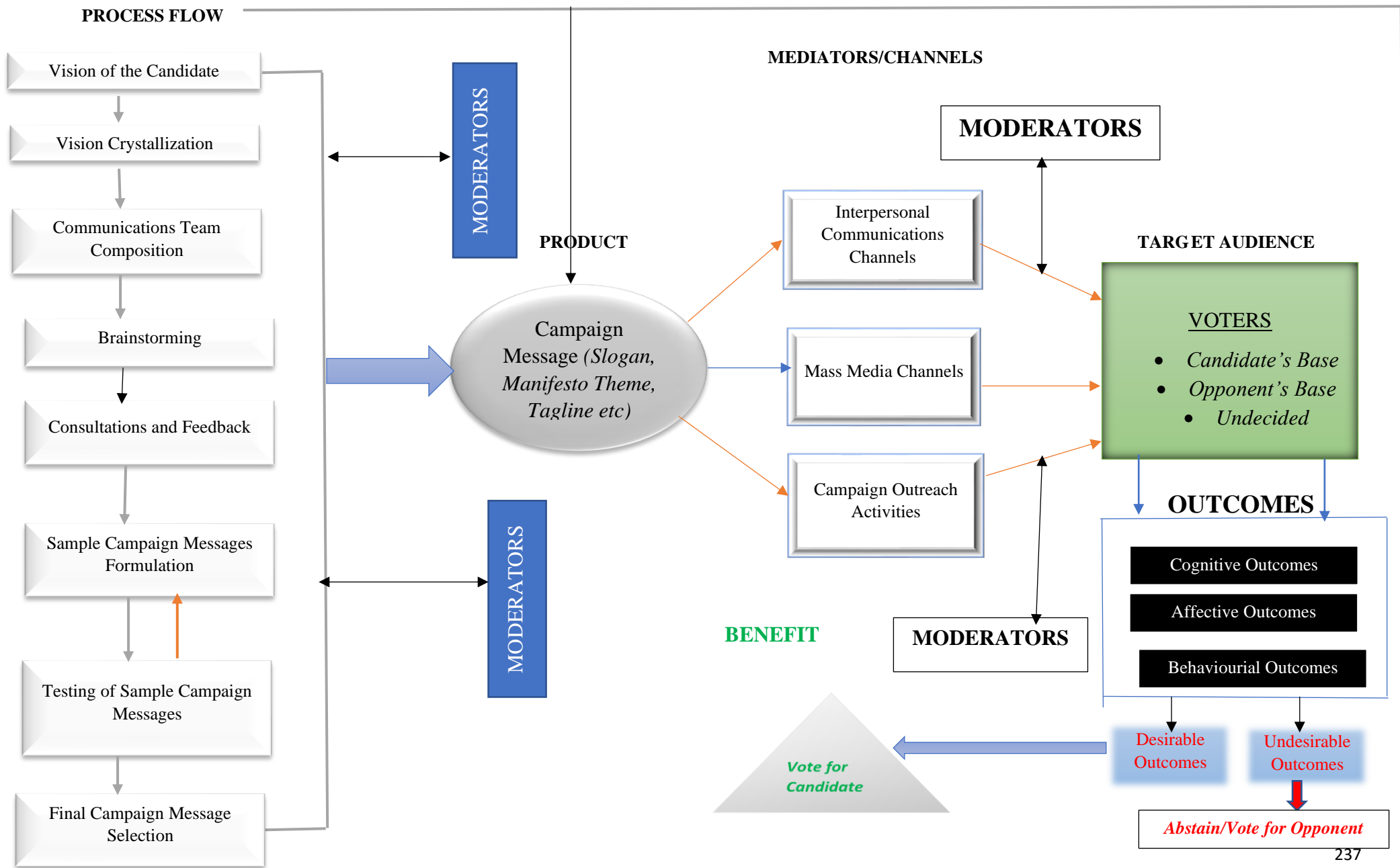
As Schumpeter (1947) earlier defined political competition as “free competition for a free vote”, political campaign can therefore be seen as organized endeavors seeking to manipulate targeted voters decision making to one's advantage. This research has therefore developed this conceptual model using the social exchange theory which posits that voters like typical consumers make their decisions by consciously or unconsciously measuring the costs and rewards of their actions (Homans, 1958).

The social exchange theory, which was developed by an American Sociologist, George Caspar Homans in 1958 is well grounded to anchor this conceptual framework because the framework seeks to facilitate exchange between candidates seeking political office and voters (Homans, 1958; O'Cass, 1996; and Gronroos, 2000). The social exchange theory which was developed by George Homans in 1958 when studying social behaviour concluded that individuals seek rewards through their social interactions. In this case, the so-called social contract between

politicians and electorates ensures that both parties enjoy some material benefits for participating in the electoral process. It is believed that the candidate and the voter are seeking to enter a relationship to exchange their respective offerings – a vote for a political office which comes with authority and collective power (Kotler and Armstrong, 2006). In many democracies, a typical political campaign will have a manifesto (*campaign message*) which will seek to offer voters a number of proposed policies, programmes, and projects which when implemented will gear towards improving the welfare of the voters (Ayee, 2016). The structure of the conceptual framework developed out of the data analysis clearly relies on understanding the expectations of the voter in order to design offerings that can be attractive to them to gain their votes. The return that compensates for gaining their votes is the successful implementation of policies, development programmes and projects to improve their welfare. Lastly, the conceptual framework as indicated below underscores the importance of voter behaviour as a response to the final campaign message that will be formulated as the offering to the voters by the candidate. The social contract between the candidate and the voter may lead to mutual gain or loss or the party who is unable to analyse the offerings available within the campaign space well may lose out (Homans, 1958 and Kotler and Armstrong, 2006).

FIGURE 8.4: POLITICAL CAMPAIGN MESSAGE FORMULATION CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK. SOURCE: PRIMARY DATA, 2022





The Political Campaign Message Formulation Conceptual Framework above in summary is an Eight-Stage process flow embedded in the Three-Component Model. The framework sets off with the vision of the candidate, vision crystallization, composition of communication team and runs through brainstorming, consultations, and feedback to formulate draft campaign messages. The process continues with the final draft campaign message use for testing with a bigger and a more diverse stakeholder groups before selecting the actual campaign message to be disseminated through mediators and media channels to the whole target audience (registered voters).

The eight stage process which is a subcomponent of the whole framework outlines a step by step approach which guides the formulation of the political campaign message. The process is initiated by the Candidate learning from his or her current and historical socioeconomic and political environment, background, and experiences, conceives a political vision for his country. The Candidate's vision is a conceptualization of the social, economic, and political ideals into a developmental mechanism that can be implemented in a form of a programme or a project in order to enhance the standards of living of the target audience in the election. The vision should reflect, to a very large extent, the aspirations, and the expectations of the majority of the electorates. The crystallization stage which follows, is where the candidate's vision is developed and explicitly expressed in a governance framework to act as the vehicle to deliver a social, economic, or a political public good to the voters.

The process continues with the composition of a team of experienced professionals and politicians by the candidate whose vision the political campaign message is being anchored. The team is primarily tasked to configure and formulate the candidate's vision into a campaign or marketing communications product(s) which has a strong market potential (campaign message or campaign slogan) to generate the needed returns (victory). According to the conceptual framework, the team sets out what is defined as a brainstorming session which involves series of engagements that deeply examine all issues underpinning the current social, economic, and political environment to formulate a draft campaign message or messages. This should take cognizance of the candidate's

own personal professional and political experiences in particular governance and public life; as well as the past records of the political party the candidate represents in the said election.

The outcome of this stage which is defined as the draft campaign message is then used to conduct a limited testing using a combination of stakeholder groups including Focus Group Discussions (FGD) to sense the potential response of the target audience, in this case registered voters. The draft campaign message in this context is defined as the very basic campaign message formulated internally using the brainstorming session. The consultations stage is commenced, and it encapsulates the use of key stakeholder groups, opinion leaders, celebrities, political office holders (such as Members of Parliament, Constituency Executives, Grassroots Political Activists, among others) representing critical segments of the whole electoral population. Although these important groups are used to finetune the draft campaign message into what is described as the final sample campaign message or messages, it must be clearly established that, this stage involved a limited process of consultations and feedback generation.

According to the framework, a more elaborate test marketing of the final sample campaign message is conducted using a combination of the various test marketing tools such as social media blitz. This stage is very critical because the outcome of the elaborate test marketing may lead to stopping the process and reversing to the brainstorming stage to conduct further review by considering new and emerging issues relevant to the campaign. The testing of the final sample campaign message or messages is conducted by segmenting the whole target audience (the registered voters) into relevant defined segments so that the feedback generated can represent that defined group.

The voter segmentation exercise can be guided by such variables as age, gender, income level, education, religion, tribe, and occupation. This exercise must be carried out nationwide in order to reflect the different geographic, demographic, and psychographic considerations and interests of all the voters who are likely to participate in the election. The outcome of the test

marketing is applied by the team to finalize the campaign message which is the finished product in a form of a campaign slogan, manifesto theme and, or campaign tagline. The campaign message is then transmitted through Mediators or Media Channels to the overall target audience, the total registered voters comprising of candidate's base; the opponent's base; and the undecided, to influence their decision making for the desired result.

The Conceptual Framework has been developed using the following key assumptions:

1. *Campaign message is at the center of any political campaign.*
2. *Campaign message is driven by the Candidate's vision.*
3. *Campaign message is defined as the campaign slogan, campaign manifesto idea, theme, and, or policy platform.*
4. *Campaign message must be formulated using a structured process.*

These assumptions acted as the guiding principles that dictated the taxonomy and the connections between the various components in the conceptual framework. The taxonomy presents the various components or the categorization of the elements into compartments which are in three parts, namely Process, Mediators, and Outcomes.

The Process component indicates how a political campaign message can be designed using a structured process while as the Mediator components are simply the channels through which the campaign message is disseminated to the target audience. The last taxonomy is the Outcome component, which is the desirable or the undesirable decision outcomes that will emanate from the voter after processing the actual campaign message. A desirable outcome occurs when the voter reacts positively by voting for the candidate and the undesirable outcome is when the voter reacts negatively by voting for another candidate with a different campaign message. These three components of the conceptual framework have moderators between them which can alter the smooth flow of the process. In this case, the researcher defines moderators as the external variables that are outside the control of the process of formulating the campaign message, and the channels through

which the message will be communicated to the voters and the possible decisions the voter is likely to make. A typical example of a moderator is a change of the Presidential Candidate whose vision the entire process has commenced, or a material change in the time set for the elections.

According to the framework and learning from the response hierarchy models (Kotler et al, 2009), the voter goes through three internal stages, namely cognitive outcomes, affective outcomes and behavioural outcomes before manifesting the decision either publicly or privately. Cognitive outcome indicates understanding of the message while as affective outcome signals like, dislike or believability, and behavioural outcome which is the last stage of the process under that compartment, where the final decision of the voter is manifested. As indicated in the framework, where the decision is undesirable, the voter will either vote for the opponent or abstain from voting at all. Irrespective of the outcome at the undesirable decision stage, that is whether abstaining from voting or voting for the opposing candidate, the campaign message formulation process should be re-initiated to deliver a campaign message that can appeal most to the electorates.

8.3.2 Managerial Contribution

CAMPAIGN MANAGERS AND COMMUNICATIONS PRACTITIONERS

The overarching objective of this study is to conceptualize how political campaign message is formulated for elections using the Ghanaian electoral campaign as the context. The conceptual framework above has therefore been designed to guide how communications experts and campaign managers undertake this primary task of formulating their candidate's political campaign message. As a general principle underlining an effective marketing stimulus, understanding the idiosyncrasies of the target audience is extremely critical. What this conceptual framework offers are that it affords managers the opportunity to examine the target audience, in this case the electorates to determine their individual and collective features, as well as their expectations in the election. This could be

done within the context of the transactional nature some electorates are likely to perceive a decision to participate in an election.

In addition, the outcomes of the study which include a validation of the use of multiple campaign messages in election, the positive relationship between ability to recall a campaign message and voters' affinity to the candidate or the political party, and the fact that personal selling channels of communication (interpersonal communications channels) were found to be relatively more effective compared to other communications channels, provide campaign managers with quality tools for decision making and resource allocation.

Lastly, the conceptual framework has simplified the process through which campaign managers and communications specialists initiate, organize, and coordinate their campaign communication activities particularly in a multiparty democratic dispensation. The model has inherent features to ensure that managers are able to identify critical elements such as the audience and moderators which have tendency to torpedo the process of formulating a successful campaign message and also when to refer to the audience to re-assess a specific action or a decision.

GOVERNMENT AND POLICY MAKERS

The findings of this research study outlined certain measures which can help or guide Policy Makers including Government institutions and stakeholders within the democratic ecosystem to shape policies and programmes that support the advancement of multiparty democracy in Ghana and Africa as a whole.

Governments and other actors within the democratic development space can use this conceptual framework to identify the types of support they can offer to political parties and presidential candidates who have outlined a clear vision to advance the course of development of their countries. Such support interventions can be used to formulate campaign messages to promote political stability, unity, and sustainable development, especially when a systematic structure and

process have been identified. A support from central Government or an international organization to political parties and presidential candidates contesting elections can be used to mitigate the adverse effects of the moderators. As earlier indicated, moderator variables are outside the control of the campaign communications experts according to the conceptual framework hence the need for stakeholders to provide support aimed at mitigating their likelihood effects. The intervention by central government institutions or international bodies interested in promoting good governance therefore becomes important.

In addition, Government can also help by using this conceptual framework to check abuse of the political system by ensuring that only professionally designed campaign messages are disseminated through the appropriate channels of communications. Many conflicts have emerged from political disagreements between political parties in many African countries as a result of political campaigns. The use of abusive political communications mostly by political activists who are not professional communicators can be curtailed when there is support by public institutions and international organizations to political parties to manage their campaign communications professionally. The advantage such a conceptual framework offers is that it helps political parties to develop attractive campaign message as well as find professional channels to disseminate them. This is very critical in this day that social media channels are becoming the dominant communication channels for news and information. For example, the resources of donor agencies or government institutions may go directly into recruiting professionals and consultants to guide political parties or presidential candidates to formulate their campaign messages. This can be done efficiently when the conceptual framework is applied.

8.3.3 Contribution to Research Methodology

Some earlier research studies have used both quantitative and qualitative methodologies to study political campaign messaging of political parties and candidates in elections, in both advanced

and transitional democracies. In some cases, also, some Political Marketing scholars have applied qualitative methodologies to test existing conceptual frameworks as well as develop new frameworks including decision making models and tools to guide political campaigning activities planning and implementation in general.

This thesis however has contributed to the development of Grounded Theory as a research methodology by adopting it to develop this political campaign message formulation conceptual framework. The Grounded Theory methodology provided the theoretical underpinning which shaped the systematic approach to data collection and constant analysis of data. Through the use of grounded theory approach, this thesis has enlightened the understanding of the processes involved in designing campaign messages for elections in transitional multiparty democratic dispensations in sub Saharan Africa, particularly in keenly competitive elections. Lastly, using Grounded Theory, this research thesis was able to compartmentalize the framework into three broad components, namely Process, Mediators, and Outcomes, and how they flow into each other to improve understanding of campaign message formulation and dissemination.

The application of social exchange theory (Homans, 1958) to analyse the sociopolitical relationship between candidate and voters brought to the fore the importance of formulating credible and attractive campaign message when contesting for political office. As posited by Schumpeter's theory of political competition, there is free competition for a free vote in a multiparty democracy, where elections are held involving many political parties (Schumpeter, 1947). This means that a candidate seeking electoral victory in an election, must ensure that the likelihood for mutual gain for the parties involved in the political exchange is guaranteed. This can be achieved by formulating a campaign message that largely meets the expectations of most of the voters in that election. The conceptual framework which has been developed portrays that for a candidate to gain from this type of exchange, the candidate must offer an attractive and a compelling message that assures the voters that there is a gain to be made when their response to the candidate's campaign message is positive (that is voting for the said candidate).

8.4 Limitations

The overall goal of this study was to conceptualize the formulation of political campaign messaging for elections. Through the application of grounded theory methodology under the qualitative research approach, an empirical conceptual framework has been developed for political campaign message formulation. The thesis has also outlined the various advantages this empirical model for formulating political campaign messages for election has for politicians, communications practitioners, stakeholders involved in democratic development in sub-Saharan Africa, and policy makers. The outcome of this research study however has some limitations in relation to data collection and the future application of the conceptual framework.

It must be established that there was very limited participation by respondents affiliated to the National Democratic Congress (NDC) party and associates of the former Presidential Candidate of the party. Although some senior associates of the NDC Presidential Candidate including a former Deputy Minister of State under the party's regime and the current Spokesperson for the NDC Candidate participated in the research. This limited participation the researcher believes, denied the research an opportunity to enrich the outcome with additional data from varying perspectives. In spite of this however, the design of the conceptual framework went through a robust systematic process using the data collected.

In addition to the above, the field data collection exercise commenced in late 2019, and due to the extensive nature of the data collection component of the study, the emergence of Corona Virus (COVID-19) Pandemic in the same year which eventually became a global pandemic, significantly slowed down field interviews. The COVID-19 pandemic led to the imposition of a number of restrictions which influenced the researcher to conduct some of the respondents' interviews via telephone. This did not however affect data quality because telephone interviews have been used as a data collection method in many qualitative studies.

Moreover, a methodological limitation that emerged from this study is the level of bias which affected the selection of respondents for data collection and to some extent the interpretation of the interview transcripts. In order to leverage the time available for the study, the researcher adopted the use of both convenience and purposeful sampling techniques for the selection of respondents which raises the issue of bias.

Lastly, the outcome of this study which is the political campaign message formulation conceptual framework can be used as a general framework for campaign message design but not a framework for general campaign management. In other words, the application of this empirical model may be limited to designing campaign messages for multiparty democracies in sub Saharan African countries with similar political, sociocultural, and economic characteristics like Ghana, which was selected as the case study country for the study.

8.5 Future Research

The limitations outlined above notwithstanding, in many cases have offered opportunities for other researchers to initiate or conduct research in future in this area of study. The goal of such studies will be to determine whether this political campaign message conceptual framework can be applied in advanced multiparty democracies, particularly in jurisdictions where significant amount of campaign resources is allocated to political communications and propaganda for electoral campaign.

Other Political Marketing scholars and research students interested in this area of study may wish to conduct future research to test this conceptual framework using a different research methodology and expand the political parties to include minor or smaller political parties. Such future research studies will provide a deeper understanding of how other political parties especially the minor or smaller political parties with no governance experience formulate their political

campaign messages. The outcome of such research will improve the general applications of the conceptual framework as well as expand its applications.

In conclusion, other future research can also focus on elaborating the three stage outcomes namely cognitive, affective and behavioural outcomes, which represent the third compartment of the whole framework. By applying other theoretical models of consumer behaviour, a deeper examination of how voter's understanding (*cognitive outcome*) leads to decision (*affective outcome*) and eventual action (*behaviourial outcome*) will enrich the application of this conceptual framework. It is therefore highly recommended that future research, is focused on the areas aforementioned in order to enrich political marketing literature covering Africa and other emerging and transitional democracies across the world.

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APPENDIX ONE: INVITATION LETTER AND INFORMATION SHEET



Department of Marketing and Business Strategy
Hull University Business School
University of Hull
Cottingham Road
HU6 7RX
United Kingdom.

Dear Sir/Madam,

Invitation letter and Information sheet

I would like you to consider participating in a study I am conducting at Hull University, Faculty of Business, Law and Politics. This invitation sheet provides further information about this project and your involvement in the research.

The aim of the project is to conceptualize political campaign messaging for elections.

The project will focus on the following:

1. *determine how the campaign messages of the two leading Presidential Candidates in the 2016 elections were conceptualized.*
2. *examine the framing strategies used by the two leading Presidential Candidates.*
3. *analyse the themes underlying the campaign messages of the two Presidential Candidates.*

Participation in this study is voluntary. It will involve an interview of approximately 2 hours in length to take place in a convenient location.

The procedures involve:

You may decline to answer any of the interview questions if you so wish. Furthermore, you may decide to withdraw from this study at any time without any negative consequences by advising the researcher(s).

With your permission, the interview will be audio recorded to facilitate collection of information, and later transcribed for analysis. Shortly after the interview has been completed, we will send you a copy of the transcript to give you an opportunity to confirm the accuracy of our conversation and to add or clarify any points that you wish.

All information you provide is considered strictly confidential. Your name and your organisation's name will not appear in any thesis or report resulting from this study, however, with your permission anonymous quotations may be used.

Data collected during this study will be retained for 5 years in a locked office at the University of Hull. Only researchers associated with this project will have access.

There are no known or anticipated risks to you as a participant in this study.

Should you [the participant] have any concerns about the conduct of this research project, please contact the Secretary, Faculty of Business, Law and Politics Research Ethics Committee, University of Hull, Cottingham Road, Hull, HU6 7RX; Tel No (+44) (0)1482 463536.

We hope that the results of our study will be of benefit to the organisations directly involved in the study, as well as to the broader research community.

We very much look forward to speaking with you and thank you in advance for your assistance in this project.

Yours Sincerely,

Name of Researcher: Samuel Adutwum

Email address: s.adutwum-2016@hull.ac.uk

Name of Supervisor: Prof. Christopher Bovis

Email of Supervisor: C.Bovis@hull.ac.uk

APPENDIX TWO: INFORM CONSENT FORM



Informed Consent form (to be completed by researcher and signed by participants)

I, _____ of

hereby agree to participate in this study to be undertaken by **Samuel Adutwum** and I understand that the aims and purpose of the research is to conceptualize political campaign messaging for elections.

By signing this consent form, you are agreeing to your participation in this research process and to the collation of the material. Participants have the right to withdraw from participation in the research process at any point and materials collated from them up to that point will be removed.

I understand that

1. Upon receipt, my questionnaire will be coded and my name and address kept separately from it.
2. Any information that I provide will not be made public in any form that could reveal my identity to an outside party i.e. that I will remain fully anonymous.
3. Aggregated results will be used for research purposes and may be reported in scientific and academic journals (including online publications).
4. Individual results **will not** be released to any person except at my request and on my authorisation.
5. That I am free to withdraw my consent at any time during the study in which event my participation in the research study will immediately cease and any information obtained from me will not be used.

Participant's Signature:

Date:

The email contact details of the Researcher are: s.adutwum-2016@hull.ac.uk

The email contact details of the Supervisor are: C.Bovis@hull.ac.uk

In some cases, consent will need to be witnessed e.g. where the subject is blind/ intellectually disabled. A witness must be independent of the project and may only sign a certification to the level of his/her involvement. The form should also record the witnesses' signature, printed name and occupation. For particularly sensitive or exceptional research, further information can be obtained from the Faculty Research Ethics Committee Secretary, e.g., absence of parental consent, use of pseudonyms, etc.

APPENDIX THREE: INTERVIEW GUIDE



SAMUEL ADUTWUM (STUDENT #: 201001705)

PhD CANDIDATE, HULL UNIVERSITY BUSINESS SCHOOL

INTERVIEW GUIDE

RESEARCH TOPIC: CONCEPTUALIZING POLITICAL CAMPAIGN MESSAGING IN AN ELECTION - THE CASE STUDY OF THE 2016 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION IN GHANA

The structure of the interview guide for this research has been designed to assist the researcher to achieve the following research objectives:

4. *To determine how the campaign messages of the two leading Presidential candidates in the 2016 elections were conceptualized.*
5. *To examine the framing strategies used by the two leading Presidential candidates.*
6. *To analyse the themes underlying the campaign messages of the two Presidential candidates.*

The researcher has developed the following research questions from both the research topic and the research objectives:

4. *What were the campaign messages of the two leading Presidential Candidates in the 2016 election?*
5. *How were the campaign messages conceptualized?*
6. *What were the framing strategies used by the two leading Presidential Candidates in the election campaign?*
7. *What themes underpinned the campaign messages of the two Candidates during the election campaign?*

CAVEAT

The researcher intends to adopt the questions below to guide the interviews. The questions will be used as a guide, an auto driving approach will be adopted so questions may navigate to additional related questions.

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR RESPONDENTS SELECTED FROM CAMPAIGN TEAMS

Basic Information about Respondents

Age:

Gender:

Educational Qualification:

Political Affiliation:

Years of Political Experience:

Role Assigned During the Campaign:

Location:

1. Discussions on *Slogans, Manifesto Themes, Media Events Headlines, Press Conferences, Newspaper headlines, etc.*
2. Examine the persuasiveness of the campaign messages.
3. Formulation of the campaign messages used by the Presidential Candidates.
4. Processes the Campaign Teams used in arriving at the final campaign messages.
Probe – consultation and engagements with relevant stakeholders
5. The application of Marketing Communications Strategies to frame the campaign messages.
6. Examine the effectiveness of the framing strategies in designing the final campaign messages.
7. Identify and examine the major themes (public interest issues) running in the media landscape during the 2016 elections campaign period (June – November 2016).
Probe - *Were these issues the most important priorities among the majority of the population?*
8. Selection of the themes that finally informed the formulation or design of the campaign messages.

9. Other lessons learnt during the design of the campaign messages.

Probe - *What media channels did your campaign team use in disseminating the messages?*

Probe - *Which of these media channels did your team find most efficient?*

10. Details relevant about formulating political campaign messages.

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR RESPONDENTS SELECTED FROM MEDIA PRACTITIONERS GROUP

Basic Information about Respondents

Age:

Gender:

Educational Qualification:

Name of Media Organization:

Role/Position:

Location:

1. Discussions on *Slogans, Manifesto Themes, Media Events Headlines, Press Conferences, Newspaper headlines, etc.*
2. Examine the persuasiveness of the campaign messages.
3. Formulation of the campaign messages used by the Presidential Candidates.
4. Processes the Campaign Teams used in arriving at the final campaign messages.
Probe – consultation and engagements with relevant stakeholders
5. The application of Marketing Communications Strategies to frame the campaign messages.
6. Examine the effectiveness of the framing strategies in designing the final campaign messages.
7. Identify and examine the major themes (public interest issues) running in the media landscape during the 2016 elections campaign period.
Probe - *Were these issues the most important priorities among the majority of the population?*
8. Selection of the themes that finally informed the formulation or design of the campaign messages.
9. Other lessons learnt during the design of the campaign messages.
Probe - *What media channels did your campaign team use in disseminating the messages?*
Probe - *Which of these media channels did your team find most efficient?*
10. Details relevant about formulating political campaign messages.