

SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

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**INVESTIGATING THE EXTENT TO WHICH VOTERS HAVE MOVED TO BECOME
MORE LIKE CONSUMERS THAN CITIZENS IN GHANA**

(AMASAMAN CONSTITUENCY)

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RELATIONS**

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DECLARATION

I declare that this dissertation is my own original work produced under supervision towards the award of Master of Arts in Public Relations. All references cited have been duly acknowledged. This dissertation has neither been presented in whole nor in part to any other institution for any award.

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DATE

I hereby certify that this dissertation was supervised in accordance with procedures laid down by the Ghana Institute of Journalism.

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DATE

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to the Almighty God and my family.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

To God Almighty, I say thank you for a successful accomplishment of this course.

I would like to express my profound gratitude to my supervisor, Dr. Kobby Mensah of the Department of Communication Studies, Ghana Institute of Journalism for guiding me through this dissertation.

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ABSTRACT

The study was conducted on the topic; “Investigating the extent to which voters have moved to become more like consumers than citizens in Ghana (Amasaman Constituency)” The study set out to investigate (i) the characteristics of voters like consumers or citizens, (ii) the level of interest of electorates in political participation, (iii) factors that motivate voters decision and (iv) voters view on voting. The researchers employed the mixed method of research for the study. The study discovered that voters have similar traits as consumers when it comes to decision making process. The study further revealed that to a very large extent, voters behave more like citizens than consumers. The study also revealed among others that consistently voters have shown high level of interest in the participation of politics through voting. The study therefore recommends that that since the study has established that voters resemble consumers to some extent; political parties must employ political marketing specialists to devise marketing plan that will target voters as consumers to enhance electoral success of political candidates in elections. Also, the study recommends that political parties must adopt a more nationalistic approach to their campaigns since majority of voters see themselves as citizens to a very large extent than consumers. Political campaign strategists must appeal to the patriotic sense of voters in order to win them to their side.

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CHAPTER ONE

GENERAL OVERVIEW AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.0 Introduction

This chapter is the general introduction to the entire study. It focuses on the background, problem statement, objectives, and the research questions. In furtherance to the above, it also covers the scope and limitation of the study. Finally, the chapter ends with the organisation of the study.

1.1. Background to the Study

Voters and consumers seem to have some resemblance in their affective, cognitive and behavioural responses to satisfying needs and wants (Hacley, 2003). This is likely since, political parties and commercial organisations in some cases employ similar marketing techniques. Also, in the context of consumer behaviour, Peter and Olsen et.al (2005) argued that the principles underpinning consumer behaviour are essential beyond the commercial domain. In many ways, researchers no longer draw significant distinctions between consumer behaviour and, for instance, voting behaviour Peter and Olsen et.al (2005).

Newman (1999) has suggested that the voter can be analysed as a consumer in the political marketplace. Newman (1999) states that voters are becoming more like consumers than citizens who are supposed to seek for the bigger interest of their nations. However, individual voters make their voting decisions in line with their own self-interest and undertaking cost-benefit analyses (Newman 2001). These notions of rationality have suggested that voters make their electoral decisions just as if they are buying products or services (Peter and Olsen et.al, 2005). Schudson (2006; 2007), bemoans that such decision making on the part of voters is viewed as an explicit and central detriment to good citizenship, rather than an important component of motivation in electoral decision making.

Voters' preferences for candidates or political party arise from the combination of many different factors. Some factors come from attributes of the candidate himself/herself (e.g. credibility,

social status, personality), while others are attributes of voters themselves (e.g. self-interest, ideological belief, understanding of development etc.), (Venkatraman, Clithero, Fitzsimons, and Huettel, 2012).

Often, voters just as consumers will tend to choose a candidate or political party (brand) that they consider congruent with their self-image. In this particular way each voter or consumer at an individual basis will try to reflect his or her own identity through choice (Cătălin, Andreea, 2014). For instance, a Ghanaian voter who believes in centre-right and liberal conservative party is more likely to choose the New Patriotic Party (NPP) over the National Democratic Congress (NDC) which is a center-left social democratic party. When they are part of a larger social group, voters' choices tend to converge to a certain pattern thus forming the basics of an individual social identity. For example, a voter in the Volta region of Ghana is likely to vote for an NDC candidate because majority of people in the region vote NDC. This is done so that he/she would be socially accepted because belongingness is a need according to Maslow (1943). In this case the choice of the voter is personal; it has nothing to do with the interest of his/her country.

In general, the study will test the extent to which voters have moved to become more like consumers than citizens, a general assumption within the literature from a Ghanaian perspective.

1.2. Problem Statement

Voting is the means of expressing approval or disapproval of government decisions, the policies and programs of various political parties and qualities of candidates who are engaged in the struggle to get the status of being the representatives of the people (Zahida and Younis, 2014).

Since 1992 to 2016, Ghana has held seven successive presidential and parliamentary elections every four years through peaceful universal adult suffrage which have resulted in three peaceful alternations of power between the two main political parties: The New Patriotic Party (NPP), and the National Democratic Congress (NDC) (Ghana Electoral Commission, 2017).

Ghana could not have achieved this electoral success as far as democracy is concern in Africa without the engagement and participation of citizens (Asah-Asante 2015). Political engagement is both a right and a responsibility of citizens in establishing, developing and sustaining

democracy (Merloe, 2016). When it comes to classifying political participation, voting is the basic conventional mode of political participation (Armstrong, 2015). Citizen engagement pursues economic, social, cultural and political development, including the provision of opportunity, resources, services, and security for their country (Merloe, 2016). Conversely, Newman (2001) has suggested that voters are becoming more like consumers than citizens whose voting decisions are in line with their own self-interest just as the Rational Choice theory posits. The theory is about the behaviour of instrumentally rational and self-interested individuals who rationalise their choice of whether or not to vote, in accordance with their potential utility of doing so (Lohmann, 1998). It looks at voter behaviour from two perspectives, namely, Evaluation and Non-evaluation perspectives (Morison et al 2004). Lindberg and Morison further assert that whereas the evaluative voting rationale is based on voters' judgment of the performance of parties or representatives on policies, non-evaluative perspective is driven by clientelistic voting based on personal affective ties of patronage. When there is a promise or implicit agreement about personal favours or goods to be exchanged in return for political loyalty, a clientelism relationship is established. This psychological and behavioral principle governing voting and buying in the literature is widely accepted yet largely untested. As such, reasonable starting points to broadening the consumer behaviour and rational choice theory by testing the extent to which voters have moved to become more like consumers than citizens in Ghana.

1.3. General Objective

The main objective of the study is to determine the extent to which voters have moved to become more like consumers than citizens in Ghana.

The specific objectives of the study are:

1. To identify the characteristics of voters like consumers or citizens.
2. To evaluate level of interest of electorates in political participation in the Amasaman constituency
3. To examine the factors that motivate voters decision in the Amasaman constituency.
4. To investigate voters view on voting in the Amasaman constituency.

1.4. Research Questions

1. What are the characteristics of voters that make them like consumers or citizens?
2. What is the level of interest of voters in voting the Amasaman constituency?
3. What factors inform voters decision in the Amasaman constituency?
4. What are voters' views on voting in the Amasaman constituency?

1.5. Significance of the Study

The findings of the study are expected to inform political parties and politicians on who a contemporary voter is; a consumer or citizen. This is to rejuvenate and remind political parties and politicians about the perception and attitude of a contemporary voter and what inform their voting decision. Thus, there will be an insight into what actually influence voters. This will help politicians to develop the best political marketing strategies that will win the hearts of voters. This study is also expected to contribute value towards existing knowledge on political marketing in Ghana and beyond. Particularly it is expected to serve as a reference document to prospective researchers who may endeavour to repeat and expand on this study.

1.6. Scope of the Study

The geographical scope of the study was limited to the Amasaman constituency in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana. Contextually, the study is to investigate the extent to which Ghanaian voters have moved to become more like consumers than citizens. The time period for this study is cross sectional; meaning data would be taken once in the lifetime of the study. The target respondents would be limited to Ghanaian electorates who vote in the Amasaman constituency in the Greater Accra Region.

1.7. Limitations of the Study

The study had number of challenges which hindered its smooth progression. Among them include limited financial resources, time constrains, scope limitation, sample size issues, ethical issues as well as statistical. The entire study was self-sponsored solely by the researcher. This made it very difficult to broaden the scope beyond the resource limit of the researcher. Time was also very limited to conduct a time series or longitudinal studies than the cross-sectional survey.

The researcher had to learn complex statistical tools within a short time, and this was a challenge. Moreover, non-compliance on the part of the respondents created some delays. Most of these limitations were mitigated by consistency on the part of the researcher and support from the project supervisor.

1.8. Organisation of the Study

The dissertation is structured in five main chapters. The first chapter deals with the introduction which covers the background of the study, statement of problem, research objectives, research questions, significance of the study, scope of the study, limitations of the study and organisation of the study. The second chapter of the study constitutes the review of literature on voter behaviour, consumer behaviour and theoretical perspective. The third chapter focuses on research methodology. The fourth chapter deals with data presentation, analysis and discussion of findings. The fifth chapter concludes the study by summarising the main findings, drawing conclusions and making sound recommendations

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0. Introduction

This section of the dissertation focuses on review of relevant literature which has relationship with working objectives of the study. This chapter throws more light on the various theories and concept surrounding what voting is as well as consumer behaviour and the extent to which voters have moved to become more like consumers than citizens.

2.1. Theoretical Framework

A theory is often stated as “a set of interrelated constructs, (variables) definitions, and propositions that presents a systematic view of phenomena by specifying relations among variables with the purpose of explaining natural phenomena” (Kirlinger 1979, p64). The theoretical framework further explains the path of a research and grounds a study firmly in theoretical constructs. The overall aim of theoretical frameworks is to make research findings more meaningful, acceptable to the theoretical constructs in the research field and ensures generalisability (Imenda, 2014). They assist in stimulating research while ensuring the extension of knowledge by providing both direction and impetus to the research enquiry (Imenda, 2014).

There are basically three schools of thought that are prominent when it comes to the scientific study of voting behaviour. There is the sociological model which is very often classified as School of Columbia whose work began with the publication of the book; “The People’s Choice” (Lazarsfeld, Berelson, and Gaudet, 1944) which emphasises the effects of social factors.

Second, the psychosocial model, also known as the School of Michigan presupposes that party identification is the foremost factor of influence when it comes to voter behaviour.

Third, the Rational Choice Theory which is also known as the model of economic voting or the School of Rochester, whose emphasis is on variables such as rationality, choice, uncertainty and information that determine the behaviour of voters (Antunes, 2010). Based on the objectives of this study, the Rational Choice Theory of voting behaviour was adopted as the main theoretical assumption.

2.1.1 Rational Choice Theory of voting behaviour

It is argued that the Rational Choice Theory was postulated as part of the behavioural revolution in American political science of the 1950s and 1960s. The theory posits that every individual has a rational side, which is capable of making consistent choices (Downs 1957). The theory has increasingly become a growing theory in political science. It assumes that people are rational at least to the extent that they make choices that will maximise their utility (Green and Shapiro 1994).

2. 1.2. Assumptions of the Rational Choice Theory

There are assumptions made by Rational Choice Theorists. These assumptions according to Abell (1992) include:

2.1.3. Individualism: The Rational Choice Theory assumes that it is individuals who ultimately take actions. They are actors in the society and organisations. They behave and act always as rational beings, self-calculating, self-interested and self-maximising. These individual social/political actions are the ultimate source of larger societal outcomes. Politically, this assumption implies that individual voters are rational and they chose to vote for a candidate if their expected utility from voting is higher than their expected utility from not voting and this action impacts on the larger society.

2.1.4. Optimality: The Rational Choice Theory assumes that individuals choose their actions optimally, knowing their preferences as well as the opportunities or hindrances with which they face. Abell (1992) defines optimality as a situation when no other course of social/political action would be preferred by an individual over the course of action he/she has chosen. This does not suggest that the course of action an individual adopts is the best in terms of some objective, and outside judgment. The rational choice theory, therefore, assumes, according to Abell (1992), that individuals do the best they can depending on the circumstances they find themselves as they see them. In voting decision, it is assumed that citizens optimise their choice of candidate after becoming aware of the opportunities and constraints they face.

2.1.5. Self-Regarding Interest: This assumption states that the actions of an individual bother entirely on his or her own welfare. According to Abell (1992), in as much as Self-Regarding Interest is a key assumption in the Rational Choice Theory, it is not as essential to the approach

as the assumption on optimality. He also noted that various types of group sentiments could exist, such as cooperation, unselfishness, charity, which initially may seem to be contrary to individual optimality. However, proponents of Rational Choice Theorist argue that these sentiments can be incorporated into the Rational Choice Model by observing that such sentiments may ultimately be aimed at pursuing some form of self-interest. For instance, efforts of charity organisations according to Abell (1992) could ultimately be aimed at making an individual feel good or could be a means of raising one's social esteem in the eyes of others.

2.1.6. Rationality –This seems the most predominant assumption of the rational choice theory. All individuals, according to this assumption act in ways that would benefit them more; every individual is most likely to undertake courses of actions that they perceive to be the best possible option and one that would immensely be to their own advantage.

The study placed the Rational Choice Theory postulated by Downs (1957) within the wider context of voter behaviour to explain how its in-built characteristics reveal the extent to which voters have moved to become more like consumers in the political market place in Ghana. The presumption is that Political Marketers working for political parties take inferences from this theory and employ marketing strategies in their campaigns through the use of marketing tactics that appeal to the personal interest of voters. They also take into consideration why and when they should target electorates just as marketers target prospects by identifying their needs and proposing policies and programmes to satisfy them.

In addition, political marketers working for political parties communicate when there is a situation that bears individual interest during electoral campaigns. Finally, marketers working in political establishments undertake segmentation or targeting. This helps them to formulate tailored messages that appeal to the personal interest of voters through the use of appropriate medium (Strömbäck, and Kioussis, 2011).

2.2. Global Studies on Voter Behavior

Based on survey data collected between presidential victory of Harry Truman in 1948 and the re-election of Dwight Eisenhower in 1956, in order to determine the voting behaviour of America, Campbell et al (1964) asserted that, the principal motivation behind voting in the US is party identification and affiliation. Popkin (1991) in an attempt to explain how citizens gather, integrate and evaluate information they need to make up their mind in voting, stated that, voters use past knowledge and experience they come across in their daily activities as well as opinions of others they trust in forming their views about the candidates and parties they vote for in a given election and that most of these information come from campaigns and the media. Admittedly this study tells us the sources of information that voters need to make up their minds as to who to vote for, but it has however, failed to disclose to us what constitute that information. Citing examples of national issues, from Britain, (Busteed, 1975), theorised that, there is a relationship between geographical location and voter behaviour. He explained that, the activities of state government, whether favourable or unfavourable towards certain regions or geographical locations in a state has a likely impact on the voting behaviour of those regions.

Evans (2004) explained the various theories of voting and identified the following; group benefits, material gain, managerial competence, a party focusing on relevant issues and party ideology as the desires which may motivate voters to vote for parties or candidates (Evans, 2004, p.6). However, he was quick to add that the personality of candidate and the perception the public has about them and how the voter whether as individual or a group would benefit from a party programme or manifesto may cause the voter to change their vote in an election.

In the same vein Lago and Coma (2010) examined the factors that shaped the electoral behaviour in mass elections in Spain and arrived at the conclusion that voters changed their voting pattern after the founding elections in the 1970 because of change in party's entry decisions, party's campaign strategies and voters predispositions. These studies (Evans 2004 and Lago & Coma) fall in line with the current study since they all deal with voter behaviour.

Patterson (2003) claimed that from 1960-2000, the interest of American voters to come out to vote or campaign for parties or even watch political debates on TV has declined drastically. He attributed the reasons to other things that equally compete for the attention and minds of voters,

generational replacement, and changes in the electoral system, political parties and the media. This study only gives us the reasons why in recent times, some American voters have lost interest in voting activities but nothing is said about those who come out to vote especially the reasons that motivate them to vote for a particular party or candidate and under what conditions would the voters change their minds. This current study would address these gaps in the literature.

2.3. Voter Behaviour in Africa Elections

African nations have organised a number of elections for their citizens to vote the kind of leaders they expect to lead them after independence and during the third wave of democratisation. These developments have produced a number of published materials on voter behaviour in Africa.

Gyima-Boadi (2007), stated that election campaigns in Africa inclined to be issueless and that any candidate who attempted to win election, based on campaign policies have woefully failed. This is because parties and candidates focused on personalities and symbols rather than policy, vision and for that reason African election are characterised by direct or indirect mobilisation of ethnic votes partly reflecting the inability of parties to articulate better policies and this deepens the relevance of ethnicity in African society and to voters.

Dovonan et al (2012) had a different view all together. To them the policy of a party and the health of either a state or national economy may greatly influence the choice of voters but they were quick to add that, in all these factors, party affiliation is the main issue driving voter choice and debunked the “Michigan Model” which puts party identification and affiliation first and regard issue-based voting and personal factors as secondary. According to him opinion polls conducted on the 2009 South African elections indicates that party affiliation is declining and that what really influence people to vote is unemployment, crime, corruption, education and personal character of party leaders.

These mentioned studies only indicated the factors that influenced voting behaviour in elections but nothing is said about what can influence the voter to change the identified voting behaviour, since no human behaviour is static. This current study would improve upon the above mentioned earlier ones by not only explaining the factors that influence the choice of voter behaviour but would also unearth the factors that can cause the voter to change his/her behaviour.

2.4 Voter Behavior in Ghana

In trying to explain voter behaviour in Ghana, Debrah (2008/9) observed that, Ghana politics since independence has been influenced by events on the economic front rather than popularised issues of ethnicity and regionalism. He contended that, majority of Ghanaians voted to effect a change of government in the 2000 elections simply because they hoped that the new government will bring about improved economic living conditions. Both Debrah (2008/9) and the current study have something in common that is to explain a change. However, whilst Debrah (2008/9) explains change in a national government, the current attempts to explain a change in voter behaviour toward consumer behaviour.

Chazan (1983) also analysed the 1969 and 1979 elections and though admitted that the anti-Ewe and anti-CPP sentiments coupled with better organisational base led to the success of the Progress Party, the study turned to highlight more on the political parties and the processes and results of the elections with no attention paid to the voter.

Frempong (2006) examined the various forms in which ethnicity manifest itself in Ghanaian politics and after analysing the 2004 general election results, he concluded that the voters voted on ethnic lines and this ethnic way of voting favoured the NPP and that is why it (NPP) won the 2004 elections but Ambo (2006) however disagrees with Frempong (2006) because to him, the closeness of the election results (52% for NPP and 48% for NDC) indicate that, the Ghanaian voter was matured and therefore voted on issues instead of on ethnic lines.

Saaka (2006) seems to agree with Debrah (2006) when he (Saaka) argued that voters choices in Bole-Bamboi and Damango-Daboya are invariably influenced by local political considerations and expectations especially whether those chosen can serve the needs of their constituents. In the same vein, Brukum (2006) stated that, a major factor that influenced the choice of voters in Tamale North, Tolon and Kumbugu was the ability of a contesting candidate to attract development projects to the area.

Ninson (2006) identified two key issues; namely, good policies to develop the country and the nature of candidates presented as the factors that influenced the preferences of voters in Ayawaso West Wuogon and Dome-Kwabinya in the 2004 elections. Stated differently, the NPP was

construed as capable of facilitating development and the candidates were perceived as being able to initiate development in the constituencies.

Bluwey (2001) in an attempt to explain the determinants of political choice in Koforidua and New Juabeng North in the 2000 elections, he explained that the voters "choices were based on rational decisions rather than on "habit" or "bandwagon" voting." He identified neglect of Koforidua in terms of infrastructure development and the bad state of the economy as some of the factors that led to the defeat of NDC in the two constituencies.

To Boafo-Arthur (2006), the need for employment, good educational infrastructure and good healthcare are the main issues that influenced the choice of voters in Mfantseman West, based on this he accepted that both national and constituency issues influenced the choice of voters and that shows the closeness between national and local development.

Ahiawordor (2001) in his bit to explain voter behaviour in Ho central and Ho West constituencies observed a high level of illiteracy among respondents and as a result the respondents did not know of any other party apart from the NDC. He conceded that ethnicity in the voting pattern cannot be ignored since majority massively voted for the NDC on ethnic basis. In his attempt to show a link between the economy and voting behaviour in Mfantseman West and Cape Coast constituencies in a pre-election survey, Boafo-Arthur (2001) reported that respondents listed unemployment, high inflation and the rapid depreciation of the cedi as the problems facing the country and unemployment was their local development problem and based on these identified problems, it was projected that the NDC would lose the 2000 elections which really did happen.

On the part of Ephson (2008) he noted that the presidential elections in central region, the NPP had a gap of 5.9% over the NDC in the 2000 elections which later increased to 19.3% in the 2004 elections. In the Western Region the gap was 6.6% in 2000 which also increased to 15.7% in 2004 elections. However, opinion polls conducted in July 2008 and March 2008 has revealed that, the gap between the NPP and the NDC in general has dwindled from 8% to 3%. Ephson (2008) succeeded in telling us how voters "preference for the NPP increased from the year 2000 to 2004 but after that, the preference of voters for the NPP dwindled but has failed to tell us the factors that accounted for the dwindled fortunes of the NPP after 2004. This current study would

improve upon Ephson (2008) by explaining the factors that accounted for a certain voting pattern and why that pattern changed in the 2008 parliamentary elections.

2.4.1. Brief Electoral History of Ghana’s 4th Republic

In April 1992, referendum was held to adopt a new constitution. It is on record that, the Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC) tasked and established a National Commission on Democracy (NCD) to collate public opinion across the ten regions of Ghana. These views were referred to the consultative assembly and were subsequently upheld to lift the ban on the formation of political parties and to pave way for the presidential and parliamentary elections in November and December 1992 respectively (Frempong, 2017:139-140). This led to the emergence of some political parties like the New Patriotic Party (NPP) led by a University professor and historian Professor Albert Adu Boahen, the National Democratic Congress (NDC) metamorphosed PNDC led by JJ Rawlings, Other contesting political parties included Peoples National Convention (PNC), National Independence Party (NIP), People’s Heritage Party (PHP) and other minor parties like the EGLE and NCP which later formed a coalition with the NDC ahead of the polls (Frempong, 2017).

TABLE 2. 1: ELECTORAL VICTORIES AND DEFEATS SINCE 1992 BY PERCENTAGE

YEAR	1992	1996	2000	2000	2004	2008	2008	2012	2016
PARTY				R/O			R/O		
NPP	30.4%	39.6%	48.2%	56.9%	52.5%	49.1%	49.8%	47.7%	53.9%
NDC	58.3%	57.4%	44.5%	43.1%	44.6%	47.9%	50.2%	50.7	44.4%

Source: Frempong (2017) & Electoral commission of Ghana.

From table 1, it is on record that the NDC led by J.J Rawlings won the 1992 General Elections with a huge percentage of (58.3%) of the total valid votes cast to form government. In the 1996 General Elections, the NDC again retained the seat of Government with (57.4%) of the total

valid votes cast as opposed to (39.6%) votes for the NPP which was led by a new candidate in the person of John Agyekum Kuffour. In the 2000 General Election, John Agyekum Kuffour of the NPP won the second round of the election with (56.9%) of the total valid votes cast as opposed to (43.1%) for the incumbent NDC under the leadership of their vice president John Evans Atta Mills. The NPP also retained the seat when the incumbent president John Agyekum Kuffour won the 2004 General Elections. The NDC led by the same candidate from 2004 election won the run-off of the 2008 elections with a slim margin of (50.2%) as opposed to the incumbent NPP's (49.8%) votes with a new candidate in the person of Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo. In July 2012, the sitting president, John Evan Atta Mills died and the sitting vice president in the person of John Dramani Mahama was subsequently sworn in as a substantive President as the 1992 constitution of Ghana prescribes. The NDC retained John Mahama ahead of the 2012 general election to compete with an old face from the NPP, Nana Akufo Addo who was contesting for the second time. The NDC won the election by a slim margin of (50.7%). Although this outcome was contested at the Supreme Court by the NPP, the verdict of the court however affirmed the earlier declaration made by the Electoral Commission of Ghana that Candidate John Dramani Mahama won the election. Again the NPP presented Nana Akufo Addo again for the third time as their candidate in the 2016 General elections and this time he won with a whopping percentage of (53.9%). The NDC with, John Dramani Mahama as candidate who was also the incumbent president lost with a percentage of (44.4%).

2.4.2. Who is a Voter?

Downs's (1957) expected utility model views a voter as a person who has attained the legally accepted voting age and is dully registered to make investment decision in which he/she compares the contemporaneous costs of voting with the expected utility gain in the future (which may be based on retrospective evaluations) and votes if the expected benefit exceeds costs.

2.4.3. Voting Behaviour

Voting behaviour refers to human activity in the context of elections. It is defined as a set of related personal and electoral actions, which may include participation in electoral campaigns, voter turnout, and choosing for whom to vote (Bratton 2013). Thus, it encompasses both the actions and inactions of people regarding electoral participation, as well as for whom to support

if one decides to engage in the voting process (Rule 2014). Therefore, the study of voting behaviour constitutes an attempt at measuring the extent to which voters have moved to become more like consumers than citizens in the context in which voters make decisions about candidates and parties.

2.4.4. The Rationality of Voters

Do people vote rationally or based on their inner biases? This is an ongoing debate and there are studies that support these two arguments. The first belief is that people vote based on self-interest or collective good (collective rationalism). The second belief also posits that voting behaviour, as well as decision-making, in general, is emotion-based.

The debate begins on the grounds of economic and behavioral models of decision-making. The Economic Model of Rationality postulates that individuals are rational human beings who make choices based on a cost-benefit analysis. It assumes that individuals have great amount of knowledge and access to information from variety of sources in relevant areas before making a decision. (Sen, 2008).

In a response to this, Herbert A. Simon, who won the 1978 Nobel Prize in economics for pioneering work on the nature of decision making, puts forth the argument that the rationality of human beings is bounded by cognitive limitations as well as limited information and resources. This may push individuals to make premature decisions based on their inner biases, culture, or ideological preferences (Simon, 1955).

In the context of voting behaviour, proponents of the rational model suggest that people vote by assessing the pros and cons of each candidate or political party. They argue that: “Voters decide whether to vote and how to vote, based on maximising an expected utility with both selfish and social terms” (Edlin, Gelman, Kaplan, 2007). They may vote for the person or party based on the expectations they have for their performance on major issues such as economic growth and lack of corruption, unemployment, infrastructure development among others (McGann, 2016). Nevertheless, most of the advocates of this belief give credit to the numerous studies done on the role of inner biases in the voting behaviour. Otherwise, they would need to extend the definition of rationality to the point of becoming meaningless if they were to assume that inner biases are rational or that their role is insignificant to the voting behaviour.

Studies in neuroscience and social psychology suggest otherwise. In the book, *The American Voter*, it is argued that identification with a party is formed at an early stage in life, and it is usually maintained throughout time. It showed that political campaigns activated these inner biases and that yields to political choices during the elections (Potter, 2006).

Studies by Gian Vittorio Caprara a professor of personality psychology shows that people vote for candidates who have a similar personality to them which is conveyed through ideology. The decision to vote for an ideology may be irrational in itself since a single ideology may not be convenient for every policy (Winter, 2015). A new and more acceptable way of thinking suggests that rationality and implicit biases are not quite opposites, rather they compete with one another in a political campaign. When in competition, emotions and inner biases take over the voting decision most of the time because it is easier and it does not require much knowledge on politics (Durham, 2016).

2.5. Who is a Consumer?

Over many years several attempts have been made to understand consumers, how sophisticated they are and the complex decisions they make in product acquisition (Goodman et. al 2008). Consumers have been shown to be heterogeneous individuals who demonstrate some similarities which enable them to be organised into aggregates of homogenous groups for the purpose of marketing products (Bruwer and Li, 2007; Bruwer, Li, & Reid, 2001; Kotler, Armstrong, Brown, Adam, & Chandler, 2001; Ogbeide, 2014).

However, past studies on consumers defined them as economic agents, the life blood of any business organisation, as they directly drive the overall health and stability of any markets through the consumption of the products or services that the markets provide (Gligorijevic and Leong, 2011). Therefore, the loss of consumers, whether due to competition, business rivalry, market shrinkage or an overall economic downturn, will adversely affect the performance of the business. Hence, it is pertinent to establish exactly who consumers are and also their attributes.

2.5.1. The Concept of Consumer Behaviour

According to Peter and Olsen et.al (2005) from the book, “*Consumer Behaviour and Marketing Strategy*”, consumer behaviour refers to the physical activity and decision engaged in obtaining, evaluating, disposing or using of services and goods. Consumer behaviour is often goal oriented

and purposeful. Each consumer is free to make an option with regard to the buying he or she is going to make. Consumer behaviour is the method which starts with the stimuli a consumer gains from his surroundings and ends with buying transaction.

Walter and Paul (1970) in the book, “Consumer Behaviour: An Integrated Framework” have also emphasised consumer behaviour as “the process whereby individuals decide whether what, when, where, how and from whom to purchase goods or services”. Behaviour at large is a sign of precise mannerism as well as technique. Consequently, consumer behaviour connotes consumer’s expression or say attitude whilst purchasing the products. In further terminology, consumer behaviour is the outcome of such purchase, at the same time as a consumer does on behalf of the contentment of his requirements.

2.5. 2. Rationality of Consumers

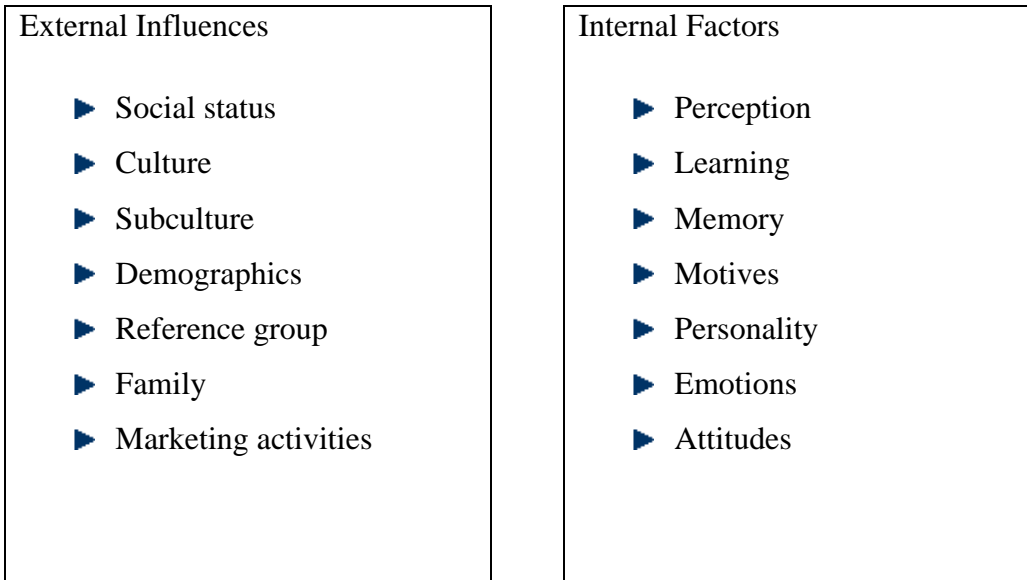
According to Maslow (1954), consumers have these needs physiological, safety, Love and belongingness, self-esteem and Self-actualisation needs which require products/services to satisfy them at a bargain price. Rational consumers seek for products/services that meet these needs by satisfying the arousal of emotion (Andrews et al. 1990 and Ogbeide et.al 2013).

Rational consumers have the expectation that products that meet consumers’ needs must communicate the emotional and physical or functional relevance of these needs (Burns, 1978; Rosenberg, 1989). Apart from the performance or functional benefits of the products, they must also meet other needs (Andrews et al., 1990; and Belk et al. 1988). Rational consumers decide for the product/service option that maximises his/her utility (Ogbeide and Bruwer, 2010).

2.5.3. Factors that influence consumer behaviour

Consumer behaviour is about purchaser buying mannerism, in the midst of the consumer taking up the three dissimilar parts, namely, user, payer and buyer. Studies have revealed that consumer behaviour is complicated to forecast (Armstrong, 1991). The factors that influence consumers could be classified into two types as shown in the figure below.

Figure 2: External and Internal Influences of Consumer Behaviour



Source – Jcmc.indiana.edu

External influences

Consumer behaviour is influenced by culture, sub- culture, locality, royalty, ethnicity, family, social class, reference groups, lifestyle, and market mix factors. These factors influence the type of product/service or brand a consumer patronises or consumes (Armstrong, 1991). According to Akhter (2010), cultural factors have the greatest impact on behaviour of consumers.

Internal Influences

Consumer behaviour is influenced by personality, attitudes, motivation, beliefs, knowledge and feelings. These factors are internal drives that influence people to consume certain brands of products/services (Andreassen, 2001). For example, the belief of Muslims is the reason why they don't consume pork. Also the amount of knowledge people has about certain brands inform their purchase decision, thus, people are likely to purchase product/service they have much knowledge about than the ones they have no or limited knowledge about. Armstrong (1991) also described that consumers behaviour is influence by the thinking of the consumer in the direction of satisfying his/her needs.

2.5.4. Buyers Decision Making

Consumers go through five steps of decision-making process in order to make a purchase of products/services to satisfy their needs. These five steps are need recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase, and post-purchase evaluation of decision (Fahy and Jobber 2012). Notably these steps are recognised and often discussed when talking about consumer buying behaviour in general, however they have not been individually analysed in the behaviour around voting particularly in Ghana.

Consumers don't necessarily go through all the five stages in the consumer decision-making process as this depends on the type of product/service they want to purchase. (Fahy and Jobber, 2012). These five stages are introduced below.

Need recognition is the first stage of the consumer buying process where the buyer recognises a problem or need. In general consumer behaviour theory, a need can be driven either by internal or external stimuli. Internal stimuli are normal needs such as hunger and thirst, whereas external stimuli are triggered by advertisements or word of mouth from friends and relatives (Kotler and Armstrong 2010).

Information search is the second stage of the consumer buying process where the consumer searches for more information on a product/service identified to satisfy his/her need. This occurs when problem recognition is strong enough (Fahy and Jobber, 2012). The information can be acquired from multiple sources such as family members, friends, reference groups, advertising, mass media, Internet searches, or actually experiencing the product/service. (Kotler and Armstrong, 2010)

Evaluation of alternatives may take place as the third stage of the buying process after a consumer is done with searching for information, and has narrowed down the choices and arrived at a set of different brands that are most likely to satisfy his/her needs. At this stage different options are evaluated in order to decide which to buy based on the standard and specification that will best meet the consumer's needs (Kotler and Armstrong 2010, Fahy and Jobber 2012).

The purchase decision comes after ranking all the shortlisted brands and most often arriving at a brand that is most preferred by the consumer. Kotler and Armstrong (2010, 179) state that “a marketer’s job does not end when the product is bought”.

The final stage of the model explains how consumers may experience post-purchase behaviour related to how satisfied or dissatisfied the consumer is (ibid.). The post-purchase decision arises from uncertainty of whether the choice was correct or not, or when the consumer has to deal with cognitive dissonance (Fahy and Jobber 2012).

2.6. What makes Voters like Consumers?

Consumers	Voters
Consumers seek commercial campaigns that aim at promoting certain products, ideas, or services that has the potential of satisfying his/her needs or wants (Kotler et al., 2005).	Voters seek political campaigns that promote candidates, parties, political causes or political agendas that will inform him/her to make a good voting decision (Holbrook, 1996).
Some consumers are loyal to certain brands of products or service and will not substitute them for similar products or service even when their preferred brands are not available (Needham, 2005).	Some voters are loyal to certain political brands. Example, some voters have been voting one political party all their life due to their loyalty to that particular brand (Needham, 2005).
Consumers pay attention to celebrities in an endorsement appeal (Messaris, 1997).	Voters also pay attention to a politician’s appearance in a persuasive campaign (Messaris, 1997).

2.6.1. Are Voters different from consumers?

Lock and Harris (1996) listed some key differences between political marketing and product or service marketing. This list was specifically designed for the UK electoral system; however, some have some degree of application to Ghanaian contexts:

- All voters make their choices on the same day (with a few exceptions, such as postal and proxy voters) while consumers do not.
- There is no price directly or indirectly attached to voting or the choice of party, which sharply differentiates it from making a purchase.
- A voter has to live with the collective choice, even though it might not have been his or her own preference, but consumers can often get a refund on their purchase.
- Winner takes all in the UK – “first past the post” system not proportional representation.
- The political party or candidate is a complex; intangible product which voters cannot untangle.
- The possibility of introducing a new brand in the form of a new party is far more difficult and unusual than it is in the commercial arena.
- In most marketing situations, brand leaders tend to stay in front. In the UK, while governments may win successive elections, there seems to be an increasing trend for them to fall behind in opinion polls between elections (Lock and Harris, 1996, pp. 14-15)

2.7. The Concept of Citizenship

Citizenship is a contested and sensitive issue and it has been a centre of attention in political democracy and individual autonomy (Shafir, 1998). There are different meanings and interpretations connected with citizenship in different countries. For instance, the determinants of citizenship status in Ghana are not completely the same as in China. This is because the understanding of the concept of citizenship relies much on the concept of a nation-state and the assumption of shared cultural values. Been a citizen of a nation is perceived to be non-voluntary.

In some definitions, the membership is acquired by being born to a certain country. According to (Margalit and Raz, 1990, p.447) “Qualification for citizenship status of a nation is usually determined by non-voluntary criteria. One cannot choose to belong. One belongs because of

who one is” (Margalit and Raz, 1990, p.447). The traditions and conceptions of citizenship within nations are not fixed but can change: in addition to gaining membership by birth, most nation-states have some alternative mechanisms through which the membership can be acquired.

2.7.1. Who is a Ghanaian Citizen?

As defined in the Constitution of the Fourth Republic (1992 Constitution), a Ghanaian is one who satisfies the following conditions:

- (1) Every person who, on the coming into force of the 1992 Constitution, is a citizen of Ghana by law shall continue to be a citizen of Ghana.
- (2) Subject to the provisions of 1992 Constitution, a person born in or outside Ghana after the coming into force of this Constitution shall become a citizen of Ghana at the date of his birth if either of his parents or grandparents is or was a citizen of Ghana.
- (3) A child of not more than seven years of age found in Ghana whose parents are not know shall be presumed to be a citizen of Ghana by birth.
- (4) A child of not more than sixteen years of age neither of whose parents are a citizen of Ghana who is adopted by a citizen of Ghana shall, by virtue of the adoption, be a citizen of Ghana.
- (5) A woman married to a man who is a citizen of Ghana or a man married to a woman who is a citizen of Ghana may, upon making an application in the manner prescribed by Parliament, be registered as a citizen of Ghana.
- (6) Also to a person who was married to a person who, but for his or her death, would have continued to be a citizen of Ghana under clause (1) of article 6 of the 1992 Constitution upon making an application in the manner prescribed by Parliament, be registered as a citizen of Ghana.
- (7) Where a marriage of a woman is annulled after she has been registered as a citizen of Ghana shall, unless she renounces that citizenship, continue to be a citizen of Ghana.

(8) Any child of a marriage of a woman registered as a citizen of Ghana under the 1992 constitution of Ghana shall continue to be a citizen of Ghana unless he renounces that citizenship.

(9) Where upon an application by a man for registration as a citizen upon making an application in the manner prescribed by Parliament, it appears to the authority responsible for the registration that a marriage has been entered into primarily with a view to obtaining the registration, the authority may request the applicant to satisfy him that the marriage was entered into in good faith; and the authority may only effect the registration upon being so satisfied.

(10) In the case of a man who is married to a Ghanaian woman seeking registration as a Ghanaian citizen, will be applicable under the 1992 constitution only if the applicant permanently resides in Ghana.

(11) A citizen of Ghana shall cease forthwith to be a citizen of Ghana if, on attaining the age of twenty-one years, he, by a voluntary act, other than marriage, acquired or retains the citizenship of a country other than Ghana.

(12) A person who becomes a citizen of Ghana by registration and immediately after the day on which he becomes a citizen of Ghana is also a citizen of some other country, shall cease to be a citizen of Ghana unless he has renounced his citizenship of that other country, taken the oath of allegiance specified in the Second Schedule to the 1992 Constitution and made and registered such declaration of his intentions concerning residence as may be prescribed by law, or unless he has obtained an extension of time for taking those steps and the extended period has not expired.

(13) A Ghanaian citizen who loses his Ghanaian citizenship as a result of the acquisition or possession of the citizenship of a country other than Ghana shall, on the renunciation of his citizenship of that other country, become a citizen of Ghana.

(14) Where the law of a country, other than Ghana, requires a person who marries a citizen of that country to renounce the citizenship of his own country by virtue of that marriage, a citizen of Ghana who is deprived of his citizenship of Ghana by virtue of that marriage shall, on the dissolution of that marriage, if he thereby loses his citizenship acquired by that marriage, become a citizen of Ghana.

(15) Parliament may make provision for the acquisition of citizenship of Ghana by persons who are not eligible to become citizens of Ghana under a provision of this Constitution.

(16) Except as otherwise provided in article 7 of the 1992 Constitution, a person shall not be registered as a citizen of Ghana unless at the time of his application for registration he is able to speak and understand an indigenous language of Ghana.

(17) The High Court may, on an application made for the purpose by the Attorney-General, deprive a person who is a citizen of Ghana, otherwise than by birth, of that citizenship on the ground.

(a) That the activities of that person are inimical of the security of the State or prejudicial to public morality or the public interest; or

(b) That the citizenship was acquired by fraud, misrepresentation or any other improper or irregular practice.

(18) There shall be published in the Gazette by the appropriate authority and within three months after the application or the registration, as the case may be, the name, particulars and other details of a person who, under an article in the 1992 constitution applies to be registered as a citizen of Ghana or has been registered as a citizen of Ghana.

(19) The citizenship of a parent of a person at the time of the birth of that person shall, in relation to a person born after the death of the parent, be construed as a reference to the citizenship of the parent at the time of the parent's death.

(20) Where the death of a parent occurred before the coming into force of the 1992 Constitution, the citizenship that the parent would have had if he or she had died on the coming into force of this Constitution shall be deemed to be his or her citizenship at the time of his or her death.

2.7.2. Obligations and Responsibilities of Citizens of Ghana

Article 41 of the 1992 Constitution of Ghana sums up the obligations and responsibilities of all Ghanaians and those who live in Ghana; It states: “The exercise and enjoyment of rights and freedoms is inseparable from the performance of duties and obligations and, accordingly, it shall be the duty of every citizen:

- a) To promote the prestige and good name of Ghana and respect the symbols of the nation.
- (b) To uphold and defend the 1992 Constitution and the laws of Ghana.
- (c) To foster national unity and live in harmony with others.
- (d) To respect the rights, freedoms and legitimate interests of others and generally to refrain from doing acts detrimental to the welfare of other persons.
- (e) To work conscientiously in his lawfully chosen occupation.
- (f) To protect and preserve public property and expose and combat misuse and waste of public funds and property.
- (g) To contribute to the well-being of the community where that citizen lives.
- (h) To defend Ghana and render national service when necessary.
- (i) To co-operate with lawful agencies in the maintenance of law and order.
- (j) To declare his income honestly to the appropriate and lawful agencies and to satisfy all tax obligations; and
- (k) To protect and safeguard the environment.

2.7.3. Political Rights of Citizens

As stated in the 1992 Constitution of Ghana, all persons shall have the right and freedom to form or join political parties and to participate in political activities subject to such qualifications and laws as are necessary in a free and democratic society and are consistent with this Constitution (Article 21). Every citizen of Ghana of eighteen years of age or above and of sound mind has the right to vote and is entitled to be registered as a voter for the purposes of public elections and referenda (Art. 42).

2.8. Political Consumerism

A central argument in this study is the extent to which citizens act more like consumers than citizens in the political marketplace. They learn about products (political candidates) through political advertisements, political rallies, political talk shows on radio and television stations and

decide whether or not they want to make a purchase (vote). It is certainly the goal of political campaigns of political parties to persuade citizens to vote for their candidate on Election Day. Like political marketing and branding, political consumerism has been explained using analogies to the commercial marketplace. Scholars have made the connection between citizens and consumers by appropriating consumer behavior to politics. Political consumerism is straightforward in definition: it is a politics of consumption based on choice between products (Lewis et al. 2005; Schudson, 2006, 2007; Shah et. al., 2007; Baek, 2010). A more pointed definition of political consumption is the idea that a citizen-consumer can either punish (i.e. boycott) or reward (i.e. purchase) political products through selective choices of brands, based on social, political, or ethical considerations (Baek, 2010, p. 1066).

Consumption as an evidence of material culture and an activity of consumers has found its way into our political process. Rapid global economic and social forces such as high unemployment rate, inflation, sophisticated lifestyle of citizens over the last decade have rendered brands and individual consumption essential components of life. This is reflected in elections in changes to campaigning where voters seek items including money from political parties that will satisfy their personal needs in exchange of their votes. Political parties have taken advantage of this phenomenon of voters becoming more like consumers by employing marketing techniques. Politicians identify the personal needs of voters and provide to them in exchange of their votes.

The real power of the citizen-consumer lies in their ability to refuse political products (Baek, 2010; Schudson, 2006, 2007). Scholars remain divided on political consumerism and its consequences for democracy. According to opponent scholars of political consumerism such as Putnam (2000), the emergence of the concept of political consumerism has resulted to the decline of civic engagement of citizens of nations, and has given rise to the idea of consumer-oriented politics and government which does not allow for deep and meaningful levels of participation that fulfills citizens' role in a democratic society.

On the other hand, the most ardent defender of the citizen-consumer is Schudson (2006; 2007), who's work has rationalised consumer politics by tracing it back to the U.S.'s founding. The Boston Tea Party, a consumer boycott against taxes levied on the Americans by the British. Citizens have always acted as political consumers on some level.

2.9. Chapter Summary

This chapter focused on reviewing the literature on how certain theories could help solidify the base of the study. Further, various concepts which needed to be understood in order to get a better understanding and perspective of the study was discussed. Also, the researcher introduced a related study to bring to light an empirical perspective. The next chapter gives a presentation of the research methodology that was employed in the collection of primary data.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

Research methodology refers to the way in which data is collected during a study (Hennink, 2011). This chapter focuses on the research design that was used in the study. It discusses the rationale of the research methodology employed, which is directed by the objectives of the study. The data sources are outlined followed by the sampling procedure. A discussion of the other processes undertaken to collect the data is detailed thereafter

3.1 Research Design

The mixed method design is adopted as the most appropriate research design for this study. The basis for which the study adopts the mixed method is that quantitative methods aim at large sample respondents which seek statistical significance whereas qualitative methods involve small respondents and within the content of in-depth studies. Mixed Method Strategy is effectively employed in this study to address the limitations of quantitative and qualitative approaches to understanding social phenomena.

Thus, the mixed method research offers practical knowledge based on any possible combination of subjective and objective knowledge in a way that has a bearing on a social problem. Mixed method is a procedure for collecting, analysing and mixing both quantitative and qualitative research and methods in a single study to understand a research problem (Creswell 2009). Thus, it combines description of political phenomena with the desire to exploring to find the extent to which voters are becoming more like consumers than citizens in Ghana. This will help to gauge its overall implications for democratic deepening or otherwise in the country.

3.2 Sources of Data

Primary and secondary data sources were utilised in this research. For primary sources of data, the researcher conducted a survey where structured questionnaires were administered to gather responses from respondents. This was aimed at ensuring that the opinions as well as attitudes and reasons behind consumers, voters and citizens behaviours were critically investigated. The secondary sources of information in this study included the use of internet, journal articles,

policy documents and library sources as well as other relevant literature such as dailies, press releases, official reports, among others.

3.3 Research Population

A population refers to the whole group of topics, people, or events of interest to the researcher from which the researcher wishes to investigate (Kotler and Armstrong, 2013). Zikmund and Babin (2013) confirm that a population is a collection of units aimed to be investigated by the research effort. For this study, the population consisted of electorates who reside in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana. Data on these persons were analysed as primary data.

3.4 Sample size and sampling technique

Sample is a portion of a population or universe. It is a normal parlance in research which states that the high the sampling size the higher the reliability and validity in the result and the vice visa (Creswell, 2003; Tailor, 2005). Since the population of the study is huge and there was limited time to complete the study, sample of two hundred (200) respondents were considered. However, after collecting the distributed questionnaires from the field, one hundred and ninety-five (195) respondents out of the two hundred (200) sample population answered the questionnaires. Graphical presentation and interpretations were done based on the number of people out of the total 195 respondents who answered the specific questions.

The researcher adopted convenient sampling technique for the study. Convenient Sampling refers to researching subjects of a population that are easily accessible to the researcher and it is affordable, easy, and the subjects are readily available (Sakaran, 2003). This was as a result of limited time for the research coupled with financial constraints and the COVID-19 Pandemic hence under the circumstance the convenience sampling was used to gather the respondents.

3.5 Techniques of data analysis

Statistical software(s) were employed for data analyses. This would include Microsoft Excel (2010 version) for data storage and management while the Statistical Package for Social Sciences, SPSS, (Version 21) were used for data storage and analyses. By this, where necessary, percentage tables, graphs, bar charts and pie charts were used in explaining all the necessary

details accrued from the study. Moreover, crosstabs were also used in order to establish the perception of the general population, gender, among others.

3.6 Validity

Validity determines the truthfulness of the research findings or the extent to which the researcher truly measured what was intended to be measured (Beardn, Netemeyer, and Haws, 2011). Sekaran and Bougie (2010) confirmed that validity is a measure of how well a particular concept was measured with the research instrument. All efforts were made to ensure that the questions in the questionnaire were constructed in line with the research objectives, research literature, and conceptually sound results.

3.7 Ethical Considerations and Confidentiality

Crow and Wiles (2008) refer to anonymity and confidentiality as the ability of the researcher to safeguard sensitive information and the names of the research participants. Anonymity and confidentiality were ensured in this study by keeping the answered questionnaires away from the general public and by not asking the research participants to divulge their names. Participants were told the aim of this research and ethical standards were greatly observed in this study. No one was coerced to take part in the survey against their will. Research participants were also informed that they could withdraw from the study at any time for whatever reason which they might have deemed necessary and that their responses were confidential as suggested by Creswell (2009).

3.8 Limitations of the study

The interviews conducted for the study were prone to bias. That is to say responses from the respondents might be biased as they had their political biases and personal interest. There was also the challenge of access to or availability of respondents for the study.

3.9 Summary

This chapter has discussed the research method that was used for the study and how data was collected. It also outlined how data for this study was analysed as well as how it was presented.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the analysis of data collected from the field and the findings of the study. It is thus dedicated to the discussion of the study. The discussion is placed mainly on the primary data collected from interviews and secondary sources that included relevant articles, books, journals, and other pertinent documents. The findings are presented thematically by means of analysing the objectives of the study and are eventually compared with the extant literature as elaborated in Chapter Two.

4.1 Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

The general citizenry (particularly adults who have attained the voting age) are usually the people who vote during elections. These categories of people also make purchase decisions to satisfy their needs and wants. Fair appreciation of the demographic data of these individuals is very important in order to help the researcher make a valid and fair analysis of their views and responses. This is important because these details are the characteristics that are often treated as independent variables and they often influence the responses, observations and opinions of these respondents.

4.1.1 Gender of Respondents

The gender distribution of respondents as presented in figure 4.1 below was skewed in favour of the male. This was not deliberate but resulted from the mode of distribution of the questionnaire. However, the sexual preferences of the respondents do not affect their responses to the issues raised by the study. 194 people out of the total 195 indicated their gender. Out of this number, 117 were males representing 60% and 77 were females representing 40% whereas 1 person failed to respond to the question on gender.

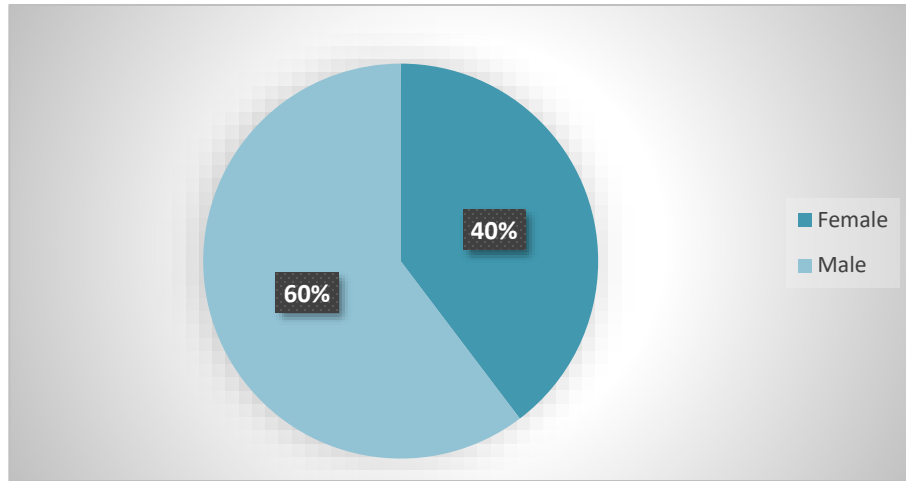


Figure 4.1: Gender of Respondents

Source, Field data, 2020

4.1.2 Age of Distribution of Respondents

Given the fact that the voting age in Ghana is eighteen (18) years and above, the study pegged the minimum age limit between 10-19 years for respondents. The study chose all respondents ranging from the ages of 10-19 and above with the principal aim of targeting the voting population. This was done to assist the researcher to solicit the views of voters who had in- depth knowledge about the nature of electoral politics and consumer behaviour as well as those with moderately young experience on the nature and dynamics of electoral politics for a holistic analysis. In terms of age distribution, a total of 172 respondents out of a total of 195 representing 88.2% were between the ages of 20 and 49 years. 14 respondents representing 7.2% were either 18 or 19 years and 9 respondents representing 4.6% were people of 50 years and above. The diagram 4.2 below explains the age distribution of respondents in details.

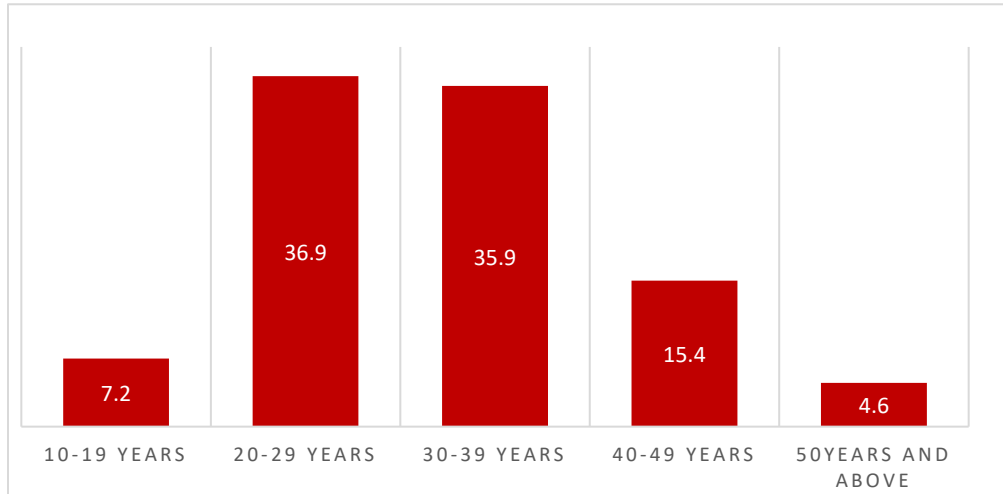


Figure 4.2, Age Distribution of Respondents

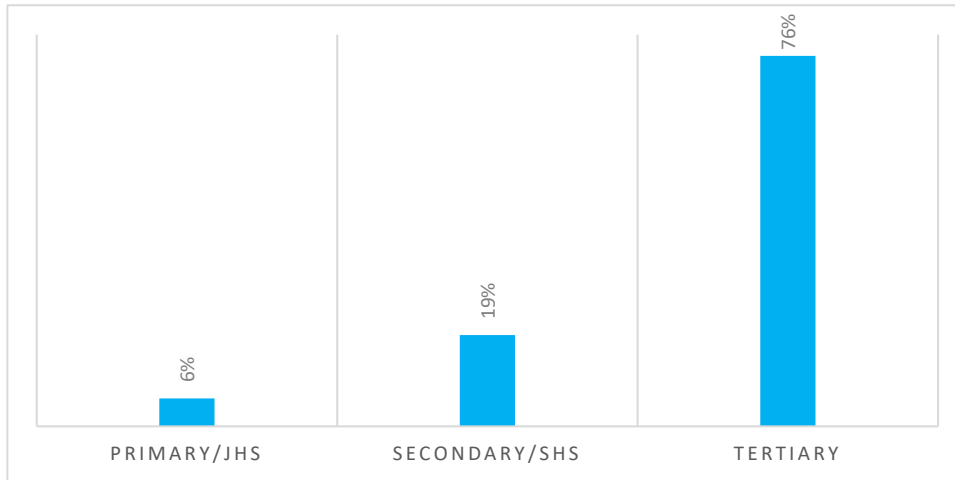
Source, Field Data, 2020

4.1.3 Educational Background of Respondents

Erdmann (2007) is of the view that there is a considerable amount of connection between the level of education and the quality of voter choice in elections. By implication, societies with high literacy rates are more likely to take into deeper consideration the consequences of their motive for the choice of a candidate than societies with lower literacy levels. For that matter, the educational status of the respondents was of immense importance to this study as it provided grounds to ascertain whether this claim is applicative to the topic under study. 193 people answered this question. Among this total, 146 respondents representing 76% had obtained a tertiary education; this was followed by 19% representing 36 respondents with secondary level education and 6% which constitute 11 respondents with primary level education.

In summary, the findings of the study revealed that all the respondents in the Amasaman constituency who answered this question have had some level of education, with the majority of them completing tertiary education.

Figure 4.3: Distribution of Respondents by their Educational Background



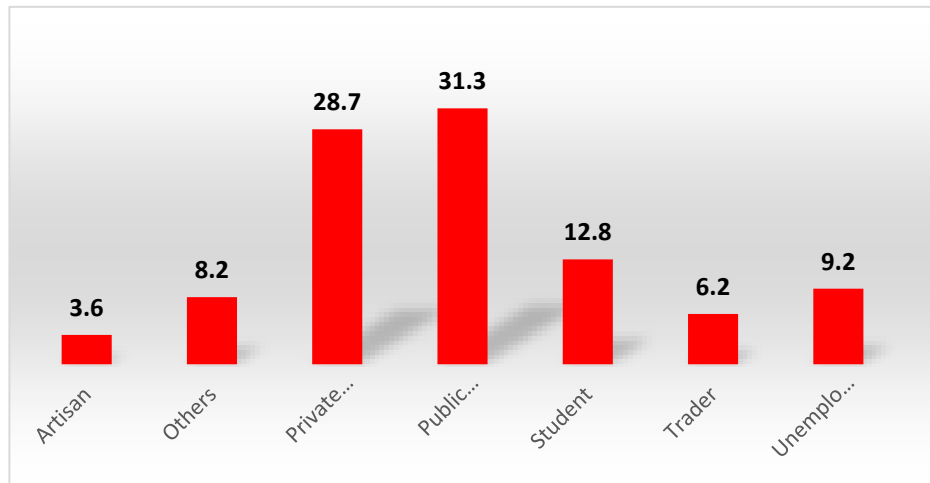
Source, Field data, 2020

4.1.4 Occupation of respondents

The distribution of respondents' occupation is depicted in Figure 4.4. The data from figure 4.4 clearly shows that in terms of occupation: 9.2% (18 respondents) were unemployed, 6.2% (12 respondents) were traders, 12.8% (25 respondents) were Students, 31.3% (61 respondents) were with the Public or Civil Service, 19.0% (56 respondents) were private sector workers, 3.6% (7 respondents) were artisans and 8.2% (16 respondents) were with other professions

In summary, the findings of the study revealed that 68.3% of the respondents in the Amasaman constituency were employed.

Figure 4.4 Occupations of the Respondents



Source, Field data, 2020

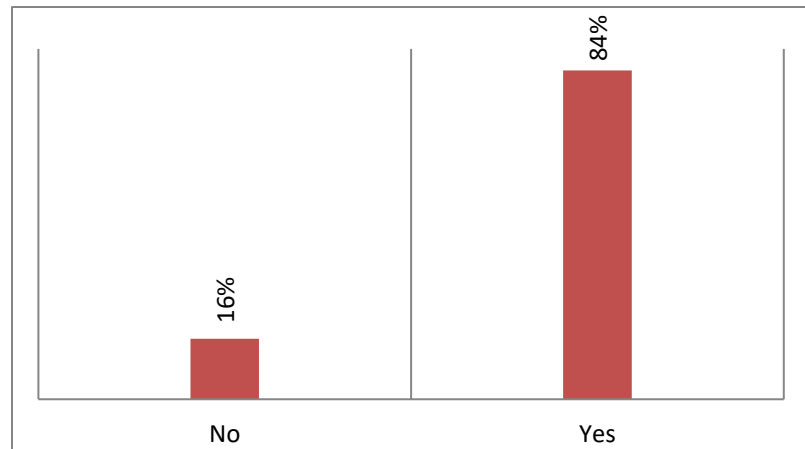
4.2 VOTERS INTEREST AND BEHAVIOUR

Have You Ever Voted in an Election under the Fourth Republic?

The question sought to find out how interested and active respondents are in politics through voting. This provide an answer to the research question; ‘what is the correlation between voters interest and their voting behaviour in Ghana’. The findings as presented in the figure below show that 193 people answered this question. Out of this number, 163 respondents representing 84% of the total respondents to this question (193) answered YES. 30 respondents representing 16% answered NO, indicating that they have not voted in any election in Ghana, whereas 2 people failed to answer the question. This shows that majority of the respondents have high interest in politics and have therefore exhibited positive behaviour towards voting.

In summary, the findings of the study revealed that respondents who have voted before under the Fourth Republic formed majority in the Amasaman constituency.

Figure 4. 5: Have You Ever Voted in an Election Under the Fourth Republic?



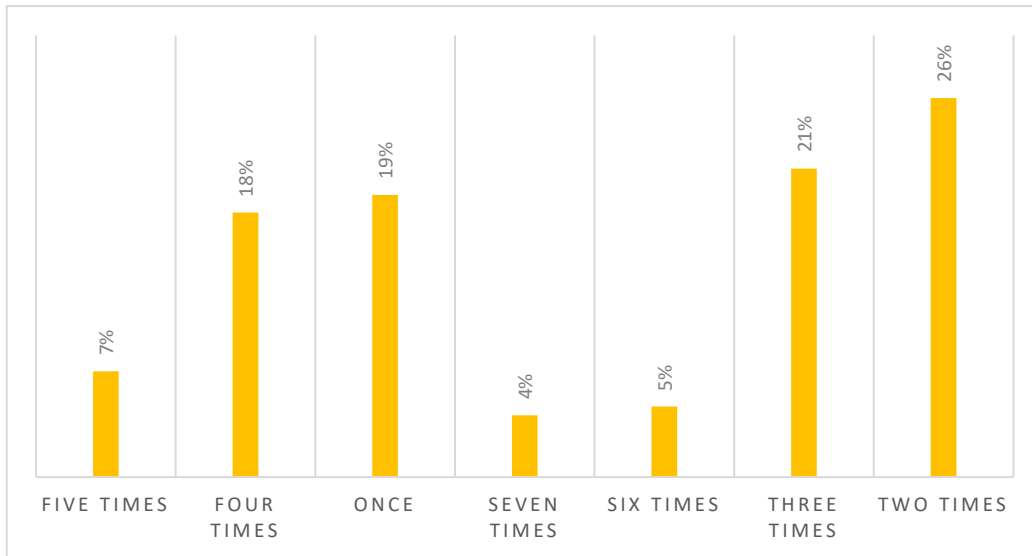
Source, Field Data, 2020

The number of times respondents have voted under the fourth republic

Figure 4.6 below shows the distribution of the number of times 167 respondents have voted under the fourth republic. As depicted in the figure below, 43 respondents representing 26% answered that they have voted two times under the fourth republic, 35 respondents representing 21% have voted three times, 32 respondents representing 19% have voted once, 30 respondents representing 18% have voted four times 12 respondents representing 7% have voted five times, 8 respondents representing 5% have voted six times and 7 respondents representing 4% have voted seven times whereas 28 people failed to answer the question.

In summary, the findings of the study revealed that respondents who had voted two and three times formed the majority in the Amasaman constituency. Overall the data shows that electorates in the Amasaman constituency have been participating in politics since the first ever election under the Fourth Republic which indicate high interest in political participation.

Figure 4.6: The Number of Times Respondents Have Voted under the Fourth Republic



Source, Field Data, 2020

Why respondents have not voted in any election under the Fourth Republic.

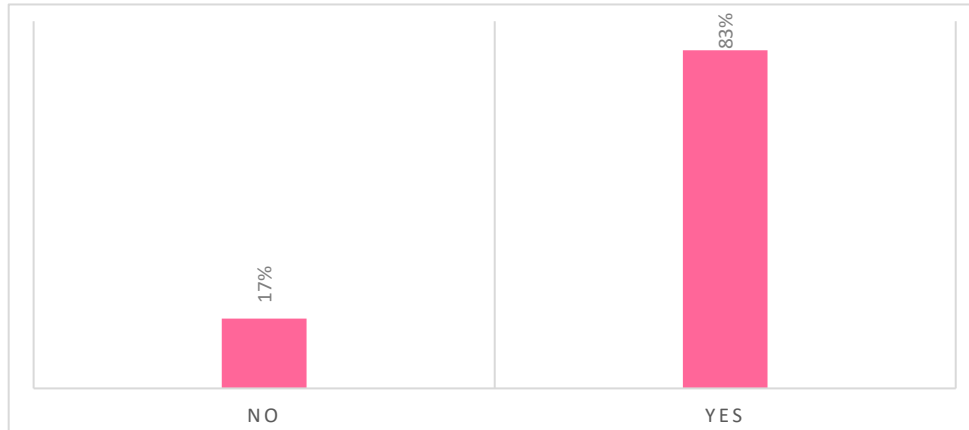
Respondents were asked to give reasons why they haven't voted in any election under the fourth republic. Out of the total 195 respondents 28 people answered NO, indicating that they have never voted in any election since 1992. Among their reasons were lack of interest in politics, respondents haven't attained the voting age and relocation of respondent overseas

Participation of respondents in the 2016 Elections

193 people answered this question out of the retrieved 195 questionnaires. Out of the 193 respondents 160 of them representing 83% answered that they voted in the 2016 General Elections. 33 respondents which interpreted as 17% in figure 4.7 answered NO, which means they did not vote in the 2016 election whereas, 2 people failed to answer the question.

In summary, the findings of the study revealed that respondents who voted in the 2016 General Elections formed majority in the Amasaman constituency. This implies that there is a sustained interest and positive attitude on the part of respondents from 1992 to 2016 towards political participation.

Figure 4.7: Participation of the Respondents in the 2016 Elections



Source, Field Data, 2020

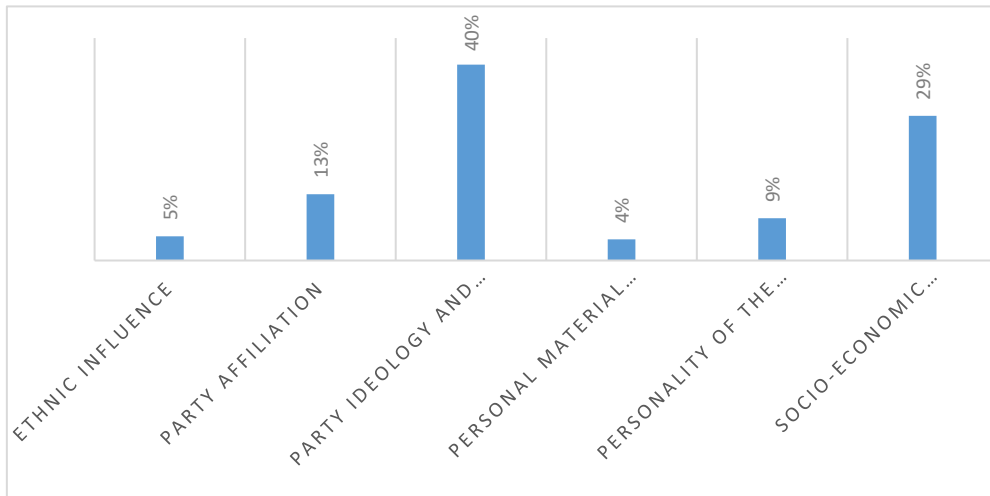
What Motivated Respondents to Vote in the 2016 Elections?

Respondents were asked about what motivated their voting decision in the 2016 elections. Out of the 195 retrieved questionnaires, 164 people answered this question. Out of this number, 65 respondents constituting 40% of the total respondents said party ideology and policies motivated their decision. Again, 42 of the respondents representing 29% of the total respondents to this question voted because of socio-economic issues. This reason also conforms to the Rational Choice Theory since voting for a better economy is a rational decision. 22 respondents constituting 13% of the total respondents voted as a result of their party affiliations. 14 respondents representing 9% of the total respondents said their decision was motivated by the personality of the candidate. 8 respondents which represent 5% of the total respondents said their decision to vote was influenced by ethnicity, and 7 respondents which constitute 4% of the total respondents revealed that, personal material benefits motivated their voting decision, whereas 31 people failed to justify why they voted in the 2016 elections.

In summary, the findings of the study revealed that majority of respondents were motivated to vote due to party ideology and policies. This response places emphasis on the Rational Choice Theory adopted by the researcher which assumes that people are rational at least to the extent that they make choices that will maximise their utility (Green and Shapiro 1994). Thus

respondents voted for policies such as Free Senior High School, One District One Factory of the New Patriotic Party in the 2016 Elections to maximise their utility

Figure 4.8, What Motivated Respondents to Vote in the 2016 Elections



Source, Field Data, 2020

What other reason made you voted in the 2016 general election?

97 out of the 195 total respondents answered this question whereas 98 people failed to answer. The respondents answered that other reasons that made them voted in the 2016 General Elections were poor performance of the then government and the manifesto of the political parties.

If NO to question (8) what was your reason

22 people out of the total 195 respondents answered NO to the question: Did you vote in the 2016 general elections in Ghana? Respondents didn't vote because they were not interested in the election, they were not eligible voters then, they were not in the country, and because they felt they won't get their needs satisfied.

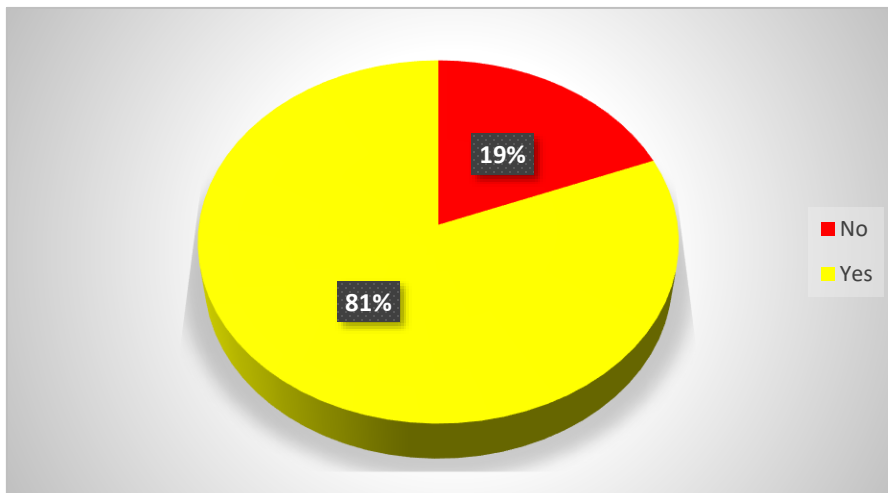
Are Respondents Interested in the Upcoming 2020 General Elections in Ghana?

Respondent were asked about their interest in the 2020 General Elections in Ghana. 157 respondents, representing 81% of the total respondents who answered the question said YES,

indicating that they are interested, whereas 38 respondents representing 19% of the total respondents to this question said NO to show that they are not interested in the 2020 elections

In summary, the findings of the study revealed that majority of respondents in the Amasaman constituency are interested in the 2020 General Election. This shows the behaviour and the level of interest of respondents in political participation.

Figure 4.9, Respondents Interested in the Upcoming 2020 General Elections in Ghana



Source, Field Data, 2020

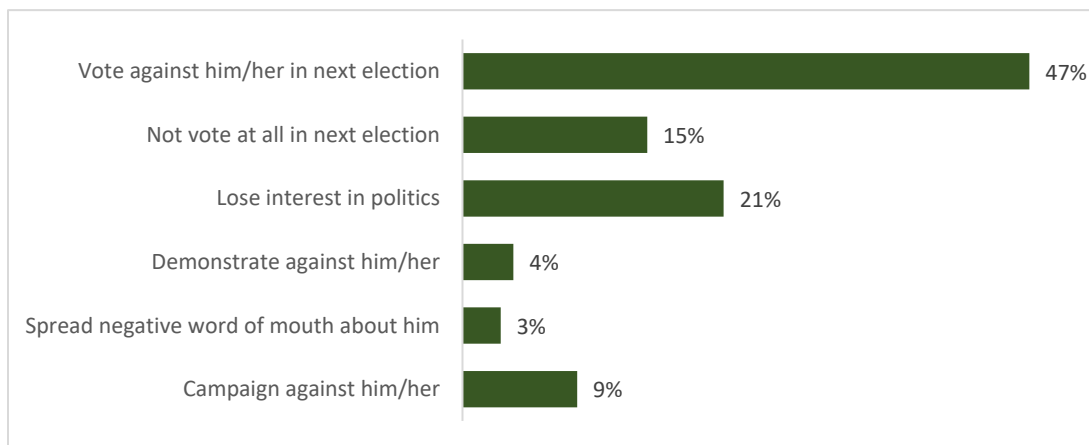
What Respondents would do if the candidate they voted for failed to satisfy the reasons why they voted him/her?

A total of 191 respondents answered the question. 89 of them representing 47% of the total respondents said they will vote against any candidate who will fail to satisfy the reason why they voted them in next election. 41 of these respondents representing 21% of the total respondents answered that; they would lose interest in politics. 29 of them constituting 15% of the total respondents indicated that they will not vote at all in any election again. 18 people representing 9% of all the respondents answered that they will vote against any politicians who will fail them 8 respondents constituting 4% of all the respondents said they will campaign against politicians who will fail to fulfill his/her promises. Finally, 6 respondents representing 3% of the total

respondents answered that, they will tell other voters about their dissatisfaction about politicians who will fail to fulfill their promises whereas 4 people failed to answer the question.

The findings of the study revealed that majority of respondents in the Amasaman constituency will vote against politicians who fail to satisfy the reason why they voted them into office. Second majority of the respondents will lose interest in participating in politics.

Figure 4.10: Respondents reactions towards politicians who will fail to satisfy the reasons why they voted him/her?



Source, Field Data, 2020

Factors likely to cause Electorates not to Vote in the 2020 Elections

To help evaluate the correlation between voters interest and their voting behavior, respondents were asked about reasons that will make them not to vote in the 2020 Elections. As presented in table 4.1 below, greater proportion of the respondents (55) representing 28.2% of the total respondents (181) don't know what may prevent them from voting in the 2020 Elections. 29 out of the total 181 respondent interpreted in percentage as 14.9% revealed that they are unlikely to vote because they feel they may not get their needs satisfied if they vote. This shows a direct relationship between voters' interest and their voting behaviour. 28 people representing 14.4% of all the respondents said they are not registered therefore they cannot vote. 25 people which is 12.8% of the total respondents said they are unlikely to vote because politics and elections don't really affect their lives. This indicates that a section of the voting population will vote because

they want to feel the impact of their voting decision on their lives not because they are citizens. 17 people representing 8.7% are likely to move out of the country before the Elections. 8 people amounting to 4.1% of the respondents don't think their vote will make a difference. 4 people equal 2.1% of the respondents don't like any of the presidential/parliamentary candidates enough to vote. 3 people representing 1.5% of the total respondents answered that they don't know where to vote, whereas 14 people failed to respond to the question. The findings of the study revealed that majority of the respondent in the Amasaman constituency are not certain of what will likely prevent them from voting in the 2020 General Election.

Table 1: Factors likely to cause Electorates not to Vote in the 2020 Elections

Factors	Frequency	Percent
No response	14	7.2
I don't know	55	28.2
I am not interested in politics	17	8.7
I don't know where to vote	3	1.5
I don't like any of the presidential/parliamentary candidates enough to vote	4	2.1
I don't think I will get my needs/wants satisfied	29	14.9
I don't think my vote will make a difference	8	4.1
I hope to move out of the country before December	12	6.2
Not registered	28	14.4
Politics and elections don't really affect my life	25	12.8
Total	195	100.0

Source, Field Data, 2020

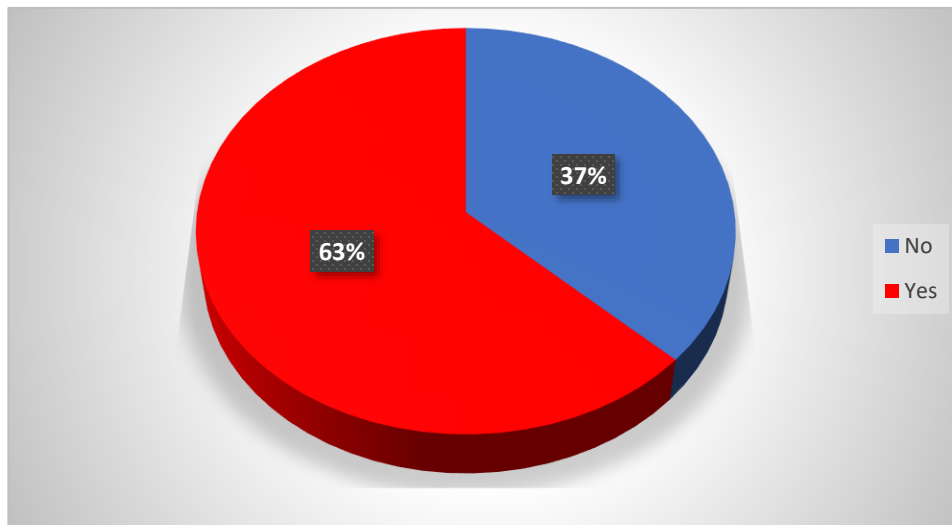
4.3 CHARACTERISTICS OF VOTERS LIKE CONSUMERS OR CITIZENS

As a voter, are you loyal to any brand of political party as you may be to a brand of product/service as a consumer?

The question sought to find out if voters are loyal to some political parties just as consumers are to some brands of product/service. From figure 4.11 below, 63% representing 121 respondents answered YES, implying that they are loyal to a political party just as they are to some brands of products/services and 71 people representing 37% of the respondents answered NO, indicating that they are not loyal to any political party, whereas 3 people failed to answer the question.

In summary, the findings of the study revealed that majority of the respondents are loyal to one political party brand or the other. This means that in terms of brand loyalty voters are like consumers.

Figure: 4. 11: As a voter, are you loyal to any brand of political party as you may be to a brand



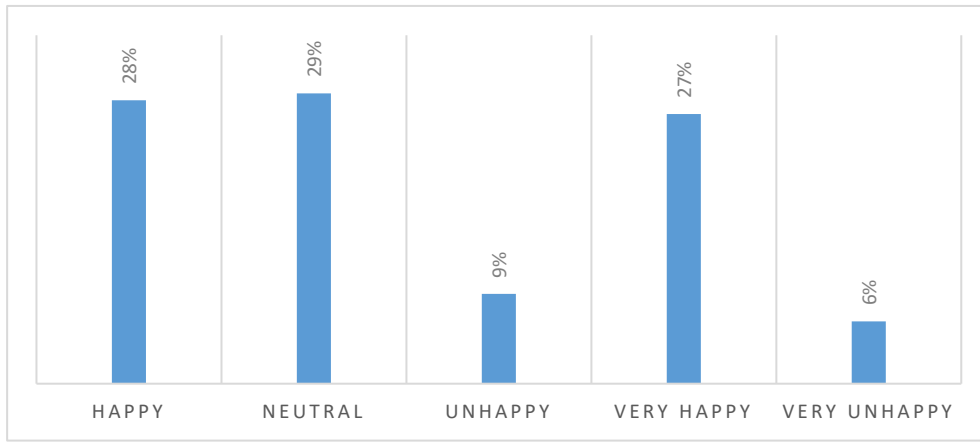
Source Field Data, 2020

If YES what is your level of happiness or unhappiness with the political party brand you are loyal to ranking from the lowest 1- very unhappy, 2-unhappy, 3- neutral, 4-happy, and to the highest 5- very happy.

Respondents were asked about the level of happiness or unhappiness with the political brands they have been loyal to. 41 respondents represented in figure 4.12 as 28% answered that they are happy. 42 respondents representing 29% of those who answered this question said they are neither happy/very happy nor unhappy/very unhappy. 39 respondents representing 27% said they are very happy with the political party they have been loyal to. 13 respondents shown on figure 4.12 as 9% revealed that they are unhappy and 9 respondents representing 6% of the total number of people who answered said they are very unhappy, whereas 51 people failed to answer. The findings indicate that there is a resemblance between a voter and a consumer. Thus, just as consumers may feel unsatisfied or unhappy with a product/service, voters as rational as consumers who want to maximize satisfaction according to the Rational Choice theory by Downs (1957) can be unhappy or happy with the political brand they most prefer hence achieving the objective of this study that seeks to identify the characteristics of voters that make them like consumers or citizens.

In summary, the findings of the study revealed that majority of the respondents are happy with the political parties they are loyal to. Thus, just like consumers feel happy with their favorite brands of products/services.

Figure: 4. 12 Level of happiness or unhappiness of the Respondents with the political party brand they are loyal to



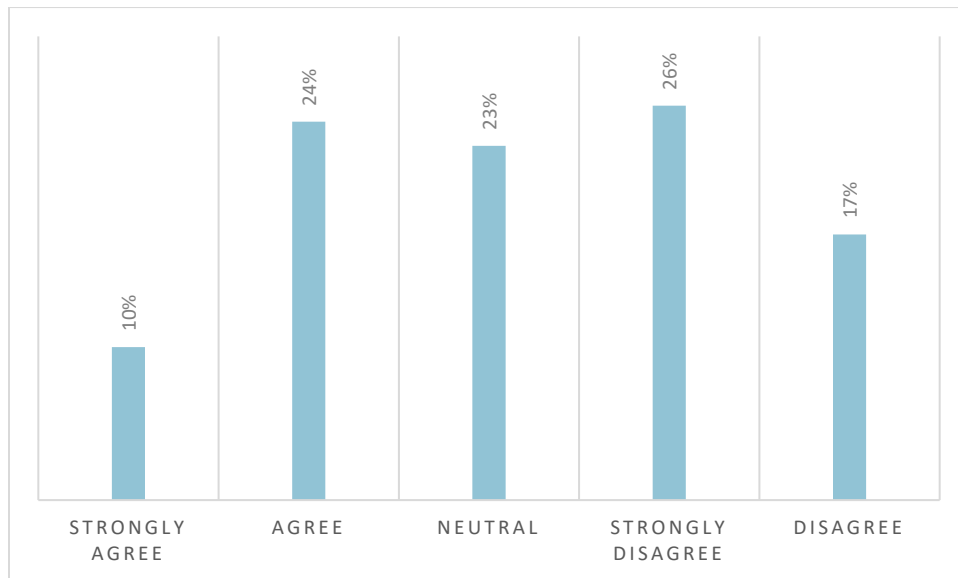
Source, Field Data, 2020

I will switch to a different political party brand if the current fails to satisfy me

Voters were asked if they will leave the political parties they are loyal to and switch to a different party if the current don't satisfy them. A total of 192 people responded to this statement. Out of the total, 49 people representing 26% said they strongly disagree that they will leave their party even if they are not satisfied with them. 44 people representing 23% of the respondents preferred to remain neutral. 47 respondents representing 24% said they agree to switch to a different party if they are unsatisfied with their current party. 19 people representing 10% of the respondents strongly agree that they will join a new political party if they are not satisfy and 33 people representing 17% said they disagree that they will leave their party for another party even if they are not satisfied with them, and 3 people failed to give any response.

In summary, the findings of the study revealed that majority of the respondents in the Amasaman constituency will have their loyalty intact with their political party even when they are not satisfied with them. A good number of the respondents said they will switch to a different political party if the current fails to satisfy them.

Figure: 4. 13 I will switch to a different political party brand if the current fails to satisfy me



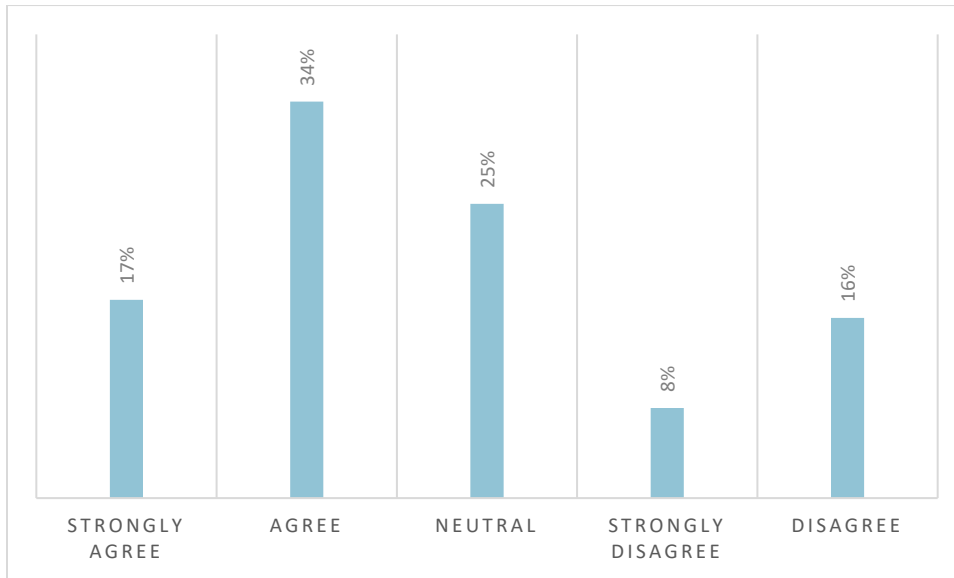
Source, Field Data, 2020

Before making a decision to vote I sought most of my information from the official communication channels of all the political parties contesting

The researcher sought to find out from the respondents to what extent they agree or disagree with statement; “before making a decision to vote I sought most of my information from the official communication channels of all the political parties contesting”. 193 people responded to this statement. Out of this number, 66 people representing 34% of the total respondents said they agree to the statement. 33 people representing 17% strongly agree, 49 people representing 25% stayed neutral, 15 people representing 8% strongly disagree and 30 people representing 16% said they disagreed, whereas 2 people failed to respond.

In summary, the findings of the study revealed that majority of respondents sought information from the political parties before making a voting decision.

Figure: 4.14 before making a decision to vote I sought most of my information from the official communication channels of all the political parties contesting



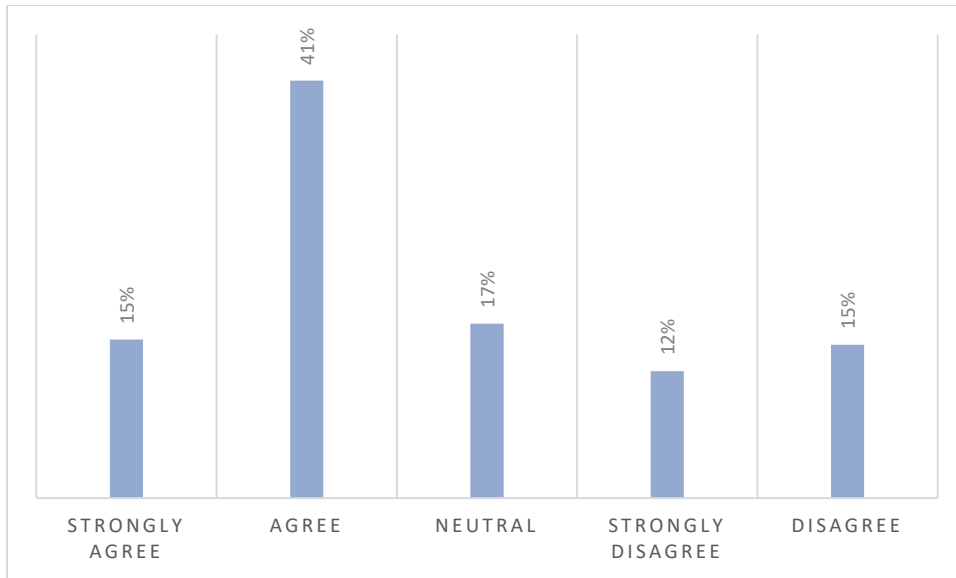
Source, Field Data, 2020

Political advertisements make me aware of some of the things I need as a citizen/voter in an election year

The researcher sought to find out the extent at which citizens/voter agree or disagree to the statement; “political advertisements make me aware of the things I need as a citizen/voter in an election year” 79 people representing 41% of the total respondents (195) agree to the statement. 30 people representing 15% strongly agree, 33 people representing 17% stayed neutral to the statement, 24 people representing 12% strongly disagree and 29 people representing 15% disagree.

In summary, the findings of the study revealed that greater proportion of the respondents in the Amasaman constituency become aware of some of the things they need as citizens in an election year

Figure: 4. 15. Political advertisements make me aware of the things I need as a citizen/voter in an election year



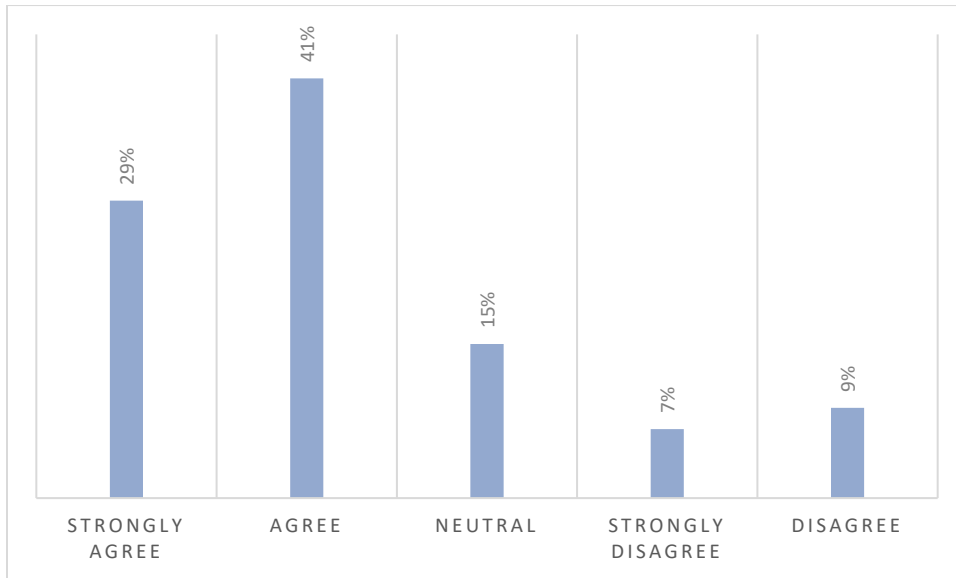
Source, Field Data, 2020

Aggrieved and disappointed voters spread negative word of mouth about political candidates who disappoint them just as consumers do when they are unsatisfied

194 people responded to the above statement. Out of this number, 79 respondents representing 41% said they agree to the statement. 56 people representing 29% strongly agree to the statement. 29 people representing 15% remained neutral. 13 people representing 7% as shown in figure 4.16 strongly disagree to the statement. 17 people representing 9% of the total respondents disagree to the statement whereas 1 person failed to respond to the statement.

In summary, the findings of the study revealed that greater proportion of the respondents will spread negative word of mouth about political candidates who disappoint them just as consumers do when they are unsatisfied.

Figure: 4. 16, Aggrieved and disappointed voters spread negative word of mouth about political candidates who disappoint them just as consumers do when they are unsatisfied



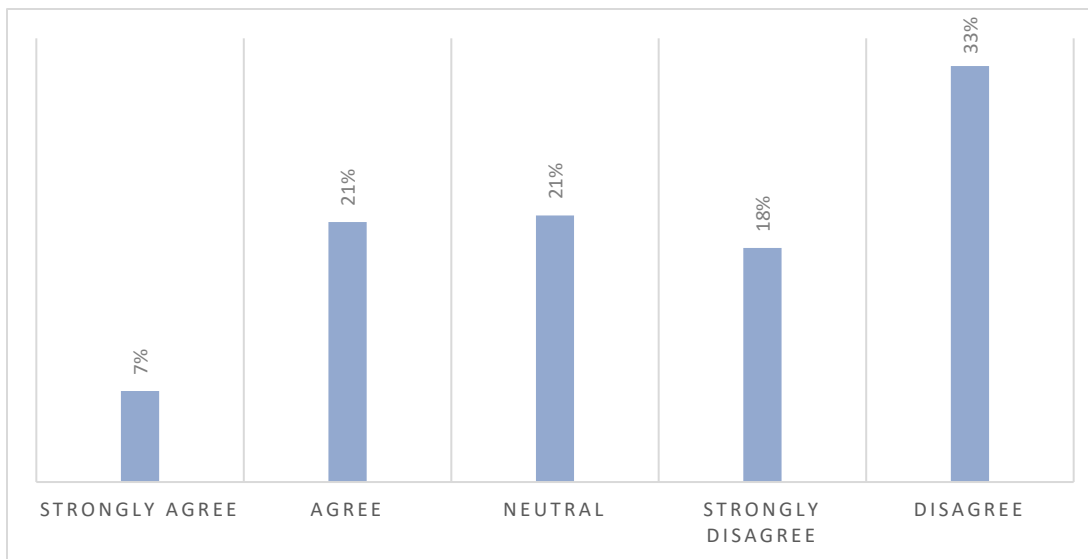
Source, Field Data, 2020

I get persuaded by political adverts and vote for the sponsor of the advert just as I get persuaded by commercial advertisement to buy a product

The researcher sought to find out the extent at which voters agree or disagree with the above statement. 195 people responded to the statement. 14 respondents representing 7% of the total respondents said they strongly agree to the statement. 40 people representing 21% agree to the statement. 41 people representing 21% stayed neutral, 36 people representing 18% strongly disagree to the statement and 64 people representing 33% of the total respondents disagree to the statement.

In summary, the findings of the study revealed that although a good number of the respondents will get persuaded by a political adverts the greater proportion of the respondents don't get persuaded by political adverts.

Figure 4.17: I get persuaded by political adverts and vote for the sponsor of the advert just as I get persuaded by commercial advertisement to buy a product



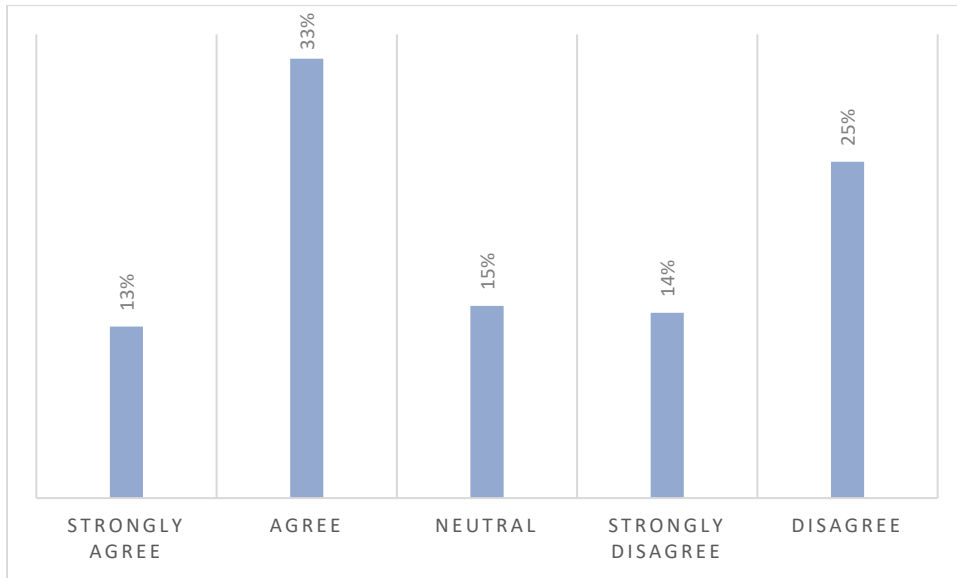
Source, Field Data, 2020

I vote in a general election merely because I am a citizen and it is incumbent on me to vote during election and not for any other reason

The researcher sought to find out the extent to which respondents agree to the statement above. 193 people responded to the statement. Out of which 64 people representing 33% of the total respondents said they agree to the statement. 25 people representing 13% strongly agree, 28 respondent representing 15% opted to be neutral to the statement, 27 people representing 14% strongly disagree and 49 people representing 25% disagree whereas 2 people failed to respond to the statement

In summary, the findings of the study revealed that majority of the respondents vote during election mainly because they are citizens.

Figure: 4. 18. I vote in a general election merely because I am a citizen and it is incumbent on me to vote during election and not for any other reason



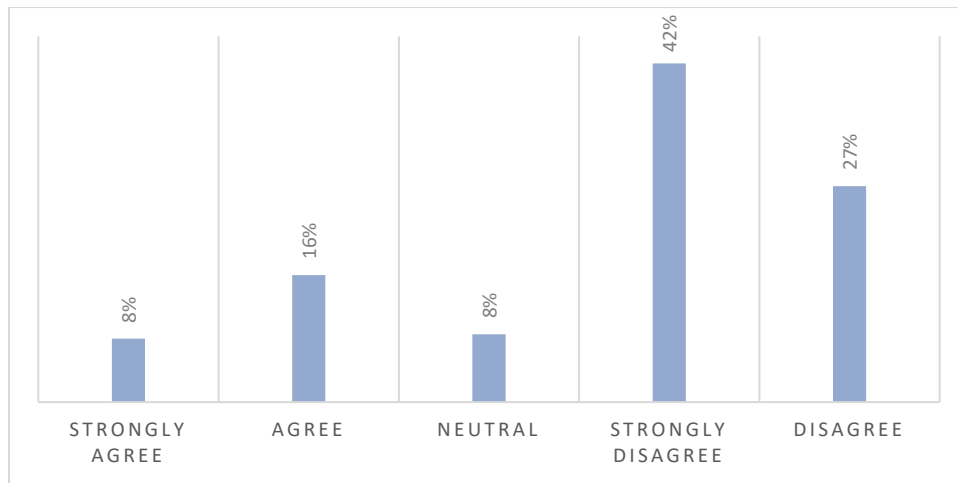
Source, Field Data, 2020

I will vote for politicians who offer me satisfying gifts for my vote during election

The researcher sought to find out the degree of agreement or disagreement of respondents to the above statement. Respondents were 192, out of which 80 people representing 42% as indicated in figure 4.19 below said they strongly disagree to the statement. 51 people representing 27% also disagree. 30 (16%) and 15 (8%) people agree and strongly disagree respectively and 16 people representing 8% stayed neutral, whereas 3 people did not respond to the statement.

In summary, the findings of the study revealed that majority of respondents in the Amasaman constituency will not vote for politicians who engage in vote buying.

Figure 4.19: I will vote for politicians who offer me satisfying gifts for my vote during election



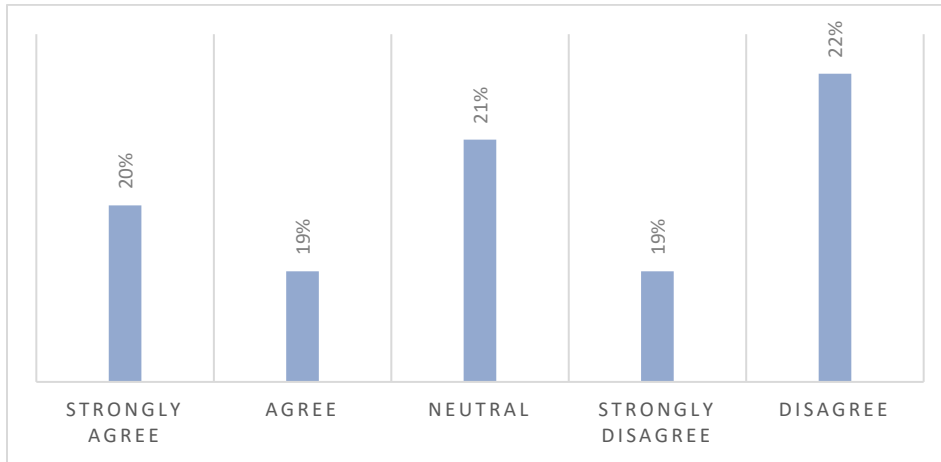
Source, Field Data, 2020

I will vote for a candidate who will appeal to my personal interest

The researcher sought to find out the degree of agreement or disagreement of respondents to the above statement. 22% of the respondents disagree to the statement, 19% strongly disagree, 21% stayed neutral, 19% agree and 20% strongly agree

In summary, the findings of the study revealed that greater proportion of respondents will not vote for politicians who appeal to their personal interest.

Figure 4. 20: I will vote for a candidate who will appeal to my personal interest



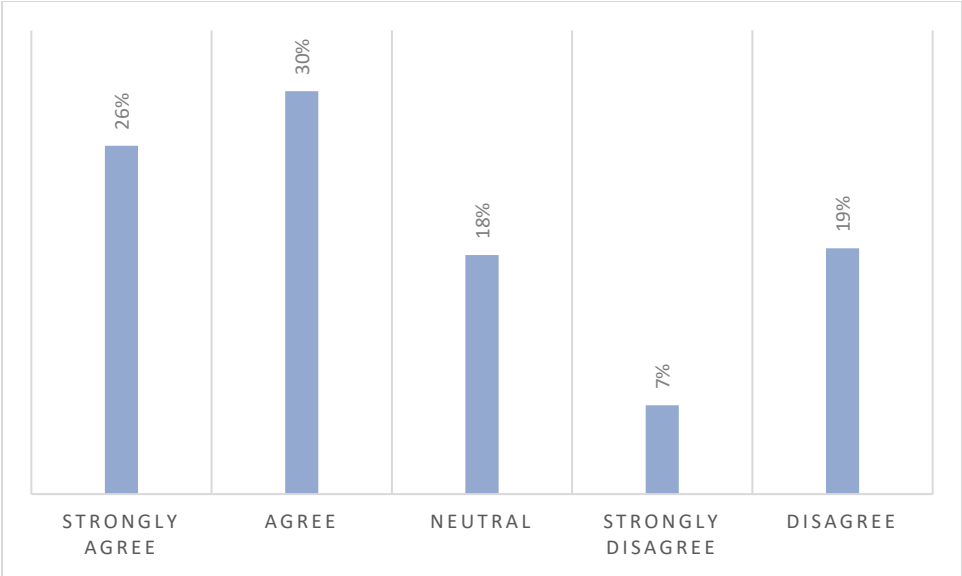
Source, Field Data, 2020

I don't care if I don't enjoy any personalized benefit for voting for a political party to power because I am a citizen and not a consumer

The researcher sought to find out the degree of agreement or disagreement of respondents to the above statement. 194 people responded to the statement, out of which 59 people representing 30% of the total respondents as shown in figure 4.21 below said they agree to the statement. 51 people representing 26% of the respondents strongly agree to the statement. 35 people representing 18% of the respondents responded neutral to the statement. 13 (7%) and 36 (19%) people strongly disagree and agree respectively, whereas 1 person failed to respond to the statement.

In summary, the findings of the study revealed that majority of the respondents will vote without aiming for any personal benefit because they are citizens and not consumers when it comes to voting.

Figure 4.21: I don't care if I don't enjoy any personalized benefit for voting for a political party to power because I am a citizen and not a consumer



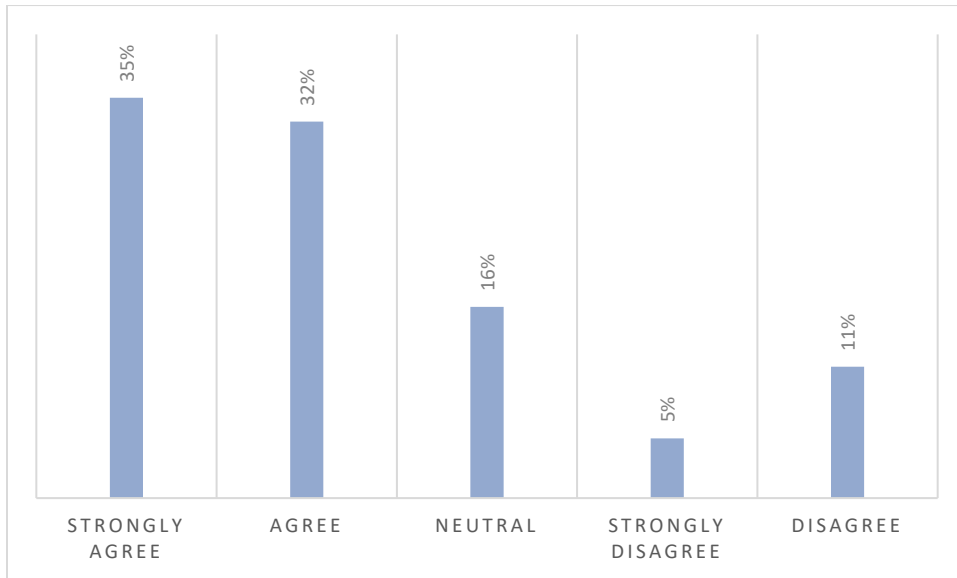
Source, Field Data, 2020

My voting decision must yield benefits for the greater number of people at the expense of my personal interest

The researcher sought to find out the degree of agreement or disagreement of respondents to the above statement. People who responded to the statement were 194. Out of which 67 people representing 35% of the total respondents said they strongly agree to the statement. 63 people representing 32% of the respondents as shown in figure 4.22 also agree to the statement. 32 people representing 16% preferred to stay neutral to the statement. 10 (5%) and 22 (11%) people strongly disagree and agree to the statement respectively and 1 person opted not to respond to the statement.

In summary, the findings of the study revealed, that greater proportion of respondents want their voting decision yield benefit for the greater number of people at the expense of their personal interest.

Figure 4.22: My voting decision must yield benefits for the greater number of people at the expense of my personal interest



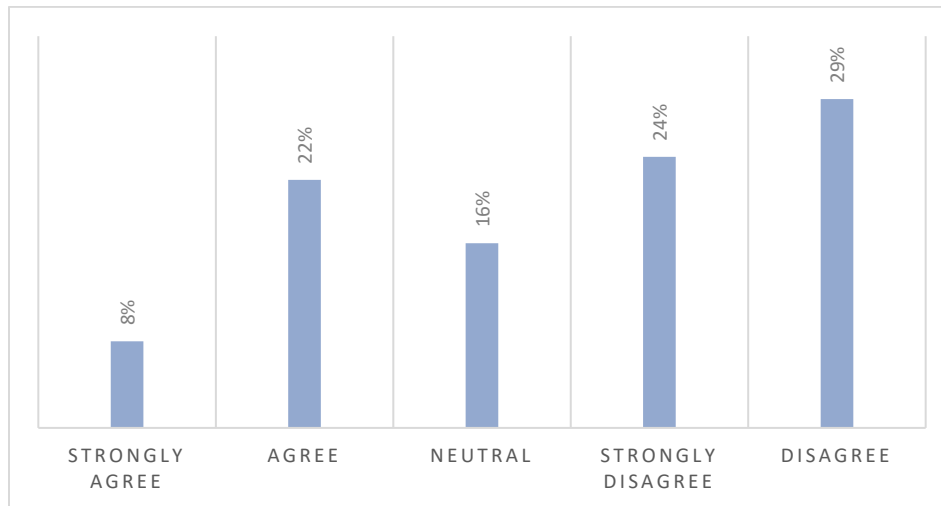
Source, Field Data, 2020

When it comes to voting I see myself as more of a consumer than a citizen

The researcher sought to find out the degree of agreement or disagreement of respondents to the above statement. 194 people responded to this statement. 43 people representing 22% of the total respondents as shown in figure 4. 23 below said they agree to the statement. 15 people representing 8% of all the respondents also said they strongly agree to the statement. 32 people represented as 16% of the total respondents in figure 4. 23 below responded neutral to the statement. 47 people representing 24% of the respondents said they strongly disagree to the statement and 57 people representing 29% of all the respondents responded that they disagree to the statement, whereas 1 person failed to respond to the statement.

In summary, the findings of the study revealed that majority of respondents see themselves as citizens and not consumers when it comes to voting.

Figure 4.23: When it comes to voting I see myself as more of a consumer than a citizen



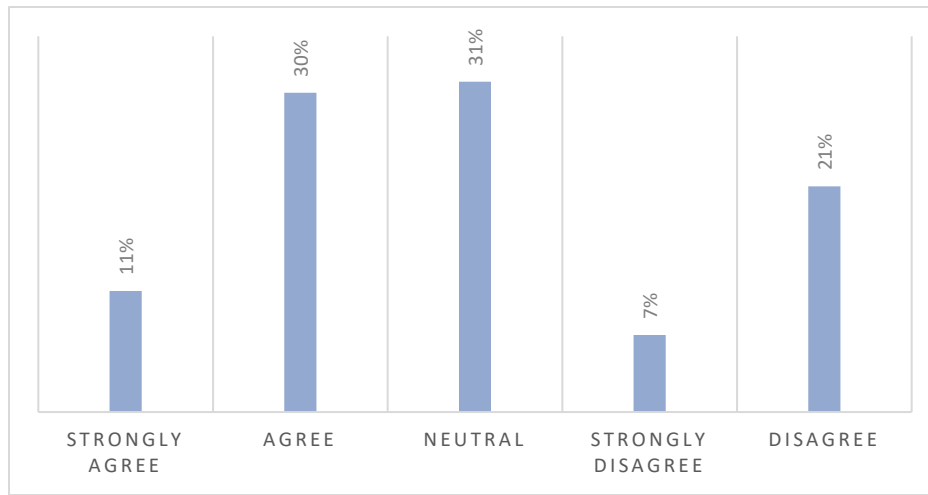
Source, Field Data, 2020

The outcomes of elections in Ghana have always been influenced by vote buying

The researcher sought to find out the degree of agreement or disagreement of respondents to the above statement. 195 people responded to this statement. Out of which 22 (11%) and 58 (30%) people said they strongly agree and agree respectively. 14 (7%) and 41 (21%) people also said they strongly disagree and disagree respectively, whereas 60 people representing 31% of the total respondents responded neutral to the statement.

In summary, the findings of the study revealed that majority of respondent remained neutral on the influence of vote buying on election outcomes in Ghana.

Figure 4.24: The outcomes of elections in Ghana have always been influenced by vote buying



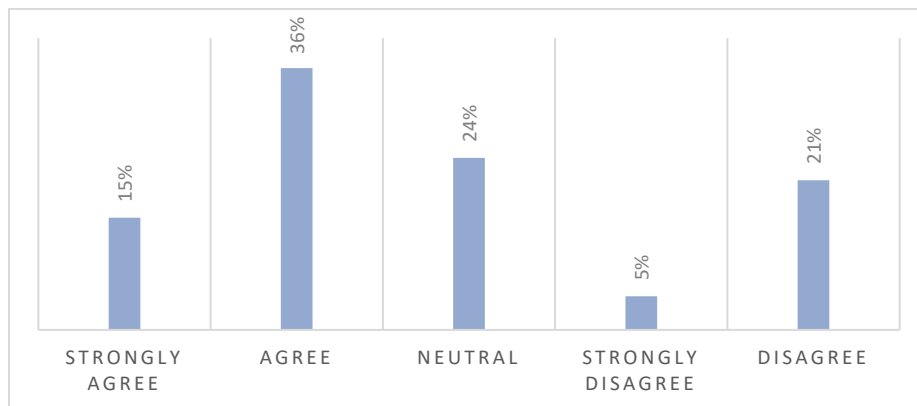
Source, Field Data, 2020

Voting in Ghana has always been on ethnic lines

The researcher sought to find out the degree of agreement or disagreement of respondents to the above statement. 195 people responded to this statement. Out of which 30 (15%) and 70 (36%) people said they strongly agree and agree respectively. 9 (5%) and 40 (21%) people also said they strongly disagree and disagree respectively, whereas 46 people representing 24% of the total respondents responded neutral to the statement.

In summary, the findings of the study revealed that majority of the respondents believe that voting in Ghana is on tribal lines.

Figure 4. 25: Voting in Ghana has always been on ethnic lines



Source, Field Data, 2020

Table 4. 2: Voting in Ghana has always been free and fair

Voting in Ghana has always been free and fair					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	18	9.2	9.3	9.3
	Agree	41	21.0	21.1	30.4
	Neutral	64	32.8	33.0	63.4
	Strongly Disagree	12	6.2	6.2	69.6
	Disagree	59	30.3	30.4	100.0
	Total	194	99.5	100.0	
Missing	System	1	.5		
Total		195	100.0		

Source, Field Data, 2020

Voting in Ghana has always been free and fair

The researcher sought to find out the degree of agreement or disagreement of respondents to the above statement. 194 people responded to this statement. Out of which 18 people representing 9.3% of the total respondents presented in table 4.2 above said they strongly agree to the statement. 41 people representing 21% of the respondents also said they agree to the statement. 12 people representing 6.2 % strongly disagree and 59 respondents representing 30.3 % of all the respondents to this statement said they disagree, whereas 64 people representing 32.8% of the respondents responded neutral to the statement. 1 person representing 0.5% failed to respond to the statement.

In summary, the findings of the study revealed that majority of respondent remained neutral to the statement; 'Voting in Ghana has always been free and fair'.

4.4 Discussion of Findings with Regards to the Research Objectives

This section of the study deals with the discussion of the results of the study in view of the objectives of the research and existing literature. The principal objectives of the study were to:

1. To identify the characteristics of voters like consumers or citizens.
2. To evaluate level of interest of electorates in political participation in the Amasaman constituency.
3. To examine the factors that motivate voters decision in the Amasaman constituency.
4. To investigate voters view on voting in the Amasaman constituency.

4.4.1 Objectives 1: characteristics of voters like consumers or citizens

The first objective of the study sought to ascertain the extent to which voters have moved to become more like consumers than citizens by identifying their characteristics that resemble consumers or citizens.

4.4.2 Objectives 1a: characteristics of voters like consumers

Political advertisements make me aware of the things I need as a citizen/voter in an election year.

The findings of the study revealed that voters just like consumers go through similar process like the consumer decision making process before making voting decision. Consumers go through five steps of decision making process in order to make a purchase of products/services to satisfy their needs. These five steps are need recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase, and post-purchase evaluation of decision (Fahy and Jobber 2012).

Need Recognition: Findings of this study revealed that the consumer decision making process is applicable to the voter. All respondents who agree and strongly agree that political advertisement make them aware of the things they need as citizens/ voters in an election year cumulatively is 56% of the total respondents for the above question. This implies that voters like consumers become aware of their needs through external influence.

Before making a decision to vote I sought most of my information from the official communication channels of all the political parties contesting.

Information Search: This study revealed that out of 193 people who responded to the above statement, 51% of them agreed and strongly agreed that they sought information from the political parties through their official communication channels for their ideologies and policies before making a voting decision.

What Motivated Respondents to Vote in the 2016 Elections

Evaluation of Alternatives: Again the study revealed that voters assess the political ideologies and policies, personalities of political candidates of all political parties contesting the election. This is done by the voter to ascertain which of the policies, ideologies or candidates (political products/services) will best satisfy his/her needs. When he becomes satisfied with a political party which is offering what will maximise his/her utility, he/she moves to the next stage of the process which is voting decision (Purchase decision). The study revealed that in the 2016

General Elections 40% of voters in the Amasaman constituency settled for the political party which presented them superior policies and ideology.

Purchase Decision: This is the stage where the voter actually vote for the political party or candidate whose ‘political products/services’ will satisfy his/her needs. The study revealed that, among all respondents who were asked if they voted in the 2016 General Election at the Amasaman constituency, 83% of them said they voted. In other word 83% of the respondents made a purchase decision.

Post-Purchase Evaluation of Decision: (Post-Voting Evaluation of Decision) this is the final stage of the process. This arises from uncertainty of whether the choice was correct or not, (Fahy and Jobber 2012). The study revealed that, out of 191 respondents who were asked about their post-voting evaluation of decision, 89 of them representing 47% of the total respondents said they will vote against any candidate who will fail to satisfy the reason why they voted them in next election. 41 of these respondents representing 21% of the total respondents answered that; they would lose interest in politics. 29 of them constituting 15% of the total respondents indicated that they will not vote at all in any election again. 18 people representing 9% of all the respondents answered that they will vote against any politicians who will fail them 8 respondents constituting 4% of all the respondents said they will campaign against politicians who will fail to fulfill his/her promises. Finally, 6 respondents representing 3% of the total respondents answered that, they will tell other voters about their dissatisfaction about politicians who will fail to fulfill their promises.

In addition, the study also revealed that 41% and 29% of a total 194 respondents said they agree and strongly agree respectively to this statement; “Aggrieved and disappointed voters spread negative word of mouth about political candidates who disappoint them just as consumers do when they are unsatisfied” this is typical trait of consumers that the study has found in voters.

Furthermore, the study revealed that voters have moved to become like consumers in the way they (consumers) associate themselves with brands and how they move through the consumer loyalty ladder from prospect through to advocate. Findings from the study have shown that 63% representing 121 out of 192 respondents answered YES to the question; “As a voter, are you loyal to any brand of political party as you may be to a brand of product/service as a consumer?”

Voters loyalty to their political party is so great that cumulatively, 55% of the same number of respondents (192) are happy or very happy. In light of this, majority of the respondents (43%) insisted that they will remain loyal to their party even if the party fails to satisfy them. This group of respondents could be said to have reached the advocacy stage on the consumer loyalty ladder if they were to be consumers.

In conclusion, it can be said that voters are like consumers up to a certain extent. This is because the study revealed that only 30% of 195 respondents see themselves like consumers in a political market place.

4.4.3 Objectives 1b: characteristics of voters like citizens

First, the study revealed that, to a very large extent, voters are citizens than consumers. In total Approximately 46% of 192 respondents expressed that they agree or strongly agree that they vote in General Elections merely because they are citizens and not for any other reason.

Second, respondents who disagree or strongly disagree form 69% of total respondents of 192 who said they will vote against any politician who will offer them gift in exchange of their votes. This implies that voters pride themselves as citizens more than consumers.

Third, the study revealed that majority of respondents disagree or strongly disagree that when it comes to voting they are more of consumers than citizens. Cumulatively, these people form approximately 53% of the total respondents of the study.

Fourth, the study revealed that majority of respondents agree or strongly agree that they will vote without expecting any personal benefits because they are more citizens than consumers during elections. These respondents constitute approximately 56% of the total respondents of the study.

Fifth, findings of the study show that greater number of respondents agree or strongly agree that voting decision must yield benefits for the greater number of the people at the expense of their personal interest of individuals. These respondents constitute 67% of respondents of the study.

4.4.4 Objective 2: level of interest of electorates in political participation in the Amasaman constituency

This objective of the study was aimed at evaluating the level of interest of voters in political participation through voting. Information gathered from the respondents revealed that interest of voters in participating in politics through voting is very high. The study has shown that approximately 84% of the sample population have at least voted in an election under the Fourth Republic of Ghana.

The study has also revealed that overall electorates in the Amasaman constituency have been participating in politics since the first ever election under the Fourth Republic which indicate high interest in political participation on the part of respondents.

In addition, the study has also shown that approximately 83% of the sample population for the study voted in the 2016 General Elections. This also places emphasis on the high level of voter interest in political participation in the Amasaman constituency through voting.

Finally, approximately 81% of the sample population for the study are interested in the upcoming 2020 General Elections.

The above consistent evidence of high interest in political participation on the part of respondents can be generalised and conclude that in the Amasaman constituency electorates are highly interested in political participation through voting.

4.4.5 Objective 3: factors that motivate voters decision in the Amasaman constituency

This third objective of the study sought to find out the factors that motive voters decisions in the Amasaman constituency.

The study revealed that several factors motivate voters decision. However, findings show that approximately 40% of the total respondents of the study voted for different political parties based on their policies and ideology in the 2016 General Election. Other factors include socio-economic issues (29%), party affiliations (13%), personality of the candidate (9%), ethnicity (5%), personal material benefits (4%). Apart from these factors, the respondents also revealed

that poor performance of incumbent government and manifestos of political parties influence their decision.

4.4.6 Objective 4: voters views on voting in the Amasaman constituency

This fourth objective of the study sought to reveal the views of voters on voting in the Amasaman constituency.

The findings of the study revealed that majority of the respondents agree or strongly agree that voting in Ghana has always been on ethnic lines. They represent 51% of the total respondents of the study. The rest of the respondents expressed disagreement or neutral position.

Finally, the study revealed that larger proportion of the respondents (194) expressed neutral position on the free and fair state of elections in the Amasaman constituency. However, more respondents expressed disagreement than agreement to the statement; 'Voting in Ghana has always been free and fair'.

4.5 Conclusion

The chapter has empirically assessed the incidence of voter characteristics like consumers and citizens in the Amasaman constituency. It has also assessed the factors that motivate the voter decision among voters in the constituency. Also, the level of voters interest in political participation and voters' views on elections has been assessed. The facts collected have been thoroughly evaluated, interpreted, and deliberated by the researcher in an attempt to come out with answers to the research questions.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the summary of findings, conclusions and recommendations aimed at addressing the established specific objectives of the study. Particularly the following are eminent, characteristics of voters like consumers, characteristics of voters like citizens, level of interest of electorates in political participation in the Amasaman constituency, factors that motivate voters decision in the Amasaman constituency, voters view on voting in the Amasaman constituency.

5.1 Summary of Findings

This sub-section of the study presents the summary of findings emanating from the study.

5.1.1 Characteristics of Voters like Consumers

The study discovered that voters have similar traits as consumers when it comes to decision making process. Consumers go through five steps of decision-making process in order to make a purchase of products/services to satisfy their needs (Fahy and Jobber, 2012). Similarly, the study found that voters go through the same process as consumers in order to make voting decision. Voters recognise what they need either through internal stimulus, or external stimulus such as political advertisements, they search for information from official communication channels of political parties, they evaluate alternative policies and programs of political parties, they vote, and make evaluation of post-voting decision.

5.1.2. Characteristics of Voters like Citizens

Generally, the study discovered that to a very large extent, voters are citizens than consumers. The study gathered that majority of respondents disagree or strongly disagree that when it comes to voting they are more of consumers than citizens. Cumulatively, these people form approximately 53% of the total respondents of the study. The study also revealed that majority of

the respondents in expressed that they vote in General Elections merely because they are citizens and not for any other reason.

5.1.3 Level of Interest of Electorates in Political Participation in the Amasaman Constituency

The study revealed that consistently voters have shown high level of interest in the participation of politics through voting. The study has shown that approximately 84% of respondents of the study have at least voted in an election under the Fourth Republic of Ghana in the Amasaman constituency. Furthermore, the study discovered that approximately 83% of the respondents of the study voted in the 2016 General Elections. Also, approximately 81% of respondents showed interest in the upcoming 2020 General Elections.

In addition to the above findings, the study also discovered that greater number of respondents want their voting decision to benefit the masses at the expense of their personal interest. These respondents constitute approximately 67% of the total respondents of the study.

5.1.4 Factors that Motivate Voters Decision in the Amasaman Constituency

The study revealed that, there are several factors that motivate voters to vote in a particular direction. These factors include; policies and ideologies of political parties, socio-economic issues, party affiliations, personality of the candidate, ethnicity, personal material benefits, poor performance of incumbent government and manifestos of political parties. The study discovered that policies and ideologies of political parties were the factors that motivated the voting decisions of majority of the respondents in the 2016 General Elections.

5.1.5 Voters Views on Voting in the Amasaman Constituency

The study discovered that majority of the respondents are of the view that voting in Ghana has always been on ethnic lines and they represent approximately 51% of the total respondents of the study.

Again, the study revealed that a larger proportion of the respondents expressed neutral position with regards to the free and fair state of elections in Ghana. Meanwhile, a good number of respondents (36.5%) disagree or strongly disagree that elections in Ghana have been free and

fair. On the contrary, 30.3% of the respondents agree that elections in Ghana have been free and fair.

5.2 Conclusions

Following the analysis and findings, this study has established that although voters share some resemblance with consumers, to a very large extent voter in Ghana exhibit characteristics of citizens than consumers in making a voting decision. Major findings of this study support the argument in the literature on rationality of voters and the nature of decision which puts forward that the rationality of human beings (voters) is bounded by cognitive limitations as well as limited information and resources. This may push individuals to make decisions based on their inner biases, culture, or ideological preferences (Simon, 1955).

The study established that citizens' interest in political participation through voting in Ghana is very high, although, electorates are not always happy with the political parties they belong to; their loyalty for their parties doesn't deteriorate. Finally, the study established that the debate about whether Ghana's elections over the years have been free and fair or otherwise has been a silence one. Majority of people are reluctant to share their opinion about it.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations have been made:

- ❖ It is recommended that since the study has established that voters resemble consumers to some extent, political parties must employ political marketing specialists to devise a marketing plan that will target voters as consumers to enhance electoral success of political candidates in elections.
- ❖ It is recommended that political parties must adopt a more nationalistic approach to their campaigns since majority of voters see themselves as citizens to a very large extent than consumers. Political campaign strategists must appeal to the patriotic sense of voters in order to win them to their side.

- ❖ It is recommended that political parties must market their good policies and programmes to electorates during electoral campaigns. This is because the study has established that voting decisions of electorates are motivated by policies of political parties.

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Appendix
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Ghana Institute of Journalism
QUESTIONNAIRE

INVESTIGATING THE EXTENT AT WHICH VOTERS HAVE MOVED TO BECOME MORE LIKE CONSUMERS THAN CITIZENS IN GHANA (AMASAMAN CONSTITUENCY)

I am Kwame Owusu Agyekum, a student of the School of Graduate Studies and Research, Ghana Institute of Journalism pursuing a Master of Arts Degree in Public Relations. This questionnaire is part of a study that is “INVESTIGATING THE EXTENT AT WHICH VOTERS HAVE MOVED TO BECOME MORE LIKE CONSUMERS THAN CITIZENS IN GHANA (Greater Accra Region)”. I hereby seek your assistance to complete the study by partaking in this survey. Any information you provide by way of answers to this questionnaire will be treated with utmost confidentiality and will only form part of the overall field data solely for the purposes of this study.

SECTION A

DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

1. Gender:

(1) Male

(2) Female

2. Age:

- (1) 10-19 years
- (2) 20-29 years
- (3) 30-39 years
- (4) 40-49 years
- (5) 50years and above

3. Educational background:

- (1) None
- (2) Primary/JHS
- (3) Secondary
- (4) Tertiary

SECTION B

VOTERS INTEREST AND BEHAVIOUR

5. Have you ever voted in any elections under the Fourth Republic?

- (1) Yes
- (2) No

6. If yes to question 5, how many times?

- (1) Once
- (2) Two times
- (3) Three times

(4) Four times

(5) Five times

(6) Six times

(7) Seven times

7. If No to question 6 what is your reason?

.....

8. Did you vote in the 2016 general elections in Ghana?

(1) Yes

(2) No

9. What motivated your decision?

(1) Party affiliation

(2) Party Ideology and policies

(3) Ethnic influence

(4) Personality of the leader

(5) Personal material benefits

(6) Socio-economic issues

10. If no to question (9) what was your reason

.....

11. What other reason made you voted in the 2016 general election?

.....

(12) What will be your post polls reaction if a candidate you voted for failed to satisfy the reasons why you voted him/her?

- (1) Vote against him/her in next election
- (2) Not vote at all in next election
- (3) Campaign against him/her
- (4) Demonstrate against him/her
- (5) Lose interest in politics
- (6) Spread negative word of mouth about him/her

13. When thinking about the upcoming 2020 general election in December, which of these reasons, if any, would potentially cause you not to vote?

- (1) Not registered
- (2) I don't think I will get my needs/wants satisfied
- (3) I don't think my votes will make any difference
- (4) I don't know where to vote
- (5) I don't like any of the presidential/parliamentary candidates enough to vote
- (6) I am not interested in politics
- (7) I hope to move out of the country before December
- (8) Politics and elections don't really affect my life
- (9) I don't know

SECTION C

CHARACTERISTICS OF VOTERS LIKE CONSUMERS OR CITIZENS

(14) As a voter are you loyal to any brand of political party as you may be to a brand of product/service as a consumer?

(1) Yes

(2) No

(15) If Yes to question (14), what is your level of happiness or unhappiness with the political party brand you are loyal to ranking from the lowest 1- very unhappy, 2-unhappy, 3- neutral, 4- happy, and to the highest 5- very happy.

(1) Very happy

(2) Unhappy

(3) Neutral

(4) Happy

(5) Very happy

Do you agree or disagree with the following statements ranking from the lowest 1- strongly disagree, 2-disagree, 3- neutral, 4-agree, and to the highest 5- strongly agree. From question

16-29

(16) I will switch to a different political party brand if the current fails to satisfy me

(1) Strongly disagree

(2) Disagree

(3) Neutral

(4) Agree

(5) Strongly agree

(17) Before making a decision to vote I sought most of my information from the official communication channels of all the political parties contesting.

- (1) Strongly disagree
- (2) Disagree
- (3) Neutral
- (4) Agree
- (5) Strongly agree

(18) Political advertisements make me aware of the things I need as a citizen/voter in an election year

- (1) Strongly disagree
- (2) Disagree
- (3) Neutral
- (4) Agree
- (5) Strongly agree

(19) Aggrieved and disappointed voters spread negative word of mouth about political candidates who disappoint them just as consumers do when they are unsatisfied with a brand of product/service

- (1) Strongly disagree
- (2) Disagree
- (3) Neutral
- (4) Agree
- (5) Strongly agree

(20) I get persuaded by political adverts and vote for the sponsor of the advert just as I get persuaded by commercial advertisement to buy a product

- (1) Strongly disagree
- (2) Disagree
- (3) Neutral
- (4) Agree
- (5) Strongly agree

(21) I vote in a general election merely because I am a citizen and it is incumbent on me to vote during election and not for any other reason

- (1) Strongly disagree
- (2) Disagree
- (3) Neutral
- (4) Agree
- (5) Strongly agree

(22) I will vote for politicians who offer me satisfying gifts for my vote during election

- (1) Strongly disagree
- (2) Disagree
- (3) Neutral
- (4) Agree
- (5) Strongly agree

(23) I will vote for a candidate who will appeal to my personal interest

- (1) Strongly disagree
- (2) Disagree

(3) Neutral

(4) Agree

(5) Strongly agree

(24) I don't care if I don't enjoy any personalized benefit for voting for a political party to power because I am a citizen and not a consumer

(1) Strongly disagree

(2) Disagree

(3) Neutral

(4) Agree

(5) Strongly agree

(25) My voting decision must yield benefits for the greater number of people at the expense of my personal interest

(1) Strongly disagree

(2) Disagree

(3) Neutral

(4) Agree

(5) Strongly agree

(26) When it comes to voting I see myself as more of a consumer than a citizen

(1) Strongly disagree

(2) Disagree

(3) Neutral

(4) Agree

(5) Strongly agree

SECTION D

VOTERS VIEW ON VOTING IN GHANA

(27) The outcomes of elections in Ghana have always been influenced by vote buying

(1) Strongly disagree

(2) Disagree

(3) Neutral

(4) Agree

(5) Strongly agree

(28) Voting in Ghana has always been on ethnic lines

(1) Strongly disagree

(2) Disagree

(3) Neutral

(4) Agree

(5) Strongly agree

(29) Voting in Ghana has always been free and fair

(1) Strongly disagree

(2) Disagree

(3) Neutral

(4) Agree

(5) Strongly agree

(30) Are you interested in the upcoming 2020 General Elections in Ghana?

(1) Yes

(2) No