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The usage of social media in political campaigns: A study of the New Patriotic Party (NPP) and the National Democratic Congress (NDC) communication strategies in Ghana's 2020 Presidential elections

BY

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this to all the people who have in diverse ways contributed to shaping my growth and development. Especially to my supervisor who has been very supportive during this period.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Appreciation to all and sundry who have in diverse ways supported me in executing this task. I thank all my colleagues at work who found time to review, print and edit the work. I am also grateful to all the people who agreed to be interviewed and offered various perspectives. I can't show appreciation without thanking my supervisor whose guidance has been instrumental in helping me put this work together.

DECLARATION AND CERTIFICATION

I, Nathaniel Alpha hereby declare that this thesis is my own work and has not been presented for a degree in any other university, and all materials used in this thesis have been duly acknowledged.

.....
Alpha

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.....
7/12/2021

Date

SUPERVISOR'S DECLARATION

I hereby certify that this project work was done under my supervision. I thereby approve that the work is adequate in scope and quality for the partial fulfilment of their requirements for the award of a Mater's of Art in Public Relations



.....
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Date

Supervisor

TABLE OF CONTENT

Introduction

Acknowledgement

Declaration and Certification

Abstract

CHAPTER ONE

| | |
|---|----|
| 1.0 Introduction | 1 |
| 1.1 Background | 1 |
| 1.1.1 Politics, democracy and communication | 1 |
| 1.1.2 Communication and campaigns | 3 |
| 1.1.3 Communication, technology and politics | 4 |
| 1.1.4 Ghana's democratic development and elections since 1992 | 6 |
| 1.1.5 An overview of the NPP and NDC | 7 |
| 1.1.6 The 2020 presidential election | 11 |
| 1.2 Problem Statement | 12 |
| 1.3 Research Objectives | 15 |
| 1.3.1 Specific Objectives | 15 |
| 1.4 Research Questions | 15 |
| 1.5 Scope of the study | 16 |
| 1.6 Organization of the study | 16 |
| 1.7 Significance of the study | 17 |
| 1.8 Chapter Summary | 18 |

CHAPTER TWO

| | |
|---------------------------------|----|
| 2.0 Introduction | 20 |
| 2.1 Political Campaigning | 21 |

| | |
|---|----|
| 2.1.1 Politics and Communication | 22 |
| 2.1.3 Political campaigns, communication, and Marketing | 23 |
| 2.1.4 Social media | 26 |
| Empirical Review | |
| 2.2 Usefulness of social media and its influence on voters | 28 |
| 2.2.1 How political parties use social media to engage the public | 29 |
| 2.2.2 Facebook and Political Campaigns | 32 |
| 2.2.3 Twitter and political campaigns | 32 |
| 2.2.4 Political Campaigns on Instagram | 33 |
| 2.2.5 Political Campaigns on WhatsApp | 33 |
| 2.2.6 Some Challenges of social media and political campaigns | 34 |
| Theoretical Framework | |
| 2.3 Dialogic Communication theory | 35 |
| 2.3.1 Dialogic communication and the internet | 36 |
| 2.3.3 Social Media Political Participation Model (SMPPM) | 40 |
| 2.4 Chapter summary | 41 |
| CHAPTER THREE | |
| 3.0 Introduction | 42 |
| 3.1 Methodology | 42 |
| 3.2 Research Design | 43 |
| 3.3 Qualitative Methodology | 44 |
| 3.4 Population and sample | 45 |
| 3.5 Research Method and Instrument | 46 |
| 3.6 In-depth Interview | 47 |
| 3.7 Thematic Analysis | 47 |
| 3.8 Processes involved in thematic observation | 48 |
| 3.9 Chapter Summary | 49 |

CHAPTER FOUR

| | |
|---|----|
| 4.0 Introduction | 50 |
| 4.1 Communication strategies adopted in the 2020 presidential elections. | 51 |
| 4.1.1 Personal attribution | 51 |
| 4.1.2 Focus on VP | 51 |
| 4.1.3 Policies | 52 |
| 4.1.4 Communication Tools (Press Conference) | 53 |
| 4.2 Implication of COVID on the 2020 presidential elections | 53 |
| 4.2.1 COVID-19 | 53 |
| 4.3 Social media use in the 2020 presidential elections | 54 |
| 4.3.1 Easy Targeting | 55 |
| 4.3.2 Content production | 56 |
| 4.3.3 Smart way of promoting policies and interventions | 57 |
| 4.4 Social media and dialogic communication | 58 |
| 4.5 Types of medium used online | 59 |
| 4.6 Social media strategies by opponents | 60 |
| 4.7 Challenges regarding the usage of social media by NPP and NDC in the 2020 presidential elections. | 61 |
| 4.7.1 Cost | 61 |
| 4.7.2 Inconsistency in communication | 63 |
| 4.7.3 The spread of false information | 64 |
| 4.7.4 Inability to control communication | 65 |
| 4.7.5 Inadequate technical personnel | 66 |
| 4.7.6 Challenges associated with appropriation | 67 |
| 4.8 Perception of experts about the communication strategies of both NPP and NDC in the 2020 presidential elections | 68 |
| 4.8.1 Aggressive Campaigning | 68 |
| 4.8.2 Uncoordinated campaign strategy | 68 |

| | |
|---|----|
| 4.8.3 Online communication | 69 |
| 4.8.4 Future elections and social media usage | 69 |
| 4.9 Chapter summary | 70 |

CHAPTER FIVE

| | |
|--|----|
| 5.0 Introduction | 71 |
| 5.1 Observations..... | 71 |
| 5.1.1 General communication strategy by both NDC and NPP in the 2020 presidential election | 71 |
| 5.2 Social Media Usage by NDC and NPP in the 2020 presidential election campaign | 72 |
| 5.3 Dialogical communication model and social media engagement..... | 74 |
| 5.4 Challenges faced with regards to social media campaign..... | 74 |
| 5.5 Recommendation | 75 |
| 5.6 Limitation of the study | 77 |
| 5.7 Conclusion | 77 |
| Appendix..... | 78 |

ABSTRACT

This study investigated how the two major political parties in Ghana, New Patriotic Party (NPP) and National Democratic Congress (NDC) used social media in their political campaigns during the 2020 presidential elections. The study also explored the perception of experts and the communication strategies used by both NPP and NDC during the 2020 presidential election. The study also investigated social media usage by NDC and NPP in the 2020 presidential elections campaigns. Another specific objective was to examine which social media strategies were used in alignment with the dialogic communication model. The final specific objective examined challenges faced regarding the usage of social media by NPP and NDC in the 2020 presidential election. Recommendation was made for further studies on how social media is used in political campaigns.

The study adopted the qualitative methodology using in-depth interview to understand from various interviewees how social media. Findings indicate that the 2020 presidential elections for easy targeting, smart was of creating content production and also promotion of policies and other interventions from both parties. The study also found out that social media provided an avenue for dialogic communication but politicians were not utilizing it effectively. The study also found out that social media was very instrumental in the 2020 presidential elections but had some challenges. Among this challenges include, cost, inconsistent communication, the spread of false information, inability to control communication, inadequate technical personnel and finally, challenges associated with political content appropriation.

Chapter one

1.0 Introduction

This chapter is the introductory chapter of the study. The chapter discussed the background of the study and the problem statement. It also discussed the research objectives and research question. The background discussed the setting for the study by linking politics, democracy and communication. The background also tried to link the politics, communication and role of technological advancement and how it has affect political communication in a democratic dispensation. Citing authors like McNair (2011), Borgebund (2019) and Eguina & Nicolo (2010) who helped us understand the link between technology, democracy and communication. This chapter also discussed the democratic development in Ghana and the 2020 presidential elections.

1.1 Background

1.1.1 Politics, democracy and Communication

McNair (2011) posit that one of the most important characteristics of democracy is the power given to the citizens to make their own political decisions by determining for themselves who should lead them. The citizens also have the ability to debate and critic each other on political issues. These debates and political discussions eventually help the citizens to form judgment (public opinion). The formation of judgment became possible with the availability of a “distinctive discursive space” (Public Sphere) that allow citizens to debate on politics and form opinions on national and political issues (Josef Ernst (1988, p.47; as cited in McNair, 2011). “Public sphere, as can be seen, comprises in essence the communicative institutions of a society, through which facts and opinions circulate and by means of which common stock of knowledge is built up (public opinion) as the basis for collective political actions” (McNair, 2011; p.18). This makes

communication a very important tool for democratic development because with communication, citizens can participate in politics (McNair, 2011).

The media, however, provides an avenue for political debates and participation by providing the medium (sphere) where citizens are fed with information about governance and politics and also a platform where they can also share their views on political issues (McNair, 2011 and Borgebund, 2019). McNair (2011) argued that the media serves as a distribution channel for information in a democracy. The media informs the citizenry of what is happening around them. They do this by reporting on government activities. The media set the agenda for public discussions by either being supportive or critical of issues. McNair (2011) argued that by providing the platform for public political discourse, the media facilitate the formation of public opinion by engaging in political debates through their political contents.

Borgebund (2019) also argued that communication provides an avenue for political actors to engage and learn from each other's philosophies, ideologies, and policies. As Borgebund (2019) carefully articulated that communication provides "access to different points of view and the ability to express and participate in public debates which are essential to making democracy vibrant" (p.2). In elections, communication is also very important this is because during elections, politicians present policy proposals to their voters (Eguina & Nicolo, 2010). This proposal outlines the initiatives of the politicians and also how they intend to lead (Eguina & Nicolo, 2010). Voters in most cases also look forward to hearing the policies of various political candidates before making their decision (Eguina & Nicolo, 2010). These policies and initiatives by the politicians ought to be communicated to the electorates in a way they will understand (Eguina & Nicolo, 2010). This is what makes communication very important in politics especially during elections.

1.1.2 Communication and campaigns

During campaigns, messaging is very important to communicating the candidate's rationale for contesting. It provides the most compelling reason why the electorates should trust candidate to deliver. Stromback & Kiouisis (2014) argued that if election campaigns are about mobilizing supporters, communication is required to convince them to actively support the campaign. Effective communication is done to reach out to electorates to help win their trust and also their votes (Stromback & Kiouisis, 2014). Politicians have developed different communication approach to reach out to their stakeholders in order to ensure that their message is adequately disseminated through the right channels and to the right targets (Stromback & Kiouisis, 2014).

If election campaigns are about building alliance between groups with similar interests, then your communication strategy should focus on building and maintaining relationships. If its about mobilizing supporters, then the communication strategy should be able to reach out to your supporters to garner support from them to actively support your candidates. If its about contacting voters, then the communication strategy should focus on reaching the voters through phones, outdoor events, door-to-door and interpersonal communication approach (Stromback & Kiouisis, 2014).

Communication is very important to every campaign. Especially that of political campaign. A very good political communication strategy can help shape political information environment, branding and positioning which will eventually lead to the success of the campaign (Stromback & Kiouisis, 2014).

1.1.3 Communication, technology and politics

Politicians and political actors up until recently communicated through traditional mass medium (Borgebund, 2019). Until the inception and prevalence of the Internet and Social media, traditional outlets like the newspapers, Radio and TV were the main media for effective mass communication. Borgebund (2019) also argued that the media holds great power over access to voters and political audience (p.5). This is because most of the political communication happens within the media space (McNair, 2011). The traditional media outlets for many decades have served as a platform for public discussion on political issues and social issues and whatever is discussed through the media become topic for public discussions and also very instrumental in influencing the public's interpretation of events (McNair, 2011 and Zain, 2014).

Information technology is affecting all aspect of our lives and these include the political atmosphere (Final Plenary, 2012). With the aid of technology, access to information has increased dramatically. This has promoted liberty, competition and choice which are also facilitating democracy effortlessly (Final Plenary, 2012). Information technology facilitated by Web 2.0 has provided the platform for social networking sites and other social media outlets which has also given voice to the voiceless (especially to the youth).

Social Networking sites and Social media has empowered citizens to demand accountability and transparency, helped improve the work of civil societies, given the platform for political parties to connect with their electorates; facilitating and providing equal grounds for political engagement and political discourse which in a long run help improve multiparty democratic system, and finally, promoting group thinking (Final Plenary, 2012).

Social media can be defined as an application capable of providing the platform for publics to connect and communicate with each other in an open virtual space (Dollarhide, 2021). The app has provided the platform for people to share content including written text, audio voice and even video content. Politicians utilize social media especially during campaigning to reach their target audience. With social media, politicians can actively engage their target directly and this has pushed campaign strategies from society to that of peer to peer dialogical level (Okan, Topcu, & Akyüz, 2014). One of the most significant examples of the effectiveness of communication and technology in political electioneering is the Obama story and how he and his campaign team utilized social media during his elections.

Former US president Barrack Obama is one of the politicians to successfully leverage social media in his campaign. His campaign team according to (Okan, Topcu, & Akyüz, 2014) used technology to collect donations and also used it to complement their communication effort. Obama used E-mails marketing, social Networking sites such as Facebook, Website, and YouTube videos to design a technology based campaign which created a database of millions of young voters across America which eventually was widely successful and aided him with his presidential bid (Okan, Topcu, & Akyüz, 2014). His campaign team designed a strong online presence to push his Agenda and also stir political debates online to increase political participation; something his opponent wasn't doing (Okan, Topcu, & Akyüz, 2014). Obama's success story has also enlightened many politicians to also utilize the potential of social media to also reach out to their constituent with easy especially during political campaigns (Kumar & Natarajanb, 2016).

1.1.4 Ghana's democratic development and elections since 1992

Ghana, up until 1992 had its democratic train on roller-coaster. Ghana was colonized by the British until March 6, 1957 when it gained complete independence. The fight for “immediate” independence was led by Kwame Nkrumah who led his CPP party to fight for “independence now” contrary to the call of the UGCC who were fighting for “independence within the shortest possible time”. Kwame Nkrumah became the first local president of Ghana after independence and in 1960 he declared the republic a one-party state and this made him and his government (CPP government) rule for almost 9 years (Boafo-Arthur, 2008).

He was overthrown in 1966 by Major A. A. Afrifa. The military ruled for over two years and ushered in a new democratic era in 1969. Elections were held and Dr. Kofi Abrefa Busia and his People's Party (PP) party won the elections. This was the new era of the 2nd republic. In 1972 however, another coup was orchestrated which saw the destruction of the Busia government. From 1972 to 1979 was engulfed by a series of coup by one military fraction to the other. 1979 saw the uprising of junior officers who challenged the status quo and organized other junior officers against their senior counterparts. This uprising was led by Flight Lt. J. J. Rawlings who later led the country for almost 20 years (Boafo-Arthur, 2008).

Rawlings briefly handed over power to Hilla Limann and his PNP in 1979. In 1981 however, Rawlings led another coup to overthrow Limann's government. Rawlings led the country till 1992 when he formed a political party and rebranded himself from a military leader to a democratic leader to join the 1992 presidential elections and won the race. He and his NDC government led the country for another 8 years before handing over power in 2001 to John Agyekum Kuffour after his party lost the elections in December, 2000 (Ayee, 2002; Boafo-Arthur, 2008).

The fourth republic has been the most stable republic so far for Ghana (Democratically) (Boafo-Arthur, 2008). Kuffour and his Conservative New Patriotic Party (NPP) won two elections and ruled for 8 years before handing over power to the John Evans Atta-Mills lead NDC government in 2009 the NDC also governed for 8 years under two different leaders. John Dramani Mahama took over following the death of John Mills in 2012. In 2016, the NDC were voted out of power and the NPP led by Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo came into power. Nana Addo and the NPP party in 2020 won the presidential seat again and were given the mandate to led the country till 2024 (Adu-Amoah, 2021).

Ghana since the beginning of the fourth republic operates in a multi-party democratic system and has also been one of the stable contemporary democratic successes in Africa. The country has also organized eight successful elections and has also changed powers from one party to another four times. Even though the country has numerous political parties, only two have dominated the political scene since 1992; thus, the conservative New Patriotic Party (NPP) and the National Democratic Congress (NDC), (Boafo-Arthur, 2008).

1.1.5 An overview of the New Patriotic Party and the National Democratic Congress

The emergence of political parties in Ghana can be traced to the 19th Century (Agomor, 2019). Austin (1964) argued that some of the factors that triggered the need for self-governance and nationalism can be linked to economic consideration, inadequate political representation and also the emergence of new class of educated locals who were confidence of their ability to lead their people (Agomor, 2019; p. 7).

The forerunners of the nationalist agenda where elite members of the UGCC who were mostly professional (practicing lawyers, doctors and businessmen) who were seeking to advance their

economic interests (Birmingham, 1988 as cited by Agomor, 2019). These nationalists were pushing for political independence through negotiation and lobbying hence their slogan “self-government within the shortest possible time” (Agomor, 2019). This strategy did not sit well with some fractions within the UGCC including their general secretary who was Dr. Kwame Nkrumah (Agomor, 2019).

Dr. Nkrumah and his entourage broke free from the UGCC and established his own political party called the CPP which is Convention People’s Party. The UGCC and the CPP wanted the same thing but their approach was different. Nkrumah wanted “self-government now” but the UGCC wanted to use diplomacy and lobbying hence “Self-government within the shortest possible time” (Agomor, 2019, p.8).

Nkrumah and the CPP as well as other nationalist groups persisted and persevered in their quest to force the colonial powers to relinquish power to the locals. Elections were held and Nkrumah and the CPP won the popular votes making Dr. Nkrumah the first local president of the country (Agomor, 2019). Nkrumah’s government was overthrown by the NLC. After a short term, the NLM relinquished power and ushered in a new era which was the second republic in 1969 (Agomor, 2019). The 1969 elections saw a different breed of political parties who were ready to mobilize to take over power from the military. Parties like the People’s Action Party (PAP), All People’s Republican Party (APRP), the People’s Party (PP) and the National Alliance of Liberals (NAL). The election was won by Dr. Busia of the PP (Agomor, 2019).

The PP was overthrown in 1972 and between then and 1978 were characterized as the era of military rule. 1979 saw the beginning of a third republic which saw the emergence of political parties like the People’s National Party (PNP), Popular Front Party (PFP), United National

Convention (UNC), Social Democratic Force (SDF), Third Force Party (TFP) and the Action Congress Party (ACP) (Agomor, 2019). The PNP headed by Limann won the elections and was overthrown by the PNDC in 1981, two years after assuming office.

The PNDC ruled the country till 1992 when it rebranded to NDC to contest for the 1992 elections (Agomor, 2019). In 1992 when the ban on political activities were lifted after years under military rule, about 13 political parties emerged; namely, Democratic Peoples Party, New Generation Party, Ghana Democratic Republican Party, National Independence Party, Peoples Heritage Party, Every Ghanaian Living Everywhere Party, National Convention Party, National Democratic Congress, New Patriotic Party, People's National Convention, People's Party for Democracy and Development, National Justice Party, and, National Salvation Party . All these parties were poised to regain power to stir the affairs of the state after some long years under the rule of PNDC.

Political parties like the New Patriotic Party (NPP) had its root dating back to the 1950s with an ideology of conservative liberalism. The NPP can trace its root from the Danquah-Busia-Dongo tradition of the 1950s (Agomor, 2019). The NPP is considered as an offshoot of the UGCC, which effectively evolved into the United Party in the 1950s, the Progress Party in the 1960s and the Popular Front Party in the 1970s (Lindberg & Morris, 2005).

The NDC had also rebranded from PNDC to NDC to meet with the new democratic demand. The PNDC ruled for over 16 years and in 1992 decided to join the presidential race. the NDC, EGLE Party and the NCP came together to form the Progressive Alliance and was led by Jerry Rawlings. The NDC won the 1992 presidential elections and took over parliament as well. This was possible because the NPP and three other political parties (PNC, PHP, NIP) boycotted the parliamentary election citing election malpractices (Agomor, 2019).

In 1996 we had only 3 parties contesting in the presidential elections, in 2000 we had 7 parties contesting in the presidential elections and in 2004 and we had 4 parties in the presidential race. In 2012, 7 political parties plus one independent candidate participated in the elections (Commonwealth Secretariat, 2012). In 2016, only 7 took part in the presidential elections. They were the Convention People's Party (CPP), National Democratic Party (NDP), National Democratic Congress (NDC), Progressive People's Party (PPP), New Patriotic Party (NPP), People's National Convention (PNC) and independent (non-party) candidate Jacob Osei Yeboah **Invalid source specified..** In 2020, 12 candidates were on the ballot paper which was unprecedented.

There have been numerous political parties in Ghana but two major political parties have stood out since the beginning of the fourth republic. In 1992, both NPP and NDC had 88.7% of vote casted, in 1996 the two parties had almost 97% of total vote cast and 2000, they had about 92% of total vote cast. From 2004 to 2016, these two political parties have been able to amass not less than 90% of the total vote cast during elections **Invalid source specified..**

This means that when we talk about are talking about the two major political parties in Ghana, we are talking about the NPP and the NDC. This is because these two parties collectively have been able to win every presidential and have dominated parliament since the beginning of the fourth republic. The two parties have also since the beginning of the fourth republic have been part of every single elections in Ghana.

1.1.6 The 2020 presidential elections

The 2020 elections can be termed as the one of the most unconventional elections ever held in the country. The country was still trying to contain the spread of the deadly coronavirus that had left

the world in awe. Citizens were still traumatized and government was still looking for ways to help citizens survive. 2020 was also an election year and regardless of what was happening, it was necessary to continue with the electoral process as demanded of the EC in the 1992 constitution. The EC, between July and August, began the process to create a new voter's registration process which was widely successful amidst some few challenges (Center For Strategic and International Studies, 2021; Agbele & Saibu, 2021).

This created the blueprint of how the 2020 elections were going to be conducted. It also gave the government the confidence it needed to ease restrictions to allow for elections activities in the country but not limited to some conditions (Agbele & Saibu, 2021). The government placed a ban on major political rallies and other social gathering and also encouraged its citizens to wear masks and continue to adhere to the protocols proposed by the experts **Invalid source specified..** This eventually meant that the dynamics of the campaigning was going to change because politicians had to devise different ways and means to engage with the voters (Agbele & Saibu, 2021).

The 2020 campaign was characterized by mini rallies and door-to-door engagements, lots of traditional media engagements as well as intensive online engagement by both of the two leading parties (Agbele & Saibu, 2021). Agbele & Saibu (2021) argued that this strategy however is not so different from the strategies adopted during the 2016 elections.

Both NPP and NDC launched their campaign with strict adherence to COVID protocol by making sure that their launches had relatively small attendance and also made use of both traditional and new media. Agbele & Saibu (2021) argued that political candidates in most cases were meeting high profile people and very few party faithful rather than opening up to the general public during mini rallies and political programs. Darko (2020) also argued that in most cases the campaign trail

was characterised by almost no adherence to physical distancing and also the use of face mask (Agbele & Saibu, 2021, p. 9).

Following the outrage from a section of the public and some media house, political leaders issued statement encouraging their respective teams to strictly adhere to the protocol (Agbele & Saibu, 2021). This also forced political candidates to shift their campaign online with so many initiatives to reach out to the people (Agbele & Saibu, 2021). For examples, Former President Mahama (the Opposition leader) announcing on Twitter on April 23rd, 2020 that he was having a digital conversation with the youth. **Invalid source specified..** Agbele & Saibu (2021) observed that most candidates where posting live feeds of their campaign activities on their various social media handles. EU EOM (2020 cited by Agbele & Saibu, 2021) revealed that close WhatsApp chat group were the most heavily used platforms folowed by Facebook, YouTube, Instagram and others (p. 9). Many parliamentary candidates also adopted other interpersonal strategies including intensifying their door to door campaigning and also adopting phone call campaign strategies as well as online media to also engage their constituents (Agbele & Saibu, 2021).

1.2 Problem Statement

Information is very important in political decision making (Lazarsfeld, Berelson, & Guadet, 1948 and Brady, Johnson & Sides, 2006). Voters need to understand you and your policies in order to decide if you are worth their votes (Eguina & Nicolo, 2010). With the internet and the emergence of social media, political communication has become very complicated yet interesting (Gyampo, 2017). Online communication needs to be strategic and carefully structured to meet with the various target audience (Borah, 2016; Abdillah, 2016; & Gyampo, 2017).

Social media use in political campaign is not a novel subject in academia. There has been considerable discussion on the topic from all over the world. Abdillah (2014) used content analysis to investigate social media as a communication tool used in political campaign in Indonesia in 2014. Abdillah's (2014) study discovered that most political candidates and instrumental political actors were very active online during the political campaign in 2014. He also argued that social media has become very effective in Indonesian politics because of its ability to disseminate information at a faster pace and also ability to provide a platform for political engagement almost immediately. This study is corroborated by studies done by Okan, Topcu, & Akyuz (2014), Bomah (2016) and by extension, Karlsen & Enjolras (2016).

Bornah (2016) for instance used the theoretical concepts from functional theory, political advertising, emotional appeal, and social endorsement to conduct a content analysis of the official Facebook posts of U.S. Presidential candidates in 2008 and 2012 elections and also discovered that social media provided an avenue for voters to directly engage with candidates and also provided candidates the opportunity to address in their own pace (Borah, 2016). Karlsen & Enjolras (2016) also scrutinized the relationship between individualization and digital social media in a study that combines the 2013 Norwegian Candidate Survey with candidates' Twitter data.

Dzisah (2018) however, studied the roles and contributions that the media, particularly social media, have played in the democratic journey of Ghana. He focused on the 2012 and 2016 elections. Dzisah (2018) argued that the existence of social media as a mobilising tool to deepened democratic participation within our political sphere.

Studies above provides evidence of a number of work done in the area of social media and political campaigns. Within the Ghanaian contest however, little have been done with regards to how

politicians employed the use of social media during campaigning. Dzisah's (2019) study however close to examining the usage of social media by political actors looked at how social media contributes to the democratic development in the country. The study focused on how electorates use social media to mobilize and also to engage in political debates and politics in general.

This study is however going to engage social media managers of the two major political parties in Ghana (NPP and NDC) on the use of social media in their political communication strategies and how they think social media features in their overall communication objectives in getting their message to the masses during campaign. This study further deepens our understanding of how social media fits into the communication eco-system within the country and its important to our democratic development.

Most of the studies above also focused on employing the use of either content analysis to analyze social media posts of politicians or political candidates and how they used social media in their campaigns or other quantitative means of gathering data. For instance, Abdillah (2014), Borah (2016), Karlsen & Enjorlras (2016) employed the use of content analysis in their bid to investigate social media use in political campaigns. Dzisah (2018) also employed the use of quantitative methodology in his study. This study is however going to employ the use qualitative methodology in gathering data on the usage of social media in political campaigning.

1.3 Research Objectives

The main objective of the study is to investigate how the New Patriotic Parties (NPP) and the National Democratic Congress (NDC) used social media in their political campaigns during the 2020 presidential elections.

1.3.1 Specific Objectives:

- i. To explore the perception of expert about the communication strategies used by both NPP and NDC during the 2020 presidential elections.
- ii. To investigate social media usage by NDC and NPP in the 2020 presidential elections campaigns.
- iii. To explore the extent to which social media strategies where used in alignment with the dialogic communication model by the NDC and NPP in the 2020 Presidential elections.
- iv. To examine the challenges faced regarding the use of social media by NPP and NDC in the 2020 Presidential elections and to explore recommendations therein.

1.4 Research Questions

- i. What are the views of experts on communication strategies adopted by both NPP and NDC during the 2020 presidential elections?
- ii. What social media strategies were used by both NPP and NDC in the 2020 presidential elections campaign and why were those specific strategies adopted?
- iii. How were the social media strategies adopted by the NPP and NDC in the 2020 Presidential election used in alignment with the dialogic communication model?
- iv. What are some of the challenges faced by both NPP and NDC whiles using social media in the campaign during the 2020 presidential elections and the recommendations to tackling them?

1.5 Scope of the Study

The study investigated the usage of social media in political campaigns. The study analyzed the communication strategies of the two main political parties in Ghana, NPP and NDC. The study used qualitative methodology in its data collection efforts. The study used the interview technique to engage one communication expert, one social media consultant, including the social media managers of both the NPP and the NDC and their communication directors on how the two major political parties used social media in their political communication efforts during the 2020 presidential elections. The study lasted for 5 months and data collection and analysis were done in Accra.

1.6 Organization of the study

This study is divided into five chapters. The first chapter is the introductory chapter which discussed the background of the study, problem statement, research objectives, research questions and also the scope of the study. The second chapter discussed the literature review, the literature review is divided into three parts; we have the conceptual framework, empirical review and theoretical framework. The conceptual framework discussed the basic concepts in the study. This helped us to understand the basic phenomenon in the topic title. The empirical studies examined the practical evidence obtained by other researchers whose work relate to this study. The empirical results obtained from other studies provided enough evidence to also help in contextualizing our study. The third part of the literature review is the theoretical framework. This part discussed the underpinning theories that will help us. The theoretical framework helped us understand the key variable that influenced the phenomenon. The framework also helped us understand certain behaviors within the study.

The third chapter discussed the methodology of the study. The study adopted the qualitative methodology and employed the use of interview techniques in gathering data. The chapter three also discussed the population, sample size and the sampling method used. The fourth chapter is the data analysis and discussions chapter. Data collected was analyzed and its findings discussed. The final chapter will be the chapter five. In this chapter we discussed the conclusion and summary of the study and also provided recommendation for future research.

1.7 Significance of the study

The study added up to existing literature on social media usage in political campaigns. Specifically on how social media is helping political parties achieve their campaign objectives. This study analyzed the campaign strategies of both NPP and NDC during the 2020 presidential elections and also how the two parties organized themselves in light of the COVID outbreak.

The study also provided us with insights into how the two main political parties in Ghana adopted the use of social media in elections and the motive behind most strategies. The study interviewed the social media managers of both political parties and also other experts on the importance of social media in political mobilization and political communication.

The study also help us understand the importance of campaigning and how communication plays a significant role in helping us achieve campaign objectives. The study also helped us appreciate the principles of democracy that looks at giving people a voice in deciding who becomes their leader.

The study helped us understand the importance of social media in a democratic dispensation. This study further helped us understand how the internet and social media are changing communication and its effect on our democracy. The study expanded on Dzisah's (2019) work on the importance of social media in our democratic development.

The study provided insight into how some social media outlets such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, Tik Tok and how other platforms help political actors during campaign.

Theoretically, the theory made us understand the importance of dialogic communication theory and also how social media drove political participation. This study will help us examine how direct engagement can help boost relationship with voters overtime. The study helped us to appreciate dialogic communication within the political space and its importance to campaigning. Another importance is that the study provided more empirical evidence as to why politicians will want to use the internet and why social media political participation can help stir public opinion online.

1.8 Chapter Summary

This chapter is the introductory chapter of the study. It discussed the background of the study, problem of the study, research objectives and research questions. The main objectives of the study are to investigate how the New Patriotic Parties (NPP) and the National Democratic Congress (NDC) use social media in their political campaigns during the 2020 presidential elections. The study in its bid to achieve this objective asked; Which social media outlets are used by NPP and NDC for political campaigns during the 2020 presidential elections? , How do NPP and NDC use social media to engage the public during 2020 presidential elections? How did social media influence the 2020 presidential elections.

Chapter two

2.0 Introduction

This chapter reviewed literature on the usage of social media in political campaigns. The study is divided into three. First is the conceptual framework, this part defined some concepts with the study bringing meaning to the various concepts within the study. By reviewing other related studies, the study contextualized concepts like political campaigning, political campaign and marketing, communication and politics and the use of social media in politics and political campaigning. This is to help us understand some basic concepts of the study and will also help us put the research into context for better understanding.

The second part discussed the empirical reviews. This part analyzed empirical studies regarding the usage of social media in political campaigns, the usefulness of social media and its influence on voters, and also how political parties use social media to engage the public and finally some challenges of the usage of social media on political campaigning by reviewing and discussing discoveries from previous research within the area of studies.

The final part of the study discussed some theoretical frameworks that examined theories relative to the studies. The review engaged two theories; social media political participation model and Dialogic communication theory, in trying to explain and understand the rationale for the usage of social media in political campaigning.

Conceptual framework

2.1 Political Campaigning

Brady, Johnson, & Sides (2006) posit that political campaign period can be classified as the period right before citizens make a real political choice. During this period, citizen's attention to politics increased and their level of participation heightened. Campaign activities are more likely to register on the voter's minds during this period because Election Day is drawing near (Brady, Johnson, & Sides, 2006). Voters are placed in high esteem as every conversation is centered around the voter. Hansen (2008) argued that to be able to effectively determine what a political campaign is, we need to at the, minimum know the election day, the names of the main parties and candidates must also be known. They (Candidates) must declare their intention to be part of the elections and must actively gain votes through various strategic engagements.

Campaigns can reinforce some ideas that is likely to attract the attention of the voter into thinking a certain way (Lazarsfeld, Berelson, & Guadet, 1948). Brady, Johnson, & Sides (2006) again argued that campaign effort can be measured by looking at the amount of time and money invested in them. according to them, time and money are the fundamental indicators of campaigns. Conventions and rallies, debates and appearances, voter mobilization and advertisements are all about money and time. Another key indicator according to Brady, Johnson, & Sides (2006) is the mass media. They argued that without the mass media, campaign would be rendered useless. It is the mass media that transmit information from the politicians to the people. Mass Media is central to any sort of campaign.

The media is well equipped to make stories and campaign debates interesting to the audience. The media set the agenda, they push information to the voters to the extent that even those who are not

interested in politics end up engaging in political debates knowingly or unknowingly. Brady, Johnson, & Sides (2006) argued that information flow is a key variable in every campaign.

2.1.1 Politics and Communication

Communication is important to shaping public opinion. Communication helps in reaching out to electorates to help win their trust and also their votes (Stromback & Kioussis, 2014). Politicians have developed different communication approach to reach out to their stakeholders in other to ensure that their message is adequately disseminated through the right channels and to the right targets (Stromback & Kioussis, 2014). If election campaigns are about building alliance between groups with similar interests then your communication strategy should focus on building and maintaining relationships. If its about mobilizing supporters, then the communication strategy should be able to reach out to your supporters to garner support from them to actively support your candidates. If its about contacting voters, then the communication strategy should focus on reaching the voters through phones, outdoor events, door-to-door and interpersonal communication approach (Stromback & Kioussis, 2014).

McNair (2011) political communication can only be effective in a democratic despensation. He (McNair, 2011) argued that for political communication to function, there must be competition (Multiparty system), and periodic elections where people are given the chance to choose their leaders and get involved in political processes. Political communication can simply be defined as the fussion of politics and communication which is mostly facilitated by the media (McNair, 2011).

A very good political communication strategy can help shape political information environment, branding and positioning which will eventually lead to the success of the campaign (Stromback & Kioussis, 2014). Lazarsfeld, Berelson, & Guadet (1948, 87) argued that “Political communication

served the important purposes of perserving prior decisions instead of initiating new decisions.” Lazarfeld and his team discorvered in their study that a fraction of voters who began the campaign undecided came to the polls with a decision that is consonant with their “predisposition, namely, sociological facts such as occupational status and religious preference. For example, working class and Catholics respondents came to support Roosevelt during the 1940 US race (Brady, Johnson, & Sides, 2006).

Borgebund (2018) agreed with McNair’s (2011) assertion that political communication is as central to democracy as elections. This is mainly because electorates in most cases will rely on information flow and communication in the process of making their political decisions. Borgebund (2018).

2.1.3 Political campaigns, communication, and Marketing

Norris (1999 as cited in Kumar & Natarajanb (2016) argued that both business and political parties have both exploited the concept of marketing campaigns to accomplish success. Both political campaign and commercial campaigns have similar characteristics (Kumar & Natarajanb, 2016). According to Kumar & Natarajanb (2016), commercial campaign focus on promoting particular products, services, or ideas to the consumer with the aim of creating awareness, distinguishing product from that of competitors, increasing sales to boost profit and market shares. Political campaigns on the other hand is also intended to promote parties and their candidates, their ideology and initiatives to the voter with the aim of winning their trust so that they can vote them into power (winning elections).

Okan, Topcu & Akyüz (2014) argued that contemporary political ideology is gradually losing its significance because of globalization which has caused the interconnectedness of different people

from different backgrounds and the fusion of different cultures. This has caused other political strategists to improve provide strategies in election campaigns (Okan, Topcu, & Akyüz, 2014). Kotler & Levy (1969) argued that elections should be one of the areas that should interest marketing. Wring (1997) tried to conceptualize political marketing as the party or candidate's use of opinion research and environmental analysis to produce and promote a competitive offering which will help realize organizational aims and satisfy groups of electorates in exchange for their votes (Okan, Topcu, & Akyüz, 2014). Winther-Nielsen (2011) argued that political marketing can also be concerned with reciprocated exchange of value between political entities and their environments (Okan, Topcu, & Akyüz, 2014).

Positioning in political marketing is more likely to be product oriented than market oriented (Kumar & Natarajanb, 2016). Kumar and Natarajanb (2016) explained that in political marketing, it is important to position the party or the candidate based on position in the electoral race. They argued that your position determines that kind of strategy to adopt.

Political advertising and commercial advertising are similar to each other. Advertising serve so many purpose by one of one main function is that it influences brand loyalty or create brand awareness. It reminds the audience about the brand and makes it active providing a sense of visibility and existence in marketplace (Kumar & Natarajanb, 2016). Kumar and Natarajanb (2016) believes that consumers and voters have some similar characteristics. They argued that consumers and voters process messages in similar manner. This is why the concept of marketing can be adopted in political communication.

Okan, Topcu & Akyüz (2014) argued that political parties and political candidates are leading our social lives to carry out marketing activities through communicating with programs and

campaigns. According to them, politicians communicate with voters through ideas to get their votes and this is made possible through research regarding voter needs through process of marketing intelligence. Grigsby (2996) argued that political campaigns have almost always followed the lead of commercial marketing. Okan, Topcu & Akyüz (2014) again added that in contemporary marketing, the most important aspect of political marketing is what vote wants and needs.

Communication is considered as the central part of political marketing (Kolovos and Harris, 2005 as cited in Guran & Ayadi, 2011). In political marketing, strategy is very important and the ability to execute a well thought after strategy to attain the desired result is always welcoming (Guran & Ayadi, 2011). One long-term strategic perspective of political marketing emphasizes the need to develop a positive relationship with all political stakeholders (O'Shaughnessy, 2001). Communication however plays an essential role in the development and maintenance of these positive relationships (Guran & Ayadi, 2011).

Guran & Ayadi (2011) also added that one of the most important aspects of political marketing is messaging. During campaigns, messaging is very important to communicating the candidate's rationale for contesting. It provides the most compelling reason why the electorates should trust candidate to deliver. Stromback & Kiouis (2014) argued that if election campaigns are about mobilizing supporters, communication is required to convince them to actively support the campaign.

Communication cannot be discussed in these contemporary times without making reference to the social media.

Contemporary politics as stated earlier has become very competitive with the aid of social media. Politicians need to connect to the voters and if possible interact with them and social media have provided that platform for interaction (Kumar & Natarajanb, 2016). Social media has over the past years proven to be very effect in mobilizing people and increasing political and social campaigns (Kumar & Natarajanb, 2016); Examples of such movements includes, the Arab spring in 2011 and #BlackLivesMatter. With the proliferation of information on social media, people can demand accountability and also pushed for a more transparent governance system. The public can use social media to set Agenda for political discussions, social mobilization and most importantly youth engagement in politics and also help political parties to also mobilize some votes during elections (Final Plenary, 2012).

2.1.4 Social media

Marchese (2007) argues that social media describes the online technologies and practices that people use to share opinions, perspectives, experience and insights (Chisenya & Chande-Malhya, 2012). Yates and Paquette (2011) posit that social media can be defined as a tool that enables open online exchange of information through conversation and interactions. Social media can be defined as a computer-based technology that facilitates the sharing of ideas, thoughts, and information through the building of virtual networks and communities (Dollarhide, 2021) . It is an internet based platform designed to give communication content to online users who subscribe to it (Dollarhide, 2021). It has the ability to connect with people from all over the world and also have the ability to share information with many people simultaneously (Dollarhide, 2021).

In 2020 3.6 billion people were using social media worldwide and the number is said increase to also 4.41 billion people by 2025 which is just 4 years from today (Tankovska, 2021). Between

2010 and 2020 social media users all over the world increase exponentially from 970 million to over 3 billion. According to statista, social media users in Northern Africa alone as of January 2021 were up to 45% of their population and in southern Africa, the figure stood at 41% (Varrella, 2021). In West Africa, the story is no different. In 2019 Ghana was ranked the 9th country globally to be spending much time on social media (Ministry of Communication and Digitization, 2019). StatCounter.com argue that 57.18% of the Ghanaian population are on Facebook and 21.73% are on Twitter. This means that a considerable number of the people are online and are using social media very well.

This has made social media an important tool in social communication (Baruah, 2012). According to her (Baruah, 2012), social media have created an avenue for social interactions which is a “superset beyond social communication” (p.1). Baruah (2012) argues that this ability of social media has helped increase communication skills among people especially students and have also helped people (particularly the younger generation) to find their voice. This is why many people are subscribing to it (Baruah, 2012). Everybody now wants to be on social media because everything is going digital (Kumar & Natarajanb, 2016). Every individual is connected to someone online for the purposes of regular communication and this has made it possible for marketers to reach people in a very simple manner (Kumar & Natarajanb, 2016).

Agichtein et al (2008) and Graham (2011) argued that social media differs from traditional media in many ways; this includes quality, reach, frequency, usability, immediacy and permanency (Gyampo, 2017). Gyampo (2017) argued that it operates in a dialogic transmission system which enables a complex format of information flow. Social media has the platform to enable many to many dialogical information flow. Traditional media on the other hand operates in a monologist

transmission model with one to many communication structure (Gyampo, 2017). This makes social media an important instrument for social interactions.

Empirical Review

2.2 Usefulness of social media and its influence on voters

Social media has become one of the most preferred mediums by political actors to reach out to the masses (Ndavula and Mueni, 2014; Druckman et al. 2014, & Dzisah (2018). The importance of Social Media in Mass communication cannot be overlook in this era of information technology and the outmost manifestation of technological determinism. DataPortal.com reports that about 4.33 billion (representing 55% of the total global population) people have now subscribed to social media. These figures suggest that at least 9 in 10 internet users are now using social media each month (DataReportal, 2021).

In Africa however, 58.56% of the population are now subscribed to Facebook alone. 24.32% are on YouTube and 11.95% are on twitter (StatCounter Global Stats, 2021). Ghana has 8.20 million social media users as opposed to the over 15.70 million internet users. This means that as at January 2021, Ghana has 26.1% of its population are using social media (DataPortal, 2021). This represents a huge number to any communicator or political actor seeking to reach voters through all other available means (Dzisah, Social Media and Elections in Ghana: Enhancing Democratic Participation , 2018). Kumar & Natarajand (2016) argued that social media has become very vital to political communication and political marketing. They explained that social media do not only allow politicians to connect with their people, it has given them the opportunity to also interact with them.

Hellweg (2011) adds that social media has a way of breaking the communication barrier between citizens and that of the politician. It also has provided the platform for dialogic communication and also helps in the mobilization of the masses. Axford and Huggins (2001) argued that Social media can help the politician to connect with the grassroots and also the elite at the same time. Hellweg (2011) also was able to draw a link between the likability of a politician and their engagement on social media. With the proliferation of social media use and its influence on political communication, it has become apparent that social media has grown to become one of the most effective mediums for political communication. Social media has a significant impact on elections relating to the number of people involved and the speed of communication (Kumar & Natarajanb, 2016). With this, it has therefore become very important to investigate the role of social media in political communication.

2.2.1 How political parties use social media to engage the public

Smith (2011) argued that the ability to express political views and opinions online plays an important role for social media in campaigns. Social media users use the platform to express their view on many issues including but not limited to, political issues, religious issues, sports and entertainment issues. Politically, they debate about policies, achievements of candidates, political ideologies and also encourage one another to engage in political activities such as voting, protesting and debating (Smith, 2011). Social media has grown to become one of the most important platforms for politicians to engage their people and also to campaign. After former US president Obama's successful social media campaign in 2008, most politicians saw the need to create a presence online to also take advantage of technology to enhance their social engagement strategies (Smith, 2011).

Park, Kang & Lee (2020) tried to look at how political marketers use social media outlets like Twitter to propagate their message using text messaging and also examined its influence on voters. The study attempted to test the limited capacity model of motivated mediated message processing by examining whether this model can be applied to the simplest form of mediated message, which is plain text. Their study discovered that, linguistic formality and human interaction in plain text messages influence perceived friendliness, truthfulness, and dependability of the message source (Politicians), as well as the receivers' (Constituents') behavioral intent to vote for message source. The study concluded that politicians should pay attention to sustainable political marketing through appropriate manipulation of structural features in social media messages.

Gyampo (2017) in identifying and discussing ways in which political parties in Ghana are utilizing social media in advancing their interest outlined how some political parties use social media in Ghana. They include; communicating party policies and positions on key issues, discussing and soliciting voice and opinion on key topical issues affecting the state, mobilizing support and membership for the parties, and fund raising (Gyampo, 2017).

Gyampo (2017) argued that parties like the NDC used social media in communicating their policies to the public. According to him, the party has a team who are responsible for social media engagements. This team is responsible for online engagement and the dissemination of party content online. The NPP also have a team of youngsters who are also being tasked with communicating party activities to the voters online. This discovery can be linked to the studies of Park, Kang, & Lee (2020) who also posit that most young people preferred to be engaged online. With this, it can be argued that political parties are using young people to communicate to young people who understand the thought process of their peers online.

Gyampo (2017) also revealed in his study that social media is used by parties to gather data on public opinion. This study also corroborates with the discovery of Asamoah (2019) who argued that companies (Vodafone) use social media to gather data on customers' needs and wants in order to come up with products that are customer specific. Gyampo (2017) argued that with views expressed online by party supporters, non-party supporters and undecided voters on national issues or campaign debates, political parties use the opportunity to monitor general views and feelings of the people about certain issues of public concern and make informed decisions from that using the principle of contextual design.

Political parties also use social media platforms to mobilize support for their parties. It is important to note that all activities by political social media managers online is to garner support and votes for their political party. It is also done to increase membership base for their various parties (Gyampo, 2017; Park, Kang, Lee, 2020). Every activity on social media especially during intensive campaigning by political parties is geared towards convincing the public to play active roles in campaigning (Gyampo, 2017; Park, Kang, Lee, 2020).

Gyampo (2017) also discovered that social media can be used to raise funds for political parties. According to him, the NPP and NDC periodically launch fundraising activities on their social media handles (Facebook and WhatsApp). This however innovation can be somewhat challenging since the concept of fundraising is not "fully accepted" in developing countries like Ghana (Gyampo, 2017; p. 14).

2.2.2 Facebook and Political Campaigns

Andersen & Medagila (2009) in studying the use of Facebook in national elections in the Danish Parliament elections discovered that Facebook users view the platform as an information channel

and also as a means to gain social prestige. Their study revealed that social media network seems not to have any revolutionary impact on the traditional means of knowledge and communication between politicians and the electorates. This means that followers in most cases already have made contact with candidates through other means before following them on facebook.

Research on Facebook and political campaigns are mostly concerned with how Facebook increase political awareness, shape political decision making, decreasing political cynicism and facilitating political information exchange (Borah, 2016). Bornah (2016) again argued that Facebook plays an important role in facilitating political participation and also connects the candidate to the voters.

2.2.3 Twitter and political campaigns

Twitter is a microblogging social media outlets that have public profiles that do not require bidirectional confirmation of connections and is limited in the number of characters allowed in users post (Conway, Kenski, & Wang, 2015). Users can blog about anything and on any trendy topic. Anybody interested in a tweet can also add up to the thread to also add their voice to it. This can go a long way to create a trend which might also set the agenda for national debate. Conway, Kenski & Wang (2015) argued that twitter mostly reacts to media agenda than the reverse. Twitter is also very useful during campaigns to push political agenda for politicians and also to increase political participation by engaging users to use their platform to push a political agenda. A more current example would be the #fixthecountry debate that started out on twitter by well-meaning citizens to force the government to work hard for the people. This hashtag started out online and found its way into the mainstream media to the extent that forced government into responding to some of the issues. Twitter, like Facebook and other social media platforms have also provided the needed platform for candidates to push their agenda during Campaigns.

2.2.4 Political Campaigns on Instagram

A study from (Peng, 2020) also suggests that politicians use Instagram as a platform for engaging voters and are also trying to discover more ways of engaging the public through Instagram. Due to the nature of Instagram, politicians normally personalize their post by posting non-political and content which mostly attract more likes and comments (Peng, 2020). During campaigns politicians use their platform for campaign updates, for their philanthropic works and in most cases pictures of their accomplishments.

2.2.5 Political Campaigns on WhatsApp

Vermeer, Kruikemeier, Trilling, & Vreese (2020) in their study have also argued that instance messages like WhatsApp can serve as a source for engaging adolescents with politics and current events. According to them, interpersonal political discourse on the instance messaging App has the propensity of evoking the emotions and also helps provide issue-specific knowledge to individuals especially among young people in Netherlands (Vermeer, Kruikemeier, Trilling, & Vreese, 2020). Instance messaging apps such as WhatsApp is mostly used for interpersonal political discussion whether between two individuals or group chat on the platform. It is also a platform that also provides us with the opportunity to share links of news websites to people and also to groups. This can also trigger some conventional forms of participation and activism.

2.2.6 Some Challenges of social media and political campaigns

Social media can provide all round information for politicians who are trying to reach out voters (Dzisah, Social Media and Elections in Ghana; Enhancing Democratic Participation , 2018). Social media can also help increase the engagement level of the politician and as commit to effective

feedback from the public. Aside its numerous advantages, social media has its disadvantages (Gyampo, 2017).

As a result of its openness and its very liberal architecture, it is very difficult to manage information as it is done in the traditional media where information has to go through a process before it is published. With social media, content creation has been opened to every user with access to the internet and smart phone. This has paved the way for false information. Most of the information from social are mostly not validated (Dzisah, 2018). This has empowered people to peddle falsehood and all sort of fabricated stories especially during elections. Some political opponents hide behind these falsehoods for their propaganda. This in most instances does not provide room for decency since it almost always ends up destroying hard earned reputation (Gyampo, 2017).

Political argument online can shift focus and this might affect the richness of the argument. Arguments on social media can sometimes be affected by emotional sentiments which may affect the quality of the conversation. “Social media can become an intolerable medium for the trading of insults and the launching of tirades against those who disagree with viewpoints expressed on such platforms” (Dzisah, Social Media and Elections in Ghana; Enhancing Democratic Participation , 2018). As Dzisah (2018) rightly articulated, arguments online can be reduced to insults and name calling which might shift the focus of the argument from contractive political discourse to trading of insults.

Theoretical Framework

2.3 Dialogic Communication theory

The dialogic theory was first applied by Pearson (1989) in his study on organizational communication and public relations (Akwari, 2017). After the death of Pearson, Akwari (2017) argued that Botan took up the concept and developed it to cover dialogue as a way of “uplifting the public to a position where communication that exist in organizations should be equivalent to that of its publics. The main theme of the theory is to look at how to establish and maintain relationships. Kent & Taylor (2002) argued that the theory is seen in its ability to change the nature of the organization-public relationship by placing emphasis on the “relationship” (Akwari, 2017). This relationship is mostly facilitated through the two-way asymmetric communication model where feedback is always encouraged. Dialogic Communication as explained earlier is a Public Relation theory that seeks to help us understand the importance of two-way communication and its impacts in the establishment of relationship.

The theory is based on the premise that organizations engage individuals in a dialogue that would be mutually beneficial and lead to consensus building (Wilcox, 2019). Kent and Taylor (1998 as cited by Men et al, 2016) argued that dialogic communication is any negotiated exchange of ideas and opinions that is guided by two tenets (1) whiles individual may not always agree with each other, they are willing to reach an agreement that is mutually satisfying and (2) dialogic communication is about mutual understand and intersubjectivity (p. 7). “This is to say that, the concept of dialogue emphasizes on meaning making, understanding, sympathetic and empathetic interaction among parties” (Men et al, 2016; p. 7).

Kent & Taylor (2002) in trying to analyze the dialogic approach to public relation between organizations and its publics proposed five features of dialogue. Thus, *Mutuality* (recognizing the relationship among parties and their interconnectedness, *propinquity* (spontaneous interactions), *empathy* (being genuine and supportive of publics' need and interests), *risk* (willingness to interact with publics and incorporate their stance) and *commitment* (giving the organization over to dialogue).

2.3.1 Dialogic communication and the internet

The dialogic communication uses the computer-mediated communication (CMC) platforms (Akwari, 2017). The theory holds the assumption that two-way balanced communication is crucial to mutually beneficial relationships. This balanced communication can be facilitated through the internet (Akwari, 2017). Kent and Taylor (2002) posit that the internet is an open door for organizations to establish a genuine dialogue between them and their publics. The principle of dialogic theory when applied appropriately turn out to be the ideal approach to strategic communication in order to ensure that the full objective of a communication project and the growth and maintenance of mutually beneficial relationship through two-way symmetric communication (Akwari, 2017).

Rybalko & Seltzer (2010 as cited in Men et al, 2018) explained that the rise of the interactive, collaborative and relationship-centric social media has further propelled the theoretical advances in dialogic communication. Arturo, Alejandro, & Gálvez-rodríguez (2017) posit that dialogic communication has become one of the most important theoretical frameworks for analyzing online relationship building in public relations.

Men et al (2018) in trying to advance the theoretical understanding of digital dialogic communication observed CEOs incorporate dialogic communication to enhance public engagement on Facebook and its impact on public engagement observed that CEOs' use of dialogic communication strategies effectively foster public engagement and also satisfies publics' information needs which leads to more public interactions and advocacy. They argued that CEOs' engagement online can boost the reputation of the organization and enable trust between the organization and its publics. Men et al (2018) also discovered that a dialogic communication between the CEO and the publics online can also give the organization the opportunity to better understand the publics and provide a platform for honest feedback which can help enhance "organization- public mutual understanding and the relationship building and ultimately promoting dialogue" (p. 25).

In Politics, Singh (2008) argued that dialogic communication can help government in their communication efforts to solve societal problems. Singh (2008) added that by engaging both parties which can very productive in a democratic dispensation. Martin, Rosario, & Pérez (2015) however, analyzed the extent to which European local governments are developing dialogic strategies in their Twitter profiles in order to establish and enhance relations with their citizens and also examined the implementation of these dialogic strategies. They discovered that most of the local governments are mostly unaware of the benefits offered by the use of dialogic principles when establishing online relationships with stakeholders. The study went ahead to recommend some potential benefits of the effective employment of the principle of dialogic communication and its importance to the establishment and maintainance of online relationships with stakeholders.

Sweetser and Lariscy (2008) used content analysis of facebook wall comments in U.S House and Senate race during the 2006 midterm elections through the lens of dialogic communication theory.

it was discovered that, most of the individuals who engage candidates online by writing on their walls perceive themselves as having a friendly relationship with candidates. It was also discovered that even though Facebook provides a platform for dialogic communication, most candidates did not respond to most of the comments online by voters. Which also meant that candidates were not using it for the two-way symmetrical relationship building.

Again in 2017, Moon and Yang studied the presidential candidate's dialogic communication during the 2017 presidential campaign in South Korea. After collecting data from about 1,195 Korean participants, the results showed that a candidate's ability to engage the public (voicing and listening to the people) was significantly associated with public's intention to support or oppose a candidate and their policies. Foster (2017) also looked at how Twitter as a platform for engaging in political dialogue. The study used the dialogic theory content analysis to analyze Donald Trump's general election campaign twitter feed. It was discovered however that, due to Donald Trump's active presence online, his followers remained highly engaged especially with tweets that is directed at the media or individual political opponent.

2.3.2 Relevance of Dialogical communication theory to the study

The theory holds the assumption that two-way balanced communication is crucial to mutually beneficial relationship (Akwari, 2017). The theory posits that the platform that provides the neutral grounds for this balanced two-way communication is facilitated by the internet through social media (Akwari, 2017). Following the arguments raised by authors like Smith (2011), Kumar & Natarajanb (2016), Gyampo (2017), and Dzisah (2018) about the importance of social media in political communication, mobilization and participation, the dialogic theory is going to help us understand how political engagement online can help establish and maintain relationship between

the politician and their electorate and how this relationship can be useful to the politician during elections. The theory will help us theorize the importance of social media in political communication and also during campaigns.

2.3.3 Social Media Political Participation Model (SMPPM)

The SMPPM explains how and why exposure to political social media content can foster both low and high effort participatory actions. The model integrates goal system theory with the uses and gratification theory, Lazarus's appraisal theory and Higgin's priming model to outline and explain the key contingent conditions for this impact based on research and offer insights into ways to enable low and high forms of political participation and also short-term and long-term participation (Knoll, Matthes, & Heiss, 2020). The model suggests that the use of social media can promote various forms of political engagement (Gibbs, 2013; Boulianne, 2015).

The model provides a comprehensive framework of testing hypothesis regarding exposure to political information on social media, the formation of both explicit and implicit participatory goals and the implementation of these participatory goals (Knoll, Matthes, & Heiss, 2020).

Looking at per exposure, the motivation of expression is identified as unique to social media motive Looking at exposure, the model emphasizes incidental and intentional exposure. Incidental exposure is a very likely feature of social media... incidental exposure depends on one's network characteristics, another unique characteristic of social media. Peers as well as algorithms regulate the content one is presented with. These network characteristics also determine the impact of political content in the reception phase (Knoll, Matthes, & Heiss, 2020 p.16)

Nanz, Heiss, & Matthes (2020) employed the use of Social media political participation model (SMPPM) to investigate how political and non-political motivations predict intentional and incidental exposure affect low and high political participation. It was discovered however that political information motivation predicted the intentional mode, and this relationship was stronger with rising levels of curation skills. The intentional mode led to low-effort political participation. However, the incidental mode was unrelated to both low and high-effort participation (Nanz, Heiss, & Matthes, 2020).

Ahmad, Alvi and Ittefaq (2019) also studied the use of social media on Political Participation among university students in rural Pakistan. Their study investigated how social media stimulates both online and offline political participation. Their study also studied the relationship between political activities and political awareness. After analysis, it was revealed that majority of the students use social media for political awareness and information. It was also discovered that political efficacy is significantly based on online political participation. The findings of their study revealed that online political activities correlates with political awareness and offline political participation. This study corroborates results from Gibson and McAllister (2012), Schmiemann (2015), Papagiannidis and Manika (2016).

The model helps us understand the conditions which foster social media political participation online with a focus on why political parties use social media. The model also provides us with the theoretical foundation to make a case for the significance of social media use in politics (Knoll, Matthes, & Heiss, 2020). SMPPM would be useful in this study because of its ability to help in the contextualization of the importance of social media to political participation through information dissemination.

2.4 Chapter Summary

The Chapter reviewed literature on the usage of social media in political campaigning. The study was divided into three. We had the theoretical framework, conceptual framework and empirical review. The conceptual framework helped us define some concepts like the social media, political campaigning and the empirical studies also reviewed empirical studies on the role of social media in political campaigning as well as some social media outlets used by politicians during campaigning. The theoretical study also discussed the social media political participation model and the dialogic communication theory. The theories helped us understand the reasons why politicians and political communication strategists decide to employ social media as part of their communication tools especially during campaigning. The theories also helped us understand the dialogic nature of social media and its importance in relationship building for political parties.

Chapter Three

3.0 Introduction

This chapter discussed the methodology used in this study. The main objective of the study is to investigate the usage of social media in political campaigns, using the New Patriotic Party (NPP) and the National Democratic Congress (NDC) communication strategies in Ghana's 2020 Presidential Elections as a case to study. This chapter is going to discuss the research design used in the study, the research methodology, data collection instrument, relevance of the methodology and some of its limitations.

3.1 Methodology

Research methodology helps explain the method by which you may proceed with your research (Goundar, 2012). Methodology involves learning of the various techniques that can be used in the conduct of the research and in the conduct of tests, experiments, surveys and critical studies (Goundar, 2012). The methodology simply helps us to define how our research study is going to be carried out. A research methodology can be quantitative or qualitative or even both in nature. The methodology determines the research design, research method and also influences the data collection instrument.

This study is going employ the use of qualitative research methodology. Qualitative study, according to Goundar (2012), is concerned with qualitative phenomenon involving quality. Unlike quantitative study, it is non-numerical. A qualitative study is interested in establishing meaning or reason behind situation; it is also interested in asking questions like “why”, and “how”. As explained earlier, the study is going to help explain how social media is used during political campaigns. Qualitative research methodology is rigorous, reflective, reflexive, intuitive and

contextualized subjectively (Keegan, 2006). Qualitative research methods are a powerful means of gaining an in-depth and holistic understanding of the relationship between international culture and communication from the perspective of those inside a society, organization, institution or ethnic group.

Qualitative methodology provides room for the researcher to understand attitudes. In qualitative study, the researchers in most cases try to put themselves into the study. This makes them a part of the study as they study phenomenon from the inside. This puts the researcher in a better position to understand behavioral traits and attitudinal trends. It also puts the researcher in a better position to understand the reason behind certain phenomenon from their target population.

Qualitative study does not follow any specific path to data collection. Data gathering and almost always open-ended. This is done to enable the research the freedom to explore the phenomenon better and also the target population the freedom to also express their feelings and thoughts without limitation. This can also help the researcher to explore the details and ask more questions.

3.2 Research Design

Research design is a detailed blueprint used to guide implementations of a research study towards realizing its aims and objective (Aaker and Day, 1990). The design focuses on the techniques and methods of collecting data and analyzing it (Zokmund, 2003). Research Design is the overview or the plan of how the research is going to be structured and executed. The design is going to explain the general plan of the methodology to be used, data collection techniques, data analysis and evaluation. The design, however, is about choosing the best approach in collecting data. This study is going to employ the use of qualitative method to understand how the two main political companies employ the use of social media during political campaigns in Ghana.

The study used the qualitative methodology in its study. Qualitative study was useful in this study because it helped delve into the meaning and also the interpretative ways of thinking that are concerned with social construction of reality. The technique helped us understand how politicians use social media in their campaigns and also the roles they think social media plays to aid their communication efforts during campaigns.

3.3 Qualitative Methodology

Qualitative study, according to Goundar (2012), is concerned with qualitative phenomenon involving quality. Unlike quantitative study it is non-numerical. A qualitative study is interested in establishing meaning or reason behind situation; it is also interested in asking questions like “why”, and “how”. As explained earlier, the study is going to help explain how social media is used during political campaigns. Qualitative research methodology is rigorous, reflective, reflexive, intuitive and contextualized subjectively (Keegan, 2006). Qualitative research methods are a powerful means of gaining an in-depth and holistic understanding of the relationship between international culture and communication from the perspective of those inside a society, organization, institution or ethnic group.

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better and also the target population the freedom to also express their feelings and thoughts without limitation. This can also help the researcher to explore the details and ask more questions.

3.4 Population and Sample

The population of this study will be all the members on the campaign team of the two political parties and three communication experts. Polit and Hungler (1993:37) refer to population as an aggregate or totality of all the objects, subjects, or members that conform to a set of specifications. The rationale behind this is that the members of the campaign team and communication experts would be in a better position to contribute relevant information to the study. They can better explain why they use social media, and why they choose some particular channels over the other, assess the communication strategies used and finally its effectiveness to their communication effort.

The study employed the use of purposive sampling technique to engaged social media managers, communication directors of the two major political parties in the country, one social media consultant and two communication experts. One social media managers from the campaign team of the NPP and another from that of the NDC plus one person from the communication team of both parties, one independent social media consultant and two communication experts making our sample size 7(7) in total.

The study engaged the communication directors of the New Patriotic Party and the National Democratic Party because as directors of the communication unit of the parties they had the final say on how social media is used and their assessment of how their opponent used it will go a long way to inform the overall communication strategy used for the parties in the election.

The social media handlers of the two parties were also selected because they usually develop and implement the social media strategies on behalf of the party. They are responsible for the day to day running of the social media assets of the party.

Two communication experts and one social media consultant were also selected as respondents because of their understanding of the ecosystem and also for independent data on how they viewed the usage of social media in the presidential elections.

3.5 Research Method and instrument.

As explained earlier, the study used the qualitative methodology in its data gathering and analysis. The study adopted the interview technique to collect data from social media managers, communication directors of both NPP and NDC to understand how these two political giants use social media in their political communication and its effectiveness to their campaign. Through the use of interviews we were able to glean an expert opinion on the communication strategies used by the NDC and NPP in the 2020 presidential elections.

The interview guide helped us interrogate issues of social media in political communication and how digital communication can help political actors to engage the citizens online. This method was used to gather first-hand information from relevant source and provide room to ask more questions regarding political activities online and the rationale behind them. The interview used the semi-structured interview technique to address the questions raised in the study.

3.6 In-depth Interview

In-depth Interview technique was used because of its flexibility. Unlike the questionnaire and survey studies, the interview technique can take any form as long as it is able to cover the relevant

part of the objectives. The interview is able to go deep into details to explore extensively in order to dig up new revelations based on participants' experience and beliefs.

Before the interview, researcher engaged the objectives, research question and literature review of the study to determine the areas worthy of discussion which is of significance to the objective of the study. This is to help the researcher make lists of topics he may want to cover.

The researcher now looks at the topics listed and the objectives of the study to create the interview guide. This guide outlines some set of possible questions and areas the researcher might venture in the course of the interview with participants.

The researcher then schedule interview appointment with respondents. Some of them wanted interview guides which was made available upon request.

Interviews were recorded and later transcribed by the researcher into a written document. The response was later analyzed using the thematic approach.

3.7 Thematic Analysis

The data was analyzed using thematic analysis. Ibrahim (2012) argues that thematic analysis is used to analyze classification and presents themes that are related to the data. Thematic analysis helped us analyze qualitative data that entails searching across data to discover, analyze and report patterns of speech within the data presented (Braun and Clarke (2006). Braun & Clarke (2012) added that thematic analysis is important in helping us understand a set of experiences, thoughts or behaviors across data sets.

Thematic analysis helped us uncover themes in a data obtained from an interview conversation with the social media managers of the two main political parties in the country and their two deputy

communication directors, two communication experts and one social media consultant. By examining similarities in the relationship between the data, we were able to understand patterns and developed themes that are of relevance to our research questions to analyze the data collected in our interview. This process involves the systematic review of units of text, creating of codes to aid in the thematic process, reviewing the themes generated and producing a report.

Thematic analysis has been used in similar research that seeks to explore the usage of social media, Benedict etc (2015) in their study of the usage of social media usage in higher education relied on thematic analysis in their research.

3.8 Processes involved in thematic observation

Data collected from qualitative methodologies can be very bulky and unstructured. This is why thematic analysis can be effective in drawing pattern among data collected and making meaning out of them. This part is going to lay down some processes involved in the thematic analysis employed in this study. The analysis measures the thought process of respondents this is because every statement is significant in understanding the concept under studied (Ibrahim, 2012). Concepts are constructed to give a full picture of the participant's views and perspectives which also gives a holistic view for the reader to understand (Blacker, 2009).

Data transcription: The first step was to transcribe the voice recording into written documents. So the researcher had to listen to all the voice through the interview and transcribed it into written document.

Data coding: The research after transcription read through the raw data to draw patterns in thoughts and views expressed and stated coding them with basic themes.

Sampling and data reduction: Data reduction is the first stage in data analysis Miles & Huberman (1994 as cited in Ibrahim 2012) this part represent the process of sorting out data, sharpening, focusing data in such a way that fits into the analysis and also help makes meaning. This part involves highlighting data and also rearranging thought processes from respondents in similar pattern.

Data reporting: Here, data is now reported and rearranged according to themes and similar thought process.

Data analysis and discussion: This part of the analysis juxtaposed the collective thought process of the respondents and also the findings of other related studies. This analysis is made according to the objectives of the study.

3.9 Chapter Summary

This chapter discussed the research design, methodology and research method employed in the study. The methodology used was qualitative research and the method used in collecting data was interview technique. The study employed the use of purposive sampling to sample 7 respondents for the study. These respondents are going to be one social media manager for NPP, one from the camp of NDC, one communication director from the NPP, one communication director from the NDC, a social media consultant and two communication experts.

Chapter Four

Data Analysis and Reporting

4.0 Introduction

This chapter analyzed and discussed responses gathered in the interview of communication experts and campaign members of both political parties. The study engaged the service of seven (7) interviewees who were kind enough to contribute to the study. The researcher spoke with the deputy communication directors of both the New Patriotic Party and the National Democratic Congress (Comms NPP and Comms NDC), one social media handler from the camp of both the New Patriotic Party and National Democratic Congress (SM NPP and SM NDC), two communication experts (CE 1 & CE2) and a social media consultant (SMC).

The communication directors helped in explaining to the researcher the general communication strategies of both political parties and the reason behind some of the strategies, the social media handlers discussed the implementation of social media by both political parties and how it aided in the campaign. The communication experts were very instrumental in helping the researcher understand some of the rationale behind some of these strategies and also provided some expert opinion on the usage of social media by the parties, their overall communication strategies and the communication challenges faced in the Presidential election. The social media consultant also provided expert opinion on the importance of social media to contemporary politics, how the political parties used and also provided some insights as to how communication challenges can be handled in the near future.

4.1 Communication strategies adopted in the 2020 presidential elections.

This section provides answers to the question of the communication strategies which was used in the 2020 presidential election. The strategies are focus on the vice president, the use of personal attribution, policies and press conferences.

4.1.1 Personal attribution

Interviewees were asked about the general communication strategies employed by both the NPP and the NDC in the 2020 presidential elections. Communication expert 1 (CE1) observed that one of the strategies used by the NPP was to portray some personal attribute of their presidential candidate in order to sell him to the people. *The campaign hovered around attributes. Now, if you look at the way they communicated, one party focused on the candidate attributes especially in NPP, they portrayed the president's attributes. They had almost like a storytelling of Nana Addo's attribute, perseverance, and I think one of the campaign ads spoke eloquently about it, how he's been, you know, struggling, so to speak, he's been in the trenches over a period of time, to become the president of this country.*

Personal attributes have always played a crucial role in how voters accept political candidates. Political parties have always played this card in order to engender acceptance or rejection of a candidate by voters. During the 2000 Presidential election, the New Patriotic Party described their presidential candidate then John Agyekum Kufour as a “gentle giant”, the late former President John Evans Atta Mills was also described as a “man of peace” during the 2008 presidential election by the National Democratic Congress. This portrayal of the personal attributes of candidates has been amplified by social media since it allows political parties to present their candidates in a manner people can always access and relate to. Taking into consideration how social media was

used to highlight the attributes of candidates in the 2020 presidential it is expected it will feature heavily in future elections. This is consistent with Miller and Shanks (1996) who argued that voters preference of a candidate can be based on the personal traits of candidates such as experiences, honesty, morality, compassion, competence and candidate's leadership abilities. Miller and Shank (1996) further explained that these traits and personal qualities are normally capitalized by politicians to influence perception of the voters to elicit for votes during campaigning. Nai, Maier and Vranic (2021) also posit that the personality of political candidate can lead to serious political consequences for either the candidate or the political parties he/she represents. Nai, Maier and Vranic (2021) added that voters sometimes rely on the personality of the candidates as a cue to gauge what they can expect from a candidate if elected into office. The challenge has always been how to convey these attributes to the voters and social media presents a solution as seen in how it was used in the 2020 presidential elections in Ghana.

4.1.2 Focus on VP

He admitted however that the NDC paid little attention to their presidential candidate compared to what the NPP did. But rather, they did a lot of work on their Vice presidential candidate (VP)⁵.

I think, when it comes to storytelling of Candidates, I think they rather used that of the vice presidential candidate Jean Naana, but in her case, it was almost about the glass ceiling The idea that her selection gives some kind of aspirations to young people, to women and to young people and to minority voices, so to speak.

The Deputy Communication director of the NDC corroborated the observation from the communication expert¹ as he also agreed that they focused more on their vice presidential candidate because they thought compared to their presidential candidate, she was a new front

runner and also a female so they felt it was a good catch to appeal to voters who wanted females at the top and also to the general female population. *This strategy seems to be a brilliant one because after the coalition of the new voters register by the electoral commission, it was discovered that the country has more female electorates than that of males.* He added.

This observation is in step with the conceptualization of Kumar & Natarajanb (2016) who argued that political campaign should focus on promoting the candidates, ideology and initiatives to voters with the aim of winning their trust and by extension, the elections. Base on this one could observe that the messaging by both political parties moved away from focusing on only the Presidential candidates but also the VPs. The VP of the New Patriotic Party was noted for speaking about digitalization and on the economy while the VP of the National Democratic Congress was about women empowerment and breaking the glass ceiling. VPs in the 2020 presidential were brought from the back of the ballot to the front of the ballot and had the same prominence as the presidential candidate. This situation is expected to continue in future presidential elections. Lopes (2020) argued that the selection of a vice presidential candidate is of equal significance to the selection of the presidential candidate. This is because in the most unlikely event of a disruption in the governance process, the vice presidential candidate could be the one to lead the country, which was the case for Ghana in 2012. Lopes (2020) again posit that vice presidential candidates are mostly selected because of some traits they have which can be of political advantage to the presidential candidate. Lopes (2020) explained that some vice presidential candidates are selected based on their connection with some ethnic group or any social group who are very whose affiliation can be positive to the campaign.

In the case of Ghana and in the 2020 election, the decision of the NDC throw a spotlight on the activities of their vice president on social media feeds into the assertion of Nai, Maier and Vranic

(2021) who posit that the gender of a candidate is often linked with the stereotypical perceptions of the role and the candidate. This is often done to garner support from people who identify with these stereotypes, in this particular situation, the Ghanaian women. The two vice presidential candidates were very active in campaigning on social media as campaign teams adopted strategies to make them popular through various online activities to tackle their competencies towards becoming a more qualified vice president.

4.1.3 Policies

CE1 again raised the point that the NPP leveraged on some of their flagship policies to campaign heavily since they were in government and needed the people to believe in their competency. *They also use some key policy or flagship policy attributes.* This submission is similar to the response given by the social media manager (SM) of the New Patriotic Party who also argued that a part of their strategy was to develop themes which was designed to help outline government's achievement. *So I mean we were in Government and so the strategy was to outline things that towed directly towards our achievement. So every sector and its achievement more or less. Let's just say Agric, this is what we achieved. Education this is what we achieved, industrialization, employment, these are what we achieved and all those things. So a strategy was to develop themes from all these sectors that will resonate more with, of course, as I said, the targets.*

4.1.4 Communication Tools (Press Conference)

Communication expert 1 (CE1) also observed that the NDC seems to use press conferences a lot which was very effective in addressing some important issues. Content from the press conferences served as materials which was used for publication in the newspaper, TV, radio and social media.

The NDC was also organizing press conferences a lot which was also very effective because at point they were dictating the Agenda which was good for them. he added.

The two deputy communication directors of the two political parties did not want to disclose specific strategies for the elections for the fear of it being replicated by their opponent. They both however agreed to the assertion that social media and online communication was very instrumental in the 2020 presidential elections mainly due to the effects of the pandemic which prevented them from getting direct access to voters as they did in previous elections.

4.2 Implication of COVID on the 2020 presidential elections

This section addresses the impact of COVID-19 in the communication strategies adopted for the 2020 presidential elections by the NPP and the NDC.

4.2.1 COVID-19

All interviewees agreed to the assertion that social media was very much instrumental in the 2020 presidential elections. Largely because of the restrictions posed on movement and social gathering as a result of the outbreak of the COVID pandemic. *There was COVID. So, again, we couldn't have done most of the things we're doing face to face. So we needed to find another platform to communicate to our target audience,* argued the social media manager for NPP. The Deputy Communication director for the NPP added that the party employed a group of young and abled technical men to assist in the campaign online. He added that the party also used some traditional media outlets aside the new media. *So teams or bureau social media groupings were commissioned to assist in the dissemination of information, campaign information and messaging to the population, then we have a lot of advertisements being run on TV or radio too.*

The Deputy Communication director for the NDC also agreed to the assertion that the COVID pushed the campaign online. He said that the parties was very open to the idea of online campaigning for the first because most of the older people seems to embraced the online. *Because of the COVID but I think that for the first time the NDC was really interested in running a digital campaign.* This also explains why they invested a lot of money online more than that of their opponent.

Communication expert (CE) 2 also added that it was obvious from the beginning of the campaigning that the two political parties were basically going to leverage online more due to the influx of COVID. *Okay, so when you speak of strategy, I think one of the things that became obvious is that as a result of the COVID, they will always have to leverage online.*

4.3 Social media use in the 2020 presidential elections

The second research question asked interviewees about how social media was used in the 2020 presidential elections.

The study observed from the responses from the interview some thematic areas that seems to suggest some of the uses of social media in the 2020 presidential elections. Social media managers of the two main political parties and their deputy communication directors all agreed to that social media helped in easy targeting of voters, provided more room for the creative creation and production of contents which was also made it possible for re-use at other equally important platforms. Another important point that was raised was the fact that social media provided an avenue for the smart promotion and distribution of policies and interventions from both political parties. The paragraphs below explain further the views of the respondents.

4.3.1 Easy Targeting

The social media manager for NPP argued that social media made it very easy for the party to target specific age groups particularly the youth. *We might want to target specific age groups to achieve message isolation for specific messaging and with social media, your work is made easy because the system has already done the targeting for you.* The deputy communication director for NPP agreed to this assertion and added that the party also targeted the middle class online citing that they are the population that have the luxury of buying data to come online to search for information. *The youth also are the population that is hooked onto social media.* He added.

This sentiment was also shared by the Deputy Communication of the NDC and also the NPP. The social media rep for the NDC also argued same. The Deputy communication for NDC argued that the party also targeted women. *So most of the digital campaigns we did, we were targeting young people and then to some extent women and with social media, it was very easy to do that.*

The Deputy Communication director for NDC however added that even though social media provides an avenue for easy targeting, *it is sometimes difficult to get the accurate audience because most people input wrong information whiles signing up for the App. This technically means that when you are looking for a particular age group, you might not be able to accurately get your target.*

Communication expert 1 argued that social media does not only help you target specific audience, it also gives you the evidence you need to measure your engagement level. *Using analytics, one can measure the percentage of the consumption.*

4.3.2 Content production

Using social media for campaigning also meant that there was the need to pay attention to content since content is very instrumental in creating awareness and also engaging your target.

The Deputy Communication director of the NDC also argued that they focused a lot on content. *So one of the strategies we employed was to, focus on the content and the target mostly determined the type of content.* He further explained that if the target is to reach out to women, then the content reflects the interest of the target because according to him, *this was a sure way of engaging the audience effectively.* He also added that some policy interventions like the *Chemp3* was for students since it was about their fees and that was why during the ads on social media they used more youth.

The Deputy Communication Director of the NDC also highlighted that the medium also determined the type of content to use. *So if you look at the medium, like Facebook, we're doing more written content, and then pictures, and then a bit of videos. But on Twitter, we just focus on flyers we know because Twitter was a place where you could meet young people. Most of the young, the youth related or youth driven content, were also focused on Twitter.*

The social media manager for NPP also argued in step with the argument raised by the Deputy Communication director of the NDC on content. He also added that social media is all about content. *This is the only to ensure engagements and interactions online* he argued.

Communication expert 2 however observed that whiles content is very important in social media campaigning; he observed that most of the politicians did not really use the content to engage people as they should. They only used it to give people information about their campaign updates. *Because when it comes to content, when you produce short videos, what form should it take? What*

message should it be in, for example, when it comes to Facebook. How are you even doing Facebook Live to engage? He added that most of the politicians were only providing updates of their campaign activities online with still pictures without coming up with innovative ways to ensure that they are actively engaging the people in real time.

Communication expert 1 added that the social media campaign by parties were effective. He argued that social media made it possible for the campaign teams to re-use content on all the various outlets this meant that no one could escape any content pushed by the parties. This he argued was effective and engaging at the same time. *And well, one would say that, if it's on Twitter, not everybody on Twitter, but Twitter content got reused on WhatsApp and the content were reused in various platforms and in their forms. So it was hard for anyone to escape and the content that will be shared. Because if you are not on one social media, you are on the other.*

Responses gather from this interactions agrees with authors like Andersen & Medagila (2009), Borah (2016), Conway, Kenski & Wang (2015) Peng (2020) and Vermeer, Kruikemeier, Trilling, & Vreese (2020) who all argued that content is very significant to social media campaigns. *Without content however it will be very difficult to engage audience through social media.* Argued social media consultant.

4.3.3 Smart way of promoting policies and interventions

Policy and interventions could actively fit in very well with content but with this, politicians sort to make sure that they actively use social media to push their message to the people. CE2 argued that when it comes to campaigning, the people to understand the candidate and their policy and social media provided the perfect platform to engage the public on a 24 hours basis.

Just as Smith (2011) and Gyampo (2017) argued that social media provides an avenue for policy engagement and political debates, The deputy communication director for NDC argued that social media was basically used to communicate the policies and interventions of their candidate. *So, basically, we use it to communicate the policies and interventions of our candidates, John Dramani, Mahama.*

The Deputy Communications director of the NPP also agreed that the social media team made sure that they focused more on policies and interventions by their candidates and the vice presidential candidate. *We were in government so we needed to show the people more of what we have done before coming to talk about what we intend to do in the future. So major part of the communication was centered on interventions and policies. Like the free SHS, the most popular one and we think that this strategy also worked for us.*

4.4 Social media and dialogic communication

The third objective was to explore the extent to which the social media strategies were used in alignment with the dialogic communication model.

When asked how respondents used social media to promote two-way communication, the Deputy Communication Director for the NDC argued that the team made sure that the content that was posted online had the ability to create some reactions and engagement from the people. *So we put a content in such a way that were engaging enough to give us feedback.* He added that the NDC design content that sought to ask questions so that they can get some responses and engagement from the people. *So we put the content in such a way that we ask them that; “What do you think?” And based on that sort of communication, you know, people will come on board.*

This response agrees with the assertion of Axford and Huggins (2001) and Hellweg (2011) who all argued that one of the advantage of using social media in political campaign is its ability to create an avenue for dialogic interactions.

The social media consultant however observed that he did not really see how the parties used social media in dialogic communication. He said that even though the platform provided room for real-time engagement, he did not directly see how political parties took advantage of the dialogic nature to engage the people.

So those are some of the things and I don't know whether they had WhatsApp groups, and they had the armies where they were monitoring various channels so that you had people assigned to Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, WhatsApp, YouTube, and all the other channels that people were using. So that they monitor to see what people saying and the things that are gaining traction or trending. So you couldn't see the two way communication, because a lot of the post and comments went on unresponded and they were not tackled.

4.5 Types of medium used online

When asked the type of social media mediums used in their campaign since it goes a long way to influence how they used dialogic communication model most of the respondents argued that they used all the social media outlets available but the platforms that were widely used by the people. Examples of such platforms were Facebook and Twitter. The also argued that they used WhatsApp mainly for internal communication.

So this Facebook, of course, the highest and more popular, there is where the name is, this time we use whatsApp as well as Instagram, of course, which was not really much because it's more of was celebrity based Platform. There's of course, Twitter which was for the young population. The

social media manager for NPP argued. The deputy communication director of NPP added that they also used Tik Tok as well. He argued that they used all these platforms because they were compelled to adopt. *We literally used them a lot in the last election largely because we're equally compelled to adopt that method.*

The Deputy Communication director of NDC and the social media manager all argued that their party use outlets such as Facebook and Twitter a lot and also Instagram. They also added that the party used any available platform that Ghanaians, i.e, voters may be found on because they wanted to reach out to everybody.

4.6 Social media strategies by opponents

We asked each political communication team member their assessment of their opponent's social media strategies in order to help us appreciate the social media usage from an opposing perspective. The social media manager of the NDC admitted that he believes their opponent (the NPP) had a far more advanced social media strategy than the NDC. This is because they just had the opportunity to build upon the strategies they used in 2016. *I think that I mean, by far, the ruling government, were far advanced because they've been at it for a while in 2016.* He also argued that Facebook had most of their (NPP) accounts verified and this helped the people know the type of official information coming from the party. He added that because of the fact that they had already engaged Facebook and other social media companies they got the chance to fix most of their technical issues leading up to campaigning. *I remember that way. There was a meeting that we had with Facebook. Around that time, it was all political parties. I together with someone represented the NDC. It was there that I realized that the NPP were far advanced in terms of getting all of those things sorted out and everything so they were more ahead.* He then added that

this made the NPP have a somewhat uniform online communication compared to the NDC. The deputy communication director for the NDC also agreed to this assertion and added that *this made it more for them to use propaganda more on social media*. He also added that their ads were not scattered. They mostly focused on the president's handle. This made it easy for people to search content on the NPP. The NPP was able to centralize its campaign and curb scattered information. He also added the messaging was also precise and always short and easy to remember example was the *four more to do more* slogan.

The deputy communications director of the NPP argued that while they were impressed with the way their opponent used social media in the 2020 presidential campaign, they were not envious of the strategy they adopted because they thought they had the better strategy.

However, I think that we are not envious of the strategy they adopted. We are not envious, particularly because we realize that this was Garnish shoots a lot of these sorts of installations. He argued that the NPP was more interested in filling the communication gap online and providing answers to questions people are asking. He argued that they made sure they were speaking on issues almost all the time; adding that this strategy worked because of the result obtained at the end of the election. *I would say that the result that emerged at the end of the election indicated that our strategy worked.*

4.7 Challenges regarding the usage of social media by NPP and NDC in the 2020 presidential elections.

One of the research questions where to examine the challenges that was faced regarding the usage of social media. This section provides answers to the challenges that were faced in the usage of social media by the NPP and the NDC in the 2020 Presidential election.

Cost

The deputy Communication director for the NDC argued that one of the challenges of using social media ads services is the cost. He argued that apps like Facebook made it very difficult to organically generate reactions to your post especially for political engagement. This means that if you want your ad or post to gain more traction then you need to employ the services of paid for ads. *They (Facebook) had a very good way of speaking to the algorithm to, you know, to be a bit flexible, but now this is a full blown business. So if you don't spend, you'll not get the reaction you want so that's about it that there is a monetary challenge that since you have the capital, you're able to overcome that.*

The social media manager for NPP also added that funding was a challenge adding that most of the content produced for online has to do with funding.

Funding in as much as we all understood that we needed to tilt towards social media, funding was a problem in terms of how we have. You know, social media is content and content is how refined or how creative are, looking at the age groups that we are targeting. So with content, you need, much, much more funding to create some good materials, and even after that you need funding to promote stuff to reach the various numbers you want them to go. He again added that some of their strategies were not executed because of cost issues.

Communication expert 1 also added that since social media is not originally from Africa or Ghana, the cost was obviously going to be an issue for parties because they would have to change their monies into foreign currencies to be able to pay for the promotion which would eventually shoot up the cost because of the exchange rate.

And then another challenge that I foresee them having is also that the platforms, the social media platforms ain't Ghanaian, I mean, these are foreign platforms. And that meant that if they wanted to boost any of these in the material, then of course, they have to pay money, it means that you're going to actually underwrite these payment in foreign, Forex exchange, which adds up to cost.

4.7.1 Inconsistency in communication

In addressing the challenges face with their strategies, the deputy communications director for the NPP pointed out that one of the main challenges was the inconsistency in communication. He further explained that while the party had a central communication plan and central message that needed to trickle down, some people who got the opportunity to talk on TV or Radio sometimes misrepresented the ideas and sometimes twisted the messaging. *In certain stances, we realized that though people had been given the opportunity to go and sit on TV and radio to speak, on matters which the messages have been tailored for them, people go there, and they think that perhaps maybe they're more wiser than the crafters, of the message or more than the system. So they try to create their own messages, which brought a lot of inconsistency in our messaging.*

The social media manager for NPP also agreed to the fact that at a point in their campaigning, they had some kind of issues with consistency. He was however arguing in terms of the consistency in the designs and logo of the NDC. *They were very consistent as far as their colours, and their logos. Every single thing they wanted to do from the beginning to the end, I think they were consistent.* He also argued that in most cases the NPP's messaging online and the messaging on mainstream campaign platforms was not in sync. *Most of the times the challenge was having to bring those two together, But sometimes we agree and all go to together and also have a synergy in terms of what they are doing.*

Communication expert 2 also observed that most of the communication online was not focused. *I think the challenge that they had was that it wasn't very focused, as in the way different groups doing different things because everybody wanted to catch the attention of the campaign managers. So it got to a point where you would find that the communication wasn't in sync.*

CE2 added that one of the ways to cure the inconsistency was for the parties to create what he calls a content hub. He argued that this content hub could have contained all the contents from the campaigns activities online where people can go to inquire more about information and also to seek information.

4.7.2 The spread of false information

The deputy communication director of the NPP argued that another problem they encountered was with the spread of false information online. *Another point, I would also say is that because people could not put a face to those who are largely on social media because of the tendency of similar accounts being created by the operators, fake news became the order of the day. So people were creating all kinds of news, circulating it, and lying, propaganda were being thrown on the social media on a daily basis, because you have no means of tracking it and that sort of affected some of our messages.* He added that at a point big tech companies had to come in to help political parties with their fact-checks. *Along the line, people resort to lying and all that to the point that even we have some of the bigger platform, Facebook and Twitter, coming in to fact-check some of the information for us.*

The social media manager for NPP posits that false information and propaganda was a huge challenge for the team. *So, I mean, it was hard diffusing false information online because a lot of people were now assimilating things directly from that place whether it's true or not.* He also

added that in dealing with the situation they had another issues of having to wait for the superiors to provide answers to these false information. This he argued made things hard since information on social media travels very fast. *Also, getting immediate answers from superior was an issue because when something is trending. How soon can you get information in order to tell the public that this is not true?*

The social media consultant also made some observation to suggest that the NPP at a point found it difficult to defend all the allegations being thrown at them. *They were not able to find solutions to some of the negative publicity, some of the contents, for example, those corruption videos, old videos that were repurposed for it to look like it was a new video against the president, and the regime, they didn't anticipate that and they didn't have any counter strategy for it.* He argued.

Communication expert 1 also believed that the political parties were finding it very difficult to deal with propaganda and negative and also false spread of information. *Especially in the case of Papa no incidence that was targeted at the NDC candidate. The party did not know how to respond to that controversy. This somehow affected the reputation of their candidate.*

Responses elicited here agrees directly with the assertion of Dzisah (2018) who argued that the open nature of social media and its democratic tendencies allows for free flow of information which can sometimes be a problem since anybody at all can send or share unverified information to the public. The communication team members of both NDC and NPP all argued that one of the main problems they had online was the spread of false information by unknown individuals.

4.7.3 Inability to control communication

The ability to control communication is partially linked to being able to curb false information. Respondents believed that one of the many challenges they faced was their ability to control their own communication as it was in the past with traditional media.

Communication expert 1 observed that political parties also struggled with controlling their communication because of the nature of social media. He argued that while traditional media provided some avenue to send controlled information through ads and other paid for strategies, with online, people can distort your message with other messaging which had the propensity of cause communication problems for parties.

I think the challenge could be that in the past, the idea that you can control the communication, because obviously, you are using the traditional media, so you can plan your ads, execute them. I mean, how you want it, and then send it to traditional media, the TV's, the radios, and let them play it for you. But because of social media, at some point, they were not in control of their campaigns. So the official campaign ads were run alongside unofficial campaign to reach some of them, the party's adopted, because they were highly effective. Example is the remember me ad where people created their own rendition which became equally popular. This responses is linked to Gyampo's (2020) argument who also believes that social media makes it very difficult to control information flow unlike what the traditional media where information is somewhat controlled.

He however added that in the traditional systems this could not be done because, nobody will waste money to create a twist of a political party's ad and go to the TV station to do a paid for ad to diffuse the messaging.

4.7.4 Inadequate technical personnel

The social media manager for NPP also added that they had issues with getting personnel to deal with more technical roles like video and audio editing, ad placement, social media strategies, designing also with other technical issues. He argued that technical personnel available were somewhat inadequate.

The independent social media consultant added to this sentiment by arguing that parties seemed not to have enough people to push content online. *Most of them also didn't have enough armies on the social media platforms to, you know, champion their cause. And also make sure they shifted public sentiment against them in their favor.*

Communication expert 2 also observed that there is a depth of competent digital marketers and digital communicators between the parties. He further explained that parties give the social media job to young people who only know their way around social media but do not have the competency to involve themselves in the strategic thinking and technical knowhow so they could not leverage social media as effectively as they could.

4.7.5 Challenges associated with appropriation

Communication expert 1 observed another problem called appropriation. He defined it as a situation where people pick an old clip of an old speech and edit it to fit into a current narrative which is usually within a completely different context. This is mostly done to make people especially political candidate look inconsistent in their thoughts and values and also makes them look bad in the sight of the people. According to him, the NDC suffered this most in the 2020 presidential campaign.

We saw quite a number of them having said something and then people bringing them back to go against them. So, there was a time that Mahama said that the Free SHS was not possible. Now, when he said that, they initiated Free SHS, people went to pull that tape that he was saying for as if it was impossible to come at him. So the question was, okay, so, if you say you began it, why then did you say it wasn't possible as a policy to So, it came back to hurt him for him to be seen as flip flopper and inconsistent in this position.

4.8 Perception of experts about the communication strategies of both NPP and NDC in the 2020 presidential elections

In line with one of the research objectives, this section tackles the perception of experts about the communication strategies used in the 2020 presidential elections. The researcher asked experts about their perception about the communication strategies employed by both parties in the 2020 presidential elections.

4.8.1 Aggressive Campaigning

The independent social media expert argued that they two political parties were very aggressive with their campaigning. *Yeah, I think most of them are the two parties were very aggressive. And to some point, they were very targeted, because you realize, even between August and December, some of the parties were targeting some of the regions.*

He also argued that the NDC invested a lot of capital in their online campaign more than the NPP did. *And over the period of the three months, they spent about \$165,000, I think. So NPP didn't spend that much.* He argued that even though NPP did not spend much, they seems to have found a way of spreading their communication online far more than the NDC.

4.8.2 Uncoordinated campaign strategy

The social media consultant argued that while the two parties campaigned aggressively, he could not identify the umbrella strategy of the two parties. Adding that for him, he believed that most of the strategies were responsive. He added that the two political parties knew that the campaign was going to be online because of the circumstance at the time and so it looks like they made some preparation for that. *I think almost all the parties knew that is why they invested almost \$230,000 on even Facebook ads alone for that, like between June, July to December, right. So they knew that to influence the people, we needed, invest a lot of money, targeted some ads to some regions, and all that.*

4.8.3 Online communication

Communication expert 1 argued that both of the parties did a relatively good job with adopting the online strategy very well but they still were not about to certain core issues which at the end hurt their campaign. He then added that some were affected more than others. *It was evident that the NDC suffered from the fake news more than the NPP. The NPP were very strong with promoting their candidate which made them gain some advantage.* He then added that he is optimistic that parties will study their strategies and come back stronger next elections.

Communication expert 2 agreed to the assertion that there were some positives. He however argued that he was not really enthused about the nature way social media was employed particularly in the area of engagement. Adding that parties should invest in experts who could bring on board appropriate strategies to help them with effective engagement. *It is important that political parties invest in technical people (not just IT people) but comms people who understand social media to*

help them in their communication online. This can help them deal with many of the problems they were facing in the 2020 elections. He added.

4.8.4 Future elections and social media usage

The social media consultant added that he is very optimistic that social media in election campaign is here to stay. He is very optimistic that the parties themselves are aware of this information and are preparing adequately for that. *I'm sure they know, they are very much aware that the coming elections, social media is going to be very critical. And if they don't plan or strategize for it, then they will not they will be shooting themselves in the foot.*

Communication expert 1 also added that social media is the way forward now and in the future, campaigns are going to be predominantly on social media. He also observed that politician themselves by now should know its importance and its effectiveness in communication.

4.9 Chapter summary

After analysis, it was discovered that social media has become an official medium for political actors to consider in their political communication and campaigning. It was also observed that social media was very much instrumental in the 2020 presidential elections. Experts also believed that both the NDC and NPP had effective and efficient communication strategies in their own rights but argued that there were some lapses which affected communication and the campaigning in general. Finally, it was also observed that dialogic communication was not effectively employed.

Chapter Five

Discussions, Recommendation and Conclusions

5.0 Introduction

This chapter concluded chapter of the study. The chapter discussed the observation of the study, provided some recommendations and discussed some the limitation of the study. The conclusion also summarized the whole study and discussed the final results.

5.1 Observations

5.1.1 General communication strategy by both NDC and NPP in the 2020 presidential election

| NPP STRATEGY | NDC STRATEGY |
|---|---|
| NPP did well in promoting the personal attributes of their candidate. | NDC focused more on their VP than they did on the presidential candidate. |
| Effective communication strategy than the NDC. Consistent and centralized communication through a lot of press conferences and amplification through traditional media and social media | Effective but relative to that of the NPP, it was relatively inefficient. Generally, communication was not as consistent as that of the NPP but also relied on press conferences and amplified through traditional media and social media . |
| Targeting, positioning and messaging was effective relative to that of the NDC | Targeting, positioning and messaging was not as effective as that of the NPP. |
| Focused more on immediate past records. | Focused more on manifesto. |

After thematically reviewing the responses obtained from the interview conducted, it was observed that experts believed that the two political parties run an effective campaign with many things to learn from. Communication expert 1 believed that NPP had an effective strategy than the NDC to

some extent. The NPP seemed to employ all the theories and ideas about political communication and campaigning which was very effective. It was observed by communication expert 1 that the NPP did a good job promoting the attribution of their candidate than the NDC and other political parties. This position in theory, corroborates with the argument of Kumar & Natarajanb (2016) on how political campaign can be effective.

The deputy communication director of the NDC also made the claim that the NPP seemed to have a more consistent and central messaging style which also proved to be more effective. He argued that the NPP used slogans effectively in communicating their message to the public which was very much effective.

The researcher made the observation that the NPP seems to have employed their political marketing strategies effectively slightly above the NDC in terms of targeting, positioning, and messaging. As explained by the Deputy communication director of the NPP who argued that the NPP was not really enthused about the strategy of their opponent because they believed their strategy was yielding the desired results and that reflected in the final elections results.

5.2 Social Media Usage by NDC and NPP in the 2020 presidential election campaign

It was also observed that social media was utilized by the campaign team for easy targeting, provided room for more creative content creation and redistribution and also smart avenue for promotion and the distribution of policies and interventions.

Social media manager for the NDC argued that social media gave them the freedom to become more creative with their content to increase their engagement level. The social media manager for

NPP also argued that social media was very instrumental in providing a 24 hour platform for content and policy engagement and redistribution. *With traditional media, your time is limited. They only discuss your policy in the news or other political shows or commercials. But with social media you can distribute information anytime.*

The NDC and NPP communicators all agreed to the assertion that social media also provides an avenue to share information on policies and interventions to the public. This response is in line with the observation of Gyampo (2017) who argued that political communicators use social media in communicating party policies and position on key issues to the public.

The response on the type of persons mostly in charge of social media handling is also inline with Gyampo’s (2017) and Park, Kang, & Lee (2020) observation that political parties mostly use young party people to get involved with the communication online. The social media manager for both NPP and NDC and also expert 1 &2 all argued that online communication is mostly done by the youth wing within the parties.

| Social media usage by NPP | Social media usage by NDC |
|---|---|
| NPP argued that it made it easy to target electorates. | NDC also agreed that social media makes it easy to target voters. |
| Provides room for more and reusable content. | Provides room for creative content. |
| Effective channel for promoting policies and interventions. | Effective medium for promoting policies and the manifesto. |

5.3 Dialogical communication model and social media engagement

While some researchers (Smith, 2011, Akwari, 2017, & Men et al 2018) have argued that the availability of social media provides increase access to dialogic engagement by politicians, it was discovered that politicians did not really utilize and exploit the dialogic opportunities offered them by social media as the social media consultant argued and communication expert 2 all observed that most of the messages under the political posts were left “unresponded”. This means that politicians were more interested in pushing information to their audience than actively engaging them in a dialogical two-way communication. The absence of a clear cut strategy on using social media to promote dialogic communication was evident in the responses given by the various representatives of the parties used for this interview. The parties were social media like how they use traditional media without using the dialogic communication model.

5.4 Challenges faced with regards to social media campaign

From the analysis of responses it was observed that political parties faced some serious challenges online. Respondents argued that cost was an issue with regards to social media marketing and campaigning. As communication expert 1 argued that because these Apps are not Ghanaian, it was obvious that any money which would be paid for promotion was going to be in dollars and meant that campaign teams needed to change the cedis to dollars which affected cost. social media consultant also argued that the NDC between a space of 5 month had spent over 250,000 dollars on promoting their content on Facebook alone. The NPP social media manager also admitted to the fact that at the parties had to forego some campaign initiatives online due to cost.

Another challenge was the inconsistency in communication, the spread of false news and the inability of the parties to control their own communication online. These challenges can all be linked to the nature of social media as being an open network which allows people to share any

information without any form of accountability. Gyampo (2017) and Dzisah (2018) also observed similar issues in their studies.

The deputy communication director for NPP in proposing solution to this encouraged government and all other stakeholders to take issues relating to fake news very seriously since it has the propensity of causing fear and panic and also disrupting the peace in society.

The research also observed that political parties even though have embraced social media and online campaigning seems to have inadequate technical persons to help in the execution and implementation of effective strategies online.

Another challenge was with the issues of political appropriation as observed by expert 2 who argued that political parties and campaign teams could not effectively deal with.

| Challenges faced by both NPP and NDC |
|---|
| 1. Both Parties agreed that cost was challenge |
| 2. Expert argued that both parties had issues with consistent communication |
| 3. It was observed that both parties also had issues with the spread of false information about their parties and candidates. |
| 4. Both had issues with the inability to control information |
| 5. Both parties had issues with appropriation |

5.5 Recommendation

Based on the observation made on some of the problems political parties faced in the 2020 presidential elections as discussed extensively by their own communication and campaign team members on the usage of social media for political campaigning, the following recommendations are made.

1. As stated by communication expert 2, it is advisable that in order to deal with inconsistency in communication during campaigning online, it is advisable to create an official and very active campaign websites that serves as an information hub for the campaign. All communication should be featured on the website and all the campaign ads as well. There should also be active announcement of the presence and information hub that has all the official content from the campaign. That way, whoever is looking for official communication material from a particular party can visit the website. This will help journalist and the general public distinguish between official communication material and those that are unofficial. It can also deal with inconsistency in communication and also help in dealing with controlled communication.
2. Because of the extensive nature of social media, it is important that political parties start to think of ways to expanding their technical professional who are well equipped to deal with the many technical issues parties faced online during elections. Political parties must invest in building the capacity of people who handles their social media assets and take various steps to build a digital media infrastructure that serves the needs of the party all year round and not just for elections.
3. Social media is here to stay and will continue to have immense influence on political communication and campaigning. This means that political parties should start taking its

effects seriously and start providing adequate funds to support their technical and communication teams to work effectively and efficiently.

4. Finally, It is recommended that future campaigns should make efficient use of the dialogic nature of social media to further engage its audience in order to gain more attention from the electorates.

5.6 Limitation of the study

As stated earlier, one major limitation was getting access to the communication directors of both parties as well as experts. These are extremely busy individuals who kept rescheduling the meeting. This had some effect on the finishing time for the project.

Another limitation was that the political communicators interviewed were at a point not willing to disclose of their communication strategies since they thought this study was going to be a public record which could be assessed by their opponent. It took some strategic interview techniques to be able to effectively garner some information from them.

5.7 Conclusion

The overall objective of the study was to investigate the usage of social media by both the NPP and the NDC in the just ended 2020 presidential election campaign. The study was divided into five chapters. The first chapter introduced that study by providing adequate background of social media, political communication and also a brief overview of the history of both NPP and NDC. This was to create a setting for the study. The second chapter discussed and reviewed literature related to the study. The chapter discussed the concepts, reviewed empirical literature to help put the study into context of other related studies. The chapter also discussed theories in relation to the study. Chapter three talked about the methodology of the study and how data was going to be

collected and analyzed. The study employed the interview techniques its data collection and employed the thematic observation in its analysis. Chapter four discussed the findings and the final chapter concluded the study.

The study discovered that social media was very much instrumental in the 2020 presidential elections. Experts interviewed agreed to the aggressive nature of the communication between the two major political parties and also disclosed that the NPP were much more effective in their communication online compared to the NDC. The study also discovered that cost, fake news / false information, inadequate technical professionals are a few of the challenges with social media campaigning. It was also discovered that politician may have a new problem with misappropriation of contents and speeches from old engagement.

APPENDIX

Interview Guide For Master’s Thesis on “The usage of social media in political campaigns; A study of the New Patriotic Party (NPP) and the National Democratic Congress (NDC) communication strategies in Ghana’s 2020 Presidential Elections”.

Introduction

This study sought to understand how the New Patriotic Party and the National Democratic Congress used social media in the 2020 Presidential election. This interview will help us understand how social media was used from the perspectives of key actors who were in charge of social media or had a say in how social media is used.

Communication Directors of the New Patriotic Party and National Democratic Party

- I. What communication strategies were adopted by your parties in light of the COVID-19?
Why?
- II. What are your perception of the social media strategies adopted by your key opponent?
- III. How did your party use social media in the 2020 Presidential elections?
- IV. What communication challenges did you encounter in the 2020 Presidential election and how can they be tackled?

Social Media Managers of the New Patriotic Party and National Democratic Party

- I. Where you a member of the campaign team?
- II. How did you use social media in the 2020 Presidential elections?
- III. What social media strategies were used by your party in the 2020 Presidential elections?

- IV. What challenges did you encounter in your usage of social media and how can they be tackled.
- V. What is your assessment of the social media strategies used by your opponent in the 2021 Presidential elections?

Communication experts

- I. What are your perception about the communication strategies used by the NPP and the NDC during the 2020 presidential elections? How did the public respond to their strategies?
- II. In your opinion what challenges were experienced by the NPP and the NDC during the 2020 presidential elections? How can they be tackled?
- III. What are your perception on the usage of social media by the NPP and the NDC during the 2020 presidential elections?

Social media consultant

- I. How should social media be used in political campaigns ?
- II. In your opinion what challenges were experienced by the NPP and the NDC during the 2020 presidential elections in their usage of social media and how can they be tackled?

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