

**GHANA INSTITUTE OF JOURNALISM**

**A CRITICAL ASSESSMENT OF THE PERCEPTION OF CONSUMERS  
ON POLITICAL CELEBRITY ENDORSERS- SURVEY OF GHANA  
INSTITUTE OF JOURNALISM**

**BY**

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## **DEDICATION**

To Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us. Ephesians 3: 20-21.

I dedicate this work to my mum, madam Winnifred Pinto, for her support and words of encouragement, never has she talked me out of any idea to develop myself. I'm truly grateful mum.

I again dedicate this to my supervisor, Dr. Kobby Mensah for his guidance and unique style surprising this work. Your depth of knowledge is enviable Doc!

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

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Respondents who spared me their valuable time during the data collecting stage, I'm forever grateful, you made this study more interesting.

## CANDIDATE'S DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation is a product of my own-in-depth research unaided by anyone. All specific ideas and materials from other researchers have been duly acknowledged.

Also no part of this dissertation has been presented for another academic requirement in the Institute or elsewhere.

.....

RICHMOND PINTO

.....September, 2020

## **SUPERVISOR'S DECLARATION**

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of this dissertation was supervised by me in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of dissertation laid down by the Ghana Institute of Journalism.

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Dr. Kobby Mensah

.....September, 2020

## **ABSTRACT**

This study was undertaken to assess the claim that celebrities who endorse political parties and candidates lose their career or fan base. The belief is an age old one yet very little is known about the veracity of it and prior researchers have focused mainly on the effectiveness of celebrity endorsement as a marketing tool.

To this end, a quantitative research method was adopted with seven hundred respondents drawn to answer structured questionnaire to ascertain the truthfulness or otherwise of this belief.

From the analyzed data, although respondents appreciate celebrity endorsement and see celebrity endorsers as attractive, they however consider celebrities as the least people to disseminate political information or messages. This proves that attractiveness of the celebrity cannot be translated into credibility for them to be used by politicians as mouthpiece or information carriers.

The study made the revelation that the widely held perception that celebrities lose their career after endorsing a political party or candidate cannot be trusted rather the effectiveness of a celebrity is dependent on how he or she manages the social capital gained across fields.

On the basis of the findings, it was recommended that celebrities even though can migrate their social capital must be proactive in building and enhancing their brands or status.

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## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

Admittedly, the consumer is increasingly becoming sophisticated due to the stiffer competition offered by same or similar brands or companies. This phenomenon is also true for political parties as a result of the ever changing needs and wants of the voter (consumer).

Political parties in recent times have joined corporate organizations in using celebrity endorsement as a strategic means of garnering support for their political candidates.

This is because of the competing ideas offered by political parties during elections in their bid to get the nod of the electorates(consumer). Just as in the business world, the electorate can get overwhelmed by ideas hence the need to get a stimulant to stimulate the interest of the consumer towards a particular idea, thus source credibility occasioned by celebrity endorsement.

Dampreh, 2006 explained that a free and fair elections must mean that electorates are given alternatives to choose from based what they (electorates) feel can solve their problems as a state or nation.

Researchers have largely focused on the fortunes of using celebrity endorsement as a powerful political marketing tool (Hinson & Tweneboah- Koduah, 2010). (Alabi, 2007), assessed the part celebrity endorsement plays in the voting behavior of a voter. (Mensah, 2009 and 2011) explored the phenomena in the light of branding in the lead up to elections in Ghana.

This approach by political parties and candidates is steadily gaining grounds in the African context and Ghana is certainly no exception. This is partly because of the fast developing nature of these democracies. This move just as in the competitive business world requires that electorates or voters

are analyzed as consumers who are bombarded by products or services by corporate entities, the consumer or electorate thus is constantly faced with the dilemma of selecting a particular product or candidate over the other.

According to the American Marketing Association, marketing is the process of planning and executing the conception, pricing, promotion and distribution of ideas, goods and services to create exchanges that satisfy individual and organizational objectives (cited in Wing 1997: 652)

The inclusion of “ideas” in the Association’s definition gives mileage to the adoption of celebrity endorsement by political parties as what they stand to get is basically to have voters (consumers) believe in their ideologies and philosophies there by choosing them over other political parties.

Again, impact of celebrity endorsement has been keenly consented by academic researchers and marketing communication strategists. There seems to be a sharp contrast on whether or not celebrity endorsement really yields the needed result. While one school of thought holds that the phenomena is just a fantasy, the other firmly believes that corporate bodies, brands and even political parties who have used celebrities to promote their business or ideas have seen enviable results. The latter position has been proven by the works of Agrawal & Kamakura, 1995; O’Mahony & Meenaghan, 1997; Pringle, 2004). They explained that celebrity endorsements are effective marketing tools because of their ability to attract customers’ attention, which might then lead to an increase in product/brand awareness.

Van Krieken (2012) further strengthens this assertion by alluding that celebrities are able to attract attention because they embody the attention capital—an abstract and self-reproducing form of capital.

Theoretically, it has been proven that celebrity endorsement can promote the sales of a company and in the case of political party ensure a win for a candidate.

The balanced theory principle is one of such theories which mean that companies that have strategically selected celebrities are able to create affectionate links between the consumer and the endorsee(celebrity) and the corporate body or political candidate (Mowen, 2000).

Following from the above, it is evident that prior researchers paid little attention to the impact on celebrities who have publicly declared their support for these brands or political parties.

Celebrities (endorser) and political parties (endorsee) both trade something they do not have individually: while political candidates are seen as credible and knowledgeable, they are not liked. In the case of celebrities, due to their profession, they have huge followers but these followers do not go beyond admiration meaning celebrities lack the credibility the politician have Smillie (2004).

According to Goldsmith, Laffery Newell 2000, celebrities are selected for endorsement deals due to two main attributes and these are the sourced -based attribute and management -based. The sourced-based attributes are controlled by the celebrity and this when not handled well, it affects the image of the celebrity. Often this is referred to as the source credibility model. This model seeks to say that the endorser is seem or viewed as credible based certain expertise and trustworthiness exhibited over time. The other attribute which is management- based looks at the factors controlled by the authorities of the celebrity relationship.

Available literature which were mostly inspired by the work of Hovland and Weiss, 1951, opines that a celebrity cutout for political endorsement must radiate traits like believable, trustworthy and credibility so they can influence the opinions, attitudes and choices of the voter.

Whereas all these attributes can be said have been gained by the constant portrayal of certain dispositions, the media is also credited as the main conduit by which these celebrities get their popularity or capital.

## **1.1 PROBLEM STATEMENT**

The nagging question at the heart of this study is what becomes of the celebrity after the endorsed politician or political party gains the nod to rule the people the celebrity helped in getting their vote?

As (Yeshin, 2006) concluded, political parties and corporate bodies are quick to distance themselves from a celebrity when he or she is seen to be interfering in some unethical activities. These political parties take entrenched position to out the celebrity in the name of the activities not aligning with party's ideologies and philosophies.

MTN Ghana, the market leader in the telecommunication industry abruptly terminated the endorsement deal by a Ghanaian actor Kwadwo Nkansah popularly known as "Lil win".

This came after the actor was spotted on a live television program propagating the smoking of marijuana.

The celebrity after the endorsement deal is certainly not the same, regardless of the benefits gotten, the public perceptions of such celebrities are definitely changed.

Again, Grace Omaboe, a veteran actress who declared her support for the New Patriotic Party(NPP) is said to have had negative ratings after her endorsement. These assertions are not backed by empirical data to ascertain the true state or otherwise of consumer's perception on celebrities who throw their weight behind political parties and candidates.

Both loyal fans and the public from the other political divide certainly have perceptions of these celebrities.

The age old belief is that celebrities who endorse political parties kill their "brand" or "image" and corporate bodies do not feel confident doing business with such celebrities.

There are far too many celebrities who have publicly declared their support towards political parties to mention, but little is known about whether their careers have taken a nosedive mainly due to the endorsement.

While perceptions or beliefs are based on personal judgement or assessment, there is scarce research to approve or disapprove this. Against this backdrop, the study will deploy empirical means by the use of statistical data to ascertain the veracity or otherwise of this widespread belief among consumers.

## **1.2 RESEARCH OBJECTIVE**

The objectives of this enquiry is in two fold. These comprises of the general and specific objectives. The general objective aims at exploring the belief that political endorsement by celebrities kills the celebrity's image and by extension career or business.

The specific objective looks at

- To examine consumers understanding of endorsement deals.
- To explore the perception of consumers towards celebrity endorsement
- To ascertain whether or not a celebrity's endorsement could affect his or her career

## **1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

Generally, research questions are set of questions designed to solicit data for a study.

For the purpose of this study, the research questions are:

- How do consumers view celebrities who endorse political parties/presidential candidates?
- Would consumers have same or less likeness for a celebrity after endorsing a political party?

- Does the celebrity endorsement influence the final decision of a consumer?

#### **1.4 JUSTIFICATION OF STUDY**

The plethora of literature on endorsement celebrity both from western democracies and locally are mostly geared towards the influence of celebrities on consumers or voters during election time. Very little is known on the veracity regarding the assertion that some celebrities have lost their status, credibility and even careers after publicly endorsing political parties.

In the Ghanaian context, the belief is almost becoming a fact that when a celebrity supports a political party, he or she is likely to face challenges career wise. Hence this study will help in unravelling the truth or otherwise about this.

Methodically, prior researchers viewed the phenomenon from a qualitative and quantitative descriptive surveys but this study will employ the inferential means to contribute to the knowledge on this subject.

#### **1.5 SCOPE OF STUDY**

The study was carried out at the Ghana Institute of Journalism in the Klottey Korle constituency of the Greater Accra region.

The decision to use the Ghana Institute of Journalism is a result the fact that most of its students understand how the media operates and these celebrities are who they are because of the media publicity either through movie, music or both.

A sample of 700 respondents were used for the study. This sample will allow for better inferential analysis.

## **1.6 ORGANIZATION OF STUDY**

The study is in five chapters. This Current Chapter discussed the background of the study, a statement of the problem, objectives, research questions and the justification of the study. The Second Chapter dealt with the review of relevant literature, theoretical framework or lens through which the subject can better be appreciated and operational definitions of terminologies uniquely associated to the subject.

Chapter Three discussed the research methodology. Taking into consideration the scientific nature and approach of the study.

Chapter Four dealt with the analysis of the study with the help of data gathered and presented.

Chapter Five looked at the discussion based on the data presented in preceding chapter then conclusions and recommendations of this study.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **2.0 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter discusses the literature of other researchers on the subject of celebrity endorsement broadly and narrowly to the perception of political celebrity endorsers. It also chronicles models and theories underpinning the study and gives operational definitions of terms used in the study.

### **2.1 CELEBRITY ENDORSEMENT**

It has now become a common feature of elections to see entertainment and politics intertwined (Jackson, 2008). This is evident as many actors, musicians from both the secular and religious divide, and other influential personalities trumpet their viewpoints on political issues. To the extent that some actively participate in political activities (campaigns, rally's, presidential debate competition), and even endorse and campaign for candidates and political parties (Becker, 2013; Lee, Yen, Lin, Chen, & Wu, 2011; Wood & Herbst, 2007).

Celebrity as term has been defined and applied in many ways but as Schlecht (2003) posits a celebrity is a popular or famous individual who enjoys public attention. Out of this description, several qualities or traits like beautiful physical appearance, "excellent" lifestyle are the qualities associated with such people and these make them sometimes different from the ordinary person. This status also bestows an incalculable amount of social attention (Schlecht, 2003) Again, a celebrity as a famous person enjoys the public recognition by a large number of people and enjoys a high degree of public awareness, having different attributes like beauty, attractiveness, extraordinary life style or special skills.

These attributes and others such as the trustworthiness of the celebrity, familiarity, expertise and likeability makes the celebrity to be the source of credible information (Aaker, 2007). Essentially

(Aaker2007) describes this the physical appearance or attractiveness of the celebrity endorser as an effective message.

Practically, a celebrity often plays the functions as a spokesperson in an Ad campaign to promote products and services (Kambitsis, Harahousou, & Giannis, 2002).

Historically, the practice was seen in the nineteenth century when Queen Victoria was associated to Cadbury's cocoa (Erdogan, 1999). It is believed by many industry players and academicians that the fortunes of the brand, company or political candidate can be turned by the use of a famous person or a celebrity. As captured by (Solomon, 2002), celebrities can increase the attention for companies' advertisement or campaign, create positive association towards companies and are seen by customers as fun loving individuals.

Celebrities have been an integral part of advertising since the 1800s (Erdogan, 1999) but with the invention and proliferation of media houses, the number of celebrities or famous people available for marketers, advertisers and political parties to use have also risen (Erdogan, 1999). (Shimp 2000) asserts that prior to the star system, advertisers had limited celebrities to choose from and there was a stigma against celebrity endorsing products for commercial gains.

Again, the root of the term celebrity can be traced to the ancient Roman civilization and fashioned out of the word "*celeber*" which translate into renowned or famous. Personalities such as Scipio Africanus Gaius Julius Ceaser and Lucius Cornelius Sulla were celebrated and respected by many. Today, personalities in the public light as a result of what they do either music, movie and gaining public attention by constantly being in the media are admired and respected by many hence they earn the status or title celebrity.

## **2.2 CELEBRITY ENDORSEMENT AS A MARKETING TOOL**

The concept of celebrity endorsement is largely a technique in marketing communication with focus on advertisement or campaigns.

Belch & Belch (2014) believe that marketing communications are means of enhancing the exchange process and the advancement of relationships among the consumer and an organization by constantly creating the awareness and interest in the organization's product or services.

They are considered as influential tools in the marketing and promotional activities of the organization. It is now more prevalent to see celebrities acting as influencers or spokespersons for a particular company's product or services.

To this end, advertisers and by extension organizations are becoming increasingly aware of the persuasive power or influence these celebrities wield and this has culminated into the massive the number of celebrity endorsements being witnessed today. The practice has become the most popular form of retail advertising (Choi & Rifon, 2007). In the U.S for instance it is estimated that about 25% of all use a celebrity, compared to about 20% in Great Britain (Erdogan, Baker & Tagg, 2001). The growing use of famous endorsers has also brought with it a rise in the cost of endorsements, such as Nike's \$90 million investment to lure Tiger Woods - as celebrities and their agents are becoming increasingly aware of their economic worth (Hsu & McDonald, 2002; Pringle, 2004; Erdogan & Drollinger, 2008)

The concept of celebrity can be said to have gained grounds in today's communication marketing activities largely because of the increase in media outlets because as these media houses strive to remain relevant some 'special people' who provide services in term of content are sought after (Giles, 1999).

Not only will the proliferation of the media be said to be the factor for the increase of the phenomenon but also the penchant for fame, resulting in a craving to emulate these ‘heroes’.

According to Seno and Lukas (2007), Celebrities are very much helpful for market promotion than other type of endorsers such as the company manager, distinctive consumer and other qualified experts. This is largely due to their fame, lifestyle and massive fan base.

Companies hold great control over created spokesperson since they build up special characters. They can build their characters which are unflinching with their brands and target audience, and ensure that these characters are fully endorsing only one particular product.

As Aaker 2007 preaches celebrity endorsement makes the message being conveyed very attractive and it helps customers to memorize the brand and its message.

### **2.3 CELEBRITY ENDORSEMENT IN THE POLITICAL FIELD (A LOOK AT THE 2016 GENERAL ELECTION)**

Ghanaians went to the polls in the year 2016 to elect presidential and parliamentary candidates and in the lead up to the election, celebrities or famous personalities were seen vehemently declaring their support for their preferred presidential candidates and political parties. In appendices 1 and 2, an array of celebrities including actors, musicians, notable media personalities publically declared their support towards mainly the two major political parties and their candidates (NPP and NDC).

These celebrities joined political parties and their candidates to various political platforms to canvass for vote. Notable among these celebrities were John Dumelo, Berlinda Akua Amoah (Mzbel), Mr. Beautiful (Clement Bonney), Paapa Yankson and many others were seen with the National Democratic Congress(NDC) (see **appendix 2**) and the likes of Grace Omaboe (Maame

Dokono), A-Plus, Lucky Mensah, Great Ampong, Daddy Lumba were also in the camp of the New Patriotic Party(NPP). (see appendix 1)

According to a news report on myjoyonline.com dated 16 September 2016, although the involvement of these celebrities increased compared to other elections, particularly 2008 general election, there was also much skepticism as to how many votes or numbers these celebrities pulled for their respective candidates.

The practice has become very common with Ghana as in other developed democracies. Available literature suggests that a celebrity endorsing a product or brand is a worthwhile venture and researches have proven that the influence wielded by celebrity is enormous but little is known empirically about the perception these consumers have about celebrity endorsers especially those who endorse political candidates or parties and that is what this study is geared towards.

## **2.4 THE BALANCE THEORY**

This theory was developed by Fritz Heider (1946) and it states that there must an emotional relationship between the endorsed and the celebrity endorser is someone is being ask

Goldsmith et al (2000) and Ohanian (1990) stipulated that the balanced theory comprises of five critical aspects and these aspects are further summarized into two themes, the source based factors and management based factors. The former looks at the factors that the celebrity has control over and these are within the remit of celebrity credibility, attractiveness of the celebrity (Langmeyer and Walker, 2000)

The latter talks about the factors controlled by the management of the celebrity and these factors are mostly the endorser product up, endorser impact on the brand and customers and endorser meaning transfer. (Hsu and McDonald, 2002).

### **2.4.1 SOURCE CREDIBILITY MODEL**

This model has been attributed to Hovland et al with their research in the 1950s, their findings suggest that the effectiveness of the message or information by the celebrity or endorser is dependent on how he or she is perceived as an expertise and trustworthiness.

Erdogan (2010), states that the receivers (voters or consumers) will perceive the celebrity endorser differently within the credibility model, this is largely because they are mostly influenced by their own beliefs, opinions, attitudes and behaviors. Ohanian (1990), states that the source credibility model has two dimensions; these are the celebrity expertise and celebrity trustworthiness.

Consumer's acceptance of information and ideas was largely dependent on the message source (Berlo, Lemert, & Mertz, 1969) and this is as a result of the trust and confidence they have in the source; the celebrity endorser but the level of trust or confidence dies if the celebrity is not able to navigate from the endorsed product to his or her original status.

This loss of confidence or trust is mostly judged by the consumer through a number of ways peculiar to him or her but as (Tripp, Jensen & Carlson, 2000) found through their study, consumers or voters tend to believe and support celebrities who endorse a single brand product than those who engage in multiple endorsements. This goes to say that voters tend to support celebrities who throw their weight behind one particular political party or candidate than those who support and endorse different or multiple political parties.

The source credibility model has its roots in 1950s psychological studies performed by Hovland and his colleagues (Erdogan, 1999). Like the source attractiveness model, the source credibility model is based on Social Influence Theory and Source Effect Theory, which essentially argue that perceived characteristics of a communication source may have favorable effects on message receptivity (Erdogan, 1999). The source credibility model follows from the

finding that opinion on an issue was directly related to how credible participants believed the source of information was (Hovland & Weiss, 1951). Originally designed to understand interpersonal communication, the model has recently been applied to studying celebrity endorsers.

The source credibility model “contends that the effectiveness of a message depends on perceived level of expertise and trustworthiness in an endorser” (Erdogan, 1999, p. 297).

Consumers who receive information from a credible source can be influenced in their beliefs, attitudes, opinions, and/or behaviors through the process of internalization, “which occurs when receivers accept a source influence in terms of their personal attitude and value structures” (Erdogan, 1999, p. 297).

Expertise of an endorser can be defined as how much the receiver perceives the endorser to be “a source of valid assertions” (Erdogan, 1999, p. 297). Expertise is related to the skills, knowledge, or experience an endorser has. The audience’s perception of expertise is the relevant consideration in determining source credibility, rather than an endorser’s actual expertise in the subject area.

Inthorn and Street (2011) through their study, using source credibility as the base theory to measure the perceptions and attitudes towards celebrity politics realized that consumer or peoples’ perceptions are centered on their personal understanding of the power structures which govern the game of politics with much dependency on the kind of political climate they experience.

A similar research among young adults to test their perceptions about celebrities’ political opinions and endorsements was conducted by O’Regan (2014). O’Regan findings suggest that majority of the sample used were of the view that they are less likely to trust information carried by celebrities and by extension support that candidate the celebrity endorses. As captured by

O'Regan, these adults were of the perception that celebrities are not more informed about politics than the average citizen and thus cannot be relied on as a credible source for important political information. Much as O'Regan (2014) and Inthorn and Street (2011) did not conclude on the same premise about the findings, it is not surprising that O'Regan also alluded to what Street (2011) found that these adults appreciate the fact that celebrities by their level of perceived credibility and trustworthiness can influence decisions, actions and attitudes of people.

#### **2.4.2 CONSTRUCT OF CAPITAL (PIERRE BOURDIEU)**

Pierre Bourdieu's way of analyzing celebrities is one great way of assessing celebrity endorsement, the power it wields in influencing consumers and how a celebrity gains and manages his or her status as a celebrity. The status as a celebrity is considered as a "capital" (resource) which has been gained or built over a period of time. Pierre Bourdieu asserts that this capital gives the celebrity power within the sector which the capital was gained, adding that the capital must be seen and appreciated within a particular "field" or "relation to a field" (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992:101). Drawing inspiration from Bourdieu's analysis, it is safe to say that the capital of a celebrity cannot be looked at without relating it to the field of that celebrity and the influential power.

According to Bourdieu, the field of the celebrity has basic principles that dictates how the field is operated and even how an individual can gain access into that field and more importantly the worth of capital needed by an individual in order to gain the needed status in that field. Theorizing Bourdieu's perspective, he believes different types, forms or kinds of capital can be accumulated by individuals and this has a significant way of measuring and telling how influential the celebrity is. Economic and cultural capitals are the two main forms of capitals identified by Bourdieu. The

former he believes is or can be transferred into monetary value while the latter is understood in an objectified state. (Bourdieu 1986: 242)

Bourdieu went further to postulate that the worth of capital accumulated by an individual is relative, meaning; two or more individuals can be in the same field but their capital would not be the same and this gives room for the argument of some celebrities wielding more power than others. Again, Bourdieu believes that there are different ways of accumulating capital and this breeds the unequal possession of it. Also he believes that capital is and should be convertible, in the sense that a celebrity should be able to convert his or her capital across fields to his or her own advantage.

Previous researchers who used Bourdieu's perspective in understanding celebrity endorsement examined the celebrity status as a capital and the different fields celebrities can cross based on the capital accumulated over time.

Celebrity Capital and fields as opined by Bourdieu is firm ground to position this study because celebrity status to Bourdieu is not a scared position but rather a feat that can be achieved by carefully accumulating social capital within a particular field and understating how to use this capital across fields. Driessens (2013) describes the practice as migration. This is where a celebrity is able to navigate fields due to the social capital accumulated from one field. To this end, it therefore does not make it a taboo for the movie, music or media icon to engage in politics but how to migrate from this field to the political arena is what is important.

To Driessens (2013), migration within a field by a celebrity occurs when the celebrity diversifies his or her activities within the field in which they have established their celebrity status, while migration across fields occurs when a celebrity uses their celebrity status to gain or force access into another social field.

Dressiens (2013) captures it more aptly by asserting that, celebrity as phenomenon or status is a treasured social power in many social fields. This is largely because the celebrity status is often gained in a particular field but has the tendency to be converted into other fields.

## **2.5 CONSUMER/ VOTER PERCEPTION**

Largely, perception relates to how a person or consumer selects and interprets stimuli in his or her environment or thinking. Also stimuli are adjusted to become a person's own idea or ideology. (Keller & Kevin, 2003).

Perception is either formed by just an event or a series of it however it can be seen in these three stages. the exposure stage, the attention stage and the interpretation stage. The process is design in such a way that the brain takes the stimuli into the attention stage and moves to the interpretation stage. Humans interpret the stimuli based on their previous experience

and exposure (Keller & Kevin, 2001). Consumer perception is very important to the communicator in coming out with a message for the audience or consumer, this is because the success or failure of a product or service depends on customers' perception.

Choi *et al* (2001) describes consumer perception as how individuals view a company and its products. This explains that perceptions are exclusive or peculiar to individuals. This means that a consumer's decision to purchase a particular product is dependent on the perception she or he has about that product. In this competitive world, when communicators know and understand perceptions of consumers about them, they can better change the negative ones and reinforce the good ones (Moven & Brown, 2002).

(Walker, Langmeyer & Langmeyer, 2002) also postulated three phases of consumer perception, the first aspect relates to the evaluation of stimuli. This deals with how a consumer assess information or message emanating from a celebrity endorser or communicator. A consumer's acceptance of a message is dependent on prior perception of the product or company. If the prior experience is a pleasant one, consumer accepts message into his or her memory but the reverse is the case when consumer's prior experience is bad (Walker *et. al*, 2002).

The second perspective is the match-up hypothesis (Kim, Lee, & Prideaux, 2014) According to the match-up hypothesis the endorsement will be more effective if there is a match between the endorser and the endorsed brand (Kim *et. at*, 2014).

The third aspect has to do with the schema congruity theory (Kim *et. al*, 2014). The schema has to do with a person's expectations of a situation or phenomenon. A consumer's stimuli evaluation is done by the structure of his or her schema.

For instance, if a celebrity like John Dumelo is an endorser of a product or political candidate, it means his profession would be very important as his schema. This is because when the two schemas completely matched, the consumer evaluates the endorsement positively; on the contrary, if the two schemas are completely misrelated, then consumers may reject the endorsement.

It takes less conviction to know that celebrities are powerful but their power does not manifest in an overt manner such as the power of a political body, but it rather functions at the very center of culture as it resonates with conceptions and beliefs of individuality that are the ideological ground of Western culture” (Marshall, 1997, p. x).

## **2.6 STUDIES ON CELEBRITY POLITICAL ENDORSEMENT**

While the study of the use of celebrities in commercial advertising has a long documented history dating back decades, the study of the use of celebrities for political ends is a largely unexplored field (Brubaker, 2011). Of the studies conducted, researchers have found significant results regarding celebrity endorsements and politics, however findings are not consistent across groups and situations. All but one of the six studies available, used student samples. While one of these studies (Veer et al., 2010) did not use a student sample, it is important to note that half of their respondents were under age 28. However, given the nature of the topic, student samples may be more appropriate in this area of research than they are in other areas.

Most of these researchers rely on components of celebrity endorser effectiveness for commercial products and draw from theory and variables used in existing research. In addition to looking at identification, Brubaker (2011) investigated a Third Person Effect of celebrity endorsements of candidates using real endorsements from the 2004 and 2008 Presidential Election cycles. Overall, respondents reported that they did not think they were personally

influenced by out-group endorsements (endorsements for candidates in the opposite party), but that the general public would be influenced to have both a better impression of and higher likelihood of voting for the candidate. In a politically polarized climate, those who are already strong partisans are unlikely to be swayed by celebrity endorsements from either side, as they are already solidified in their vote choice. “Although people knew that they were too knowledgeable to be influenced by the opposing candidate’s celebrity endorsement, they were concerned about others, within the general public and their own political party” (p. 19).

Brubaker’s (2011) findings regarding partisanship make sense given that politicians often pander to the base to win nominations, and then begin to move more center during the general election to win the votes of non-partisans. Data from the 2004 election suggest “that most respondents reject the notion that celebrities might influence their voting behavior” (Pease & Brewer, 2008, p. 387). However, people are not always aware of the way media messages shape their attitudes and behavior.

Pease and Brewer (2008) explain voting using Popkin’s (1991) concept of “low information rationality,” that is that for individuals, “when thinking about presidential campaigns: instead of expending a great deal of effort in acquiring knowledge about campaigns, they use information shortcuts” that often come from their daily nonpolitical lives (Pease & Brewer, 2008, pp. 388-389). Voters often assess candidate viability in addition to desirability, particularly in primaries. Interestingly, in this study, liking the celebrity endorser, Oprah, did not lead to more favorability or likeability for Obama as predicted by the meaning transfer model, but did translate to increased vote intentions for Obama. The researchers credit an increase in perceived viability of Obama in the general election garnered through Oprah’s endorsement for this effect.

Both Brubaker's (2011) and Pease and Brewer's (2008) studies dealt with real celebrity endorsements of real candidates. St. Dizier (1985) focused on newspaper endorsements rather than celebrity endorsements of a fictional candidate and found that in low information context, people look for subtle differences between two apparently similar candidates to make a vote choice. In this case, the only information experimental group participants were provided to differentiate between two candidates was each's party and which the newspaper endorsed. Those who did not receive any information to differentiate the two fictional candidates (control group) generally did not change their votes over the course of the experiment, as they had no new information to warrant a change.

Veer et al. (2010) had similar findings with regard to information and engagement.

Looking at endorsement of the Conservative party in Britain by either a celebrity (Kate Winslet) or non-celebrity (selected in a pre-test), drawing from the ELM and source attractiveness models, they found that people who had been manipulated to have high political salience preferred the advertisement featuring the non-celebrity, whereas those with low political salience preferred the advertisement featuring Winslet. She was found to be more familiar and likeable than the non-celebrity, however, this did not translate into vote intention for the Conservative party. The study's authors suggest that while celebrity endorsers do little (or even possibly have slightly negative effects) for high political salience voters, they ought to be used in campaigns to increase political salience in the public. From a campaign standpoint, celebrity endorsements appear to only affect those who are not engaged.

Also investigating celebrity endorsements of political parties, Nownes (2012) directly suggested that we think about political parties as brands that celebrities use, in investigating the relationship between celebrity endorsers and politics (p. 497). While other researchers have

used components of the celebrity endorsements for commercial products and brands theory, Nownes (2012) used the meaning transfer model, focusing particularly on identification to study the impact of information about celebrity support for political parties, namely Jennifer Anniston's financial contribution to the Democratic party and Peyton Manning's contribution to the Republican party. Nownes' (2012) findings suggest that when people like a celebrity who donates to a political party, they also report liking that party more, and conversely when people do not like a celebrity, they will report liking the party that celebrity donated to less. However, for partisans, the relationship is slightly more nuanced, as the relationship is a two-way street, and people who dislike Republicans in turn report more dislike of Peyton Manning after learning of his contribution, as people who dislike Democrats report more dislike of Jennifer Anniston for the same reason. For Jennifer Anniston, Democrats liked her more after learning of her contribution. The same could not be said for Peyton Manning with Republicans. Overall, the data show meaning transfer occurring in a political endorsement context.

Jackson and Darrow (2005) also used a meaning transfer approach when studying whether or not celebrity attribution of a statement about a politician affected agreement with that statement. Respondents in this study, conducted in Canada, were asked their level of agreement with a series of statements made by Canadian celebrities (Avril Lavigne, Alanis Morissette, Deryck Whibley, and Wayne Gretzky) about George W. Bush and U.S. policy. The control group was given no attribution to a celebrity for a statement. The experimental group received the name of the celebrity who made the statement. Two statements were critical of U.S. policy, one was supportive of U.S. policy, and one positive about Canada's decision not to go to war. Attribution of statements to Lavigne, Whibley, and Gretzky increased agreement with the statements. Morissette had no effect, presumably because she is no longer considered a pop star,

as celebrity is fleeting. With respect to the source credibility model, these findings underscore previous findings suggesting that moderate credibility is more effective than high credibility in a spokesperson.

## **2.7 CELEBRITY ENDORSEMENT; THE AMERICAN PERSPECTIVE (THE OPRAH FACTOR ON OBAMA)**

Oprah Winfrey is a celebrity of nearly unparalleled influence. She has been named to Time magazine's list of the 100 most influential people six times—more than any other individual, including the Dalai Lama, Nelson Mandela, Bill Gates, George Clooney and Rupert Murdoch. She was named one of the 100 most influential people of the 20th Century, an honor shared with Albert Einstein, Mohandas Karamchand (Mahatma) Gandhi, and Franklin D. Roosevelt. She was only one of four people who were included on these lists in both the 20th and 21st Century. The others included Mandela, Gates, and Pope John Paul II.

According to Forbes magazine, Winfrey was the most powerful celebrity in 2007—the year she endorsed Obama—and 2008. This is based on a ranking that “analyzes celebrity earnings, plus media metrics like Google hits, press mentions as compiled by Lexis/Nexis, TV/radio mentions from Factiva and the number of times an A-lister appears on the cover of 32 major consumer magazines” (Goldman, 2007). From June 2006-07, Winfrey made \$270 million—making her highest paid celebrity in the United States. She also ranked first in web presence and TV or radio mentions. Winfrey is also unique in her ability to translate her star power into influencing the purchasing decisions of her followers. From the establishment of her book club, to the launching of a popular women's magazine, to creating an “Oprah's Favorites” list, Winfrey has a commercial reach that eclipses other stars. Her reference can literally mean the success or failure of a variety

of products. For example, when the cosmetic company Philosophy's "Gingerbread Man Salt Scrub" was included in the 2004 favorite things list, the company was forced to rearrange its entire production schedule to meet the resulting demand (Walker, 2004). After selecting Ciao Bella blood orange sorbet for her 2007 list, the company's website received 3 million hits in one week compared to an average of 175,000 in previous weeks. Clarisonic skin-care system had their sales increase "10-fold in just one week after her endorsement" (Goldman, 2007). After challenging her viewers to beat the one day sales record for Lance Armstrong "Live strong" bracelets, 900,000 bracelets were sold—besting previous records by approximately 600,000.

A negative comment by Winfrey can be equally damaging to a products success. During a 1996 show concerning "mad cow" disease Winfrey stated that her fear of the disease "stopped me from eating another burger" (Babineck, 1998). The day after the show cattle futures fell 10 percent (Verhovek, 1998).

Winfrey was subsequently sued by a group of cattlemen claiming they suffered losses of \$12 million. In addition to her influence on the sales of consumables, Winfrey has also been credited with promoting book-buying and reading in the United States. Beginning in 1996, Winfrey began operating a book club. She selected books and then approximately one month later had an hour long show featuring the author of the novel (or an expert on the novel in cases where the author was deceased). Butler et al. (2005) found that each of the first 48 books selected for the show became a top 150 best seller and that these sales successes lasted longer than the month the book was included in the club.

Winfrey has also successfully created commercial ventures of her own, such as the 2001 launch of O – Oprah the Magazine (Oprah Magazine). Originally conceived as a bi-monthly magazine, the initial issue's 1.6 million copies sold and quick popularity caused it to be upgraded to a monthly

publication within 6 months of release (Peterson, 2003). Unlike even other celebrity magazines, this publication was definitively connected with Winfrey, even to the point of only featuring her picture of the cover of every issue. Its immediate success was attributed to the power of Winfrey's brand. Advertising executive Roberta Finkle commented "[m]y theory is that you could put out a magazine, call it Oprah, put her picture on the cover, and have blank pages inside and it would still sell" (Kuczynski, 2000). Oprah Magazine now averages selling 2.4 million issues a month split roughly equally between subscription and newsstand sales (Audit Bureau of Circulations, 2007). It is estimated that over 16 million people view each issue (Mediamark, 2007).

Winfrey's ability to influence the purchasing decisions of her followers exceeds that of a traditional talk show host. A 2007 poll of likely voters conducted by Forbes Magazine found that Winfrey's influence in the commercial sector may also translate to politics. Fourteen percent of likely voters, and 26 percent of likely voters aged between 18 and 24 years old, said that they would react positively to an endorsement by Winfrey. This was the highest percentage for any celebrity included in the survey (Andelman, 2007). A Pew Research Center poll found that 23 percent of Democrats said they would be more likely to vote for Winfrey's endorsee. Interestingly, while 69 percent of all respondents said that their vote would be unaffected, 60 percent said that they believed the endorsement would help Obama (Pew Research, 2007).

The scope of Winfrey's influence creates a unique opportunity to examine the effect of endorsements on political outcomes. First, Winfrey's endorsement was very public and acquired a large amount of attention in the popular press. Appendix 3 shows Oprah and Obama in one of those moments when she publicly declared her support for candidate Obama.

Following this point, however, a large number of stories were written peaking at nearly 550 in December, 2007. This peak reflects the second unique feature of Winfrey's endorsement. During the last months of 2007, Winfrey hosted several very large and well reported events in key primary states. For example, The Los Angeles Times reported that in order to accommodate the crowd, a Columbia, South Carolina event in December, 2007 was moved from an 18,000 seat basketball stadium to an 80,000 seat football stadium (Abcarian and Roug, 2007).

Another significant feature of Winfrey's endorsement is that this was the first time that she had ever publicly endorsed a political figure. Her approval rating dropped from 77 percent in January, 2007 to 66 percent in October, 2007, which was attributed to her endorsement being viewed as a surprising, partisan move (Pew Research Center, 2008). The lack of a history of endorsements makes her endorsement unlikely to be related in voters' views of the policies or politics of other political figures. This is different, for example, from an endorsement by another politician or by a more politically active celebrity, such as Martin Sheen or Barbara Streisand.

Moreover, from reading a sample of these stories, a large number of the articles were primarily about Winfrey and Obama which then referenced other celebrity-politician pairings.

## **2.8 OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS**

Celebrity: a popular or famous person whose fame is gotten from either the movie, music and media industry.

Celebrity endorsement: a form of advertising campaign that involves a well-known person using his or her fame to promote a political party or candidate

Consumer: an eligible voter who has exercise his other a general election organized by the electoral commission of Ghana.

Perception: the way or process of understanding or interpreting a phenomenon

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **3.0 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter deals with the research design, sampling techniques and the instruments and procedures used in the collection of the data and appropriate method of data analysis for the study.

### **3.1 RESEARCH DESIGN**

To arrive at an empirical end and ultimately the objective of the study, the survey research method was employed. This method primarily looks at the gathering of quantitative data about a particular population sample.

As Parahoo (1997: 142) puts it, a research design is the plan that describes how, when and where data are gathered or collected and analyzed. There are basically two types of survey research. The descriptive survey which mostly describes the population being studied taking into account demographic factors such as age, gender, marital status, occupation, race or ethnicity and religion to relate this information to opinion, values, beliefs, behaviors of the population under studied.

Burns and Grove (2003:201) opines that descriptive research is mostly designed to provide a picture of the situation or phenomenon as it naturally happens. It may be used to justify current practice and make judgement and also to develop theories.

Inferential is the other type of survey, it is usually termed analytical survey because it seeks to find out why people behave in a particular manner or way. Researchers usually use data from descriptive surveys to develop hypotheses and use inferential methods to test the hypotheses about what causes certain kinds of behavior. Practically, analytical or inferential surveys seek to ascertain whether there are or maybe casual relationships between certain kinds of behavior and various social and demographic characteristics of a particular people mostly captioned under research as population sample.

### **3.2 POPULATION OF THE STUDY**

The population and sample size are two critical aspects of the data gathering stage of the research. The population refers to the entire items, units or individuals under observation. According to Bryman 2004, it is the measurement of all items whose features are being measured. Bryman further explains that population can be described as the set of objects or individuals often with similar features which a researcher is interested in studying.

Again, Parahoo (1997) defines population as the total number of units from which data can be gathered or collected, such as individuals, artifacts, events or organizations. Burns and Grove (2003:234) went a step further to define eligibility criteria as a list of characteristics that are required for the membership in the target population. For the purpose for this study, the criteria for inclusion in the study were:

- Must be a registered voter within the catchment
- Must be a citizen of the Republic of Ghana
- Must have voted in any election conducted by the electoral commission of Ghana

All the respondents by their characteristics can read and write basic English language

### **3.3 SAMPLE SIZE AND SAMPLING TECHNIQUES**

As postulated by Stewart and Kamins 1993, sample size is a unit or fraction of the bigger population that the researcher is interested in. It is best described as the sample selected by the researcher to carry out his or her study.

Polit et al (2001: 234) affirm that in a sampling, a portion that represents the whole population is selected. Therefore, sampling is closely related to generalizability of the findings. Again, Saunder et al (2009) argues that if the population is unknown, the agreed sample size should be within a

range of the sampling methods used, usually with a 5% margin error. To arrive at the objective of the study, the random sampling technique was employed, where respondents were drawn at random from the population of the study. The researcher administered questionnaires to seven hundred (700) randomly sampled respondents from the research setting.

### **3.4 DATA COLLECTION METHODS AND INSTRUMENTS**

According to Parahoo (1997:52, 325), a research instrument is a tool used to collect data. An instrument is a tool designed to measure knowledge, attitude and skills. Considering the objective of the study and the characteristics of the population sample, questionnaire was the main tool used in this study. Parahoo could not have captured it more appropriately by saying “obtaining data from respondents with different experience prevents information bias and thus increases credibility of the information gathered”.

Data are facts, empirical statistics or even opinions drawn from respondents by a researcher for analysis. Saunder et al (2009). This study relied on both primary and secondary data. The former was obtained from voters (consumers) with a deliberately designed questionnaire while the latter was obtained from published articles, journals, textbooks, magazines and other relevant literature related to the study. As opined by Saunder (2007) secondary data usually aids the researcher in engaging with other researchers thereby throwing more light on concept and theories chosen for the study.

The questionnaire was designed with the closed-ended questions to solicit responses from respondents.

A questionnaire is a written list of questions which is answered by an individual(respondent) or a group of individuals(respondents) to provide data or information for a report or research.

Saunders et al (2009) explains that closed-ended questions are questions structured with alternative or multiple choice of answers from which the respondents are expected to choose from.

Again per the characteristics of the respondents, the questionnaire was administered by hand for the respondents to answer. It is imperative to state that characteristics of the respondents allowed for self-administered questionnaire.

### **3.5 DATA HANDLING AND ANALYSIS.**

This section of the study, explains the means of organizing, providing structure and elicit meaning of the gathered data. The data collected was edited, coded and organized in relations to the research questions and objectives in the chapter one.

The data was subjected to scrutiny; this ensured that all responses that were not fit for purpose regarding the objective of the study were eliminated. The data was then assigned codes and entered as statistical products in the SPSS version 20 for windows. This procedure led to the descriptive analysis of the data and a presentation of the findings was done employing tables, frequencies and charts but due to the objective for the study, an inferential analysis was also carried out to ascertain the relationship between the widely held perception that a celebrity's association or endorsement of a political party can ruin his or her career.

### **3.6 RELIABILITY AND VALIDATION OF INSTRUMENTS**

Reliability shows the extent to which the data gathered and the entire research can be trusted or used for a bigger analysis. It also explains that when other researchers use the same structure, methodology and procedures used in this study, they will arrive at the same or very familiar outcome.

To this arrive, the wording and the entire construction of the questionnaire was done under supervision with great dexterity. The objective of the study and the research questions were placed side by side in order not to lose sight of the aim of the study. The first draft of the questionnaire was sent for review and a final one was crafted after the review.

The approved questionnaire was again piloted with twenty (20) selected respondents to ensure that the respondents are able to understand and answer the questionnaire. Some issues were raised by these respondents and the correction was effected to suit the purpose of the study.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### 4.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter deals with the analysis and interpretation of data gathered from the field work through the use of questionnaires. Data was analyzed statistically with the use of frequency tables and charts.

### 4.1 FINDINGS

Demographic characteristic

To know the respondents of the study, a section of the questionnaire was allotted to gauge respondent's demography about, gender, age, educational background, marital status and employment status.

Table 1.

CHARACTERISTICS	CATEGORY	FREQUENCY
Gender	Male	293 (41.85%)
	Female	407 (58.14%)
	Total	700
Marital status	Single	479 (68.43%)
	Married	198 (28.28%)
	Divorced	23 ( 3.28%)
	Total	700
Age	18-30 years	476 (68%)
	31-40 years	224 (32% )
	Total	700

Educational background	Secondary	213 (30.43% )
	Tertiary	487 (69.57% )
	Total	700
Employment status	Unemployed	101 (14.43%)
	Employed	142 (20.28%)
	Student	457 ( 65.28%)
	Total	700

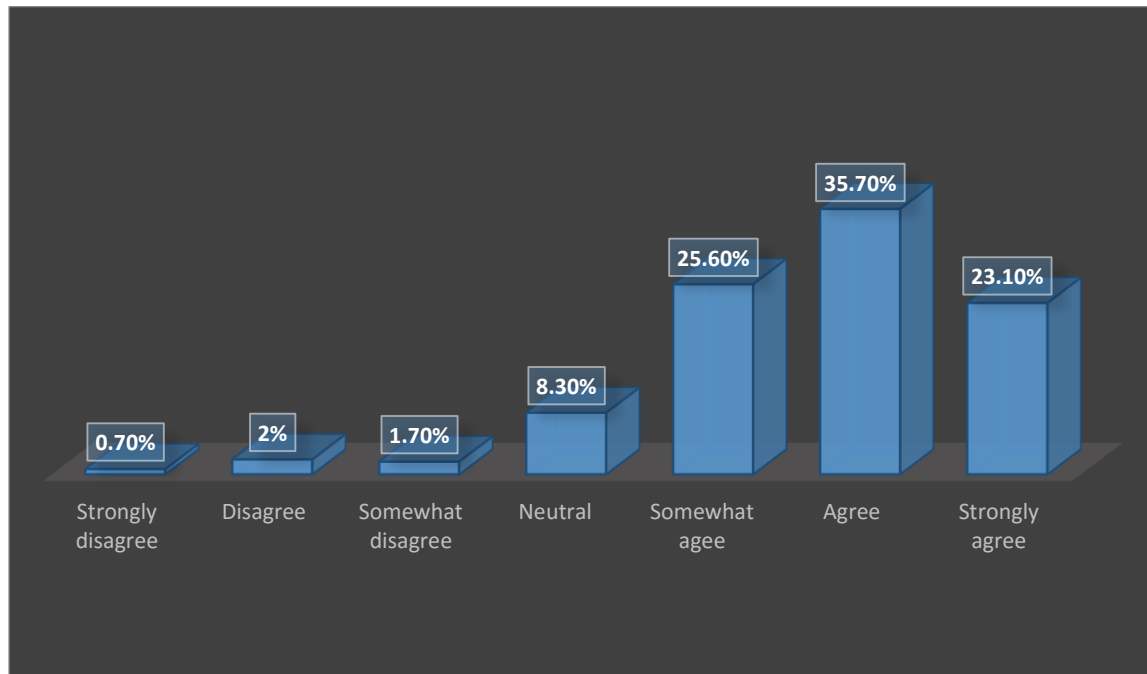
**Source: Field data 2020**

The table shows demographic information about respondents. 407 respondents representing 58.14% were females while 293 which represent 41.85% were males. 479(68.43%) respondents were single, 198(28.28%) were married and 23 (3.28%) had divorced.

476 respondents were in the 18-30 years' age bracket and the rest of the sample 224 were in the 31-40 years' age bracket. 487 respondents which represent majority of sample were in or had gain tertiary education while the rest 213 were in or had gained second circle education.

On employment, the data showed that majority (457) of the respondents were students, followed by 142 which were employed and 101 were unemployed.

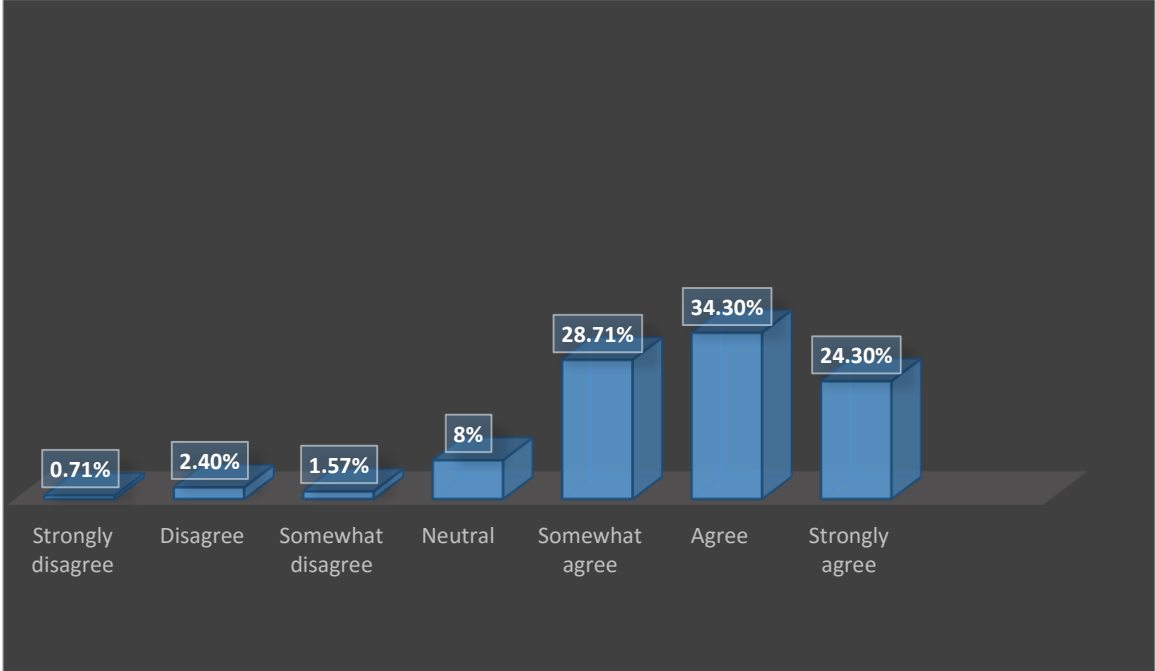
**Chart 1: Responses to whether Celebrities are used by political parties to gain recognition and popularity**



**Source: Field data 2020**

It is indicative from the chart above that consumers appreciate the aim of celebrity endorsement by politicians. A good number of respondents (25.60% ,35.70% and 23.10%) of the total sample size agree that celebrities are used for recognition and popularity. These percentages sum up to give 84.40% of the total population sample.

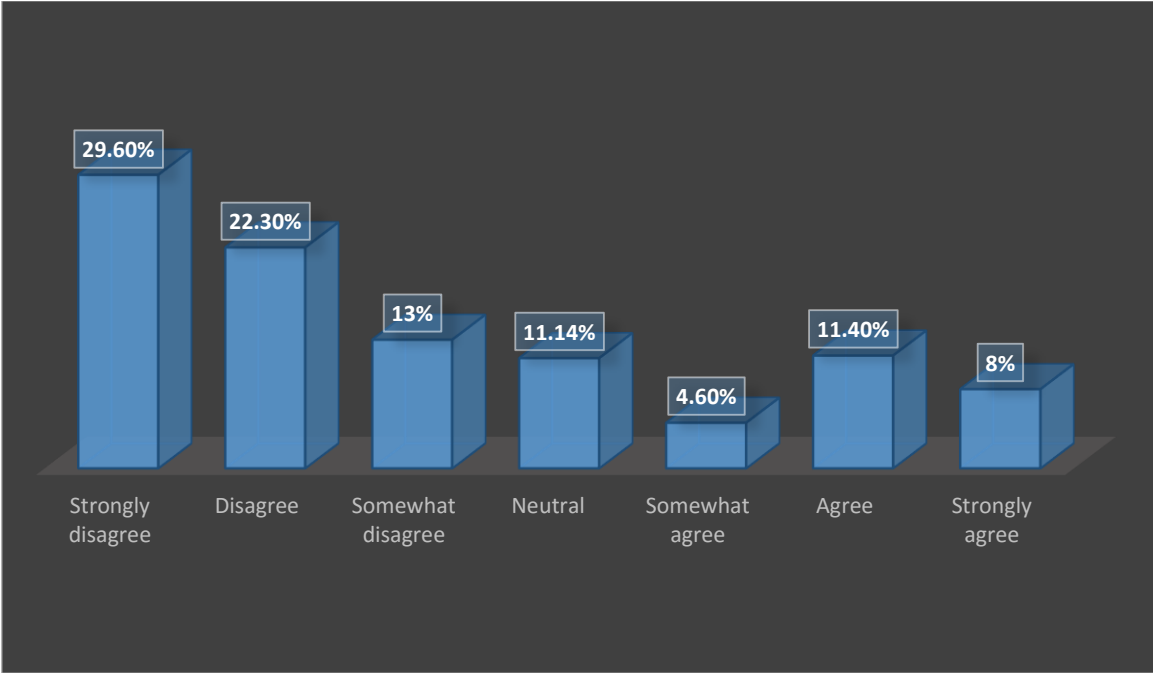
**Chart 2: Political parties use celebrities during elections because voters like and admire celebrities.**



**Source: Field data 2020**

When respondents were asked to agree or disagree with the statement regarding likeness and admiration for celebrities, (28.71%, 34.30% and 24.30%) which represent more than half (87.31%) of the respondents agreed to the statement. This supports the argument that celebrities due to their unique traits like expertise in their fields and physical attractiveness are able to attract consumers or transfer those traits onto products or candidates endorsed.

**Chart 3:). Celebrities are only attractive but do not understand political manifestoes**

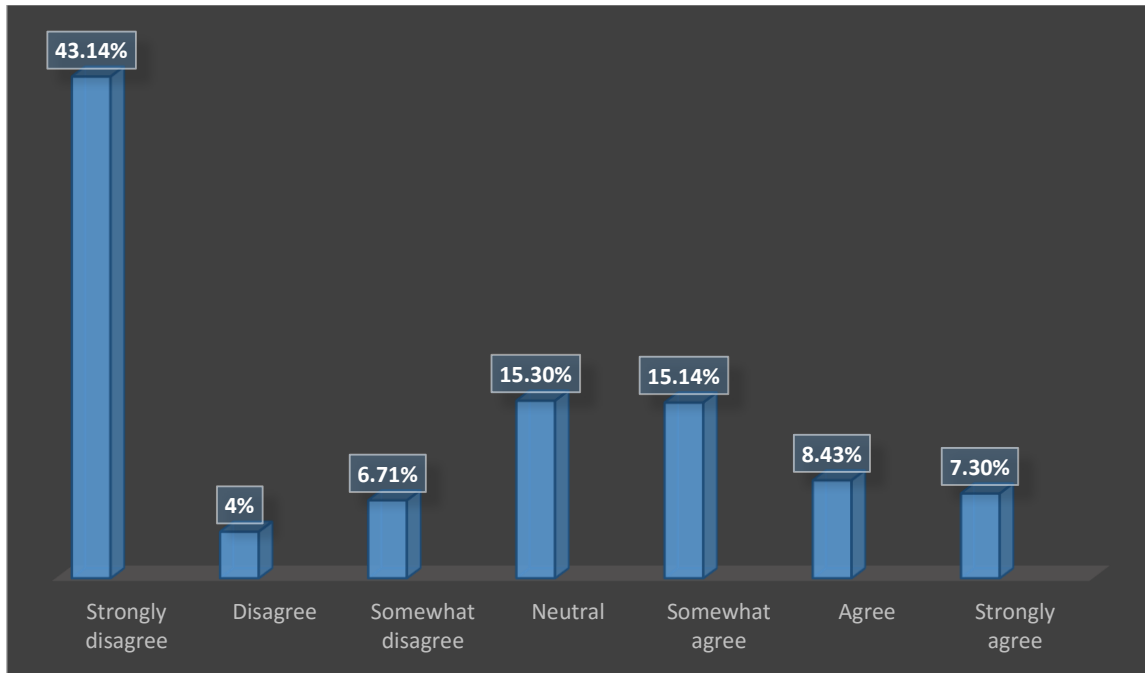


**Source: Field data 2020**

Celebrities are noted by fame and expertise in the field they are in but the data gathered showed that respondents believe that celebrities are worth more than the physical attraction as (29.60%, 22.30% and 13%) of the sample disagree that celebrities do not understand political manifestoes but are only engaged by politicians due to their attractiveness.

This finding supports Pierre Bourdieu’s construct of capital theory, where a celebrity’s capital is considered as a resource that can be transferred or migrated across fields.

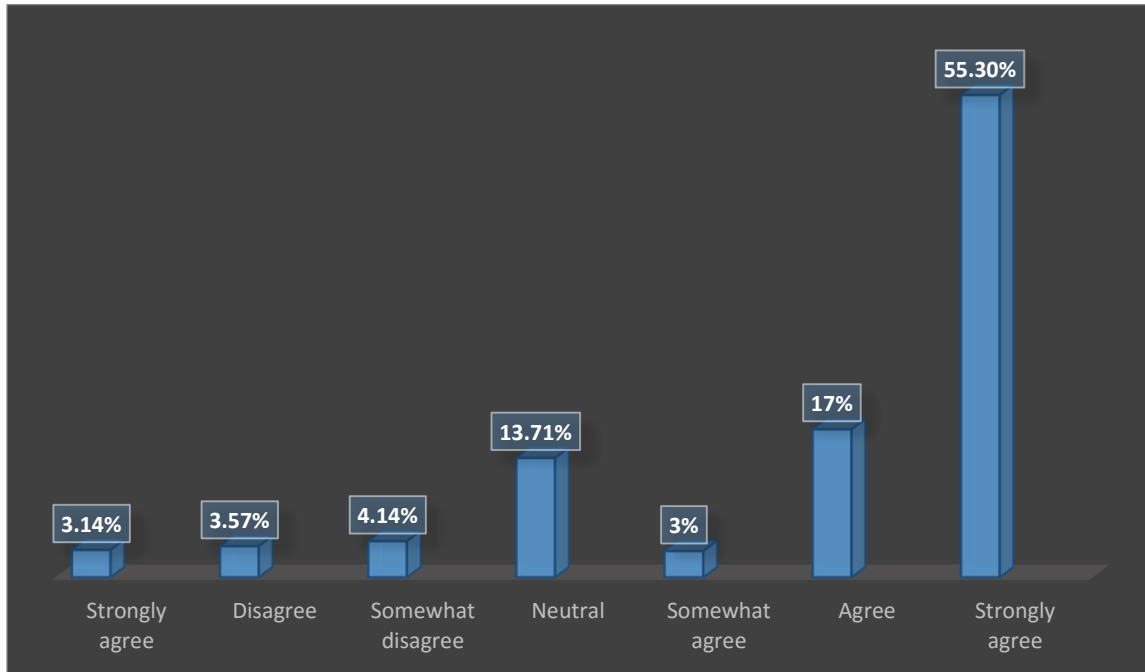
Chart 4 Celebrities are credible sources of political information or messages



**Source: Field data 2020**

The above chart shows responses regarding the credibility of political messages carried by political endorsers. Almost half of the sample thus 43.14% disagree, which supports what O'Regan 2014 captured that majority of his sample were of the view that they are less likely to trust information carried by celebrities. O'Regan stipulated that "these adults were of the perception that celebrities are not more informed about politics than the politician and thus cannot be relied on as a credible source for political information".

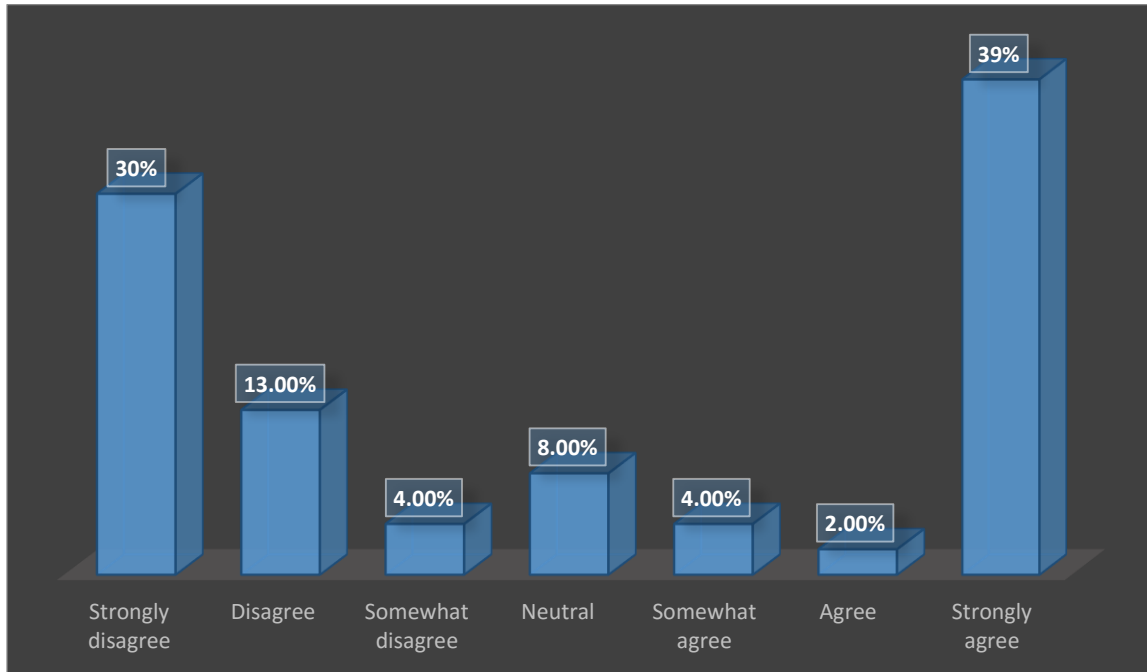
**Chart 5: Do political candidates or parties appear as attractive to you because a celebrity has endorsed him or her?**



**Source: Field data 2020**

The chart shows what respondents believe happens to a political party or candidate after a celebrity endorsement. 55.30% of the sample strongly agree that a political party or candidate becomes attractive when he or she has been endorsed by a celebrity. This finding lays credence to the meaning transfer model which preaches that a communicator or an endorser if influential can positively transfer his or her influence onto the product for consumer to believe in and act as expected. Again, this confirms the findings of Aaker 2007, that celebrity endorsement makes the message or product being conveyed very attractive and it helps customers to memorize the brand and its message.

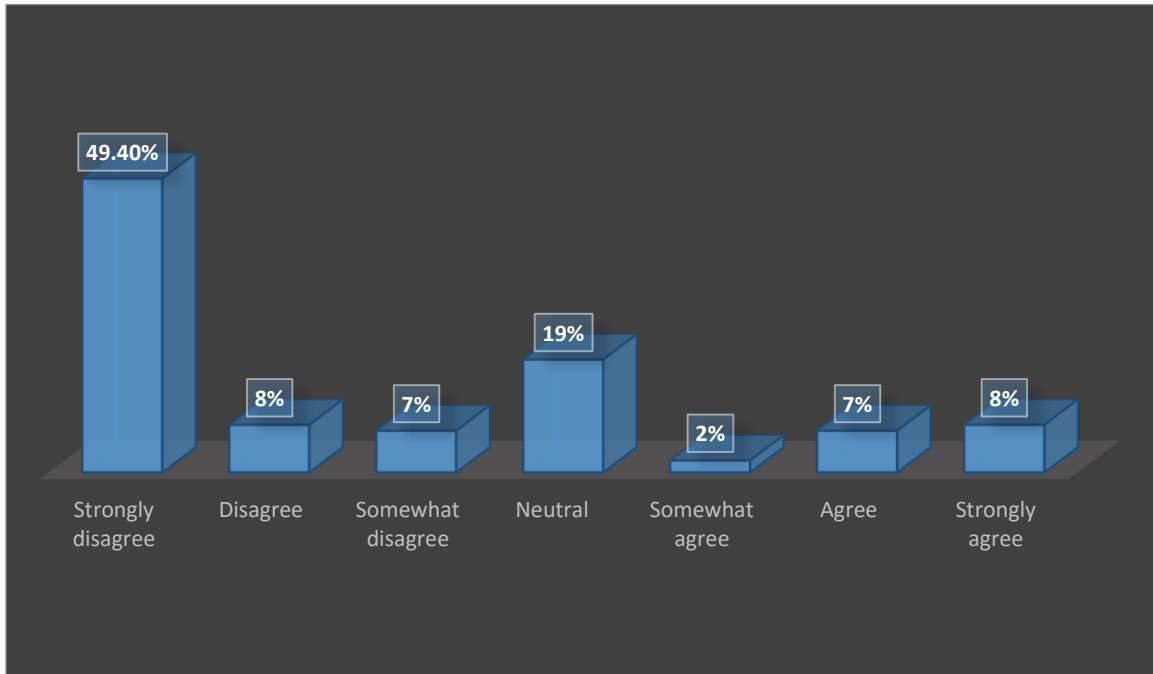
Chart 6: ). **Would you vote for a political party or candidate if your favorite celebrity has endorsed it?**



**Source: Field data 2020**

Responses generated when respondents were asked if they would vote for a particular political party because their favorite celebrity has endorsed the party or candidate gives the indication that a lot more work needs to be done by political campaign managers because 39% of the sample strongly agree to the statement while 30% of the same sample strongly disagree. What this implies is that consumers or voters may have other factors that they consider before finally making a decision as to who to vote for. None of the response is able to make a definite statement to be in the majority.

**Chart 7: Will you stop patronizing your favorite celebrity after he or she has endorsed a political party or candidate**

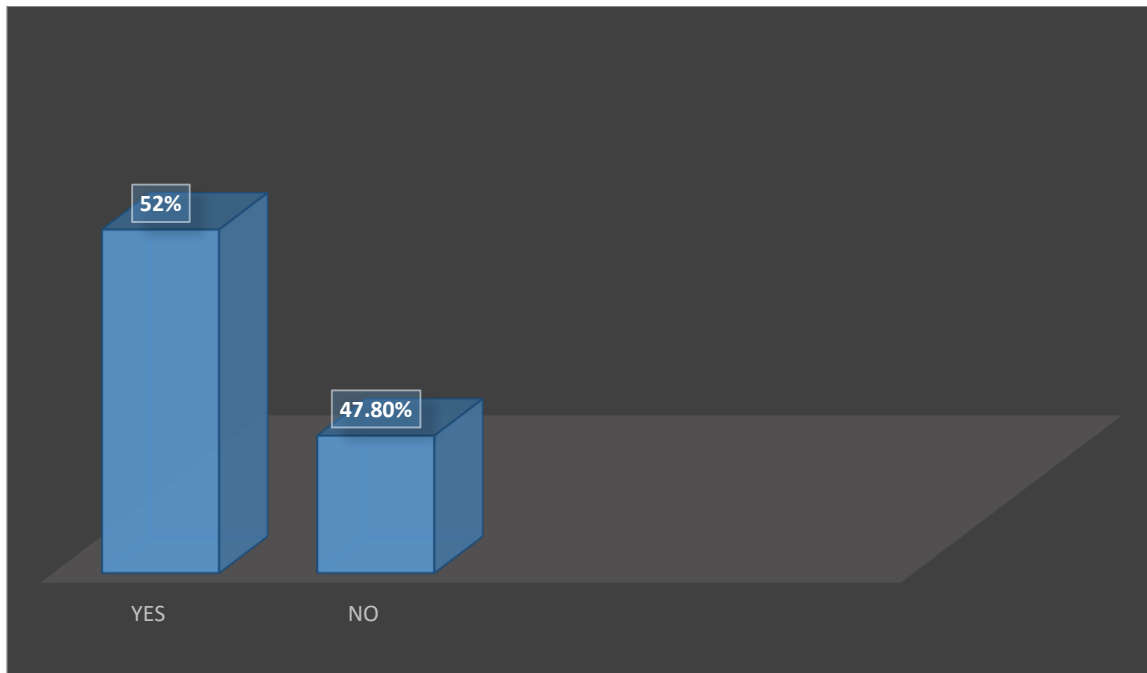


**Source: Field data 2020**

49.40% of the sample strongly disagree with the statement that sought to know whether they will stop patronizing their celebrity after he or she has endorsed a political party or candidate while 8% strongly agree that they will stop patronizing their celebrity after he or she has endorsed a political party. This finding may debunk the belief that a celebrity’s career is likely to take a nosedive after endorsing a political party or candidate.

Chart 8

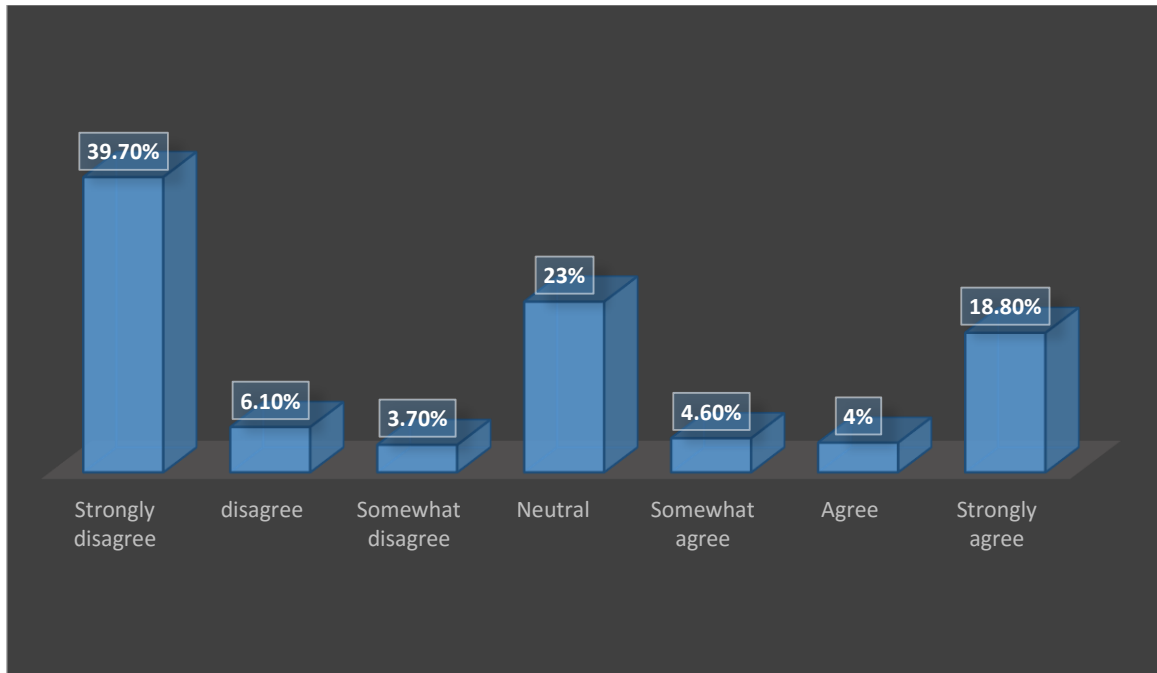
**Would you keep your celebrity as your favorite after his or her political endorsement deal?**



**Source: Field data 2020**

The above chart represent responses solicited from respondents on whether they would keep their favorite celebrity after he or she has endorsed a political party. A staggering revelation came to bare when 52% of the sample responded in the affirmative. This finding gives a sharp contrast to speculations and belief that celebrities likely to face career crisis or their careers can take a nosedive after associating or endorsing politicians.

Chart 9 Celebrities lose their fans and career after a political endorsement.



**Source: Field data 2020**

The data above shows how respondents responded to statement regarding whether a celebrity can lose his or her career after endorsing a political party or candidate. 39.70%, 6.10% and 3.70% of sample disagree while 18.80%, 4.60% and 4% agree to the statement. This goes to agree with Pierre Bourdieu's capital or resource theory. To Bourdieu, the social capital or resource can be transferred from one field to the other or cross fields if the celebrity understands how to manage it.

Driessens (2013), also confirms this by describing the transfer of social capital or celebrity resource from one field (industry or sector) to another as "migration". Driessens believes that the migration occurs when a celebrity is able to diversify and gain influence and access in and across other fields or industry.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **5.0 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter deals with discussion on the findings in the fourth chapter, conclusion and recommendations.

### **5.1 DISCUSSION**

This study was to ascertain empirically whether celebrities who endorse political parties are affected negatively especially with respect to their careers. The craze, political celebrity endorsement has become an integral part of political marketing and campaigning and even though the practice has been accepted into the political landscape for some time now, very little is empirically known about the aftermath of celebrities who endorse these political parties and candidates.

In Ghana, celebrities, mostly renowned personalities from the music and movie industries are gradually making appearances on political platforms. Although there has been a lot of debate about celebrities involving themselves in politics, others are also of the believe that celebrities just as any ordinary person should be involved in politics if they so wish ( Ephson 2008).

The research topic was chosen as a result of the belief held by many that celebrities usually lose their fan base, fame, respect and even their career after endorsing a political party or candidate but as (Smillie 2004) puts it, celebrities and politicians offer one another something that they individually lack; while elected officials have credibility, they are often not liked; and while celebrities are often well-liked and admired, they do not often have credibility to their names.

Prior researchers focused mostly on celebrity endorsement as a new trend or political marketing tool hence the shift to understand how consumers perceive celebrities who endorse political parties or candidates.

Political marketing literature and other celebrity endorsement research suggest that, the stock value and sales of a company or an organization is likely to go up when the right celebrity or influencer is associated to the product or service. What remains true is the fact that political candidates have been “commodified” and the voter has also become a sophisticated consumer and it will take rigors marketing for a political party to win the interest or vote of a voter hence the need to bring the celebrity as a stimulus.

Against this backdrop, questionnaire was structured to solicit responses on how consumers perceive their celebrities who have openly declared their support for a particular political party or candidate. To get a wider understanding of the phenomenon, 700 respondents were drawn. A statistical presentation of data gathered showed that, the females were more than the males. On a 100 percent scale, it is instructive to note that females were more enthused about answering questions regarding their favorite celebrities compared to their male counterparts.

The data showed that majority of the respondents were within the age bracket of (18-30) years. This was followed by the (31-40) years age bracket. What this means is that all respondents had attained the required voting age. (universal adult suffrage), see table 1.

It is worth mentioning that more than half of the respondents agree that celebrities are mostly used by politicians to gain recognition or to increase their popularity and visibility during elections. On a 100 percent scale, 25.60% somewhat agree ,35.70% agree and 23.10% strongly agree. Cumulatively this gives 84.40% of the total sample of the study. See chart 1.

When respondents were asked whether celebrities are used by politicians because consumers or voters like and admire them, 28.71% somewhat agree, 34.30% agree and 24.30% strongly agree

to the statement. These percentages give 87.31% of the total sample which means consumers are attracted to celebrities because they like or admire something about them.

To confirm or debunk the notion that celebrities are not best placed when it comes to politics or policies, respondents were asked to react towards the belief that celebrities are only attractive and do not understand manifestoes of these political parties that they endorse. 64.90% of the total sample disagreed with the statement as (29.60%, strongly disagree, 22.30% somewhat disagree and 13%) disagree respectively. See chart 3

Again, to measure the reactions of respondents on whether the celebrities are able to perform their roles as stimuli to political parties, respondents were asked if political parties or candidates become attractive to them because a celebrity has endorsed them; 55.30% of respondents which represent more than half of the sample strongly agreed and this supports the findings of Aaker 2007, that celebrity endorsement makes the message or product being conveyed very attractive and it helps customers to memorize the brand and its message.

During election seasons, all political parties or candidate desire is for voters to remember and choose them over their opponent(s) on the ballot paper and with the association of a known personality, political candidates become attractive and consumers are able to recall them easily.

This statement was followed by another statement which sought to know whether respondents will cast their vote for a particular political party if their favorite celebrity endorses that party or candidate. 39% strongly agree, 2% agree and 4% somewhat agree to statement which cumulatively gives 45% of the total sample while 30% strongly disagree, 13% disagree and 4% somewhat disagree this also cumulatively gives 47% of the sample. This finding suggest that the mere association of a political party or candidate cannot result in positive electoral outcome because

there may be other factors that militating against this phenomenon hence political parties and political marketing or campaigning managers must be strategic in choosing and accepting these endorsement deals.

Driessens (2013) describes the practice of celebrity endorsement as migration because is where a celebrity is able to navigate fields due to the social capital accumulated from one field.

Judging by the responses in chart 7 and 8, it is prudent to say that a celebrity's endorsement of a political party or candidate cannot be the main reason or rational for the celebrity's career to end.

Dwelling on Pierre Bourdieu's construct of capital theory, the celebrity's understanding of capital or resource he or she wields as a celebrity is very critical and how to use it across fields is also very crucial. Voters will always behave as consumers in the commercial market, their needs will always trigger the kind or type of product to go for but information available on the products they come across during their search will be the deciding factor to final purchase.

When respondents were asked if they think a celebrity is likely to lose his or her career after an endorsement deal with a political party, responses clearly depicted that a celebrity cannot lose his or her career after an endorsement political deal. On a 100 percent scale, (39.70%, 6.10% and 3.70%) disagree to the assertion which represent (49.50%) while (18.80%, 4.60% and 4%) which sum up to 27.40% agree to the assertion. It is imperative to note that the number of respondents that fell in the neutral bracket on this particular statement were quite significant compared to other statements. 161 respondents which represent 23% of the sample chose neutral which means they could not be definite on this response. This finding gives the understanding that even though consumers were not able to make a definite statement, a fan lost after an endorsement of a political party can be considered as a lost to the endorser but when the source capital gained in one field is

managed well then the celebrity can make the migration across fields and still remain relevant. Again, the status as celebrity is fleeting hence the need for personalities who wield that resource to look for ways to reconnect to their fans and remain as the attractive, trustworthy character they have known over the years. **(See chart 9).**

## **5.2 CONCLUSION**

The overarching aim of the study was to examine consumer perception of political celebrity endorsers and ascertain whether a celebrity's endorsement of political candidate or party can ruin his or her career. A plethora of literature suggest that celebrity endorsement is a strategic tool used by both business organizations and political parties. Per the findings of this study, it is evident that political marketing and campaigning cannot be complete without the involvement of famous personalities (celebrities). It also became apparent that a celebrity's career cannot just end or take a nosedive because of an endorsement of a political party or candidate however the social capital of the celebrity if managed well can be transferred from one field to another. Again, from the findings of this study, it was realized that although celebrity endorsement can be considered as a strategic political marketing tool, some factors militated against this phenomenon. Top of these factors is credibility of the endorser, this is because consumers or voters do not consider information emanating from celebrities as credible. Consumers see celebrities as attractive personalities with awesome features, characteristics, traits and expertise hence political marketing and campaign managers must treat celebrities as stimulus to get voters onto their side but not handlers of political information. Drawing inspiration from Pierre Bourdieu's construct of capital theory, (Driessens 2013) finding and the findings of this study, the inference can be made that celebrities who endorse political parties and candidates may not necessarily lose their career rather

when the brand or image is managed well the celebrity gains more prominence even though there are chances that he or she may suffer some level of negative ratings.

### **5.3 RECOMMENDATION**

With Oprah Winfrey's public endorsement of Barack Obama in the run-up to the 2008 US presidential elections, many political marketing and campaigning managers have gotten a solid ground to make the argument that a celebrity's endorsement of a political candidate has the ability of raking in more numbers since thus the vision of political campaigning.

Juxtaposing existing knowledge to the findings of this research, it is recommended that celebrities be more proactive in building their brand or image as that is their capital in the game. Because when the brand is formidable, the social capital becomes trustworthy and enviable.

From the analyzed data, consumers strongly opposed the perception that celebrities do not understand political manifestos, this goes to say that consumers appreciate that celebrities are also able to interrogate issues put forward by political parties during elections hence their endorsement must be based on proper understanding of the policies a particular political party wants to enforce when given the power. This can increase the ratings of the celebrity because consumers either fans of the celebrity or not will appreciate the endorsement if they realize it is for the greater good and not myopic gains.

Lee-Marshment, 2003; Newman, 1999 captured this by asserting that, voters have needs and interest that must be identified and properly satisfied if parties want to build relationship with them. When the consumer realizes that his or her own needs are prioritized by both the politician and celebrity endorsing the politician he or she feels happy.

To future researchers who would want to take another look at this phenomenon, it is recommended that a qualitative approach is used to allow for more in-depth responses.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1



Appendix 2



Appendix3



**GHANA INSTITUTE OF JOURNALISM**  
**SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH**

Dear sir/madam,

I'm a graduate student of the Ghana Institute of Journalism undertaking a research on consumer perception of celebrity political endorsers. The study is purely academic with the objective of assessing consumers' perception of political celebrity endorsers. The questions have been put in sections based on the various specific objectives of the research.

I would appreciate it if you assist me in answering these questions. In order to ensure anonymity and confidentiality, pseudonyms will be assigned to you during the writing of the research findings. All information obtained will be treated in strict confidentiality. Each question is followed by a list of alternatives to choose from. Please tick the box and write where appropriate.

**SECTION A: BACKGROUND DATA OF RESPONDENTS**

1) What is your gender?

Male {  }

Female {  }

2) Age?

i 18-30years {  } ii 31- 40years {  } iii 41-50years {  } iv 50years and above {  }

3) What is your employment status?

Employed (  )      Unemployed (  )      Retired (  )      Student (  )      Other (please specify) .....

4) What is your marital status?

Single (  )

Married ( )

Divorced ( )

Widow ( )

5) Educational background

Basic education { } secondary education{ } tertiary education{ } non formal education { }

Section B Consumer perception of political celebrity endorsements

The extent to which celebrities have been used as political endorsers

kindly rate these statements to agree or disagree, on a scale of 1-7, where 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=somewhat disagree, 4=neutral, 5=somewhat agree, 6=agree and 7=strongly agree

6. Celebrities are used by political parties to gain recognition and popularity

1. Strongly disagree { }

2. Disagree { }

3. Somewhat disagree { }

4. Neutral { }

5. Somewhat agree { }

6. Agree { }

7. Strongly agree { }

7. Political parties use celebrities during elections because voters like and admire celebrities

1. Strongly disagree ( )

2. Disagree ( )

3. Somewhat disagree ( )

4. Neutral ( )

5. Somewhat agree ( )

6. Agree ( )

7. Strongly agree ( )

8. Political parties believe celebrities can influence voters for their political fortunes.

1. Strongly disagree ( )

2. Disagree ( )

3. Somewhat disagree ( )

4. Neutral ( )

5. Somewhat agree ( )

6. Agree ( )

7. Strongly agree ( )

9). Political parties use celebrity endorsement to compete with their opponents.

1. Strongly disagree ( )

2. Disagree ( )

3. Somewhat disagree ( )

4. Neutral ( )

5. Somewhat agree ( )

6. Agree ( )

7. Strongly agree ( )

10). Political parties at all cost need celebrities during elections

1. Strongly disagree ( )

2. Disagree ( )

3. Somewhat disagree ( )

4. Neutral ( )

5. Somewhat agree ( )

6. Agree ( )

7. Strongly agree ( )

11). Celebrities are only attractive but do not understand political manifestoes

1. Strongly disagree ( )

2. Disagree ( )

3. Somewhat disagree ( )

4. Neutral ( )

5. Somewhat agree ( )

6. Agree ( )

7. Strongly agree ( )

#### Section C: How consumers perceive political celebrity endorsers

kindly rate these statements to agree or disagree, on a scale of 1-7, where 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=somewhat disagree, 4=neutral, 5=somewhat agree, 6=agree and 7=strongly agree

12). Celebrities are credible sources of political information or messages

1.Strongly disagree ( )

2. Disagree ( )

3.Somewhat disagree ( )

4. Neutral ( )

5. Somewhat agree ( )

6. Agree ( )

7. strongly agree ( )

13). Do political candidates or parties appear as attractive to you because a celebrity has endorsed him or her?

1. strongly disagree ( )

2. Disagree ( )

3. Somewhat disagree ( ).

4. Neutral ( ).

5. Somewhat agree ( )

6. Agree ( )

7. Strongly agree ( )

14). Would you vote for a political party or candidate if your favorite celebrity has endorsed it?

1. Strongly disagree ( )

2. Disagree ( )

3. Somewhat disagree ( )

4. Neutral ( )

5. Somewhat agree ( )

6. Agree ( )

7. Strongly agree ( )

15). Will you stop patronizing your favorite celebrity after he or she has endorsed a political party or candidate?

1. Strongly disagree ( )

2. Disagree ( )

3. Somewhat Disagree { }

4. Neutral ( )

5. Somewhat agree ( )

6. Agree ( )

7. Strongly agree ( )

16). Does a political party or candidate come to mind once you see a celebrity who has endorsed the party or candidate?

1. Strongly disagree ( )

2. Disagree ( )

3. Somewhat Disagree ( )

4. Neutral ( )

5. Somewhat agree ( )

6. Agree ( )

7. Strongly agree ( )

17). Celebrities are trustworthy just as the political parties they endorse.

1. Strongly disagree ( )

2. Disagree ( )

3. Somewhat Disagree ( )

4. Neutral ( )

5. Somewhat agree ( )

6. Agree ( )

7. Strongly agree ( )

18). Would you keep your celebrity as your favorite after his or her political endorsement deal?

YES { }

NO { }

19) Celebrities endorse politicians to make more money and/or fame

1. Strongly disagree ( )

2. Disagree ( )

3. Somewhat Disagree ( )

4. Neutral ( )

5. Somewhat agree ( )

6. Agree ( )

7. Strongly agree ( )

20) Celebrities lose their fans and career after a political endorsement.

1. Strongly disagree { }

2. Disagree { }

3. Somewhat disagree { }

4. Neutral { }

5. Somewhat agree { }

6. Agree { }

7. Strongly agree { }

Thank you!