



Celebrity Advertisement and Young Voters' Choice of Political Candidates in Ghana: Looking Through the Lens of Tertiary Students

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Authors' contributions

The two authors collaborated in preparing the article. Author RA was responsible for putting together the literature needed for the study, performing the analysis and preparing the first draft of the article. Author EA was responsible for the design of the instrument, data collection and write up of the introduction and the literature review. Authors RA and EA together read through the manuscript to put it in good shape. Both authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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ABSTRACT

The drive to win elections by political candidates has resulted in the employment of marketing tools such as celebrity advertising. Celebrities have been engaged in endorsing various political candidates. The current study sought to investigate the influence of celebrity advertisement on young voters' choice of political candidates in Ghana. The study employed the quantitative technique through regression statistics to establish the influence. A sample of about 400 students (respondents) was drawn for the study. The results showed that there was weak positive but significant influence of celebrity advertisement on young voters' choice of political candidates. This indicates that political parties that engage celebrities in advertising for their candidates and brands stand the chance of winning over young voters to vote for their candidates. It is recommended that celebrity advertising should be designed in such a way that it could improve the capacity of creating long lasting impact in the minds of young voters, influencing young voters to better recognize

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political candidates at voting points as well as influencing recalling of political candidates during national elections. Policies makers should put measures in place to regulate the contents and type of adverts that can be run by celebrities for political parties since most of these adverts are directed to and consumed by young voters.

Keywords: Celebrity advertising; politics; celebrity endorsement; young voters' choice; political candidates; political parties.

1. INTRODUCTION

Marketing has become an important tool in politics in general over the past few years [1]. According to Dermody and Hanmer-Lloyd [2] political parties heavily relied on advertising to influence public opinion towards their parties and their leaders. In trying to become popular among young voters, political parties have resorted to the usage of celebrities to endorse their political brands. Celebrity involvement in politics in its various forms, has become a popular topic in political discourses, and can also be recast as the blurring of pop culture, political platforms and stars (Street, 2012). Celebrity endorsements has been regarded as a marketing communications tool (Kang & Herr, 2006). Thus, politics and endorsements have become increasingly intertwined for some years now [3].

Celebrity endorsement is a form of advertising strategy. According to Bovee and Arens (1996), advertising is the non-personal communication of information, usually paid for and usually persuasion in nature about products (goods and services) or ideas by identified sponsors through various media. The British Code of Advertising Practice defines advertising as a paid-for communication addressed to the public or a section of it, the purpose of which is to influence the opinions or behavior of those to whom it is addressed. Celebrities are perceived as individuals who are directly associated with product category being advertised [4]. The use of celebrities in advertising has become the norm of the day because celebrities are seen as credible source of information that customers rely on in their purchasing decision making [5].

The idea in celebrity advertising is that positive celebrity personality characteristics (attractiveness, likability, expertise etc.) are transferable between the brand of the celebrity and the brand(s) such celebrities are advertising and results in desirable advertising campaign outcomes [6]. A rich literature on spokespersons and endorsers and their effects on consumer

and commercial marketing and marketing communication is present [7,8]. Despite the pervasiveness of celebrity political advertisement, the effective use of celebrity political advertisement, the selection of suitable advertisers, and celebrity political advertisement effects on voters' responses are relatively under researched in the political marketing and communication field [9,10,11].

Although majority of studies have investigated the influence of celebrity advertisement on products or brands [12,13], little research has been conducted on such advertisement with respect to politics. According to Street (2012), there has been little effort to understand the role of celebrity advertisement within the larger political marketing strategy during election campaigns. However, it is debatable whether such results (celebrity advertising results) can simply be transferred to the political sphere [14]. In Ghana, the limited amount of research that has been carried out using political marketing has as well focused mainly on political marketing strategies [15]. Celebrity advertising research in Ghana is woefully inadequate [16,4]. The current study thus seek to achieve the objective of finding the influence of celebrity advertising on young voters' choice of political candidate in Ghana.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This section of the article looks at the theory that underpins the study and the relevant literature on the various concepts of the study.

3. THEORETICAL REVIEW

3.1 Transfer Theory

The basic tenet of the Transfer Theory as propounded by McCracken, [17] asserts that celebrities encompass a wide variety of implications which are connecting to demographic facts, character and standard of

living types which independently but sometimes cooperatively impact consumer decision making procedures. This underscores the assertion that a celebrity does not support one connotation but rather a plethora of different imports [17]. According to Fowles (as cited in Erdogan, 1999 [18]) and Hoekman and Bosmans [19] advertisers' justification for signing celebrities to endorse products (in this context, political parties and or candidates) is that the general public ingest imageries of celebrities. Gupta [20] discloses that cultural meanings are also associated to the merchandise not only through text but also through personalities associated with adverts. Advertisers should discover the imagery that contains a celebrity in order to decide whether these meanings are necessary for brands since the overall efficiency of the endorser hinge on, in fragment, on the denotations he or she take along to the endorsement process. Being much pronounced in celebrity endorsement for political parties and or contestants.

4. CONCEPTUAL REVIEW

4.1 Celebrity Advertising

The intent behind celebrity advertising is that constructive celebrity persona capabilities (splendor, friendliness, information etc.) are exchangeable amongst the brand of the celebrity and the logo(s) those celebrities are advertising and outcomes in suitable marketing campaign aftermaths [6]. Celebrity commercial considers classes, celebrity authorization and celebrity endorsement. A celebrity endorsement is the utmost commonplace manner that large organizations use celebrity reputation to approve an advertising campaign [21]. This marketing logic in such communication strategy usually applies in the context of political marketing where political parties use celebrities to market their political figures to their target electorates so as to promote their candidanship within political landscape [22,2] (von Sikorski, 2017). Such endorsements usually take in the using of the identity and resemblance of a celebrity in a print or television advertising campaign. It has been described as a habitual policy for bringing attention to a brand. This paper conceptualizes two aspect of celebrity advertising as critical to the success of any celebrity advertising campaign: Celebrity advertising roles and celebrity persona features.

Advertising acts crucially in the development of buyers' purchasing objective and real successive acquisition. These characters are independently certain and exclusive yet the collaborating interaction amid such obligation jointly impacts purchasing choices of consumers. This results in generating the atmosphere for keeping and increasing sales. Consumers obviously recall endorsed products than unendorsed brands. Celebrity advertising plays convincing part in persuading consumers to buy the endorsed brand [23] via strategies which include confronting target listener's societal standing, encouraging pleasure, restraining obtainability, growing superb institutions, constructing sensational attraction and many others. Celebrity advertising additionally escalates the recollecting and acknowledgment competences of consumers for the advocated emblem [24]. Further, endorsed products come to be more appealing to clients when the endorser is held to be clever to the objective spectators. Likewise, the material being advocated through celeb endorsers for recommended brands impacts consumers to buy recommended brands [25].

Celebrity publicity hooks customers' responsiveness [26] and continuously reminds them (clients) of the endorsed trademark [27]. Khatri, [28] observed that celebrity advertising offers material that help clients' valuation of the endorsed brand(s). Integrity of endorsers complements brand worth and brand image which is transmitted to clients who locate robust affection with the chosen celebrity [28]. Higher charges connected to endorsed brands by superstars shows merchandise superiority and customers are more likely to purchase these brands, thereby supporting the discern stable to produce supplementary boundary that might not be brought in anywhere such brands aren't endorsed [29]. Correspondingly, celebrity advertising augments brand fairness and affordable point of the endorsed brand in the marketplace area [30]. Hsu and McDonald, (2002) also establish that endorsing a product with numerous celebrities may be useful for attracting many audiences to whom the manufactured goods is meant.

4.2 Young Voters Choice of Political Candidates

Young people's involvement in politics can take a variety of forms, similar to that of other age group [31] consequently further research ought to be accomplished in political advertising and

marketing on this segment of the vote casting populace [32]. Vote casting constitutes handiest detail of a far greater repertoire of political participation, however it's the simple democratic act that all citizens need to carry out on a regular foundation. Young people are a number of the human populace least possible to show out and vote. Attempts by way of political events to have engaged younger voters seemed to have been inadequate. Young voters are specifically keen to observe the feel of participation, of 'having a say'; the relaxation of the electorate is probable to quote a sense of civic duty or obligation to vote. In line with Marcelo, Lopez and Kirby [33] younger citizens fall among 18-29 years voting age, of which maximum of them are first time voters (Esser & De Vreese, 2007).

According to Chou [7], a comment on younger electorate is commendable as young adults reverence for celebrities makes them an appealing aim for celebrity demands [3]. Aside, young votes' outlooks concerning political hopefuls are frequently unsure [34] that makes them a promotion intention [35]. Moreover, notwithstanding the truth that they display, they portray a decrease in participation and concern in politics and polls, connecting with the right message and through the right intermediate can grow younger citizens' involvement within the political system [36] and then inspiring young voters to vote is indispensable due to the fact their balloting behaviors can turn out to be routine [37]. Young people are not 'victims' or 'complicated' as regularly claimed, however diverse and vital stakeholders in democracy [38,39].

The likelihood to select a political candidate during elections represents voting intentions or choice of political candidate [40,41] which is similar to customer purchase intention except contextual evaluation (Hughes & Dann, 2006). Thus, likelihood to choose a particular endorsed political candidate is usually the best approach to measure voter's choice [41]. Others see it as preference for a particular political candidate at the time of voting [41]. Of the different kind of celebrity political endorsement, performer/idol endorsements and political character endorsements are widely wide-spread and produce sturdy imprints on electorate [42,43]. Different studies, though, proves that the attitudes of which we might not be conscious, inclusive of our implicit (e.g., unconscious) possibilities, can expect balloting picks, which may also query the properly-functioning

democracy [41]. Voter choice and selection making has acquired pretty a tremendous interest within the extant political advertising and political science literature [43].

Um [44] additionally found out that human people's view of celebrity endorsement of political aspirants as having no bearing on their very own vote casting conduct but manipulating that of others by means of inspiring them to cast their vote for recommended political applicants. Wood & Herbst [45] discovered that, in comparison to the effect on pals and circle of relatives, idol endorsements made an insignificant influence on first-time citizens' balloting picks. Payne, Hanlon & Twomey [46] specified that, nonetheless Hollywood huge name endorsements accelerated the balloting intents of young voters; they also improved the propensity of votes deciding on the rival instead of the advertisement sponsor. Endorser knowledge is a vital contributing issue of political endorsement consequences [10]. But, heroes are most at times seen as more appealing, which may be handed directly to the hero's recommended aspirant and party see [45]. After observing the propensity of young adults to behave like their preferred celebrities, it was advocated that idol endorsements may also additionally have an impact on young folks' political alternatives and reactions [3] (Yue & Cheung, 2000).

5. MATERIALS AND METHODS

5.1 Research Design

The study employed the explanatory research design in accordance with the nature of the scientific enquiry supporting this study. Consequently, being driven by the logic of cause-effect relationship the constructs of interest were— celebrity advertising (Independent variable), and young voters' choice of political candidates (Dependent variable). Siding with Zikmund, Babin, Carr and Griffin [47] explanatory design research is piloted in the bid to ascertain the degree and nature of relationships. The study employed the quantitative research approach built on the strength of the study's aim under study, explicit objectives/hypotheses and the nature of the primary data to be collected and analyzed. The concepts (celebrity advertising, and voters' choice of political candidates) were by nature calculable and subject to statistical influence.

Table 1. Reliability results

Construct	Cronbach's alpha	No of Items
Celebrity advertising	0.725	5
Young voter's choice	0.803	4

Source: Field Survey (2019)

5.2 Population

The study population therefore included young voters in Cape Coast Technical University, Ghana. An estimated population of 2500 young voters in Cape Coast Technical University were targeted in this study (Students Records CCTU, 2019).

5.3 Sampling Procedure

Before selecting sample to be surveyed, it becomes necessary to determine the representative sample size. A minimum sample size of 344 was targeted and obtained through Krejcie and Morgan's [48] table. However, in order to avoid the possibility of obtaining lesser return rate, 450 respondents were targeted but 400 respondents were finally used for the data analysis in this surveyed. Ideally, larger sample size in quantitative studies are preferable to lesser sample size [49]. The respondents were selected through the simple random sampling technique because it is a major assumption underlying causal studies.

5.4 Data Collection Instrument

The research tool that was used for data collection was structured questionnaires. The questionnaire essentially employed the closed-ended questioning patterns to approaching the measurement of the principle gadgets that made up the scale. A 5-point Likert scale was used to quantify the opinion of the participants regarding the items that measured the constructs considered on this study.

5.5 Reliability and Validity

Reliability and validity are predominantly the two fundamental constituents to be well thought-out in the bid to gauge a particular instrument. A minimum cut-off point of 0.7 is required for a scale to be reliable [50]. The celebrity advertising was reliable with Cronbach's alpha of 0.725 (5 items) was above the minimum standard as postulated by Pallant [51]. The young voter's choice of political candidate construct was

reliable (Cronbach's alpha=0.803 with 4 items) which met the minimum cut off point.

5.6 Data Processing and Analysis

The responses were edited, coded, entered into SPSS version 22.0 for the analysis. Composite variables were formed for each of the constructs and this improved universal approach to data analysis. The data were analyzed and interpreted with descriptive statistical techniques such as mean, standard deviation, frequency count and percentage. These techniques were extensively applied to analyse the demographic characteristics of the respondents that were surveyed. Regarding the objective of the study, an inferential statistical tool was employed. Thus, regression was conducted to find out how much variance in the dependent variable (young voters' choice of political candidates) were explained by the independent variable (celebrity advertising).

6. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

6.1 Demographic Information

The demographic information of the respondents is presented in Table 2. The study utilized descriptive statistics such as frequency and percentage to assess these features of the respondents surveyed in the study. The findings are presented and discussed to that effect.

With respect to the sex of the respondents it was discovered that majority of the respondents were female (201) representative of 50.2% whilst the remaining 49.8% (199) were males. The age range of the respondents show that majority of the young voters (38.5%) were in the 22-25 years category. About 35.7% of the young voters were within 26-29 years whilst the remaining 25.8% were within 18-21 years category. Also, from Table 2, an in-depth observation of the qualification of the respondents indicated that majority of the respondents (204) were HND constituting 51.0%. It was discovered that (30.8%) of the respondents were B-TECH (123) whilst the remaining 73 representing (18.3%) were Diploma students.

6.2 Objective: Effect of Celebrity Advertising on Young Voters' Choice of Political Candidates

For regression analysis to be validated, it is recommended for the dependent variable to be normally distributed. The normality of the dependent variable-young voter's choice of political candidates- was assessed with Skewness and Kurtosis. The findings indicated that choice of political candidate was normally distributed because the scores for both Skewness and Kurtosis were closer to 1. The facts are presented in Table 3. Thus, Skewness score of 0.545 and Kurtosis scores of -0.421

were respectfully recorded for the dependent variable (young voter's choice of political candidate).

The study sought to assess the effect of celebrity advertising on young voters' choice of political candidates. This was conducted to assess the sole effect of celebrity advertising devoid of personality characteristics of the celebrity used in such political campaign strategy. Composite variable was created for voters' choice of political candidate. Standard multiple regression analysis was conducted to that effect. The findings are presented in Tables 4, 5 and 6.

Table 2. Demographic information

Variable	Options	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Sex	Male	199	49.8%
	Female	201	50.2%
Age	18-21 years	103	25.8%
	22-25 years	154	38.5%
	26-29 years	143	35.7%
Qualification	B-Tech	123	30.8%
	Diploma	73	18.3%
	HND	204	51.0%

Source: Field Survey, (2019)

Table 3. Test of normality

			Statistic	Std. error
Young Voters' choice of political candidates	Mean		2.5594	.04878
	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Lower Bound	2.4690	
		Upper Bound	2.6635	
	5% Trimmed Mean		2.5299	
	Median		2.5000	
	Variance		.952	
	Std. Deviation		.97561	
	Minimum		1.00	
	Maximum		5.00	
	Range		4.00	
	Interquartile Range		1.44	
	Skewness		.545	.122
	Kurtosis		-.421	.243

Source: Field Survey, (2019)

Table 4. Model summary^b

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Durbin Watson
1	.339 ^a	.115	.104	1.312

a. Predictors: (Constant), better political recall at the point of voting, creation of faster awareness about the political candidate., creation of a longer lasting impact in the young voters' mind., better political candidate recognition at the point of voting, capturing young voters' attention easily.

b. Dependent Variable: Voters' choice of political candidate

Source: Field Survey, (2019)

The findings in the model summary provides the information to that effect. In the first instance, it was revealed that there was a weak positive correlation between the predictors and young voters' choice of political candidate ($R = .339^a$), with lower levels of the predictors being associated with lower levels of young voters' choice of political candidate. Regarding the predictive capacity of the model, it was also found that the predictors accounted for only 11.5% ($R^2 = .115$) positive variance in voters' choice of political candidate. It therefore means political parties in Ghana together with their branches in Ghana must use celebrity advertising as part of the political campaign targeting university student in CCTU in particular and Ghana at large. The conditions surrounding the predictors should also be improved significantly so as to influence voters' choice of political candidates through celebrity advertising.

The findings pertaining to the justification of the reliability of the results depicted in the model summary Table 4 are showed in Table 5. Observation of the significant level of the model showed that the 11.5% variance in the voters' choice of political candidate caused by the changes in the predictors was statistically significant ($p=0.000$). It can be concluded therefore that 11.5% change in voters' choice of political candidate was not due to chance but by the scientific interaction among the predictors actually caused that positive change in voters' choice of political candidate.

The finding supports the empirical claims that celebrity advertising is a significant predictor of choice of political candidates [22,40,12,27,7] (Kapoor, 2013; von Sikorski, 2017), especially among young voters [52,7] and especially those who are highly educated [7] (Negi, Fern & Jeedigunta, 2018; Nisbett & DeWalt, 2016; Nownes, 2017).

The study further sought to reveal the contributions of the predictors to the 11.5% positive variance in the voters' choice of political candidates. The findings are presented in Table 5. The findings regarding the contributions of the individual predictors to the 11.5% variance in voters' choice of political candidates showed that creation of a longer lasting impact in the young voters' mind ($Beta=0.152$: $p=0.007$) and better political candidate recognition at the point of voting ($Beta=0.175$: $p=0.002$) all made statistically significant and positive contribution to predicting the 11.5% positive variance in voters' choice of political candidates among the young electorates in Ghana when the effect of other variables in the model were held constant for each of the variables when the contribution of each of the variables to the 11.5% change in voters' choice of political candidate was considered. These roles all made statistically significant positive contribution to the positive change in voters' choice of political candidates in that their contributions to predicting the positive change in voters' choice of political candidates in the model were not by chance but true scientific interaction in the model.

Table 5. ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of squares	Df	Mean square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	43.722	5	8.744	10.252	.000 ^b
	Residual	336.055	394	.853		
	Total	379.777	399			

a. Dependent Variable: Voters' choice of political candidate

Source: Field Survey, (2019)

Table 6. Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.596	.150		10.637	.000
	CA5	.016	.049	.019	.338	.736
	CA2	.019	.064	.018	.290	.772
	CA3	.147	.054	.152	2.722	.007
	CA4	.163	.052	.175	3.136	.002
	CA1	.092	.048	.098	1.895	.059

Source: Field Survey, (2019)

Further, it was revealed that the rest of the individual variables in the model made some contribution to predicting the positive change in voters' choice to vote for politicians advertised by celebrities. But such contributions were not statistically significant ($p=0.736$, $p=0.772$, and $p=0.059$) when the influence of other variables in the model were held constant for each of the variables when the contribution of each of the variables to the 11.5% change in voters' choice of political candidates was considered. This implies that although these variables made some contribution to predicting the positive variance in voters' choice of political candidates, their contributions could be attributed to chance but not genuine interaction in the model considered in the study. Political parties in Ghana together with their branches in CCTU must therefore design their advertising strategy in such a way that these roles of celebrity advertising can be integrated into such adverts so as to improve the impact of such advertisement on voters' choice of political candidates.

Comparative to the overall model it can be seen that the level of relationship between the joint predictors (better political recall at the point of voting, creation of faster awareness about the political candidate., creation of a longer lasting impact in the young voters' mind., better political candidate recognition at the point of voting, capturing young voters' attention easily) and choice of political candidates fell to 0.339 from 0.597 which is a weak positive correlation [53]. Similarly, it is was also confirmed that the impact of celebrity advertising on young voters' choice of political candidates fell to 11.5% compared to the 35.7% although in both instances, a statistically significant effect was recorded. It thus, shows that celebrity advertising component of celebrity endorsement has the capacity to cause a weak but positive increase in young voters' choice of political candidates especially in technical universities in Ghana.

Without consideration of the personality characteristics of celebrities employed in endorsement contracts, the effect of such celebrity endorsement contracts would be limited. Hence the need for proper screening of personalities of celebrities employed by political parties in Ghana during national campaign by political parties [4,54] (Agyepong, 2016). Regarding the specific indicators of celebrity advertising that actually made a statistically significant positive contributions to predicting the positive change in young voters' choice of

political candidates, it was discovered that capacity to recognize political parties and candidates through celebrity advertising strategy and creating a longer lasting impact in the young voters' mind made such significant contributions.

These predictors have recognized to making contributions to influencing choice of political candidates in literature [53]. Invariably, it can also be concluded that celebrity advertising functions such as faster awareness creation and capturing young voters' attention easily were not supported as claimed by some empirical studies [55,30].

7. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

It is therefore concluded that, at the individual modeling level, celebrity advertising accounts for weak positive statistically significant variance in young voters' choice of political candidates. This therefore means political parties and politicians in Ghana should blend their campaign strategy with celebrity advertising as this can influence young voters to vote for them during national elections.

From the perspective of the roles of celebrity advertising, it is advised that celebrity endorsement communication strategies need to be designed in such a way that these contracts could easily articulate the significant functions considered in this study that actually made some statistically significant positive contributions to causing the weak positive significant change in young voters' choice of political candidates. Thus, for celebrity advertising to influence young voters' choice of political candidates, such advertising should be designed in such a way that it could improve the capacity of creating long lasting impact in the minds of young voters, influencing young voters to better recognize political candidates at voting points as well as influencing recalling of political candidates during national elections. Through these roles, national political parties in general and for that matter celebrities and political candidates can truly enjoy the marketing potential of celebrity endorsement through gaining political capital through causing voters to choose endorsed political brands.

The findings from the study reveals that young voters pay particular attention to the celebrities who are used for the adverts by the various political parties in making their choice, thus confirming the transfer theory. For policy

purpose, it is recommended that Ghana National Media Commission should regulate those who engage in celebrity advertising as well as the advertising content. Appropriate sanctions should be meted out to parties that go contrary to the provisions of regulations of celebrity advertising in political marketing in Ghana.

SUGGESTION FOR FURTHER STUDIES

Subsequent studies should be conducted to assess whether demographic characteristics such as political affiliation status, sex, level of education and religious affiliation can moderate the effect of celebrity endorsement on choice of political candidates among young voters in Ghana. A further study can also be conducted using longitudinal method to understand in details the various stages that young voters go through in accepting a particular celebrity's endorsement and also how they choose a particular candidate to vote for based on their acceptance of the celebrity's advertisement.

CONSENT

As per international standard or university standard, participant's written consent has been collected and preserved by the author(s).

COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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