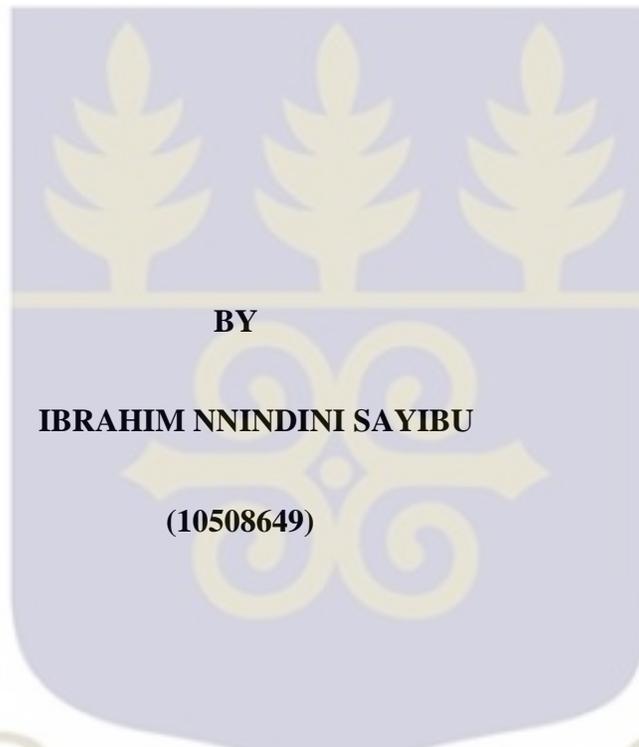


UNIVERSITY OF GHANA

FORMING AND MAINTAINING INTRA-PARTY RELATIONSHIPS:

A TWO PARTY COMPARATIVE STUDY



**THIS THESIS IS SUBMITTED TO THE UNIVERSITY OF GHANA, LEGON
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR THE
AWARD OF MPhil MARKETING DEGREE**

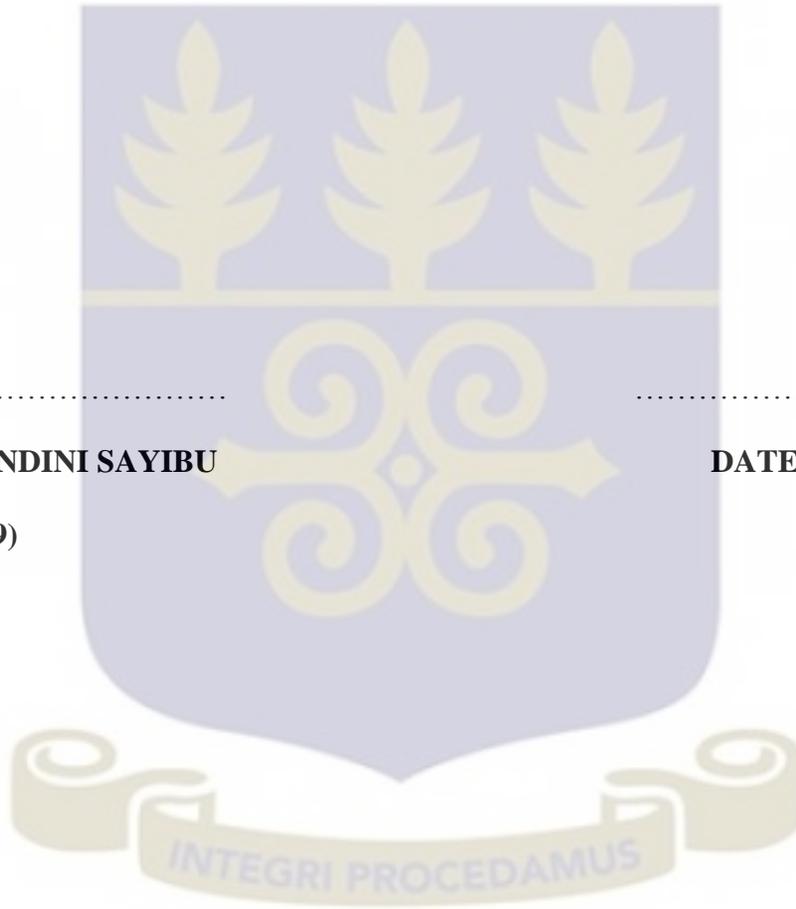
JUNE, 2016

DECLARATION

I do hereby declare that this piece of work is the output of my own research and has not been presented by anyone for any academic award in this or any other university. All references used in the work have been fully acknowledged.

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CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that this thesis was supervised in accordance with procedures laid down by the university.

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DR KOBBY MENSAH
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DATE

.....
DR KWAME ADOM
(CO-SUPERVISOR)

.....
DATE



DEDICATION

This piece of work is dedicated to my family, especially to my lovely and supportive wife, Babaneto Margaret Selasi, whose unlimited belief in my abilities always spurred on. Also to my lovely sons, Wunnam Sayibu Nnindini, Wuntira Fareed Nnindini and Anfani Ibrahim Nnindini, who sometimes wake up in the morning and daddy is gone. I say thank you for your sacrifices.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Which of the bounties of Allah shall I deny? To HIM belong all the praise and glory for this accomplishment. God's favour has been my companion throughout the two years journey and for this reason I will never cease being your obedient servant.

Firstly, I would like to express my profound gratitude to Dr Kobby Mensah, my lead supervisor for his mentorship and guidance in carrying out this research. 'Dr' as I often referred to him made immeasurable contribution to this work not only in his supervision of the work but his guidance and advice on how to navigate the potholes in the academic profession. I am particularly thankful to 'Dr' for his presence during my presentations at seminars during the research work. It was always reassuring knowing that my mentor is in the audience.

I would also like to express my appreciation to my co-supervisor, Dr Kwame Adom for his patience, guidance and contributions to this work. 'Dr Adom, thank you. I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to all my respondents from the eight constituencies for participating in this research work. To my MPhil colleagues of the Department of Marketing and entrepreneurship, I say thank you for your friendship and useful suggestions. Finally to my mother, I am grateful for your prayers and to my late father, may Allah grant you eternal rest.

ABBREVIATIONS

ALP	:	Australian Labour Party
AMA	:	American Marketing Association
CDC	:	Constituency Disciplinary Committee
CPP	:	Convention Peoples Party
CSO	:	Civil Society Organizations
EC	:	Electoral Commission
IMC	:	Integrated Marketing Communication
MP	:	Member of Parliament
NCA	:	National Communication Authority
NCP	:	National Convention Party
NDC	:	National Democratic Congress
NPP	:	New Patriotic Party
PM	:	Political Marketing
PNC	:	People's Convention Party
PNDC	:	Provisional National Defense Council
RDC	:	Regional Disciplinary Committee
RM	:	Relationship Marketing
SMNs	:	Social Media Networks
UGCC	:	United Gold Coast Convention
UGM	:	United Ghana Movement

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ABSTRACT

In recent times political parties appear to have focused narrowly on winning elections to the detriment of the effective management of their intra-party relationships and this is what necessitated this study. The study sought to examine the management of internal relationships among party officers and members at the constituency level. This study focused on the two leading parties in Ghana – National Democratic Congress and New Patriotic Party with all constituencies in Ghana as the target population. The sample of the study was made up of twenty four participants drawn from eight constituencies, four constituencies each for the two parties under study. The study is qualitative in nature and so in-depth interviews were used to gather the necessary data. This data was analysed qualitatively using the thematic and textual technique. The study found that the political parties do practice some of the elements of relationship marketing. Six of these elements (communication, conflict management, competence, partnership and social bonding, empowerment and culture) are been practiced by the two parties as indicated by the data. The findings show that there are more similarities between the two parties, yet there is still some internal wrangling among the two parties particularly in the New Patriotic Party. The study concludes that, it is important for political parties to realize that there cannot be any internal harmony and relationship without the six variables and particularly communication.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This study is situated in political relationship marketing (PRM) and is instigated by the internal wrangling that rocked political parties in Ghana in recent years. This is because political parties over the years have focused attention on winning elections to the detriment of the management of internal relationships. This practice perhaps is influenced by the transactional approach which used to be the dominant paradigm in marketing in the past. The transactional approach as a marketing strategy focuses on single transaction, where emphasis is on increasing sales volume instead of developing relationship with customers. This thesis also borrowed literature from relationship marketing to explain how political parties can manage their internal relationships at the constituency level.

Traditionally, commercial entities are more associated with marketing concepts (Blankson, Mbah & Owusu-Frimpong 2009; Owusu-Frimpong & Martins 2010) than social based organizations do (Hinson & Tweneboah-Kodua 2010). However, scholars like Lees Marshment (2001) suggests that social based entities like political parties can adopt the concepts and theories of marketing to enhance their understanding of the organization's operations, personnel behaviour, policy choice and ultimately attaining the goal of winning power.

According to Wring (1997) initial attempts to introduce political marketing (hereafter referred to as PM) into mainstream marketing was resisted by marketing purist until the mid-seventies. By

mid 1970s, sound theoretical foundations for the merger of politics and marketing had been developed. This is manifested in the American Marketing Association (AMA) revised definition of marketing in 1985 which included the word 'ideas' in the product offerings (Benyi, 2013).

Brown & Coates (1996) posit that contemporary politics has become an offering, designed, packaged and promoted with the appropriate brand image based on accurate marketing insight by marketers and public relations practitioners into what is desired by the political market. Political marketing is now an established academic discipline that has the ability to influence political behaviour (Scammell, 1999; Lees-Marshment, 2001; Henneberg, 2004).

The marketing discipline has evolved over the years from the traditional transactional approach to relationship marketing. The shift in emphasis in marketing came along with a focus on building relationships (Gronroos, 1994; Bolton, Day, Deighton, Narayanda, Gummesson, Hunt, ...Shugan, 2004; Vargo & Lusch, 2004). Since the merger of the two disciplines - political science and marketing, political entities and candidates have largely utilized the marketing concept in multi-targeting. According to Kotler & Keller (2012) one of the factors that accounted for the success of Barrack Obama in the 2008 United States elections was a well-designed and effectively executed marketing programme. They further argue that effective use of marketing is not by chance, but an output of meticulous hard work using state-of-the-art tools and techniques.

Scholars have (for example Kotler 1992; Gronroos, 2004) argued that there is an end of an era in the field of marketing- the era of transactional exchange, which is giving way to a focus on long term relationships. For instance the modern view of marketing according to Webster (1992) is an

engagement process that focuses on forming relationships that is long lasting and also mutual beneficial. On the other hand the transactional approach of marketing is viewed to be adhoc in nature which does not engage the customer nor take customer's inputs into consideration (Gronroos, 1994). Gronroos further asserted that the traditional four Ps of marketing is fast becoming less popular as a global dominant marketing concept.

Kotler (1992) notes companies must move from a short-term *transaction oriented* goal to a long-term *relationship-building* goal. Speaking to the *Marketing Science Institute Review* in 1991, Kotler stated that a paradigm shift, as used by Thomas Kuhn..., occurs when a field's practitioners are not satisfied with the field's explanatory variables or breadth...What I think we are witnessing today is a movement away from a focus on exchange – in the narrow sense of transaction – and toward a focus on building value-laden relationships and marketing networks.

Expressing his views on developments in the field of marketing, Webster (1992) also observed “There has been a shift from transactions to a relationship focus” and “from an academic or theoretical perspective, the relatively narrow conceptualization of marketing as a profit-maximization problem, focused on market transactions or series of transactions, seems increasingly out of touch with an emphasis on long- term customer relationships and the formation and management of strategic alliances.”

Relationship marketing takes into account factors such as leadership, organization, resource allocation as well as internal partnerships – interaction between functional departments and within firm relational exchanges involving different business units (Blomqvist, Dahl, & Heager, 1993; Morgan & Hunt, 1994). Based on this, it could be argued that it is time for not – for –

profit entities such as political parties shifted attention from the traditional transactional exchange practice to relationship building and maintenance.

Political activism in Ghana dates back to the pre- independence era, when pressure groups were formed to advocate for independence from colonial rule. Indeed as many as eight (8) parties were formed between 1954 and 1957 to participate in the fight for independence from the British colonialism (Ninsin, 2006). Since independence Ghana had not witnessed sustained democracy until the fourth republic, which has seen over two decades of multi-party democracy. In the last two decades Ghana has successfully organized six elections with ruling parties handing over peacefully to victorious opposition parties. Despite these achievements in the political development of the nation, it could be argued that there are still a lot of challenges associated with the management of political parties in Ghana. This deficiency could be accounting for the lack of internal harmony and coordination within the political parties.

This study is focused on the National Democratic Congress (NDC) and New Patriotic Party (NPP), the two largest parties in Ghana. This study sought to explore how relationship marketing can be applied to political parties. The study examined the internal relationships of these two parties under the following themes; communication, trust, conflict handling, social bonding empowerment, organizational climate and culture.

1.2 Problem Statement

Political marketing has in the last two decades emerged as a new area of research interest (Henneberg, 2009). The growth of which has been largely due to the popularity of marketing

concepts among political entities, candidates as well as lobbying groups (Newman, 1999; Lees-Marshment, 20001; Henneberg, 2009). Nevertheless, political marketing as described by Bauman (1997) is still “an aspiring resident without residence permit.” It is observed that studies conducted thus far in political marketing is lacking clear and innovative themes like the one for this study, ‘the practice of relationship marketing by political parties’ and has therefore not provided compelling reasons enough to be accepted by academic community as suggested by Bauman (as cited in Scammell, 1999; Henneberg, 2009). Besides Butler and Collins (1996) assert that one of the key shortfalls in the political marketing literature is its narrow focus on developments emanating from the political system in the developed world which necessarily does not reflect the happenings in other democratic nations.

According to Bowler, Donovan, and Fernandez, (1996), it is feasible for political organizations to practice new concepts of marketing such as market segmentation, market intelligence and relationship marketing among others as part of their political marketing strategies. It is based on this that this study sets out to examine the practices of relationship marketing by political parties with emphasis on the two dominant parties in Ghana. Hastings (2003) posits that relationship marketing and its conceptualizations are yet to be fully applied on entities like political parties. Bannon (2003) equally argues that despite the potential benefits of relationship marketing, its practice by political entities is yet to be tested and fully examined.

Political parties like any human institution are not free from occasional conflict and differences in opinions. The Ghanaian political landscape has over the years witnessed many political parties go through internal rancor and turmoil, largely due to the struggle for power and influence as

well as personality ‘worshipping’. These internal wrangling in the past had led to factions breaking away to form new parties. Indeed this is not a new phenomenon in the Ghanaian political landscape; Dr Kwame Nkrumah as far back as 12th June, 1949 decided to part ways with the United Gold Coast Convention (UGCC) and went ahead to form the Convention Peoples Party (CPP) (Austin, 1961 as cited Mensah, 2007). Again In the year 2000, the NDC and NPP had factions within them breaking away to form new parties.

Previous studies have examined the practice of relationship marketing in different sectors of the economy but very few of these studies have looked at the practice of relationship marketing by political entities (see Narteh, Agbemabiese, Kodua & Braimah, 2013; Anabila, Narteh & Tweneboah-Koduah, 2012; Durkin & Howcroft, 2003). This study is therefore designed to close these gaps in the literature identified above by exploring how these two major political parties in Ghana manage their intra-party relations.

1.3 The Research Objectives

The main aim of this study is to explore the practices of relationship marketing concepts by political parties, with a focus on the two leading political parties in Ghana. This aim will be pursued through the following objectives;

1. To examine the management of internal relationships among party officers and members at the constituency level.
2. To uncover the character of organizational climate and culture that underpins relationships in the two political parties and its impact on relationship building.
3. To compare the relationship marketing practices of the two parties under study.

1.4 Research Questions

1. How do political parties manage intra-party relationships at the constituency level?
2. What is the character of the organizational climate and culture of the two parties at the constituency level?
3. What is the difference between the relationship marketing practices of the two parties under study?

1.5 Significance of the Study

The importance of this study emanates from the fact that little is known about how political parties manage their internal relationships. Very few research projects have been conducted in the political marketing discipline which focused on the practice of relationship marketing by political parties. In Ghana, none of the previous studies on political marketing have focused on the internal relationships of political parties. For instance, Hinson & Tweneboah (2010) looked at “Political Marketing Strategies in Africa; Expert Opinions of Recent Political Elections in Ghana,” Alabi and Alabi (2007) “Analysis of the Effects of Ethnicity on Political Marketing in Ghana; Mensah (2007) “Kwame Nkrumah and Political Marketing; Locating the Campaign Strategy in Modern Political Campaigning,” “Analysis of The Effects of Ethnicity on Political Marketing in Ghana,” “Political Party Brand and Consumer Choice in Ghana,” by Tweneboah-Koduah, Akotia, Akotia and Hinson (2010) and Benyi (2013) Marketing the Political Product: Perspectives among Tertiary Students” among others.

This study seeks to explore a new dimension of political marketing that is to examine the practice of relationship marketing by political parties in Ghana, the findings of which should be

valuable to political parties, politicians, academics and institutions of learning. This work will contribute immensely to the existing political marketing literature in Ghana, Africa and the world at large. This work also sought the opinions of party officials on the challenges and perceived potential benefits of good intra-party relationships. This is to allow the study provide evidence as to which of the two leading political parties in Ghana maintains good internal relationships.

1.6 Disposition of the Study

This study is categorized into six chapters; chapter one gives an introduction to the study, followed by a description of the problem statement, also discussed in chapter one are the research objectives. Also included in chapter one are the research questions, significance of study, scope and limitations and finally the disposition of the study. The review of literature relevant to the topic is presented in Chapter two of the study. The methodological approach adopted for the study which basically include research design, data collection procedure, study population, sampling technique, data collection , data analysis technique and the research instruments are contained in the third chapter of the study . Chapter four looks at the context of the study. The data analyses and presentation is contained in chapter five and the last chapter - chapter six presents highlights of the findings, conclusions as well as recommendations.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

In the previous chapter it was argued that the phenomenon of political parties focusing on winning election instead of building networks of committed members is as a result of the transactional exchange paradigm that dominated the marketing concept in the past. This chapter reviews the RM literature in an attempt to explain how the concept can be used to help solve the internal relationship management problems of political parties. In addition literature on the concept of political science is reviewed showing the marriage between it and marketing.

2.1 The Interface of Marketing and Political Science

The underlying philosophy of the concept of marketing is exchange, an exchange that is not viewed as an encounter between two entities, such as companies but seen as a web of complex interactions (Moller & Halinen, 1999; Ford, Gadde, Hankansson & Sehota, 2003). That said, the earlier definitions of marketing were narrow in scope. For instance, the National Association of Marketing Teachers, (which later merged with the American Marketing Society to form the American Marketing Association) in 1935 defined marketing as “those business activities involved in the flow of goods and services from production to consumption.” In 1937 AMA modified the definition as “the performance of business activities that direct the flow of goods and services from producers to consumers” (Gundlach, 2007). This definition reflects the level of development of the marketing concept at that time. This definition narrowly portrays marketing as organizational function that is required to ensure that goods produced are sold. Indeed this

definition was offered during the 'selling era' of marketing development, a philosophy that dominated marketing thought between 1930 and 1950.

Due to the evolution of the marketing concept, AMA in 1985 redefined marketing as "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."

This definition attempted to remedy some of the shortfalls in the earlier definition by broadening the scope to include services but failed to highlight the central importance of value to customers.

In dealing with the deficiency in the definition above, AMA in 2004 redefined the marketing concept as "an organizational function and a set of processes for creating, communicating and delivering value to customers and for managing customer relationships in ways that benefit the organization and its stakeholders" (Keefe 2004). Though this definition has been refined, it still fails to meet the expectations of many scholars of marketing. For example, Zinkhan and Williams (2007) note that the "new definition is needlessly narrow in scope" (p. 285), observing that it "appears to assign marketing to the restricted confines of an organization" (p. 285).

Similarly, Hunt (2007) finds that the definition "fails to incorporate explicitly the view that marketing is more than a managerial technology within organizations. That is, it fails to acknowledge the existence and roles of marketing institutions and marketing systems in society" (p. 281). From Shultz's (2007) perspective, AMA's 2004 definition is "too microscopic," (p. 293) given its focus on marketing management versus all of marketing.

Perrault Jnr. and McCarthy (2005) viewed marketing at both micro and macro level of activities. They went further to define micro marketing as “the performance of activities that seek to accomplish an organization’s objectives by anticipating customer or client needs and directing a flow of need – satisfying goods and services from producer to customer or client “and macro – marketing as “a social process that directs an economy’s flow of goods and services from producers to consumers in a way that effectively matches supply and demand and accomplish the objectives of society” (p. 7). This definition is more comprehensive in scope than that of AMA, not only is it recognizing the role of marketing as an organizational function, it also highlights the role of marketing in socio-economics at the national level.

It could be argued that this definition addresses some of the concerns expressed by scholars about the AMA’s definition. Wilkie and Moore (2007) suggest that “it is important that the official definition for the field of marketing explicitly includes the societal domain and the remarkable marketing systems that characterize the workings of our field” (p. 273). Similarly Ringold and Weitz (2007) note that “an official definition ... [that] acknowledges marketing activity in the public, private, and non-profit sectors and recognizes activity and impacts at the individual, organizational, and societal levels may serve to improve the collective understanding and practice of marketing” (p. 255).

These varied views about marketing are useful in that they counteract the crude and over simplistic belief that marketing is simply about firms giving their customers what they want. Marketing is actually a process in which the notion of ‘consumer focus’ plays a major strategic role but not to the exclusion of organizational needs (Nor, Assari, Karia & Haron, 2006). Based

on these definitions it could be said that marketing is about proactively finding out the changing needs of customers and taking steps to design offerings that satisfy these needs of customers while making sure organizational objectives are achieved. Key to marketing today is interactions, relationship building and networking.

The key theme that runs through the definitions discussed above is exchange. The exchange theory originally focused on the direct transfers of tangible entities between two parties but now acknowledges exchange of meanings/symbols and other intangible matter, as well as other participants, and ‘unconscious’ exchange systems as well as organized or overt ones (Bagozzi 1988). At its core, the theory professes three main types of exchanges – restricted, generalised and complex depending on the number of parties involved and the pattern of benefit and inter-relationships (Levi-Strauss, 1969; Ekeh 1974).

Moreover, the purpose of exchange varies between utilitarian and symbolic (or a mixture of the two), with the former referring to a predominantly *practical* value attached to the object of exchange and the latter, not surprisingly, referring to primarily social, psychological or other intangible value (Bagozzi, 1988). At its most fundamental level, exchange theory enquires about why - and how - exchange relationships are created (or not), develop, and end (Bagozzi, 1988). These concerns reflect some of the pressing issues for partnerships, too, especially for the directions that research might provide in terms of ‘how to do these well’, to echo (Porter & Kramer, 2002) words. If better partner ‘fit’ can be achieved, greater benefits can be enjoyed, by both business and the nonprofit organization (Dickenson & Barker, 2007).

Value is another concept that can be deduced from the definitions presented above. A value proposition is an explicit promise made by a company to its customers that it will deliver a particular bundle of value creating benefits (Buttle, 2009). The value propositions vary across industries and across different market segments within an industry (Kaplan & Norton, 1996). Capon and Hulbert (2007) linked the success of firms in the marketplace to the value provided to customers. They introduced a principle of customer value, with customer insights driving the company's marketing activities. Indeed customer value should not be driving only the marketing activities of companies but the entire business process of the company including investment and production decisions because customers perceive value on the benefits of the product or service they receive.

Political science like marketing has different meanings to different people and so many scholars have offered different perspectives on political science. For instance, in the view of Bluntschli (2000) "Political Science in the proper sense is the science which is concerned with the state, which endeavours to understand and comprehend the state in its fundamental conditions, in its essential nature, its various forms or manifestations of development" (p.12). This definition of Bluntschli suggest that the state, government and legal system which have been the focus of political science is giving way to a new form of thought which now views political science as a concept that is concern about what goes on in the state. The scope of political science has widened and less emphasis is now placed on institutions and laws, instead the interest in political behaviour has increased.

Today political science has emerged as an important discipline in the social sciences. Its focus now is to forge relations among individuals and to build relations between individuals on one side and the society and state on the other side. It is keen to establish harmony between the power of state and the freedom of individuals. In an ideal political system, the laws and functions of state help in increasing the freedom of an individual and developing his personality. Political science is also now interested in studying international relations and cooperation among states. Hence the relationship between government and civil society is an important determinant of governance in the state. Political science studies this relationship in order to better understand the nature of the state and the efficacy of governance. It could be argued that this concept of forging relations is similar to the concept of relationship marketing in the marketing discipline.

Competition is yet another dimension of political science which is one of the features the two disciplines of marketing and political science have in common. Many see politics today as happening in one of two venues: a political market square where services are bought and sold (with policy awarded to the highest bidder), or an arena (in which politics is a sport, with a few teams competing and most of us in the audience rooting or booing).

Just as in commerce, businesses as a result of competition are going the extra mile to provide excellent services to customers and sometimes customization. Competition brings about more media attention, which heightens voter interest and encourages candidates to be clear about their positions on issues (Kahn & Kenney 1999). Considering the similarities between the two disciplines, it is not surprising that the two has merged into what is now known as political marketing.

Since the merger of these two disciplines into what is now called Political Marketing, several attempts have been made to define it. For instance Gronroos (1990) defined political marketing as “seeking to establish, maintain and enhance long-term voter relationships at a profit for society and political parties, so that the objectives of the individual political actors and organizations involved are met. This is done by mutual exchange and fulfillment of promises” (p. 4). Wring (1997) defines political marketing as “the party or candidates use of opinion research and environmental analysis to produce and promote a competitive offering which will help realize organization aims and satisfy groups of election exchange for their votes” (p. 653). These two definitions appear to reflect two different concepts of marketing. Whereas Gronroos definition emphasizes relationship building that of Wring is focuses on customer insight. Perhaps the emergence of relationship marketing in the era of Gronroos’ definition influenced his thought and ideas expressed in the definition.

Osuagwu (2008) conceptualizes political marketing as the adoption of marketing theories, tools and approaches by political entities such as candidates, parties, organizations and nations. While Gronroos and Wring focused on specific marketing concepts in their conceptualization of PM, Osuagwu professes a general application of marketing concepts. Baines and Egan (2001) argue that though political campaigning activity existed for several decades the phenomenon of political marketing is a fairly new concept in the marketing discipline. On the contrary, Newman (2002) submits that political marketing currently has developed and matured into its own field of research. The development of this field is manifested in the availability of published political marketing textbooks, journals, political advertising etc. (Osuagwu, 2008).

The marketing discipline has over the years gathered a body of knowledge, techniques and technical know-how that is closely related to understanding human behaviour and persuasion of large groups of people in business and not-for-profit setting (Osuagwu, 2008). It is therefore not surprising that political actors have embraced the concepts of marketing in carrying out their political campaign since the latter part of the twentieth century (Wring 1999). These suggest that the marketing discipline has the capacity to contribute to the understanding of political organizations and persons (Harrop, 1990; Butler & Collins, 1994).

Marketing is about taking actions to elicit desired responses including behavioral responses such as vote or support from a target audience. In effecting successful exchanges, marketers analyze what each party expects from the transaction (Kotler, 2003). For example politicians want trust and commitments (Henneberg, 2004); long-term electoral success (Ingram & Lees-Marshment, 2002); brand loyalty and long-term support or repeat voters (O’Cass, 1996), and maximized electoral support (Wring, 1997). Voters, however, want political information and facts; prudent, credible, intellectual and honest leadership (Newman, 2001) and good governance (O’Cass, 1996).

Political marketing has reached the level where parties/governments adopt a “voter-orientation” analogous to a market-orientation in commercial marketing. Political marketing is focusing on exchange relationships, a long term perspective, voter orientation (but restricted by societal considerations), and mutual mainstream marketing concept of “Relationship Marketing” aims to build long-term benefits for all parties involved (Henneberg, 1996). This is analogous to the

mutually satisfying relations with key parties – customers, suppliers, distributors – in order to earn and retain their long-term preference and business.

Relationship Marketing, and more broadly the placement of networks at the heart of marketing theory and practice, has sometimes been seen by practitioners and theorists alike as a universal panacea. Yet, given the contemporary phenomenon of rapid decline in direct participation in politics, with tumbling party membership rosters, the relevance of relationship marketing and its capacity to re-energize democratic politics has intuitive plausibility (Henneberg & O'shaughnessy, 2009). The relationship between politics and RM is discussed in detail in the next session.

2.2 Theoretical Review: Relationship Marketing

Gronroos (1994) argues that the marketing mix paradigm which has dominated marketing thought, practice and research for the last 40years is fast losing its position to a new approach that is emerging in marketing research. This new approach is driven by globalization of markets, the emerging importance of customer retention and the recognition of the strategic importance of customer relationship among others.

Relationship formation and management or what is widely referred to as relationship marketing is one leading approach to marketing which has gained prominence in the marketing literature (Gronroos, 1994). The relationship marketing concept has been variously defined. Harker (1999) estimated at the time of writing that 28 definitions were offered for relationship marketing. In fact Dann and Dann (2001) suggest there are nearly 50 published definitions on relationship

marketing. Berry (1983) first introduced the concept of relationship marketing in the services context and defined it as attracting, maintaining and enhancing customer relationship. Gummesson (1994) defines relationship marketing as “marketing seen as relationships, networks and interaction.”

Gronroos (1994) perspective on RM though not fundamentally different from that of Gummesson appears more comprehensive and all encompassing, “relationship marketing is to identify and establish, maintain and enhance and when necessary also to terminate relationships with customers and other stakeholders at a profit, so that the objectives of all parties are met, and that this is done by a mutual exchange and fulfillment of promises” (p.9). This definition by far is considered the most elegant and succinct with regards to its coverage of the underlying conceptualizations of relationship marketing and it’s widely acceptability among relationship marketing researchers (Harker, 1999; Egan, 2004).

Based on these definitions, it could be argued that relationship marketing is about attracting customers and making efforts to build long term relationship with them. In other words relationship marketing is advocating a shift away from emphasis on one – off exchange transaction to a focus on customers’ life time value and the establishment of networks. Relationship marketing emphasizes a long term interactive relationship between a company and the customers with an eye on long term profitability (Gummesson, 1994). Gummesson further states that relationship marketing puts the responsibility of marketing not only on the marketing and sales department but on everyone connected to the firm (part-time marketers).

Just as there are different views as to how relationship marketing should be defined, so are there divergent opinions as to how to conceptualize its dimensions (Cooper, Gardner & Pullins, 1997). For example Morgan and Hunt (1994) described trust and commitment as the key dimensions underpinning RM, a view shared by Kalafatis and Miller (1998). Gronroos (2004) asserts that in order for RM to be successfully implemented three key elements are vital, these include “an interaction process as the core of relationship marketing. “A planned communication process supporting development and enhancement of relationships and a value process as the output of relationship marketing” (p 100). After a review of the existing literature Leo, Sin Alan, Tse Oliver, Yau Jenny and Lee (2002) identified 6 dimensions RM including trust, bonding, communication, shared value, empathy and reciprocity.

Regardless of the difficulty in defining and conceptualizing relationship marketing one thing that is undisputed is the ability of RM to improve the performance of businesses. This is a view shared by both marketing academics and practitioners (for example, Berry, 1983; Gummesson, 1994; Morgan & Hunt, 1994). This is especially true in the service organizations. Indeed previous studies in services marketing note that in order to achieve competitive advantage in the market place service firms ought to develop long lasting relationships with their customers (Berry, 1983; Gummesson, 1987; Gronroos, 1991). The concept of RM if properly implemented can lead to customer retention and loyalty and its accompanying benefits. Based on the potential of this new paradigm it could be argued that the time is right for other social base entities like political parties to embrace it. The next session takes a look at relationship marketing and politics.

2.2.1 Relationship Marketing in Politics

Relationship marketing has been acclaimed by both academics and practitioners as a good concept for business that has the capacity to improve business performance (Berry, 1983; Gummesson 1994; Morgan & Hunt 1994). Relationship marketing being a successful new paradigm for commercial marketing can be suitable for not-for-profit entities like political parties. Political organizations (actors) like commercial entities offer products in the form of policies and ideas to the political market. That said, relationship marketing and its theoretical and conceptual implications on social and not-for-profit entities are under explored (Hasting, 2003 as cited in Henneburg & O'Shaughnessy, 2009) despite the potential for its successful practice by political parties (Bannon, 2003).

This shortcoming with regards to the practice of relationship marketing by political organizations and actors and the over reliance on the traditional marketing concepts such as the 4 Ps needs to be remedied (Henneburg & O'Shaughnessy, 2009). In an attempt to broaden the discourse on the political marketing, the issue of whether political actors can fully utilize the numerous benefits of relationship marketing was raised (Luck & Chapman, 2003). Again Henneburg & O'Shaughnessy, (2009) argue that relationship marketing which has been viewed by some academics and practitioners as a panacea has the potential to deal with the current waning enthusiasm in politics and declining party membership. They further assert that we are moving to what they called 'value based politics' which is already manifested in the US, relational strategies will be useful in taking advantage of this phenomenon since values will drive relationships more than economic considerations.

2.2.2 The Role of Empowerment in Relationship Management

The roots of empowerment can be traced to Douglas McGregor when he developed a theory on organizational behaviour called ‘theory X.’ This theory was based on the assertion that employees’ motivation, productivity and participation can be achieved by allowing for autonomous and flexible task design (Hancer & George, 2003 as cited in Zeglat, Aljaber & Alrawabdeh, 2014). Since then empowerment has attracted the interest of both academics and practitioners because of its effect on organizational effectiveness and the competitive edge it offers companies (Abu Kassim, Yusoff & Fong, 2012).

With regards to the definition of empowerment, different meanings have been ascribed to it by different scholars and authors (Melhem, 2004). For instance, Del Val and Lloyd (2003) define empowerment as “the involvement of employee in decision making process” (p. 102). Jha (2010) offers more comprehensive definition of empowerment when he describes it as “a process of enhancing feelings of self-efficacy among organizational members through the identification of conditions that foster powerlessness and through their removal by both formal organizational practices and informal techniques of providing efficacy information” (p. 380). Ahmad and Oranye (2010) view empowerment, as “energizing followers through leadership, enhancing self-efficacy by reducing powerlessness and increasing intrinsic task motivation” (p.586). Empowerment is about giving employees the free hand to use personal initiatives in executing their assign tasks, while taking responsibility for their actions.

Just like the definitions there are different categorizations of empowerment. Sun, Zhang & Chen (2012) delineated empowerment into three categories – leadership empowerment, structural

empowerment and psychological empowerment. In the opinion of Menon (2001) empowerment should be grouped into three broad categories which include situational empowerment, motivational empowerment and leadership empowerment. Kuokkanen and Leino- Kilpi (2000) suggest that empowerment should be looked at from three different perspectives – providing better conditions for the marginalized, structural empowerment and psychological empowerment.

However, empowerment has often been discussed from two perspectives – structural/relational empowerment which Melhem (2004) defines as “freeing someone from rigorous control by instructions, policies, and orders, and giving that person freedom to take responsibility for ideas that he/she provide for management, decisions, and actions that he/she made in the workplace context” (p. 73). The second perspective is motivational/psychological which Melhem (2006) described as “a state of mind in which an employee experiences the feelings of control over how the job can be done, a great level of responsibility to both personal work outcome and overall organizational advancement, and the perceived justice in the rewards based on individual and collective performance” (p.586).

Historically empowerment has been associated with services marketing. According to Hennig-Thurau and Thurau (2012) the behaviour of employees is crucial to how customers perceive service quality especially employees who interface with customers on regular basis. It could be argued that companies that are customer oriented and values long term relationship with customers would have to pay special attention to employee empowerment. This could be applicable to both commercial entities and not-for-profit organizations like political parties.

According to Lindgreen and Crawford (1999) in order for employee empowerment to be effective organizations ought to put emphasis on training for the customer focused staff in areas like industry knowledge, communications, customer service, teamwork and presentation skills. It could be said that empowerment has gained prominence because of the numerous perceived benefits it offers companies. For instance Bowen and Lawler (1992) enumerated the following potential benefits of empowerment.

- Empowerment can result in effective word-of-mouth advertisement which can lead to customer retention.
- Empowered employees could be source of brilliant business ideas.
- Empowered employees deal with customers with cheerful countenance.
- Empowerment instills self confidence in employees and they are excited about their jobs
- Swift response to complaints from dissatisfied customers during service recovery.

2.2.3 The Role of Conflict Management in Relationship Building

Political parties like any human system, is susceptible to occasional disagreement and dissenting views. There are varied reasons that account for intra-party conflict. Conflict sometimes brings to the fore inter-personal and task related challenges and serves as the vehicle through which such challenges are resolved (De Dreu & Van De Vliert 1997 as acted in Hempel, Zhang & Tjosvold, 2009). Conflict is defined as an incompatibility of goals or values between two or more parties in a relationship combined with attempts to control each other and antagonistic feelings towards each other (Fisher, 1990). Conflict in itself is neither good nor bad. However,

the management of conflict will determine whether the conflict is constructive or destructive (Kriesberg, 1998; Deutsch & Coleman, 2000).

The sources of conflict include but not limited to the following; economic conflict – which involves competing for the limited resource, value conflict – involving differences in ways of life, ideologies (for example, preferences, convictions and practices that people believe in) and power conflict – which occurs when each party desires to maintain or maximize the amount of influence that it exerts in the relationship and the social setting (Katz, 1965). Aside these sources of conflict offered by Katz, ineffective communication or miscommunication can be yet another source of conflict (Fisher, 2000).

In situations where information is not readily disseminated to party officers and members, different perception as to what are the facts are formed and until information is provided to clarify the situation, resolution of these difference will be impossible (Fisher, 2000). Tjosvold (1998) argues that effective resolution of conflicts can enhance creativity and motivates teams to accomplish tasks and strengthen interpersonal relationships and teamwork.

Tjosvold discovered that cooperation as a conflict resolution approach instills confidence in the parties to express their views openly, listen to each other without prejudices and sincerely take each other's perspective on board. Conflict resolution using the competitive approach on the other hand can lead to one side imposing the resolution on the other which is inimical to relationships. Research shows that under this approach, the protagonists do not consider the views of each other with open-minds and do not integrate the opposing views into their own

thinking (Tjosvold, 1998). The opposing parties rather choose to point out the shortfalls in each other's position and refusing to take responsibility for their own mistakes. (Tjosvold, Yu & Hui, 2004).

This imposition of solution on each other will result in the lack of mutually beneficial agreements. This will leave protagonist frustrated and unable to work together as a team (Hempel, Zhang & Tjosvold, 2009). From the foregoing, it could be argued that conflict can erode the trust that team members have for each other and this in the long run affects their relationships.

2.2.4 Significance of Trust and Commitment in Relationships

Castro (1994) submits that it will be near impossible to have effective and productive working relationships without trust. Trust is a key determinant of how people work together, listen to one another and build effective relationships. Trust mean different things to different people and so there are various definitions of trust offered by different scholars.

Ferrin, Dirks and Shah (2006) defined trust as perceived trustworthiness where people expect support and believe that they have a relationship where they can discuss issues and rely upon each other. Another view on trust is the confidence in the exchange partner's reliability and integrity. These definitions however failed to deal with the issue of insecurity that trust appears to overcome. Blois (1997) noticing this offered this comprehensive definition of trust "an acceptance of vulnerability to another's possible but not expected, ill-will or lack of good-will" (p.58).

Like trust, commitment is another important variable for determining the strength of a marketing relationship. Hocutt (1998) defined commitment as "an intention to continue a course of action or activity or the desire to maintain a relationship" (p.90). Broadly, commitment refers to the disposition that specific intentions and actions are often characterized with the purpose of realizing value for both parties over the long term (Vesel & Zabkar, 2010).

Morgan and Hunt (1994) view commitment as "an exchange partner believing that an ongoing relationship with another is so important as to warrant maximum efforts at maintaining it". Commitment is seen as vital in relationships because it does not only leads to such important outcomes as decreased turnover (Porter, Richard, Richard & Paul, 1974), increased motivation (Farrell & Rusbult, 1981), and increased organizational citizenship behaviours (Williams & Anderson, 1991), but it can also influence firm activities such as recruiting and training practices (Caldwell et al., 1990), job equity (Williams & Hazer, 1986), and organizational support (Eisenberger, Peter, & Davis-LaMastro, 1990).

McAllister (1995) delineated trust into effect-based trust, which has do with the feeling of emotional attachment and genuine show of concern for each other's welfare and cognitive based trust – that is belief in other people's competence and their ability to discharge their responsibilities as expected of them (Hempele, Zhang & Tjosvold, 2009). According to Langfred (2007) relationships built on trust influences organizational processes and serves as a driver of teams effectiveness. Indeed, previous studies have found that trust facilitates organizational coordination and performance while an atmosphere of mistrust breeds individualism (Dirks,

2000). Williams (2001) suggests that trust is a key element in developing networks and building strong relationships.

Studies have shown that the level of trust in organizations lately has been dwindling. Indeed a survey carried out by Maritz showed that only seven percent of employees strongly agree that they trust their senior leaders to look out for their best interest. Based on this it could be argued that trust not only promote co-operation but influences employee output. According to Rousseau, Sitkin, Burt and Camerer (1998) apart from generating cooperative behavior trust also reduces harmful conflict, lowers transactional cost – since there is no need for constant checks; promotes adaptive organizational forms – that is forming networks, facilitates the rapid formation of *ad hoc* work groups and ensures effective response to crisis.

However, Egan (2008) argues that these advantages of trust suggest that trust suppresses personal ambition, which is debatable considering human nature and political maneuverings that often characterize organizations. From the foregone discussion it could be deduced that trust is the foundation on which relationships are built. Therefore for organizations to build long lasting relationships it is imperative that the organization takes steps to engender trust among employees and between management and employees.

2.2.5 Partnership and bonding in relationship marketing

According to Smith (1998) building strong bonds is one of the primary objectives of relationship marketing. Smith further described bonds as psychological, emotional, economic, or physical attachments in a relationship that are natured by association and interaction and serve to bind

parties together under relational exchange. Social bonds according to Wilson (1995) refer to the degree of mutual personal friendship and liking shared by the buyer and seller. Liljander and Strandvik, (1995) defines bonds as exit barriers that tie the buyer to the supplier and maintain the relationship.

Hsieh, Chiu, and Chiang (2005) are of the opinion that organizations which exhibit good social and financial bonds are more likely to retain their customers. On the other hand, financial bonds have been described as frequency marketing or retention marketing, where the service provider uses economic benefits, such as price, discount or other financial incentives to obtain customer loyalty (Berry & Parasuraman, 1991).

In relationship management, the root of this type of bond is derived from business-to-business literature, where it was used to indicate good personal relationships (Smith, 1998; Williams, Han, & Qualls, 1998). According to Wendelin (2011) social bonds are building blocks of relationships that affect the stability in the cooperation between companies. The strength of bonds affects the strength of the total business relationship. Technical, time, knowledge, economic, legal, social, geographical, cultural, ideological, psychological and strategic bonds exist in a business relationship.

While Wilson (1995) conceptualized two types of bonds: structural and social, Smith (1998) proposed that functional bonds also serve to bind parties and helps them commit to a relationship. Furthermore, Berry and Parasuraman (1991) delineate the way retailers stimulate customer behavioral loyalty into three levels: social, financial, and structural bonding tactics.

According to Turner (1970) social bonding tactics are personal ties or linkages initiated and nurtured through interaction. They include the degree of personal friendship and liking shared by a buyer and seller (Wilson, 1995) as well as linking of personal selves or identities through self-disclosure; closeness; providing support or advice; being empathetic and responsive; feelings of affiliation, attachment, or connectedness; and shared experiences (Turner, 1970).

Financial bond is a kind of bond that uses economic variables like price discounts, higher interest rate, etc to stimulate customers' purchase of a company's offerings. This kind of integration emphasizes the pricing function of marketing components. This type of relationship bonding tactics is similar to functional bonds provided by Smith (1998), and thus, is the multiplicity of economic, performance, or instrumental ties or linkages that serve to promote continuity in a relationship.

According to Liang and Wang (2007) structural bonding tactics are knots relating to the structure, administration and institutionalization of norms in a relationship. The rules, policies, procedures, infrastructure, or agreements that provide formal structure to a relationship; the norms or routines that informally govern interaction; and the organizational systems and technologies, such as electronic mail or electronic data interchange, that enable or facilitate interaction can provide psychological, legal, and physical ties that bind parties to a relationship and make it difficult to consider other exchange partners. Based on the descriptions of these 3 types of bonding, it could be argued that if RM is to be practiced by not-for-profit entities like political parties then bonding has to be given special attention with emphasis on social bonding.

2.2.6 The role of effective communication in relationship marketing

“If you want to find a mate, save a marriage, get a job, sell a used car, educate the public, and prevent a war then communicate!” (Cushman & Cahn, 1985, p.5). This profound statement encapsulates the strategic importance of communication to any human entity. This means that communication is not only vital for business entities but it is equally needed in social base organizations such as political parties.

Organization’s personnel at all levels communicate with their superiors, business colleagues, customers, shareholders, the media and members of the public on a daily basis. No organization can function smoothly or become successful without a good communication system (Poovalingam & Veerasamy, 2007). Naoui and Zaiem (2010) defined Communication as the consumer’s perception of the extent to which a business interacts with its regular customers in a warm, caring and personal way. Such an interaction is manifested in the feelings of familiarity and friendship, personal knowledge, and the use of the client’s family name and/or first name on the sales spot.

Van Staden, Marx and Erasmus-Kritzinger (2002) describe communication as a two-way process where information (the message) is sent from one person (the sender) through a channel to another person (the receiver) who upon receipt would interpret the message and in turn reacts by providing feedback. According to Rouse and Rouse (2002) for communication to be effective the message has to be received uninterrupted and accurately decoded in terms of content and meaning as intended by the sender. In the opinion of Duncan (2002) “marketing communication is a process for managing the customer relationships that drive brand value” (p. 8).

Communication is believed to have influence on the building of long term relationships with the customers and stakeholders of an organization. It is therefore, imperative to acknowledge the role of communication in building relationships between the various functional units within the organization and between the organization and its stakeholders (Rensburg & Cant, 2003). Schultz, Tannenbaum and Lauterborn (1995) observed that it is “the rapport, the empathy, the dialogue, the relationship and the communication that the marketer establishes with the prospect that makes the difference” (p. 58).

As stated early on in this report relationship marketing offers more holistic approach to understanding marketing dynamics and to developing and implementing marketing strategies. It further emphasizes the creation of greater value for customers and organizations through fostering co-operative and collaborative partnerships (Poovalingam & Veerasamy, 2007). For organizations to realize the potential of RM they ought to have a carefully crafted company - wide communication strategy that guides the activities of all personnel of the organization, especially those who have regular interface with customers and stakeholders of the entity.

It is through interactions with customers that companies get to know their customers better – their preferences, taste and economic power and in turn design offerings to satisfy these requirements effectively. Communication in the perspective of relationship marketing is about keeping in touch with valued customers, providing timely and trustworthy information on service and service changes and communicating proactively if a delivery problem occurs (Taleghani, Gilaninia & Mousavian, 2011). In recent years there has been a wave of new communication medium called social media. Social media are new information network and information

technology that uses interactive and user produced content which facilitates the creation and maintenance of inter-personal relationships. Organizations need to be proactive with communication if they are to keep pace with the changing communication forms. Social media is discussed in detail in the next session.

2.3 Politics and Social Media

The internet has emerged as a key avenue for political activity and information (Kushin & Yamamoto 2010). According to Rainie (2007) the percentage of Americans who relied on online sources for political news and information increases from 4% to 40% between 1996 and 2008 (as cited in Kushin and Yamamoto, 2010). This increasing trend of online political activities is partly influenced by the emergence of new interactive, media – rich Web sites widely called social media (Kushin and Yamamoto 2010). Social media networks (SMNs) can be defined as “online tools and utilities that allows communication of information, participation and collaboration” (Newson, Houghton & Pattern, 2008).

Some of these new technologies that are classified as SMNs include; professional and social networking such as facebook, flickr, space; video sharing such as YouTube, yahoo video; blogs such as Google blogscoped; Micro blogs – Twitter; Wikis – Wikipedia, Wiki leaks. It could be argued that, the most popular and widely used of these SMNs are Facebook, Youtube, Twitter and blogging. Facebook, a social networking website was designed solely for Harvard Students, launched in 2004, is now having 1.01 billion daily active users, 83.5% of whom are outside the US and Canada (Facebook.com/company.info/stats).

Launched in May 2005, Youtube offers billions of people the opportunity to discover, watch and share originally created videos. Over a billion people (almost one third of internet users) watch hundreds of millions hours of videos on Youtube. Eighty percent of these users are outside U.S (www.youtube.com/yt/press/statistics). Youtube is also ranked 3rd most frequently visited website globally by Alexa.com.

Twitter has the mission to give everyone the power to create and share ideas and information instantly without any restrictions. Launched in 2006 Twitter's current monthly active users stands at 320 million users, 80% active users on mobile, with more than 35 languages supported (Twitter.com). Users of Twitter communicate through '*Tweets*' which should be 140 characters long.

Web blogs, commonly called blogs are easy – to – use content management tool which allows people to add new content to their sites through a web interface (Wyld, 2007). From the foregoing, it is obvious that a significant proportion of the world's population is engaged in social media, therefore the influence of SMNs on the socio – economic activities cannot be overemphasized. Political parties and candidates have used social media to their advantage. According to Hayes (2008) though social media is a new phenomenon with regards to political communication, almost all major party candidates used social media during the 2008 campaign of US elections (as cited in Kushin and Yamamoto, 2010). For instance, Barack Obama's 2008 US presidential campaign is viewed by many as the first electoral campaign in which the use of social media had a decisive impact (Harfoush, 2009).

In the 2007 French presidential elections, the victory of Nicholas Sarkozy was partly influenced by social media. Social media had a significant bearing on the results of the elections, as over 40% of social media users acknowledge that activities and conversations on the internet had influenced their voting pattern (Baygert, 2007). Furthermore, the power and influence of the social media is untamed. Social media has been used to help mobilized people for protest and demonstrations that have changed the political order in many counties.

The power of social media was at display when angry Filipinos amassed at a major crossroads in Manila with the help of text messages to force the Philippine Congress to change their decision about their corrupt president Joseph Estrada. Again with the help of text messages protester succeeded in ousting of the Spanish Prime Minister, Jose Maria Aznar in 2004. Massive protest with the aid of text messages, twitter and facebook reversed fraudulent election results of Moldavia in 2009 and the revolution in the Middle East dubbed ‘Arab spring’ was greatly influenced by the social media (Shirky, 2011).

2.4 Dearth of Party Unity

Party unity and cohesion is paramount to the success of every political entity. It is only when political parties present a united front that the electorate can entrust them with their (electorate) mandate. Manning (2005) posits that political parties are required to present strong social base, offer unique offerings (in terms of policies) which arouses the interest of core party supporters and the ability to attract and retain floating voters, party activist and future party leaders.

A party that lacks cohesion therefore cannot offer any coherent political message to the electorate. Party discipline and cohesion according to Heller and Mershon (2000) are key

elements of party unity. Party members are expected to exhibit a sense of discipline in their attitude towards party decisions and also in their behavior. Harmal and Janda (1982) found that in the United States (U.S), party unity usually is higher in non – election years than in election years.

Political parties like any human institution, occasionally witness struggles for power and personality ‘idolation’. These often results in the formation of sub groups to advance or promote a particular course or personality. This is usually referred to as factionalism. Factionalism is not a new phenomenon in political organizations. Lasswell (1931) were among the first scholars to offer a definition for *Factions*. He says the term faction refers to any constituent group of a large unit whose aim is to work for the advancement of particular person(s) or policies. Key (1949) another famous scholar of politics offered rather a narrow definition of faction. In his view, faction represents a group of people, both voters and politicians which is initiated at a certain point of time in support of a particular candidate running for office.

However, Zariski (1960) in conducting an exploratory study on factionalism in political parties provided an elaborate definition. For him, faction is “any intra – party combination clique or grouping whose members share a sense of common identity and common purpose and are organized to act collectively – as a distinct bloc within the party to achieve their goals. Based on this, it could be suggested that factionalism is when a sub-group within a larger group decides to support and promote the interest of a particular person or a cause. A faction may arise as a result of power struggle and/or a manifestation of divisions in the party.

2.5 Strategic Importance of Intra – Party Relationship

According to Gronroos (1994) the level of interaction and coordination between functional departments in an organization depends on whether the firm has chosen a transaction – type strategy or relationship – type strategy. In transaction marketing, the marketing and sales specialists are responsible for the total marketing function of the organization with no involvement of part-time marketers. Relationship marketing on the other hand advocates a broader customer interface involving a large number of part – time marketers in several different functions. Hence, for a firm pursuing relationship marketing, the operations, personnel and other functions are of strategic importance to the success of the programme (Gronroos, 1994).

Political parties being human centered entities would be more successful if RM is adopted and applied properly. Political parties and candidates as well as voters and citizens at large see political exchanges not as one – off transaction (such as voting for a party or a candidate) but as a continuous social process of interactivity within which they live their daily lives (Sniderman, Brody & Petlock, 1993). O’Shaughnessy (2005) argues that like the traditional business entities, politics of today is moving away from a focus on isolated exchange to a focus on building value – laden relationships and establishing networks. The importance of internal partnerships in political organizations cannot be underestimated, considering the vital role of relationships in social exchanges (Henneburg & O’Shaughnessy, 2009).

Relationship marketing ultimately induces loyalty which is the desire of many entities both businesses and not-for-profit entities like political parties. If the old cliché (it costs five more times to attract new customers than to retain the existing ones) is anything to go by then political parties and candidates ought to pay special attention to relationships and loyalty. Political parties

and candidates may have realized the need to build strong ties or relationship with party members and the electorates and so have taken steps to empower them (members) to take part in key decision making process (for example selection of a candidate). However, Young (2013) suggest that, there appear to be a contradiction here as parties offer enhanced motivation for membership by allowing members to take part in key decisions, yet party membership numbers and activism rates are still in decline at the same time.

Based on this, it could be argued that empowering party members may not be enough to halt the decline in party membership and activism. Perhaps relationship marketing could be the solution to this phenomenon. Relationship marketing goes beyond empowerment by building long term relationships, deeper interaction and development of networks.

2.6 Empirical Review

There has not been many studies conducted on the practice of relationship marketing by not –for – profit entities like political parties except the work of Henneberg and O’Shaughnessy (2009) titled ‘Political Relationship Marketing: some macro/micro thoughts.’ Nevertheless few related previous studies are reviewed here. Hinson and Tweneboah – Koduah (2010) reported that internal conflict and disunity largely accounted for the defeat of the then ruling party (NPP) in Ghana at the 2008 presidential and parliamentary elections. They also found that the party failed to deal with the concerns of the grassroots members. They further stated that the lack of empowerment of the grassroots members and their lack of participation in the selection of the party’s parliamentary candidates created divisions in the party.

Similarly Hopkin (2007) researching on the relationship between party decentralization and organization of political parties in Britain and Spain found that the two parties under the study (the British Labour Party and Socialist Party in Spain) did not show much commitment in decentralizing their internal organizations. Thus these two parties appear not to have taken the empowerment of their members seriously.

Cross (2014) writing on the relationship between party members, supporters, groups and intra – party decision making reports that political parties in Australia have acknowledged the gravity of the problem of decline in party membership and intra-party activism and are taking steps to recruit new members and maintain the existing ones. For instance the Australian Labour Party (ALP) in responding to this phenomenon allowed party members direct participation in key party decisions like the selection of party’s candidates.

2.8 Chapter Summary

This chapter presented a review of literature relevant to the topic. This review included theoretical concepts in marketing and political science. The dimensions of RM in relation to politics were presented in this chapter. Also included in this chapter is a discussion of the strategic importance of relationship marketing as well as the role of social media in politics.

CHAPTER THREE

CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

3.0 Introduction

The context is a necessary ingredient in qualitative research. According to Holloway and Wheeler (2002) context includes the “environment and conditions in which the study takes place as well as the culture of the participants and location” (p.34). This chapter presents an overview of political parties’ development in Ghana, followed by brief profiles of the NDC and NPP, brief description of the selected constituencies as well as a look at the state of politics and marketing in Ghana and the chapter ends with a discussion on political party membership decline.

3.1 Brief Overview of Political Parties’ Development in Ghana

A political party in the view of Lemay (2001) is any group of vibrant individuals who are politically inclined and work towards winning political power and then select officials who direct the operations of government and make policy decisions. The difficulty with this definition is that political parties form government and it will therefore be difficult to delink a party from government. In Ghana for instance senior party officers like national chairman and /or general secretary are often part of the highest decision making body of government (cabinet meetings).

Political party activism predated Ghana’s independence.

According to Ninsin (2006) as many as 8 political parties were formed between the period of 1954 and 1957 to take part in the struggle for freedom from colonial rule. When Ghana returned to multiparty democracy in 1969 after a military intervention in 1966, about 12 political parties

emerged to participate in that year's elections. In 1979, when the country returned to democratic path after 5 years of military rule, there was an explosion of political parties, 11 of them surfaced. However, the mushrooming of parties reduced by 1981 as their number reduced to six (Ninsin, 2006).

The agitation against military rule of the Provisional National Defense Council (PNDC) resurged in the period between 1986 and 1992 which resulted in the military regime returning Ghana to democratic practice in 1993. In 1992 about 13 political parties mushroomed after the freeze on political activities was lifted. These parties included; National Independence Party (NIP), New Generation Party (NGP), Democratic Peoples' Party (DPP), Ghana Democratic Republican Party (GDRP), Peoples Heritage Party (PHP), Every Ghanaian Living Everywhere Party (EGLE), National Convention Party (NCP), National Democratic Congress (NDC), New Patriotic Party (NPP), People's Convention Party (PNC), People's Party for Democracy and Development (PPDD), National Justice Party (NJP) and National Salvation Party (NSP) (Ninsin, 2006).

While parties like the NPP traces its roots to the Danquah – Busia tradition, a political tradition that started in the pre-independence era and subscribing to conservative liberalism others such as the National Justice party (NJP) were newly formed parties; they had no lineage in Ghanaian politics and did not profess any explicit political ideology. A number of these parties soon fizzled out as they could not survive the competition as well as organizational and financial demands of electoral politics. Three of these political parties went into alliance with the NDC which won both the presidential and parliamentary elections held in November-December 1992 respectively.

Six others joined the NPP to form an alliance of opposition parties to rope in the hegemony of the NDC and its allies.

Four years later only six (6) of these parties, namely; NPP, PNC, DPP, NDC, EGLE, NCP, and two newly formed parties - People's Convention Party (PCP), and Great Consolidated People's Party (GCPP) contested the 1996 elections which was won by the NDC for the second time.

Table 3.1 Political Parties which have contested Presidential elections: 1992 - 2012

1992	1996	2000	2004	2008	2012
NPP	NPP	NDC	NDC	NPP	NDC
PNC	NDC	NPP	NPP	NDC	NPP
NIP	PNC	PNC	PNC	PNC	PNC
NDC		CPP	CPP	CPP	CPP
PHP		UGM		DFP	DFP
		GCPP		DPP	PPP
		NRP		RDP	GCPP
				IND.	IND.
5	3	7	4	8	8

Source: Data from the Electoral commission of Ghana

In December 2000, seven (7) political parties contested the general election which was won by NPP. NPP again emerged victorious in the December 2004 elections. The NDC bounced back

from eight (8) years in opposition to win both the 2008 and 2012 general elections. It is based on this historical perspective that NDC and NPP are considered as the dominant parties in Ghana in the last two decades (Ninsin, 2006). Table 3.1 shows the political parties that have contested presidential elections from 1992 to 2012.

From the table 3.1 it could be argued that only well-organized parties were able to participate in the 6 elections held since Ghana returned to multiparty democracy in 1992. This is against the fact that there are 24 registered political parties according to the electoral commission (EC). Obviously parties that are well managed, which are also well resourced- both financial and material resources, are the ones that could field candidates in both the parliamentary and presidential elections. Indeed, with the exception of the NPP and NDC the other small and less endowed political parties were unable to put up parliamentary candidates in all the constituencies.

The lack of resources - financial, human and other material resources have become the major challenge facing the less endowed political parties, and this is why they are poorly organized and unable to fully participate in electoral process. The table above also shows that the number of parties contesting elections fluctuates, as it ranges from 3 to 7 parties. As illustrated in the table above, in 1992 only five of the 13 parties that were in existence at that time could make it to the ballot paper. The challenge is that the filing process for the presidential candidates is a somewhat cumbersome; it requires both financial and human resources. Often these smaller parties go to the EC to file the nomination of their presidential candidates on to realize that there are challenges with their documents. The number even reduced to 3 four years later and the last two

elections saw eight parties putting up candidates for those elections. It is only the NDC and NPP that have contested all elections since 1992.

Though the NPP and the NDC have different backgrounds and history, both parties express similar ideological beliefs. Over the years the NPP has largely been supported by elite and the middle class in society and the NDC on the other hand enjoys the support of the working classes, rural folks and the youth. Past elections however indicate that this trend is changing as both parties score across these class and demographic line (Ninsin, 2006).

3.2 Brief profile of National Democratic Congress

The NDC was formed in 1992 with members and supporters of the erstwhile Provisional National Defense Council (PNDC) government forming the nucleus of the party. The PNDC was formed after a military coup in 1981 and had ruled the country for over 10 years. The NDC has an umbrella with an eagle's head on top as the party symbol. Party colors include red, white, green, and black.

The party professes social democracy as its ideology and believes in the fair treatment of all persons with respect to their social, cultural, educational, political, religious and economic relations in a multi-party environment while its political position is centre left. Internationally the party is affiliated to socialist international and progressive alliance. The NDC is a party with a national character and so have branches nationwide, thus from regional, through constituency to the grassroots called the 'branches'. Indeed the party recently empowered its supporters by allowing all registered members to take part in the selection of the party's parliamentary and

presidential candidates- thus making the NDC the first party in Ghana to implement such a policy. The NDC since its formation has remained as one of the biggest parties in Ghana. It has contested all the elections organized under the fourth republic. In the 1992 elections NDC's presidential candidate, Jerry Rawlings won the elections with 58.4%.

Table 3.2 NDC's performance in elections (1992-2012)

Election	Candidate	Number of votes	Share of votes	Parl. seats
2012	John Dramani Mahama	5,574,761	50.7%	148/275
2008 (Round off)	John Atta Mills	4,501,466	50.1%	
2008	John Atta Mills	4,056,634	47.9%	116/230
2004	John Atta Mills	3,850,368	44.6%	94/230
2000 (Round off)	John Atta Mills	2,728,241	43.3%	
2000	John Atta Mills	2,895,575	44.8%	91/200
1996	Jerry Rawlings	4,096,760	57.35%	133/200
1992	Jerry Rawlings	2,323,140	58.40%	189/200

Source: Data from Electoral commission and myjoyonline.com

In 1996, Jerry Rawlings won a second term garnering 57% of the popular vote. Furthermore, Rawlings' party (NDC) won majority (133) seats of the Parliament's 200 seats, just one seat short of the two-thirds majority needed to amend the constitution. However, the NDC lost power in the 2000 elections with candidate John Evans Atta-Mills, who was Rawlings' vice president and hand-picked successor. Again in 2004, candidate Mills failed to win the elections. Below is a table showing the electoral performance of NDC since 1992. The NDC has over the years improved upon its internal democratic practices, from a unilateral declaration of the presidential

candidate in 2000 (famously referred to as the Swedru declaration) to a system where all registered party members are empowered to take part in the selection of party candidates.

However, the journey of the NDC has not been all that smooth sailing, the party has had to deal with divisions, internal wrangling and at some of points disgruntled factions breaking away to form new parties. For instance after the 2006 congress to elect national executive officers, the incumbent national chairman after failing to win a second term resigned from the party and together with other losing candidates formed a new party (DFP)to contest the 2008 general elections. At some points sitting members of parliament of the party resigned resulting in by-elections. Again in 2011, divisions in the party escalated when a former first lady (Nana Konadu Agyeman Rawlings) decided to contest the then sitting president (John Atta Mills) in the party's presidential primaries (see politics.myjoyonline.com).

3.3 Brief Profile of the New Patriotic Party

The NPP though formed in 1992 traces its roots to United Gold Coast Convention (UGCC), a party formed in the pre – independence era (Ninsin, 1996). The party was registered on 28th July, 1992. The party colours are red, blue and white and have an elephant with one of the fore- legs raised. The NPP is a liberal democratic party and believes in liberal conservatism with centre right as its political position. It is internationally affiliated to the international democrat union. The NPP in consonance with the *Political Parties Act 2000, Act 574* is nationally organized and so has branches at the regional, constituency and even polling station level. The NPP is one the two largest parties in Ghana. It has also participated in all elections organized under the fourth

republic. Below is a table illustrating the performance of the party in the 6 elections under the fourth republic?

From the table 3.3 it could be seen that out of the 6 elections the NPP has won 2 of the elections in 2000 and 2004 with John Kufour. In 1992 the party boycotted the parliamentary elections and that is why the parliamentary column for that year is dash. The party has lost the last two presidential elections (2008 and 2012 elections) with candidate Nana Akuffo Addo. The NPP pride itself as a party that values internal democracy. They have over the years exhibited democratic tendencies and were the first among the political parties to widen the scope of their electoral college to allow for over 100, 000 party officers take part in the selection of their presidential as well as parliamentary candidates.

Table 3.3 NPP's performance in elections (1992-2012)

Election	Candidate	Number of votes	Share of votes	Parl. seats
2012	Nana Akuffo Addo	5,248,898	47.74%	123/275
2008 (Round off)	Nana Akuffo Addo	4,478,411	49.9%	
2008	Nana Akuffo Addo	4,159,439	49.1%	107/230
2004	John Kufour	4,524,074	52.45%	128/230
2000 (Round off)	John Kufour	3,576,771	56.7%	
2000	John Kufour	3,131,739	48.4%	100 /200
1996	John Kufour	2,832,895	39.66%	61/200
1992	Adu Boahen	1,204,764	30.29%	-

Source: Data from Electoral commission and joyfmonline.com

Symptomatic of every human system, the NPP has had to contend with divisions and perceived factionalism. There is a widespread view that the party is divided into two factions-John Kufour (the former president) and Nana Akuffo Addo (the party 3 times flag bearer) factions. This perception is supported by the findings of Hinson and Tweneboah –Kodua (2010) which suggested in the 2008 electioneering campaign, John Kufour, the then president failed to actively campaign for his party and that the few occasions he attempted to campaign for the party, he rather made controversial statements which had the tendency to cause more harm than good to the party's fortunes in that election.

Leading up to the 2000 elections some aggrieved members left the party and came up with a new party (UGM). The party after winning the 2000 elections managed to stay united until recently when the disunity and factionalism escalated. In recent times the party has dominated the news media headlines for the wrong reasons. For instance, in May 2015 a regional chairman of the party lost the life after an acid attack allegedly orchestrated by some party members (see www.myjoyonline.com). In the midst of these challenges the party has had to suspend indefinitely some of its national officers.

3.4 Brief Description of the Eight Selected Constituencies

3.4.1 Asawase Constituency

Asawase is one of the constituencies in the Ashanti Regional capital, Kumasi Metropolis. This constituency was created just before the presidential and parliamentary elections in 2004 and since then has been held by the NDC. The constituency was created by the EC alongside 29 other new ones, moving the total number of seats in the Ghanaian parliament from 200 to 230 (Smith,

2011). The constituency was carved out of the realignment of the Asokwa East and Asokwa West constituencies. The seat was won by the NDC in the 2004 elections and has since been maintained by the NDC and so it is considered as one of the urban stronghold constituencies of the NDC by this study.

3.4.2 Akatsi South Constituency

This constituency is situated in the Akatsi South District of the Volta region. The constituency was previously called Ave –Avenor before the constituency was divided into Akatsi South and Akatsi North constituencies prior to the December, 2012 elections (EC, 2012). The Ave-Avenor seat had been held consistently by the NDC and in the 2012 elections the NDC again won the Akatsi South constituency. This constituency is therefore considered by this study as a sub-urban stronghold of the NDC.

3.4.3 Nhyiaeso Constituency

Nhyiaeso is one of the constituencies in the Kumasi Metropolis of the Ashanti Region. The EC created the constituency in 2004 just before that year's presidential and parliamentary elections (Smith, 2011) and the NPP won the seat that year and has held on to the seat since then. The seat is considered by this study as the urban marginal seat for the NDC.

3.4.4. Juaben Constituency

The Juaben constituency was carved out of the Ejisu-Juaben constituency in 2012 along 44 other new constituencies. The constituency can be found in the Ashanti region specifically in Ejisu-Juaben District (myjoyonline.com). Hither-to the Ejisu-Juaben constituency had been won consistently by NPP. On that basis the study considers the seat as sub-urban marginal constituency of the NDC.

3.4.5 Oforikrom Constituency

This constituency was created after the realignment of the Asokwa East and Asokwa West constituencies in 2004 (EC, 2003). This is yet another constituency situated in the Kumasi Metropolis of the Ashanti region. The seat since its creation has been won by the NPP. This constituency is designated as urban stronghold seat of the NPP.

3.4.6 Tamale Central Constituency

The Tamale central constituency was created after the realignment of Gukpegu/Sabongida and Choggu/Tishegu constituencies in 2004 (Smith, 2011). The seat is located in the Tamale Metropolis in the Northern region. Since then the seat has been won by the NDC. It is considered by this study as the urban marginal seat of the NPP.

3.4.7 North Tongu Constituency

North Tongu is one of the 26 constituencies in the Volta Region of Ghana specifically the North Tongu District. It was created in the year 2004 alongside the North Tongu and Central Tongu

constituencies after the realignment of the previous North Tongu constituency. The geographical demarcation of this constituency thus differs from the North Tongu constituency that existed before 2004 elections (EC, 2003). The NDC has won this seat in all elections since it was created in 2004. Therefore the seat is considered as a sub-urban marginal seat of NPP.

3.4.8 Effiduasi/Asokore Constituency

The effiduasi/Asokore constituency is located in the Ashanti region of Ghana. This constituency used to be known as Sekyere east constituency before the Kumawu constituency was carved out of it and the name changed to Effiduasi/Asokore constituency. This seat since its creation has been won by the NPP in all presidential and parliamentary elections.

3.5 The State of Politics and Marketing in Ghana

As discussed in chapter two of this report, political organizations and candidates globally have embraced the marketing concept in promotion of their activities. According to Benyi (2013) “there is the widespread use of IMC within the framework of the promotional tools and the marketing mix to reach the ever-sophisticated Ghanaian electorate. The extensive and expensive use of the mass media, billboards, sponsorship, public relations among others is so obvious during the peak of the political season” (p. 179). However it is important to note that this phenomenon is not peculiar to Ghana. Indeed the use of political advertisement to communicate with the electorates is a widespread phenomenon in many developed countries (see O’Cass, 2001; Peng & Hackley, 2007).

Mensah (2009) notes that political parties and candidates disseminate information about their policies, ideologies and campaign messages to the electorate through signs, sounds and symbols familiar to the voters. He further explained that the rise of the use of signs, sounds and symbols particularly in Ghana is due to political actors' realization of lack of appreciation of ideologies and economics indices by the electorate who are largely illiterates (Mensah, 2009).

Most of the parties and candidates in Ghana often adopt multi targeting using marketing elements like advertising (through electronic media, print media and outdoor advertisement), direct marketing and personal selling (rallies) to promote their activities especially in political seasons. Perhaps the reason for the use of multi targeting is because almost all the elections in the 4th republic have been decided by the niche of floating non-aligned voters (Benyi, 2013). Friday (2007) acknowledge this phenomenon and asserted that unless something swift happens in the political landscape academics, politicians, and pundits alike envisage same voting patterns, all be it not the same electoral outcomes, to continue for a long time to come. If the assertion of Friday is assumed true then one would argue that the expansive and expensive use of the mass media, billboards, sponsorship, and public relations among others in political seasons is targeted at the undecided floating voters not the aligned voters. The question then is what strategies are political parties adopting to increase their membership base?

Political parties in Ghana ought to widen their scope in the application of marketing tools. There are less expensive and effective marketing tools that political entities and candidates can use to promote their activities. These tools include, relationship marketing, segmentation, internal marketing and market orientation among others.

3.6 Decline of Party Membership

Political parties as mass based organizations depend on members for their organizational and material needs. There are two categories of party membership – card bearing members and informal or floating members. Since the 1950s political parties have drawn their membership from these two sources. Modern democracies (developed and emerging democracies) are greatly influenced by the practices, actions and inactions of political parties (Katz, 1980; Manning, 2005). Political parties as mass based organizations are noted for vertical organizational ties, an explicit ideology and counting on members for funding and electoral success (Panebianco, 1988).

Some parties have worked hard to remain attractive membership organizations to the citizenry and either maintain or increase their membership levels over time. Parties in Iceland for instance are noted for their resilience, stability and high levels of membership; the Australian Peoples' Party has witnessed 20 percent increase since 1950 (Paulis, Sierens & Van-Haute, 2015). Despite these evidences of some parties making progress in membership levels, there are arguments that mass parties are losing their popularity, as cartel parties are springing up especially in countries where the state funds political parties. Whereas mass parties are locally rooted, cartel parties on the other hand do not profess any clear ideologies and are not interested in activism and solely rely on the state for funding (Klandermans & Mayer, 2006).

Manning (2005) argues that the foundations on which party systems are built in Africa is quite different from that of the developed democracies. At a conference in 2005 held in Ghana on the theme "*Survival and Growth of Political Parties in Africa - Challenges and Solutions Towards*

the Consolidation of African Political Parties in Power and Opposition,” Dr. Neo Simutanyi (University of Zambia) seems to agree with Manning when he suggested that African parties are different because most of them spring up in election years, often with the aim of contesting elections and therefore poorly managed, which account for the failure of most these parties. He further asserts that such parties are not socially based in character and are usually formed by ambitious individuals with the objective of gaining political power. He added that African political parties tend to be characterized by factionalism, which – unlike factionalism in Europe – is not properly managed. Instead of arranging a compromise, dissidents within parties are usually hounded out.

Despite the strategic importance of mass base political parties, there is a widespread opinion in the literature that party membership is on the decline (see Mair & van Biezen, 2001; Whiteley, 2011; van Biezen, Mair & Poguntke, 2011; Paulis, Sierens & Van-Haute, 2015). Parties like Danish Social Democrats or the British Conservative Party have over the years found it difficult remaining attractive membership organizations. For instance, the Danish Social Democrats and the British Conservatives have had their membership basis drastically shrunk by 84% and 93% respectively since 1950 (Paulis, Sierens & van Haute, 2015). One of the factors that account for the decline in party membership levels as identified in many countries is the increasing prominence of the party at the national level instead of well-organized party structures at the local level (Katz & Mair, 1994).

The question is how important are members to political parties. According to Cross (2014) a party in Australia states in its report that, it is from the party membership that they choose

candidates and members of parliament. Moreover, well organized local branches are vital in identifying and nurturing potential party candidates for future elections. Party members as stated early on are also seen as source of funding for political parties. According to Paulis, Sierens and van Haute (2015) some party experts claim that the decline in party membership is due to cost and benefits analysis of membership recruitment. The view then is that, overtime the financial and other cost of recruitment of party members have exceeded the benefits associated with large membership base (legitimacy, electoral, labour, financial, outreach) (Bowler &Farrel,1992; Farrel & Webb, 2000; Norris, 2002 as cited in Paulis, Sierens & Van-Haute, 2015).

However there are counter arguments against this assertion stated above. Some argue that on the contrary the value of party members have increased overtime (Scarrow, 1999) and this account for members participation in key party decision making process (Bille, 2001; Hopkin, 2001). Other scholars hold the view that financial contributions by members remain a vital part of political parties (Hofnung, 1996; Scarrow, 1996). A number of scholars have equally disagreed with the notion that party members are no more influential representatives, who propagate the messages of their parties in their local communities and canvassing for votes in electoral campaigns (Pedersen, 2003; Fisher, Johnston, Pattie, Cutts & Fieldhouse, 2012; van Aelst, van Holsteyn & Koole, 2012). None of the previous studies on party membership fluctuations and decline can explain why some parties are affected more in membership decline than others.

CHAPTER FOUR

METHODOLOGY

4.0 Introduction

This section presents the various research tools and methodology used to explore and uncover information relevant to the research objectives. It starts with a discussion on the research approach followed by the research design. Sample size is presented after a discussion on the population and sampling technique. Data collection procedure and sources of data is presented but that is preceded by a discussion on the data collection instruments. Reliability of the study is next discussed and the chapter ends with a discussion on ethical consideration.

4.1 Research Approach

In research there are primarily three approaches, these are qualitative, quantitative and the mixed method. The quantitative research approach relies on the use of statistics and numbers which are usually reported in the form of figures and qualitative approach on the other hand is describing an event with the use of words. The mixed method is a combination of the quantitative and qualitative techniques. The choice of a research approach according to Yin (1994) ought to be made taking into account the research questions that the study seeks to answer since each approach has its own advantages and disadvantages and how empirical data is collected and analysed.

In conducting this study the researcher adopted the qualitative approach of research which was influenced by the objectives of the study. Indeed, Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Lowe (2002) espoused three reasons why it is necessary to carefully select a research approach. First, it allows

the researcher to make a more informed decision with regards to the research design, which encompasses the techniques used in data collection and the technique used to analyze the data. It is the general framework of any research work involving questions about what kind of evidence is gathered and from where and how such evidence is interpreted in order to provide good answers to your initial research question.

Secondly, it aids the researcher to keep in mind the research techniques and choices that will suit the work and, crucially, those that will not. For example, if a researcher is particularly interested in understanding why something is happening, rather than being able to describe what is happening, it may be more appropriate to undertake the research inductively rather than deductively. Third, Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Lowe (2002) further assert that knowledge of the different research traditions enables the researcher to adapt the research design to cater for constraints. These may be practical, involving, say, limited access to data, or they may arise from a limited knowledge of the subject.

4.2 Research Design

This study adopts the phenomenological approach as its qualitative design, because the aim is to explore the formation and maintenance of intra – party relationships by interviewing party officers of NDC and NPP. As a result, this work relies upon the perceptions of social actors within the stated specific context; that is how party officers perceive the phenomenon of developing internal relationships and how it is managed.

This research employed one of the qualitative tools (in-depth interviews) in gathering data. Burns and Grove (2003) describe a qualitative approach as “a systematic subjective approach used to describe life experiences and situations to give them meaning” (p. 19). Similarly, Holloway and Wheeler (2002) view qualitative research as “a form of social enquiry that focuses on the way people interpret and make sense of their experience and the world in which they live” (p. 30). Indeed qualitative research emphasizes the experiences of the people as well as their distinctive characteristics (Parahoo, 1997).

Qualitative method was deemed appropriate for this study because it allowed the study to capture the opinions and experiences of party officers with regards to the formation of internal relationships. This is a longitudinal study, where panels for NDC and NPP were interviewed for 6 months. Longitudinal study can be described as repeated measurements of the same individuals over a time spanning long enough to encompass a detectable change in the developmental status of the subjects under study (Rajulton, 2001).

Research design is a blueprint or framework of a research work. It showcases the procedures and steps to be used in gathering the required data to solve the research problem. Burns and Grove (2003) define a research design as “a blueprint for conducting a study with maximum control over factors that may interfere with the validity of the findings” (p.195). The research design also provides the guidelines and instructions to be followed when addressing the research problem (Mouton 1996; Polit & Hungler 1993).

A good research design will ensure that the information collected will be consistent with the purpose of the study and that the procedures with respect to data collection is accurate and reliable (Kinnear & Taylor, 1996). Three designs to research exist, both of which are used extensively in the field of marketing: exploratory (qualitative), conclusive (quantitative) and a combination of the two (mixed method). Both designs have their respective benefits and uses in respect of the fundamental objective(s) of any research, and neither of them is better than the other (Cassell & Symon, 2006).

4.3 Population and Sampling Techniques

The population of this study is the 275 constituencies in Ghana. Since it was not possible to cover all these constituencies a sample was taken from them. Purposive sampling was adopted for the study. As noted by Denscombe (2003) it is not possible for researchers to collect data from all those categories being investigated; however, a researcher attempts to get evidence from a section of the category through sampling techniques.

According to Parahoo (1997) a study population can be described as “the total number of units from which data can be collected” (p. 218), such as individuals, artifacts, events or organizations. Burns and Grove (2003) describe population as all the elements that meet the criteria for inclusion in a study. Polit and Beck (2004) on the other hand view population as the summation or totality of those conforming to a set of specifications. According to Polit, Beck and Hungler (2001) “sampling involves selecting a group of people, events, behaviors or other elements with which to conduct a study. When elements are persons, they are known as subjects and the subjects are selected from the delineated target population in a way that the individuals in the

sample represent as nearly as possible the entire population.” (p. 234). Non-probability sampling was employed in selecting the sample. Under the non-probability sampling, purposive sampling was used to select the sample after the population was categorized into the following;

An urban stronghold constituency

A sub-urban stronghold constituency

Urban marginal constituency

Sub –urban marginal constituency

A constituency that has been won three consecutive times by same party in elections is considered a stronghold by this study. According to the extant literature a constituency is usually regarded as a stronghold of a particular party if the party has won all elections in a given period of time in the constituency (See Keefer & Khemani, 2009). According to Bale, Reilly and Witt (2008) in UK a marginal seat is often used to describe constituencies where the win margins are not more than 10%. They further stated that marginal seat could be defined based on the length of time that it is consistently won by one party.

This study therefore defines a marginal constituency as a constituency that is considered as swing seat in terms of voting pattern, which no party is able to win for two consecutive times. Any constituency located in any of the 10 regional capitals of Ghana was considered an urban constituency by this study. Any other constituency outside of the regional capital was considered sub-urban constituency by this work. After this categorization, purposive sampling was used to select the sample.

According to Brink (1996), purposive sampling is about selecting participants who are knowledgeable about the issue under study, because of their level of involvement in and experience of the situation. Creswell (2003) explains that purposive sampling is about the selection of sites or participants that are in the best position to help the researcher understand the problem and the research question and they must be willing to reflect on and share this knowledge.

Purposive sampling may also be used by researchers adopting the grounded theory strategy. For such research, findings from data collected from your initial sample inform the way you extend your sample into subsequent cases. Purposive sampling was used to select the sample because this afforded the researcher the opportunity to select the most experienced party officers who were willing to participate in the study. This being a longitudinal study meant it was going to take a significant amount of participants' time. So there was the need to select participants who were ready to stay the course and willing to grant the weekly interviews.

4.3.1 Sample Size

In conducting an exploratory research, the emphasis is likely to be on the context in which such events were taking place. Therefore the study of a small sample of subjects will be more appropriate than a large number as compared with the deductive approach (Saunders, Thornhill & Lewis, 2007). Besides Holloway and Wheeler (2002) are of the opinion that sample size does not influence the importance or quality of the study and indicated that there are no laid down procedures for determining sample size in qualitative research. Qualitative researchers often do

not normally know the number of people the research will cover beforehand; the sample may change in size and type during research.

Eight constituencies were selected for the purpose of this work. A total of twenty four respondents - three respondents from each of the eight constituencies were selected. This sample size was influenced by the knowledge that in qualitative study small sample is preferred (Saunders, Thornhill & Lewis, 2007). The breakdown of these constituencies is as follows;

NDC		
An urban stronghold constituency	-	Asawase
A sub-urban stronghold constituency	-	Akatsi south
Urban marginal constituency	-	Nyhiaeso
Sub –urban marginal constituency	-	Juaben
NPP		
An urban stronghold constituency	-	Oforikrom
A sub-urban stronghold constituency	-	Effiduasi/Asokore
Urban marginal constituency	-	Tamale central
Sub –urban marginal constituency	-	North Tongu

A minimum of three executives from each constituency were selected to form the panel for that constituency. These panels were interviewed once a week for a period of 6 months. Among the 3 executives, one was selected as the key informant – that is the key contact person who was interviewed weekly. The other two executives were selected for the purpose of corroborating the

information supplied by the key contact person. This was to ensure that the data gathered was accurate and reliable.

4.4 Data Collection Instruments

As indicated early on in this report, this study was an exploration into a ‘virgin’ territory, an area which is yet to be explored. It was therefore necessary to use interviews as data collection tool which would allow the researcher to gain deeper knowledge about the practice of RM by political organizations. An interview guide was designed with the questions crafted to reflect the various themes of the study. These themes include communication, conflict management, competence, partnership/bonding, empowerment and culture. Burns and Grove (2001) described data collection as “the precise systematic gathering of information relevant to specific research objectives or questions” (p. 49). They further stated that data can be collected in several ways depending on the study and often encompasses a variety of methods; however, the research objectives must be accomplished with the instrument used. In other words research instrument is a tool used to obtain the needed data and can also be designed to measure variables like knowledge, attitudes and skill (Parahoo, 1997).

Due to the exploratory nature of this study, the research instruments used in the data collection was in-depth interviews. According to Malhotra (2007), an in-depth interview is an unstructured, direct, personal interview in which a single respondent is probed by interviewer to uncover underlying motivations, beliefs, attitudes and feelings on a topic. Yin (2003) posits that interview is a vital tool in gathering primary empirical data and that it allows the researcher to remain focused on the objectives of the study. He further states that there are 3 types of interviews which

includes, open-ended, focused and survey interviews. Similarly, Payne and Payne (2004) describe interview as one of the research instruments that is used in data collection which is often carried out in face-to-face settings, using oral question-and-answer format. It either employs the same questions in a systematic and structured way for all respondents; or allows respondents to talk about issues in less directed but discursive manner.

4.5 Data Collection Procedure

This study is longitudinal in nature and so the interviews were conducted over a period of 6 months (from October, 2015 to March, 2016). The first interview with each key contact person was depth and detailed while the subsequent weekly interviews were designed to find out whether or not within the past week there was any interaction among the party officers and between the party officers and their members at the constituency level. The interviews were both face to face and via telephone. There were face to face interviews (researcher meets respondents in person for the interviews) for five out of the eight constituencies used for the study and telephone interviews were used for the other three constituencies. With regards to the telephone interviews each session with the participants lasted for about 40 minutes for each of the three constituencies.

Burns & Grove (2001) describe data collection as a procedure of selecting participants of a study and gathering data from same. The data collection process started with the researcher personally visiting the constituencies selected to meet with the constituency executives and explained to them the purpose and significance of the study. The researcher indicated to them how crucial

their effective participation and cooperation can impact the success of the study. The researcher also sought the consent of the participants to record the interviews on tape recorder.

4.6 Source of Data

This study made use of primary data. Empirical data gathered from the party executives of the two parties under study- NDC and NPP formed the primary data of this study. The primary data was collected from the participants through in-depth interviews. Also journal articles, books, newspapers and websites were useful to this study.

There are basically two main sources of data - primary and secondary sources of data. Secondary data essentially includes information found within books, journal articles, websites and catalogues and which provides information which may have been collected for other purposes (Ghuri & Grønhaug, 2005). Primary data on the other hand is gathered in the event that secondary data is not available to answer a specific research problem the researcher seeks to solve. This form of data can be gathered in numerous ways such as through observations, experiments, surveys, and interviews, depending on the research design/approach adopted for the study (Ghuri & Grønhaug, 2005).

4.7 Data Analysis

There are different types of data analysis available to the qualitative researcher including data display and analysis, thematic analysis, template analysis, grounded theory, analytic induction, discourse analysis and narrative analysis among others (Saunders, Thornhill & Lewis, 2007). In the analysis, the study employed thematic analysis approach.

In adopting this technique the researcher sought to presents a detailed description of the cases under study (NPP and NDC) under different themes that underpinned this study (Creswell 2007). Following Creswell (2007) suggestion, the data presentation started with the analysis of the two cases where interview results of the twenty four participants from the eight constituencies were presented under different themes. The themes include communication, trust, conflict handling, social bonding empowerment, organizational climate and culture. The interviews were conducted using an interview guide, so all the participants (three executives from each of the eight constituencies) were asked the same questions. In order to ensure anonymity, the respondents from the eight constituencies were represented with codes as illustrated in table 4.1 below. This was to allay the fears of participants and allows them to provide honest answers.

Table 4.1 Codes for respondents

Constituencies	Participants	Code
Akatsi South	Chairman	ASC
	Secretary	ASS
	Organizer	ASO
Asawase	Chairman	AWC
	Secretary	AWS
	Organizer	AWO
Nyieaso	Chairman	NCC
	Secretary	NCS
	Organizer	NCO

Juaben	Chairman	JCC
	Secretary	JCS
	Organizer	JCO
Oforikom	Chairman	OCC
	Secretary	OCS
	Organizer	OCO
Tamale Central	Chairman	TCC
	Secretary	TCS
	Organizer	TCO
Effiduase/Asokore	Chairman	ECC
	Secretary	ECS
	Organizer	ECO
North Tongu	Chairman	NTC
	Secretary	NTS
	Organizer	NTO

Source: researcher's construct

4.8 Reliability

Reliability is a key element in testing the quality of a research work. This is affirmed by Polit, Beck & Hungler, (2001) when they noted that validity and reliability are justifiable in research although qualitative researchers use different procedures to establish validity and reliability. They further stressed that internal validity is important in qualitative research, as researchers are able to demonstrate the reality of the participants through detailed description of the discussion.

One of the steps taken in this research to ensure validity is triangulation. Triangulation according to Robson (1997) is the use of multiple referents to draw conclusions. It involves evidence from different sources; different methods of collecting data and different investigators. The use of triangulation allows the researcher to strive to distinguish true information.

In this study the researcher conducted a literature review to get to know the content of the phenomenon under investigation, and then proceeded to collect data through in-depth interview with questions covering all the thematic areas of the study. In each constituency, 3 executives were selected to participate in the study. Among these 3 executives one was designated as a key informant and after interviewing the key informant, the researcher would corroborate the information by asking the other two executives same questions in order to validate that of the key informant.

4.9 Ethical Consideration

In conducting this study the researcher placed a high premium on ethics and put a number of measures in place to ensure that ethical requirements were observed throughout the study. Some of these issues relate to researcher-respondent relationships such as asking sensitive questions, openness with the respondents, appropriate use of words, handling of confidential information from respondents among others.

The researcher personally visited the participants and explained to them the purpose of the study and sought for their consent to participate in the study. Green (2002) defined informed consent as the prospective subject's agreement to participate voluntarily in a study, which is reached after

assimilation of essential information about the study. The participants were informed of their rights to voluntarily consent or decline to participate, and to withdraw their participation at any time without penalty. Subjects were informed about the procedures that would be used to collect the data, and were assured that there were no potential risks or costs involved.

Anonymity and confidentiality were maintained throughout the study. Anonymity in this case according to Creswell (1994) is when subjects cannot be linked, even by the researcher, with his or her individual responses. In this study anonymity was observed by not attaching the names of the participants to the information they provided. In this regard codes were used in place of the names of the participants as illustrated in table 4.1 under data analysis. This was to allow them express themselves freely without any reservations.

4.10 Limitations of the Study

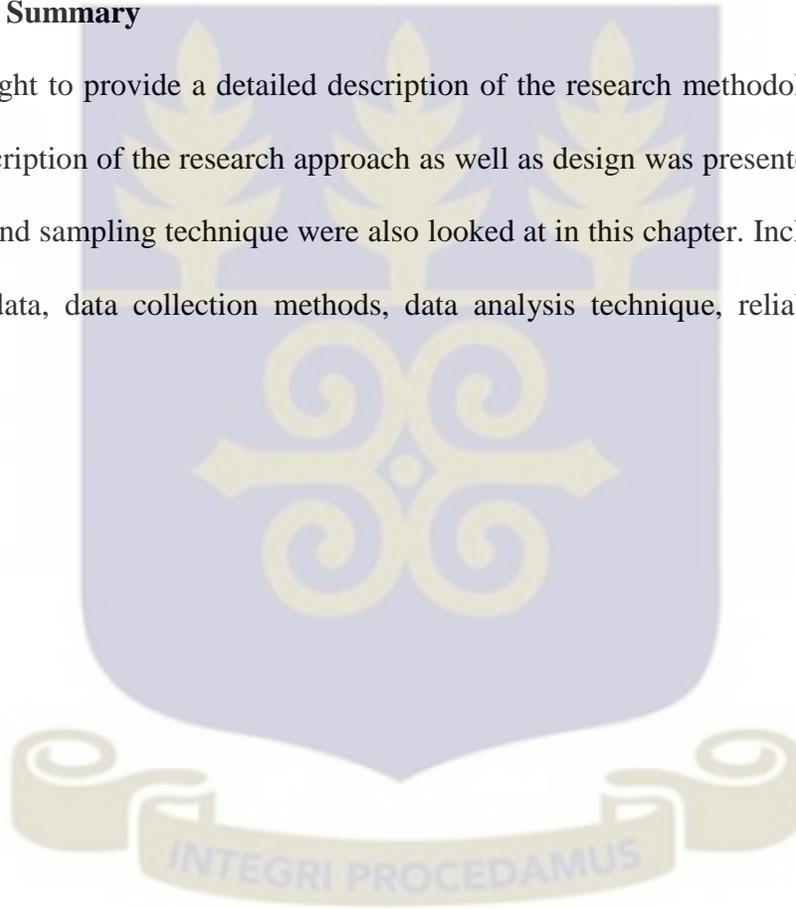
This study is limited in a number of ways. Firstly the study is on a subject area that is under explored. Available literature suggests that very few studies have looked at the practice of relationship marketing by political parties. In fact in Ghana there has not been any research work that focused on examining the practice of relationship marketing by political parties. Therefore this study relied heavily on relationship marketing literature in the mainstream marketing. Secondly the study covered only two parties which happen to be the two leading parties in the country and so the perspectives of the smaller parties are not captured by this study.

Also the sample size of 24 participants from eight constituencies out of the 275 constituencies is another limitation of the study. This sample size was influenced by the methodological approach of the study as well as resource constraints. It was the aim of the study to examine how political

parties in Ghana manage their internal relationships. So the study did not cover all aspects of political parties' marketing activities. Furthermore the study did not weigh the variables and so it was difficult to determine the impact of each variable on the internal relationship development of the parties.

4.11 Chapter Summary

This chapter sought to provide a detailed description of the research methodologies adopted by the study. A description of the research approach as well as design was presented in this chapter. The population and sampling technique were also looked at in this chapter. Included herein were the sources of data, data collection methods, data analysis technique, reliability and ethical consideration.



CHAPTER FIVE

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the analysis and presentation of data gathered through in-depth interviews with the aim of providing answers to the research questions. The analysis begins with a presentation of the findings from the eight constituencies under study and ends with a comparison of the findings from the four constituencies each of NDC and NPP. This is after a comparison of the two parties on the four categorizations of the constituencies – urban stronghold, urban marginal, sub-urban stronghold and sub-urban marginal constituencies.

5.1 Data Analysis and Presentation of Findings from the Eight Constituencies

5.1.1 Akatsi South Constituency (Sub-Urban Constituency- NDC Stronghold)

Communication

The constituency executives of Akatsi South acknowledged the role of communication in building internal relationships. They use various forms of media to communicate. One these mediums are meetings. The executives of the constituency meet at least twice a month to interact. The party branches at the grass roots on the other hand meet once a week. One of the executives noted,

“Our party branches do hold weekly meetings to discuss party matters. We often make efforts to attend these meetings to interact with our officers and learn at first hand some of the concerns of the party officers and members at that level.” (ASS-10th October, 2015)

This kind of interaction is important in relationship building, as observed by Gummesson (1994) when he defined relationship marketing as “marketing seen as relationships, networks and interaction.” Apart from meetings, other mediums used by the participants to communicate are telephone and the social media, specifically “Whatsapp”. The other social media networks are not being used because of security. One of the participants explained,

“You know, we communicate through Whatsapp too; for example, we have groups like constituency secretaries group platforms, chairmen platform, organizers group platform, and so on. At the regional level too there are such group platforms which are mainly used to disseminate information.” (ASS-October, 2015)

This suggests that politics is not insulated from the frenzy of social media. Indeed literature suggests that it is one of fastest, convenience and cheapest way of communication (www.nibusinessinfo.co.uk). Communication is a two way process – the sender encodes and transmits the message, it is received and decoded by the target audience and a reply is sent back to the original sender of the message. The participants indicate that they interact on regular basis with the regional officers. According to the participants, information flow from the national office through the regional office to the constituency and vice versa and that there are interactions between the constituency executive. This implies that the communication process in the constituency is both vertical and horizontal as explained further by one of the participants below,

“We often deal with the regional office – they call us for meetings where five of us (constituency executives) usually attend. At these meetings, we discuss things going on in our constituency and are also briefed with information from national

office and if we also want to pass information to the national office, it is sent via the regional office for onward transmission to the national office.” (ASS- 10th October, 2015).

This statement above aptly describes the communication process of the party at the constituency level. During the interaction with the participants, it was revealed that such interactions between the constituency and the regional office sometimes take place on the telephone especially on issues that need urgent attention. On the question of the strategic importance of communication in relationship building and party cohesion, the participants were unanimous in their view that communication is an essential element in fostering intra-party relationships. This view is not different from that of Van Staden, Marx and Erasmus-Kritzinger (2012) when they enumerated among others better customer relationships and good decision making process as part of the advantages of effective communication.

Conflict management

The occurrence of conflict is not entirely a bad phenomenon, how it is managed is the important issue. Conflict is symptomatic of every human institution as noted below by one of the participants noted,

“As human beings, you know we cannot always agree, so sometimes people hold different views on how things should be done in the party. Some of these conflicts and tensions are sometimes due to personal grudges between party officers and/or members.” (ASS-10th October, 2015)

Inferring from this statement, it could be said that the conflict experienced in this constituency is of two types – organizational conflict and inter-personal conflict. It was found that these conflicts peak during internal contest in the party, such as the selection of party officers and candidates for election (presidential and parliamentary). Since conflicts are anticipated, proactive organizations have in place conflict resolution mechanisms to deal with conflicts when they do arise. The party has constituency disciplinary committee (CDC) which is mandated to deal with conflict within the constituency. A participants describes in detail the role of the CDC below,

“We have a CDC that is supposed to resolve conflicts and disagreements among members of the party in the constituency. However if the conflict is involving the constituency executives, then it is referred to the regional disciplinary committee to deal with. If the regional disciplinary committee is unable to resolve the issue it is referred to the national DC.” (ASC- 15th October, 2015)

Conflict if effectively resolved can inure to the benefit of the organization. Conflict sometimes brings to the fore inter-personal and task difficulties which if resolved properly can serve as a source of motivation and also serve as the vehicle through which these difficulties are solved (De’Dreu & Van De Vliert 1997 as acted in Hempel, Zhang & Tjosvold, 2009). Indeed, a good internal relationship has the capacity to reduce the occurrence of conflict.

Partnerships and bonding

The study found that despite the diverse backgrounds of the participants, they still strived to relate to each other in a cordial manner. On the question of the relationship among the constituency executive committee one of the participants had this to say,

“You see; we all come from different backgrounds with different values, attitudes and beliefs, but we make efforts to work together regardless of these differences. In fact our relationship is good to the extent that we could eat together from the same bowl.” (ASS- 10TH October, 2015)

It was however revealed during the interaction with the participants that, as at the time of the study, the relationship was not as it used to be as a result of the party internal election to elect parliamentary candidates.

Competence

From the interaction with the participants, it was revealed that there are no stringent requirements for those desirous of occupying executive positions in the party. In fact unlettered party members are allowed to occupy the highest executive position in the constituency (constituency chairperson) as elaborated by a participants below,

“Apart from the positions of secretary and director of elections who are required to be literate and computer literate respectively, the rest of the positions such as chairman, vice-chairman, organizer, youth organizer etc can be contested for by any party member in good standing. Even those without any formal education are allowed to contest.” (ASS-10th October, 2015)

This indicates that majority of party officers who are entrusted with the day to day administration of the party lack formal education. However, what could remedy this situation is the person’s experience acquired over the years, for example the person may have been an assembly member for a number of years. It was also revealed that there is no party system that aims at upgrading

the knowledge of elected party officers except an orientation course usually organized for elected officers just before they take office. The party according to the participants has a policy for personal development; unfortunately such opportunities are limited to those at the national office as lamented by one of the participants below.

“Oh such opportunities (personal development) exist, but you see my brother we at the lower level here hardly benefit from this policy, it is only those at national office who enjoy these opportunities. They can go for further studies paid for by the party and some officers too get the opportunity to attend refresher courses often organized by NGOs.” (ASC-15th November, 2015)

Regular training is very necessary as it helps organizations get the best out of its human resource. Availability of personal development for personnel does not only increase productivity but also serves as a motivating factor for them.

Empowerment

Empowerment is needed in social base organizations as it is required in business entities. This is because social organizations like political parties are mass based. In interacting with the masses there are a lot peculiar encounters that require on the spot action. One of the participants had this to say about empowerment.

“You see, the work we do cannot be done well with strict rules, because we are dealing with human beings, and sometimes in the course of these interactions issues pop out that need prompt response, I cannot say for example please wait let me consult my superiors or colleagues before I respond to you. So we solve

a lot of problems on our own without referring to the party.”(ASS-10th October, 2015)

Inferring from this it could be said that empowered constituency executives are able to deal effectively with emerging issues within the grassroots supporters of the party. Theoretical views on empowerment are not different from practical as the participants acknowledge the importance of empowerment to include quick resolution of problems and the enhancement of party officers' confidence. In the course of the interaction with the participants it emerged that, the party has no formal mechanism that encourages and promote personal initiatives. Party officers get verbal commendations for successfully resolving party issues on their own.

Culture

Culture in essence is how things are done in a particular organization. Organizations have values and practices that over time become the norms and conventions in the organization. Organization's culture defines the organization's personality. The participants affirmed this assertion as one of them offered the explanation below about the party's culture.

“If I understand your question well, I would say the hallmark of our party is our discipline. In this party we have grown with the practice of respect for the party, so if the national office says this is the we have to go everybody obeys. But like the old adage goes, in every family there is a black sheep. So you will find some party members acting contrary to party orders and rules, that is part of human nature .”(ASS-4th February, 2015)

This could be as a result of how the party was evolved. Besides discipline the party is steadily growing its internal democratic practices and deepening freedom of speech within the party. The party in the last elections to select the presidential and parliamentary candidates moved from the practice of Electoral College to the system where all registered party members been empowered to vote to select these candidates. The participants however conceded that the party has no system of enforcing the norms, values and conventions of the party.

5.1.2 Asawase Constituency (Urban Stronghold Seat of NDC)

Communication

Effective communication is central to the successful formation and maintenance of relationships. The study found that the constituency executives are not oblivious of this fact and therefore have employed various channels of communication in their effort to develop internal relationship. Below is a description of the communication process of the constituency by one the of the participants;

“We understand the importance of communication and that is why we endeavour to meet as regular as possible because we do not have scheduled meetings time-sometimes we can meet once or twice a month to discuss matters concerning the party. Apart from meetings, other means of communication we use include social media and telephone calls. Also our local branches hold meetings week and we attend these meetings”. (AWS- 23rd March, 2016)

The participants argue that they only use the Whatsapp platform because of security. They communication system is a two-way process-from national office through the regional office to

the constituency and vice versa. The participants therefore rarely interact directly with national office. The participants' interactions with the grassroots structures and members are through weekly meetings organized by the branches of the party.

Conflict management

Conflict is inevitable in any human setting, be it as social or commercial organization. Political parties as social based organizations are prone to conflict as many competing interests are represented in the party-so there are bound to be occasional disagreements and tension. The participants acknowledged this as one of them explains below;

“You know anytime people are supposed to work as a team, there is the potential for disagreement here and there. Fortunately for us in this constituency we have not experienced any major conflict and the party nationally is enjoying relative peace.” (AWS- 20th November, 2015)

There is a mechanism in place to deal with conflict according to the participants as and when it surfaces. The constituency disciplinary committee (CDC) is mandated to deal with conflict arising within the constituency. If the CDC fails to effectively deal with the conflict it is then reported to the regional disciplinary committee (RDC) for resolution.

Partnership/social bonding

Partnership as a key element of relationship marketing is about organizations removing internal bottlenecks that allow employees from different departments to integrate and coordinate their activities. In the process of this integration employees will begin to bond together. A participant had this to say about partnership.

“Though we all have our individual jobs to do we still need co-operate and work as a team if we are to achieve the set goals of the party. We relate well with each other and so I will say we bond well.” (AWS-25th December, 2015)

Social bounding is about being compassionate about each other, being supportive and showing solidarity when the need arises.

Competence

Political parties as service organizations have to exude competence and capability that meet the expectations of the electorate. The findings show that emphasis is not placed on competence when it comes to the selection of people to manage the day-to-day activities of the party. For instance, one of the respondents observed;

“Oh! At the constituency level we do not have strict requirements for those who want to contest for positions, even people without educational qualification are allowed to contest for any position except the secretary. In fact my constituency chairman is unlettered. “(AWS- 2nd January, 2016)

Having people without much education hold top executives positions would not engender confidence among the buyers of the social goods offered by the party. On capacity building for party officers, the study found that there are training programmes for party officers even though it is not regular as observed by one the participants below;

“O Yes! We do have on-the-job training; it is just that we don't have a scheduled programme indicating when a training would be organized. Sometimes we could have two or more training sessions a year. Also there are orientation courses for

newly elected party executives.” (AWS- 5th March, 2016)

There is also opportunity for personal development, unfortunately the respondents do not usually benefit from such a policy. It is only those at the national level who benefit from the policy.

Empowerment

The participants believe that empowerment is necessary in the smooth execution of duties. Empowerment is when employees are given the opportunity to determine how best to accomplish their individual tasks. A participant had this to say about empowerment;

“Our job requires that we are empowered to act on our own initiatives otherwise it would be extremely difficult to become effective. In our regular meetings with the rank and file of the party we often encounter moments that demands us to act immediately without the opportunity to consult colleagues and superiors.”(AWS- 12th January, 2015)

Empowerment if not abused can lead high to moral among employees as well increased productivity. Organizations sometimes have formal reward system for employees who excel in dealing with party matters on their own. The participants laments that they only get verbal praises for successfully dealing with party matters.

Culture

Culture is seen as the long held values and practices within an organization that overtime because norms and intern influences the organizational climate. According to Hogg, Carter and Dunne (1998) organizational climate and culture are often influenced by the perceptions of

employees about the organization's aspirations and values. The key cultural value of the party (NDC) as identified by the participants is discipline, as explained further by a participant below;

“For us in the NDC, what we are noted for is our discipline. We have respect for the leadership of our party and we trust their sense of judgment, so when they take decisions we follow it. We are also creating an image for ourselves as a party that believes in internal democracy.” (AWS- 20th November, 2015)

The participants claim in the above statement to the effect that the party has respected for constituted authority could be true. This may be as result of how the party evolved.

5.1.3 Nhyeaso Constituency (Urban - Marginal Constituency of NDC)

Communication

The participants not oblivious of these thoughts on relationships use various media to communicate and disseminate information. It was found that, there were regular meetings by the constituency executives even though there are schedule time table for meeting. The branches of the party on the other hand meet weekly and the constituency executives participate in these meetings. One of the participants explained further,

“We do not have strict time table for meetings but meet as when the need arises. But our branches meet weekly and we the constituency executives participate in these meetings to get to know their problems.” (NCC-10th January, 2016)

The party structure of communication is that of two-way approach; top – down and bottom –up. The national office of the party communicates with the regional office, which in turn

communicate with the constituency office. In the same vein the constituency office also passes their correspondence to the national office through the regional office. On the question of whether the constituency executives sometimes deal with the national office directly, this was the response,

“Some constituencies have in the past have dealt directly with the national office but I have not had such situation before always we engage the regional office.”
(NCC- 10th January, 2016)

Apart from meetings, other mediums of communication used by participants in the constituency level include telephone, mail and the social media specifically Whatsapp platform. The constituency communication team led by the communication officer has regular meetings to take stock of events and strategize for the future. Even the ‘serial callers’ for the party are once a while given training.

Conflict handling

The participants intimated that a lot of the party conflicts and disagreements are personal rather than organizational. When pushed further to explain, one of them noted that,

“You know, conflict is part of human beings. Sometimes, some of these conflicts are as a result of personal squabbles rather than a party wide problem. But we have an effective mechanism of dealing with conflict when it arises. The district disciplinary committee is supposed to deal with issues and disagreements arising from our wards. If the conflict involves constituency executives then the regional D.C is mandated to deal with it.” (NCC-15th October, 2015)

It is a good practice to have a conflict resolution mechanism in place in every organization. The question is whether aggrieved party officers and members are willing to use these internal structures to resolve their differences.

Partnership and social bonding

On the question of the relationship between party officers, a participant had this to say,

“We have a good working relationship among ourselves, is just that once a while we have our disagreements especially during the season of internal elections. Otherwise we like each other and collectively most of the time.”
(NCC-4th November, 2015)

Social bonding is about exhibiting friendship warmth and fellow feeling towards one another in an organization. The goal of social bonding is to ensure that political party officers are able to work together as a group. On teamwork the participants asserted that they do work in teams for the collective good of the party. A participant noted below,

“We often work in groups or teams in a friendly atmosphere. We have occasional disagreements but when it comes to working for the party, we all give out our best after all we all offered ourselves to serve the party.” (NCC-January, 2016)

This proclaimed unity in the party could it be interpreted to mean because the party is in power they are able to close their ranks than a party in opposition will do.

Empowerment

Political parties as mass based organizations are akin to service oriented companies where employees need more flexibility in dealing with customers. Party executives at the constituency level have regular interface with their members and the general public and therefore need some level of flexibility in the discharge of their duties. This indeed is confirmed by the participants as one of them noted below.

“This our work requires flexibility and on the spot solutions, because every day we encounter unique problems or situations that requires us to act immediately without the benefit of consultation. If we are to work with strict regulations and rules then we will end up leaving many problems unresolved or many of the party people dissatisfied.” (NCC-12th February, 2016)

The above statement is a testimony of the importance empowerment as has been held in the literature. Empowerment provides the organization with a number of benefits including increased productivity, motivated employees, and quick resolution of problems and as a source of new ideas among others (Bowen & Lawler, 1992).

Competence

Competence is the perceived skills and capabilities of the people entrusted with the day to day running of political parties. Indeed the requirements for those contesting for executive positions in the constituency are not high enough as noted by one of the participant below;

“At our level here, any party member can contest any position except the post of secretary and director of elections where those contesting for these position

are supposed to be literate – they should be able to read and write.” (NCS-4th February, 2016)

Competence engenders confidence among customers especially service customers. Due to the intangibility of service, trust and belief in the provider’s skills and professional capabilities reassures the customers of the quality of services to be expected. It emerged that the only way of assessing aspiring party officers’ competence is through the vetting process. Employees no matter their qualification still need regular on-the-job-training. It was found that orientation programme is usually organized for newly elected party officers before they assumed office. When pushed further one of the respondents offered the explanation below.

“When we were elected, before we assumed office, we were taken to the regional office for orientation. Apart from that once a while we attend workshops at least two sessions a year to upgrade our knowledge (NCC- 12th January, 2016)

The participants also intimated that there are opportunities for party officers to develop themselves but lamented that they at the lower level hardly get to benefit from this policy and that it is only those at the national office who often benefit from this policy.

Culture

Organizational culture is the deep seated values and practices that has become a norm for the organization. In the view of the participants one of the things the party can be identified with is discipline. This is elaborated upon below by a participant;

“This party is known for its discipline especially in the early stages of its formation. But you know, in every family there are deviant people. So such people are always

likely to go contrary to party rules and values. We also making progress in internal democratic practices, you see that recently we allow all registered members of the party to vote in the party primaries to select our candidates both presidential and parliamentary candidates.” (NCC-5th March, 2016)

Employees are expected to mirror the culture of the organization; these include employees who regularly interface with customers as well as those in other functional departments of the organization. Political party officers and any other person purporting to represent the party ought to behave in such a manner that reflects the values and principles of the party. In an answer to a question on whether the party has a mechanism that helps them monitor the actions of party members, a participant had the following to say;

“Oh no! At our level here we don’t have any system in place to ensure that party members’ behavior of people. But you see every now and then we meet with the party communicators and give them feedback from listeners, so that they can take stock and re-strategize.” (NCC-10th December, 2016)

The importance of corporate image cannot be underestimated and that include political organizations. Systems have to be put placed to ensure the corporate image of the political party is protected.

5.1.4 Juaben Constituency (Sub-Urban Marginal Constituency of NDC)

Communication

Meetings are effective means of communicating. At meetings very important decisions are taken.

The participants posit that though they do not have a mandatory schedule for meetings, they

endeavour to meet regularly. However, the party branches at the grassroots hold weekly meetings at the local level and the constituency executives participate in these meetings. A participant explains further.

“We do not have statutory times for our meetings but we often have constituency executives committee meetings at least once month. It is our branches who hold weekly meetings and we often assign ourselves to each of these branches meeting.”
(JCS-25th January, 2016).

Apart from meetings the participants also use telephone and the social media as means of communication. The telephone is used to get urgent meetings across to party officers. With regards to the social media, it is the Whatsapp platform which is mainly used. The other social media platforms are not being used because of security. On the Whatsapp platforms party matters are discussed and it is also used for disseminating information. The communication structure is both vertical and horizontal. The communication team of the constituency headed by the constituency communication officer also meets regularly to take stock of their activities and strategize for the future.

Conflict management

Conflict is part of human nature and especially when people are expected to work as a group. It is therefore imperative that preventive measures are taken so as to minimize the occurrence of conflict and also a conflict resolution mechanism put in place to deal with conflict when it surfaces. A participant elaborates on the conflict management mechanism in the constituency below.

“In this constituency we have not had any major conflict to deal with thankfully, that notwithstanding we have in a CDC with the mandate to deal with conflict emanating from the constituency. If the CDC is unable to resolve the issue it is then referred to the regional D.C.” (JCS-21st November, 2015)

If a conflict is resolved well it brings along with a number of benefits to the organization. The parties involved in the conflict become more motivated knowing that they have been heard and this can lead to increased productivity.

Competence

As discussed early on competence of the service provider is perceived by customers as cues of quality service. It was found that emphasis is not placed competence in the selection of party officers. Indeed all that is required of aspirants of executive positions is to be a member in good standing. Except for the post of secretary and director of elections who are supposed to be literate and computer literate respectively, the rest of the positions can be contested for by anybody whether lettered or unlettered. The only way of assessing the competence of party officers is through the vetting process as explained by one of the participants.

“At the constituency level here any member in good standing can contest for any position, apart from the positions of secretary and director of elections where it is expected that aspirants have to be able to read and write. Also the capabilities of those aspiring for positions in the party are assessed during our vetting where, questions are asked to examine whether the person can do the work he is putting himself up for or not.” (JCS-2nd December, 2016)

Regardless of the backgrounds of the people elected to manage the affairs of the party they are given an orientation course before they assume office. Also there are in-service trainings organized for party officers once a while. It is not a scheduled training program but at least in a year, there could be two or three training sessions. On the availability of opportunities for personal development, it was found that such opportunities exist but often it is party officers at the national level who benefit from the policy.

Partnership and social bonding

Internal partnership among employees is vital in service firms' success. It allows for integration of employees instead of them operating as islands on to themselves. Party officers ought to integrate coordinate their activities in order to serve their members and the general electorates. The participants intimated that they bond well as observed below by one of them.

“We are from different backgrounds but we bond well, we communicate freely within ourselves. If any of us have a social function we all show solidarity. We also share information among ourselves, so we are all informed about what is going on at the constituency secretariat.” (JCS- 10th February, 2016)

Partnership and social bonding are essential elements in building relationships. If the assertion above is assumed true then the party officers in the constituency do practice one of the key elements of relationship marketing.

Empowerment

On empowerment it was found that the participants were empowered to deal with party matters as when the need arises. One of the participants elaborated on the role of empowerment on their

work below.

“Our work requires us to deal with issues on the spot without having the benefit of consultation. For example, you go to the remote villages to interact with the party members and you are presented with a problem, you have no choice but to try and resolve it there and then.” (JCS-15th March, 2016)

Empowerment brings to an organization a lot of benefits as indicated early on in this analysis. There is no structured reward scheme for officers who excel in their duties. It was found that officers who are able to use their own initiatives to advance the cause of the party are given verbal commendation.

Culture

According to the participants the party is noted for respect for constituted authority and the belief in the greater good of the party. A participant explains further.

“You see, it is because of our respect for authority that helped kept the party together after the demise of the late President Prof. Mills. Once the decision was taken by the party executives at the national level that we would present President Mahama as our candidate for the presidential elections, every party member accepted that decision and move on. In some parties you would have heard dissenting views in the media making noise.” (JCS-January, 2016)

Besides discipline the participants also cited the growing internal democracy as a developing culture in the party. The party has set the pace for being the first party to allow all registered members of the party to take part in key decisions like the selection of candidates for election.

The participants however admitted regrettably that there is no mechanism in their party to check the conduct and behaviour of party officers and members to ensure that it is in conformity with the party cultural values.

5.1.5 Oforikrom Constituency (Urban Stronghold Constituency of NPP)

Communication

The importance of communication transcends the exchange of information. It is such a vital element in relationship development that if not handled properly can hinder the growth the relationship. The participants have realized this and therefore have been having regular interactions with the rank and file of the party members in the constituency. The study found that the communication structure of the party is both vertical and horizontal, that is the participants interact with their superiors and also among themselves. Thus it is a two way communication process as explained in detailed below by a participant.

“We often communicate with the regional office and rarely deal directly with the national office. But let me add that, most of the time it is the regional office that initiates our interaction with them. They call us when there is information from national office but sometimes if we also have some problems we can call them to help solve the problem or we want to pass information to the national office we will route through the regional office and it will be passed on the national office.”

(OCO-18th January, 2016)

It was also found that the communication between the constituency and the regional office is done through multiple mediums including meetings, telephone and social media. The executive

committee of the constituency has no schedule timetable for meetings, so meetings are organized as when the need arises. Occasionally a general meeting is organized where all party members in the constituency are expected to attend. The lower structures of the party known as polling stations organize weekly meetings which the constituency executives attend. One of the participants explains further,

“For executives meetings, there is no fixed schedule or time table because most of the time it is influenced by events and party activities at a particular time. But the branches organize weekly meetings and we participate in these meetings.”

(OCO-5th February, 2016)

After interacting with the participants it emerged that, issues that dominate these meetings are party matters. These issues can be referred to as structural/operational party matters. Also during such meetings conflicts are uncovered and attempts are made to deal with them.

Conflict handling

Conflict is inevitable in any human establishment and political parties are not an exception. The participants conceded that the incidence of conflict in the party is on the ascendency in recent years. One of the participants laments

“In the past we used to be a very united group with minimal disagreement and conflict. Unfortunately in recent years our disagreements have escalated and we wash our dirty linen in the public all because of perceived factionalism.”

(OCO-4th March, 2016)

Factionalism whether perceived or reality has the tendency to breed mistrust. The conflicts in the party peak during the season of internal contest such as election of party candidates (presidential and parliamentary). A participant observed.

“During our party primaries for instance you find executives declaring supporting one candidate other and because of these preferences we throw mud at each other forgetting that we are members of the same family.” (OCO- 3rd January, 2016)

The parties knowing that disagreement and conflict are bound to occur have put down structures to deal with conflict anytime it surfaces. There is a constituency disciplinary committee, regional disciplinary committee and a national disciplinary committee. Conflicts arising from the constituency are dealt with by the constituency disciplinary committee. However if the issue is not resolved by constituency disciplinary committee, then it is referred to the regional disciplinary committee for redress.

Empowerment

They participants contend that without empowerment their work would have been significantly hindered. Like service encounters they come across a lot “moment of the truth” scenarios which requires them to think and act smartly on the spot without any consultation. A participant gives a further account of such experiences.

“You see, our work involves going into the hinter lands, places where you can not even have access to telephone services or the internet. If you are confronted with a problem in such an environment you can only act on your own because you can't defer the issue and you are also out of coverage area. You have to deal with the

issue and then later brief your colleagues and superiors.” (OCO- 24th January, 2016)

This is a confirmation of the theoretical view that empowerment increases productivity among other benefits. According to Bowen and Lawler (1992) empowerment is about sharing with line manager’s information that would otherwise be known by only senior management. These include information about organizational output, rewards for performance, knowledge that allows employees contribute to organizational performance and the capacity to make decisions that can influence the achievement of organizational goals. On the question of reward for the successful use of personal initiatives, a participant had this to say,

“The only reward we often receive for solving party issues on our own is verbal praises, meanwhile sometimes we have to use our own resources to solve these problems.” (OCO-24th January, 2016)

Lindgreen and Crawford (1991) posit that in order to achieve effective employee empowerment there has to be investment in staff training that focuses on the customer. This training should enhance employees’ skills in areas like customer service, communication, industry knowledge, presentation skills and teamwork.

Competence

The participants admitted that there is no stringent competence criteria set for those who wish to contest for party executive positions especially at the constituency level particularly academic qualification. This is how one of them described the situation.

“There is no academic requirement for those contesting for executive positions

except the position of secretary where the person is expected to be literate. The only way of assessing the competence and capabilities of contestants is through the vetting process.” (OCO-4th December, 2016)

This suggests that the capacity of the personnel who are charged with the running of the affairs of political parties may be deficient or perhaps emphasis is placed on experience instead of academic achievement. The participants intimated that there is no schedule training program for party executives. Below are lamentations of one the participants,

“We do not even have orientation before taking office. And you know we should have been having regular training programmes but as an opposition party our resources are limited and that is why we are not able to have as many training sessions as possible. Because you have to rent the premises, take care of the facilitators and also pay the transport allowance of participants (trainees).”
(OCO- 4th December, 2016)

Voters or citizens unlike customers are becoming more and more sophisticated and demanding. They expect people who offer themselves for national leadership positions to be people of high competence and this starts with the political party. The interaction with the participants revealed that at least by the time executives finish their 4 years term of office they would have attended 3 or 4 training sessions.

Partnership and social bonding

On the question of the working relationship among the constituency executives, one of participants had this to say,

“Oh yes, we do have good relationship, we interact well even though sometimes we disagree on some issues. But you know we always remind ourselves that we have a common objective to work towards to win power. If I decide for example not to talk to the constituency chairman or secretary and work on my own then there will be no cohesion in the party and how can we win the elections?”(OCO -24th January, 2016)

According to Doyle (1995) internal partnership is about dismantling functional barriers within an organization. Internal partnership can be described as one of the drivers of teamwork and the participants corroborate this assertion. Below is an explanation offered by one of the participants on how they work as a team.

“Yes, we work together, if you take every functional area there are about 2 or more people, for example the secretary work closely with the deputy secretary and the financial secretary, the chairman’s side too they are first and second vice chairmen. The research officer works closely with the communications officers and we organizers are even many, there is organizer, deputy organizer, women organizer, deputy women organizer, youth organizer and then the Nasara co-ordinator.” (OCO-4th March, 2016)

This indicates that the party organizational structure is designed to favor or facilitate internal partnership and social bonding.

Culture

According to Bitner (1990) dealing with individual encounters is “nested within broader”

management issues of organizational structure, philosophy and culture that also can influence the service delivery and intimately, customer perception of service quality.” (P.69). On the party’s culture, one of participants noted,

“I think it should be our democracy, to me our unique culture is our democratic principles. But sometimes you will hear noises, it is black man culture. Example, I am going for an election, let’s say I am contesting as organizer, I go round to campaign, just as the other contestants will do and at the end of the day when I loose, I begin to make noise, blaming people – it is the chairman who has made me loose or is the secretary who did not like. But when you were campaigning, you did not complain, it is when you lose that you complain, that is the ‘black man culture.’ Another value of our party is development in freedom – we want everybody to free and go about their business without any restrictions.” (OCO-24th January, 2016)

Party officers are expected to reflect the norms and shared values of their party in their speech and behavior. On the question of whether the party has any mechanism to monitor and ensure that party officers as well as members adhere to the party culture, the following response was offered by a participant;

“There is no formal mechanism at our level here to check members conduct to see whether they are conforming to the party’s culture. But I think the ‘dos’ and ‘dents’ of our party is stated on the membership form. Our values and principles are known to all those who want to become members. And also those who speak on behalf of the party are often reminded about the values through trainings. But

you know as human beings people can get carried away particularly on the media and make unguarded statements.” (OCO-5th February, 2016)

Organizations particularly political entities are not tangible objects but social constructs made up of people, activities, thoughts, emotions and other ‘intangibles’ (Gummesson, 1994). It is for this reason that party officers and any other person representing the party ought to reflect the culture of the party.

5.1.6 Tamale Central (Urban Marginal Seat of NPP)

Communication

Communication is the bedrock of relationships. Its importance is recognized in all kinds of relationships, be it business, social or family relationships. The study found that the theoretical propositions about communication is not different from practice as noted below by a participant,

“This work is largely communication and interpersonal relationships. So if you are a party executive and you do not have good communication skills and also don’t know how to relate with people then you can’t succeed in your work. To me communication is very key, the way you talk as a party officer can either draw people to the party or drive away potential party members and followers”
(TCS-15th January, 2016)

It was also found that the participants use different mediums of communication in their interaction process –meetings, telephone, e-mail and the social media. With regards to meetings it emerged that there is no statutory time table for the constituency executive committee meetings. Meetings are organized and as when the need arises. It is often influenced by events on

the party calendar. However the lower level structures (polling station executives) hold weekly meetings and the constituency executives attend these meetings to interact with the party members at the lower level and get to know their concerns.

The communication structure in the constituency is both vertical and horizontal. Thus the national office passes information through the regional office to the constituency. Likewise the constituency also route their concerns through the regional office for onward transmission to the national office. The constituency executives also interact among themselves and this is described as horizontal communication system. Sometimes the communication is done through telephone especially when there are urgent issues that need immediate attention. With the social media, one of the participants had this to say,

“We communicate through social media too, but it is mainly via the Whatsapp. We have constituency chairman Whatsapp group, secretaries’ group platform and so on. This helps in disseminating party information quickly. We do not also use the other social media platforms because of security”. (TCS-15th January, 2016)

It was important to find out whether the distance or the location of the constituency would affect the communication process. It was found that the location of the constituency has no impact on the communication process. The constituency communication team led by the constituency communication officer also meets regularly to take stock and re-strategized.

Conflict handling

The incidence of conflict is inevitable, so proactive measures are needed to effectively manage it

when it surfaces. The participants observed that it is part of human nature that once a while disagreements would arise; the important thing is to ensure that it does not escalate. On what causes these conflicts one the participants explained.

“My brother some time ago this party used to be strongly united but now because of this perceived factions in our party, there are a lot suspicions and tensions. For me largely that is the cause of our problems and of course these issues are played out in the media. The media is also focusing on us too much, so every little thing is magnified. (TCS-15th January, 2016)

Factionalism is not a new phenomenon in political science and its presence in a political party is not entirely bad. Elsewhere it is managed well to the benefit of the party. However, in the case of the NPP, whether perceived or reality, it would appear, that factionalism in the party is causing more harm than good. It was found that in this constituency there has not been any major conflict, except occasional petty disagreement on decision making on some major issues or allocation of party resources. Often they would always find a way of resolving these matters before they escalate. In this constituency too the conflict management mechanism exists in the form of the CDC as noted by a participant.

“Because we anticipate that as human beings, there will be occasional conflicts we had to put in place a mechanism to address it when it surfaces. So we have a CDC which deals with conflict arising within the constituency. However if it involves the constituency executives it is referred to the regional disciplinary committee for resolution.” (TCS-20th February, 2016)

This statement above suggest the party has recognized the significance of speedy resolution of conflict and that is why a mechanism has been put in to resolve them properly as and when they occur . The concern however is whether party officers and members are willing to subject themselves to the internal process of conflict resolution.

Empowerment

Empowerment is a popular phenomenon in business circles, especially in the services sector. The peculiarity of services, where it is difficult to divorce the service provider from the service is what makes empowerment an element of service businesses. It is important that sales people are given some level of flexibility to deal with the ‘moments of truth’ in the service encounter. The role of political party officers includes regular interaction with party members and sympathizers at the local level and so they need to be empowered to deal with the unexpected situations that often arise during the engagements. The participants were unanimous in their view that without empowerment their work would be extremely difficult if not impossible to execute. One of them explains further.

“In this work of ours, you can act instantaneously without remembering the party structures because the situation demands that you act, and you cannot say please wait let me go and consult my superiors before I will come attend to you.” (TCS- 20th January, 2016)

Inferring from this statement above it could be said party officers encounter peculiar situations that require the use of their ingenuity to solve problems on behalf of the party without recourse to superiors. In successfully doing this it is only right and fair that such achievements are

rewarded. The participants laments that the only reward they get for using their own initiatives is verbal commendations. One of them laments below;

“My brother sometimes we have to use our own resources to solve some of the party problems. Usually what we get in return as reward is verbal praises”

(20th January, 2016)

Competence

In services the credentials and credibility of the service provider is as important as the service offering itself. It was found that academic qualification was not a requirement for people putting themselves up for party executive positions. So top executive positions can actually be occupied by illiterates at the constituency level as one of the participants observes below,

“At our level here anybody can contest for any position except the position of the secretary where the person is expected to be literate. No educational qualification is required, all that you need is to be a party member in good standing.” (TCS-10th March, 2016)

On the question of how the competence of the people offering themselves to serve as constituency executives can be assessed, the response was that, the assessment is usually done during the vetting process. When pushed further on how this is done one of the participants offered the explanation below:

“You see, during the vetting process the aspirants’ knowledge about the job description of the position they are contesting for are tested. For example if I am contesting for the post of a secretary then I should know what is

expected of a constituency secretary otherwise should not be putting myself up for that post.” (TCS-10th March, 2016)

This practice obviously falls short of theoretical expectations. On the question of whether orientation programmes are organized for newly elected executives before they assume office. It was found that no orientation course is organized for newly elected officers of the party. However in-service training is organized for the party officers, at least by the end of the four term of office, they should have 3 or more training sessions.

Partnership and social bonding

The participants acknowledged the importance of internal partnership and social bonding to the building relationship. They contend that if they do not work together as a solid team, they are not going to be able to achieve their goal which is to win power. A participant made these observations:

“Once you are elected as executives, even if you were not friends before you have to begin to like your selves and establish friendship and that is what we have tried to do in this constituency. Also the design of party structure allows us to be able work together because in every position you will find two or more people who are supposed to work together.” (TCS-20th January, 2016)

Social bonding is about the level of liking employees feel towards one another. The feeling of compassion for each other and the showing of support for one another are the ingredients that would spice up relationships.

Culture

Culture is simply the way of life. Organizational culture can be described as the way things are done in the organization. Organizational practices, values and conventions which have endured long enough to become norms is referred to as the culture of the organization. On the question of the party's culture, the participants allude to its internal democratic practices and freedom of expression as the key values of the party. But they were quick to add that recent happenings in the party have the potential to cause harm to the brand image of the party. The party also believes in development in freedom. Thus people should be free to go about their businesses without any impediments as noted by a participant below

“One of our key values as a party is our internal democracy and the belief that people should be allowed to express themselves. We also believe that this country should be free and her citizens should go about their legitimate businesses feel. They should be free to acquire property.” (TCS-20th January, 2016)

Organization's culture according to Payne, Christopher and Peck (1995) has the potential to increase the fortunes of the organization in the market place. Therefore it is imperative for political parties to pay attention to how its culture is being portrayed by the party officers and members.

5.1.7 Effiduase/Asokore Constituency (Sub-Urban Stronghold of NPP)

Communication

Relationships thrive on effective communication; whether in commerce or social relationships, regular interactions are vital to the maintenance of the relationship. It was found that the

constituency executives make efforts to meet once a while but they have no schedule time or mandatory times for meetings; they meet as and when necessary as noted by one of the participant.

“We don’t have any time table for constituency executive committee meetings but we try to meet when there are important issues to be discussed. It is our polling station executives at the lower level who meet regularly, in fact they meet once a week and we usually attend such meetings.” (EAC- 5th February, 2016)

It also emerged during the interactions with the participants that apart from meetings, they also use other mediums of communication such as telephone and social media. Emergency issues are communicated through telephone. With regards to the social media, the Whatsapp is largely used. The other social media platforms are not being used because of security concerns. The communication structure of the party is two ways; they communicate vertically – with the superiors and among themselves referred to as horizontal communication. The communication team of the constituency led by the communication director for the constituency also meets once a while to review their work.

Competence

Political organizations like services business are expected to be conscious of the caliber of people who interface with the party members and supporters. The competence of party officers as the study found is not given any serious attention. Indeed, on who can contest for constituency executive position, it was found that any member in good standing can contest for any post except that of secretary where contestants are expected to be literate, the other positions can

actually be occupied by illiterates. The only mode of credibility and competence assessment is through the vetting process as described by one of the participants below;

“It is through our vetting process that the capabilities and the suitability of those who want to run the party are assessed. It is only the positions of secretary that aspirants are expected to be able to read and write.”(EAC- 5th February, 2016)

The perception of customers about the competence of service provider is crucial in the purchase decision making process of customers. Same can be said about those who patronize political products. The competence of the party officers offering the social goods will be assessed and evaluated alongside party policies before the voter decides to sign a social contract with the party. The study found that there is no orientation course for elected party officers before they assume office. Furthermore there is no structured on-the-job training programme for the participants. A participant partly blames this on lack of resources;

“You see, we are an opposition party and so we are handicapped in terms of resources, otherwise we should have been having regular training sessions to update our knowledge. Organizing such a programme cost a lot of money.”
(EAS- 5th January, 2016)

So once a while a training programme is organized for the participants; also workshops are organized for the communication team of the constituency but it is not also on regular bases.

Conflict management

The participants in this constituency affirmed that conflict is part of human innate characters. Any group of human beings put together to work as a team is likely to encounter conflict. A

participant laments about the conflict situation in the party:

“This party used to be very united but I don’t know what has hit us in recent years. Especially our leaders at the top there, for us in this constituency we’ve not had any major conflict to deal with. Despite that we have CDC with the mandate to deal with conflict within the constituency.”(EAC- 20th December, 2016)

Conflict do have its own positive side if properly managed it could prove beneficial to the organization. Apart from the CDC there are regional disciplinary committees and national disciplinary committees which are supposed to deal with conflicts that the constituency fails to resolve.

Empowerment

In commercial marketing, service personnel who have regular interface with the customers of an organization are required to have some flexibility in the discharge of their duties. Similarly political officers equally need some amount of flexibility in carrying out their duties.

“Our work demands that we solve problems on the spot without having to make reference to our colleagues and superiors. Sometimes you can go to some of the interior where there is no telephone service and so when you are confronted with issues to deal with you have to do it on your own.” (EAC-20th December, 2016)

Empowerment brings a lot of benefits to an organization as stated early on in this analysis. It was found that party officers who through their own initiatives are able to deal with party issues successfully are often given only verbal praises.

Partnership and social bonding

Partnership internally in an organization is vital to relationship building. Partnership is about breaking down the departmental walls to allow for integration instead of employees operating as silos. The participants admitted that after been elected it took a while before they started to bond. A participant explains further;

“When we were elected, we didn’t know ourselves well so it took some time for us to study each other. Now I think we bond well, we have close relationship. We might not be the best of friends but we work together for the good of the party.” (EAC-23rd October, 2016)

This description of bonding in the above statement is in consonance with the views of Wilson (1995) when he describes social bonding as having fellow feeling for one another as employees, showing compassion and empathy for colleagues in times of difficulties.

Culture

The participants were unanimous when they identified internal democracy as the key value of their party (NPP). Apart from this, the party also cherishes freedom expression but the participants were quick to add that recent events in the party are gradually taking this prized culture away as lamented by one of the participant below.

“We used to be a party that respected the views of one another. We had been the pacesetters in intra-party democracy in this country, but now there is culture of intolerance creeping into the party which is one causes of the disunity in the party. Another issue is the perceived Kuffour, Alan faction and Nana Addo’s factions.

We used to be a party that resolved our disagreement internally but now every small issue of the party is in the media.” (EAC- 5th February, 2016)

Organizations’ employees are expected to mirror the culture of the organization, so the behavior they put up in public should be in conformity with the organizations core values. It was found that apart from internal democracy and free speech the party also believes in development in freedom. The party believes that citizens have the right to go about their legitimate business without any impediments from the state.

5.1.8 North Tongu Constituency (Sub-Urban Marginal Constituency of NPP)

Communication

Communication is a vital element of relationship marketing. If an organization fails to manage its communication process with its customers well, it stands the risk of losing grounds in the market place. The strategic importance of communication is not lost on the participants as noted by one of them below;

“We see communication as the pivot of our work. As a party if you don’t take your communication serious how can you succeed? So we communicate via different mediums. We meet at least twice a month as a constituency executive committee to discuss party issues.” (NTC-15TH March, 2016)

Inferring from the statement the participants do not have a schedule time for meetings. However the grassroots structures-polling station executives meet once every week and the constituency executives makes effort to attend these meetings. Apart from meetings the participants do communicate through telephone and social media, specifically Whatsapp. The other social media

platforms are not being used because of security concerns. The communication structure is both vertical and horizontal process as explained by one of the participants below;

“We do not have direct interactions with the national office. Usually if they want to communicate with us they pass it through the regional office and the regional office will in turn pass it on to us. The same way if we want to pass on any information to the national office we route it through regional office for onward transmission to the head office.” (NTS- 18th February, 2016)

Inferring from the statement above it could be said that, the vertical communication process is a two way process, that is party officers communicating with superiors and national officers also communicate with the constituency officers through the regional office. Also the constituency executives interact among themselves.

Conflict management

Conflict is part of human nature especially when people are put in a group to work together. There is bound to be occasional tension and suspicions, political parties are more prone to conflict because as social based entities various groupings within the larger group are competing for recognition and control of the party. For instance a participant made this observation about conflict in the party.

“We have allowed few people interest to tear the party apart. This person says I belong to this camp and another say I belong to this camp. This kind of divisions causing our down fall as party and we have not been able to win power for some time now.”(NTS-18th February, 2016)

Implied in this statement is the belief that disunity does promote progress and development in any entity. There is a CDC mandated to deal conflict emanating from the constituency. Cases that are not resolved by CDC are referred to the RDC for solution, if the RDC also fails to resolve the matter then the national office steps in and resolve it. The participants aver that conflicts in the constituency usually peak during the time of internal party contest.

Empowerment

Empowerment is where an organization helps make the internal organizational atmosphere more co-operative such that employees are able to act on behalf of the organization without reference to superiors (Chasten, Badger & Saddler-Smith, 2000). Empowerment brings to an organization a number of benefits among which are increased productivity and employees feeling confident and excited about their jobs. One of the participants confirms this below;

“The way our work is if we were not empowered then we would be frustrated in executing our jobs. We encounter unique situations in our interactions with our members every day. Whenever you encounter such situations and you are able to deal with it successfully you become happy. In fact sometimes we have to use our own resources to solve such problems.” (NTS -18th February, 2016)

Implicit in the above statement is the call for reward for party officers who have successfully used their own initiatives to resolve party issues. However the study found that the only reward party officers often get is verbal commendations.

Competence

Competence in the political sphere is the perception of the electorates about the capabilities and skills that party officers and leading members possess. Due to the intangibility of the ‘social goods’ offered by political parties, competence of a party serves as cues of the kind of service to be expected. The study however found that the party is not paying any special attention to the competence of people who put themselves up for executive positions as noted below by one of the participants.

“At our level any member in good standing can contest for any position except secretary where of course the person should at least be able to read and write.”

(NTS-5TH October, 2016)

The only form of assessment that those who aspire to become party executives go through is the vetting process. This is the only avenue through which the suitability of aspirants are assessed. On the issue of capacity building it was found that once a while a training programme is organized for the constituency executives. There is also no orientation course for newly elected executives.

Partnership and social bonding

Internal partnership is about an organizational atmosphere that allows employees from different departments to integrate. It is a situation where employees express liking for each other and the show of compassion. The participants described relationship among the constituency executives as good. One of them elaborated below;

“You know that currently our party is facing a lot of problems, but at our level

here we try to work together as a group in order to able to achieve the goal of the party which is to win political power.” (NTS- February, 2016)

The party organizational structure also facilitates team work, for instance every portfolio have two or more people who are expected to work together. The organizer position for example has about 5 people (constituency organizer, deputy organizer, youth organizer, women organizer and the NASARA coordinator) who are supposed to be working together.

Culture

Culture is a way of life of any group of people that is enduring and dynamic. Organizations have practices and values that are long lasting which are supposed to be reflected in the organizations employees. The participants asserted that their party has long been noted for its democratic credentials. A participant explained further below;

“We are a party that believes in freedom of expression and internal democracy. But I must add that lately we are not doing our image any good, because we are constantly in the media for the wrong reasons otherwise we were the very first party to widen our electoral college in order to give more power to the grass roots supporters.” (NTS-15th November, 2016)

Implied in this statement above is the concern that the actions and inactions of party officers and members can promote or harm the party brand. It is found that the party has no mechanism of ensuring that party officers and members adhere to the culture of the party.

5.2 Discussion of Findings

5.2.1 Comparative Analysis of the Management of Internal Relationships of the Urban-Stronghold Constituencies (Asawase-NDC and Oforikrom – NPP)

In this section a comparison of the findings from the two urban stronghold constituencies is presented. The presentation highlights the major similarities as well as the differences that are identified in the findings. This is done base on the six thematic area – communication conflict management, competence, partnership/social bonding, empowerment, and culture. Comparative analysis will be done for the other 3 categories- urban marginal constituencies, sub-urban stronghold and sub-urban marginal constituencies.

Communication

No organization can function smoothly or become successful without a good communication system (Poovalingam & Veerasamy, 2007). If this statement is assumed true, then political organizations equally have to pay special attention to their communication systems. Communication is believed to have significant influence on the building of long term relationships with customers and stakeholders of organizations. According to Banihashemi (2011) face-to-face communication is one of the most effective forms of communication because it is information rich as a result of the use of multi-channels such as words, facial expressions and bodily demeanour which serves to reinforce the message. Face-to-face interactions also provide instant feedback.

The findings from the two constituencies suggest that they both believe in the strategic importance of communication to the success of any organization especially with regards to relationship building. The communication structure of the two constituencies are also the same, it

is both vertical and horizontal communication process. Participants from both constituencies use different modes of communication including meetings, telephone and social media (whatsapp). The only difference is the frequency of the meetings, whereas Asawase meets at least twice a month, Oforikrom constituency can meet about three times a month. The grass roots structures of both constituencies meet once a week and the constituency executives participate in these meetings

Another similarity is that both constituencies interact regularly with the regional office and rarely have direct interaction with the national office. The participants in Asawase Constituency intimate that once a while the natural officers embark on outreach programmes to the constituency. Both constituencies have communication teams headed by the communication officer in the case of Asawase and communication director in Oforikrom.

Conflict management

On the issues of conflict there is congruence on the findings of the two constituencies with regards to the inevitability of conflict. The important thing is to put in place mechanisms that identifies and resolved these conflicts. Both constituencies agreed that occasionally they experience conflicts and so CDCs are put in place with the responsibility of resolving conflicts. If the CDCs are unable to resolve the conflict it is referred to the RDC for redress and could go up to the national discipline committee if unresolved at the regional DC.

They key difference between the two constituencies is the perception of the incidence of conflict. The participants from Asawase Constituency are of the view that there is relative unity in the party (NDC) and this has reduced the incidence of conflict. Whereas the participants in

Oforikrom feel that their party (NPP) has experienced some difficulties in recent years because of the perceived factions that exist in the party.

Partnership/social bonding

Social bonding is the personal ties or linkages established during interaction (Furner, 1970). These ties according to Wilson (1995) include the level personal friendship and adoration shared by a seller and buyer. There are more similarities between the two constituencies than differences on the issue of partnership/social bonding. To begin with participants in both constituencies agree that partnership and bonding are key drivers of relationships. They both acknowledge that they may have their differences as individuals but they try to work together. The relationship between each of the constituency executives is described as cordial. In fact the participant of the Asawase constituency describes their relationship as friendly and that they bond well.

Competence

In commerce, the extant literature suggests that competence is about the customer's perception of the vendor's technological and commercial ability (Anderson & Weitz, 1998, as cited in Nartey, Agbemabiese, Kodua and Braimah, 2013). In the same vein competence in social based organizations like political parties can be described as the buyer's (electorate) view of the capabilities and skills of the supplier (political parties and candidates). With regard to competence, there is little to differentiate between the two constituencies. In both constituencies, there is no high qualification standard for people who desire to contest for executive positions. Indeed apart from the position of secretary and director of elections in Asawase Constituency who are required to be literate and computer literate respectively, the other position can be

contested for by even unlettered party members. The situation is the same in Oforikrom constituency where only the position of secretary requires contestants to be literate and the rest of the positions are open to all members whether lettered or unlettered.

The participants in both constituencies indicated that in terms of capacity building, they have training sessions once a while. Whereas the participants in Asawase have at least 3 training sessions in a year, their counterparts in Oforikrom constituency have at least one training session a year. The explanation offered by the participant from Oforikrom for the lack of frequent training sessions is because as an opposition party they are resource challenged. Both participants also have indicated the availability of personal development policies. However it is only officers at the national level who benefits from these policies. One key difference between these two constituencies is that whereas orientation course is organized for newly elected executives in Asawase constituency, there is no such opportunity for newly elected executives in Oforikrom Constituency.

Empowerment

Empowerment advocates the creation of intra-organizational environment where employees exhibit flexibility and are prepared to take personal initiatives and act on their own without referring to their superiors (Chaston, Badger & Sadler-Smith, 2000). The participants unanimously agree with this view of Chaston et al. The respondents in the two constituencies were unanimous in their view that empowerment is necessary if they were to excel in the performance their duties. Both participants indicated that they are empowered to use their own initiatives in dealing with party matters. There was also congruence of views with regards to the benefits of empowerment which includes increase in productivity and speedy resolution of issues

among others. With regards to the reward for successfully using personal initiatives to deal with party matters, participants from both constituencies get verbal praises for good work done.

Culture

With respect to party culture and climate, while the participants in Asawase claim their party (NDC) is noted for discipline, the participants from Oforikrom feel that internal democratic practices is the key cultural value of their party (NPP). The participant of the Asawase also observed that there is a growing culture of democratic practices in their party. For instance the party recently empowered all registered members to vote in the selection of the party's presidential and parliamentary candidate. The participants from Oforikrom Constituency on the other hand express regret about recent acts by party top ranking members which are tarnishing the image of the party (NPP) in the eyes of the general populace. Another common element between the two constituencies is the lack of mechanism to monitor the behavior of party officers and members to ensure that it reflects the cultural values of their parties.

5.2.2 Comparative Analysis of the Management of Internal Relationships of the Sub-Urban Stronghold Constituencies (Akatsi South - NDC And Effiduase/Asokore-NPP)

The analysis under this section highlights the key similarities and major differences in the findings of these two constituencies. This comparative analysis is done according to the six themes identified in the study.

Communication

There are many similarities in the communication processes of the two constituencies than there are differences. The communication structures of both constituencies are the same-it is both vertical and horizontal approach to communication. They both interact with the regional office and the regional offices transmit their concerns to the national office. Indeed the findings of the two constituencies show that they both acknowledged the vital role of communication in relationship building. Indeed communication is the life blood of relationship of any kind – business or social. Interactions and networking is at the heart of RM as asserted by Gummesson (1994).

The constituency executives of both constituencies do not have scheduled time for meetings and the numbers of times they meet are irregular. However while the Effiduase/Asokore constituency executives meet about 3 times a month, the Akatsi South constituency executives meet at least once a month. They both also use the social media for communication.

Conflict management

On the issue of conflict the participants from both constituencies agree that conflict is part of human nature and anytime people are put together to work there is bound to be conflict. Both constituencies have disciplinary committees to deal with conflict that arise within the constituencies. Issues that could not be resolved by the CDC are referred to the RDC. In the opinion of the participants in Effiduasi/Asokore, the party (NPP) used to be united but now the incidence of conflict is so rampant whereas the participants in Akatsi South are of the view that they used to be united until disagreements emerged during the last internal contest to select the party's presidential and parliamentary candidates.

Partnership and social bonding

According to Smith (1998) building strong bonds is one of the primary objectives of relationship marketing. Participants from both constituencies acknowledged the importance of partnership and social bonding to relationship development. The findings show that the participants from both constituencies strive for partnership. The parties organizational structures are also set up to promote team work as every position has about 2 or more people who are expected to work together. Inferring from the findings on conflict management of both constituencies, it could be said that the participants in bond is Effiduasi/Asokore stronger than that of the participants of the Akatsi South Constituency at the time of the study.

Competence

The analysis of the findings from the two constituencies revealed that competence is not given much prominence and attention it deserves by the participants from both constituencies. In both constituencies the skills requirement for people who desire to contest for executive position is not high. In fact, people who are unlettered are allowed to contest for any position except that of secretary. Perhaps the parties place emphasis on experience rather academic qualifications.

Studies conducted by Aldlaigan and Buttle (2005) found that one of the key things that draws customers closer to a service provider is the level confidence the customers reposes in the organization's competence and capacity. On the issue of capacity building, the findings from the two constituencies show that both have some in-service training once a while. However the participants in Akatsi South have more training sessions per year than the participants from Effiduase/Asokore Constituency who blame the lack of frequent training sessions on financial

resources. They claim as an opposition party they are resource challenged. The participants from Akatsi South constituency also have orientation course for newly elected party officers before they assumed office, the participants from Effiduase/Asokore Constituency do not have this opportunity. There is also opportunity for personal development but both participants lament that it is often only those at the national offices who benefit from these opportunities.

Empowerment

Inferred from the findings from both constituencies it is clear that participants by default were empowered. This is largely due to the nature of the job of the party officers. Participants in both constituencies feel empowered to act on their own in the interest of their parties. Participants from both constituencies indicate that it would be near impossible to execute their tasks if they were not empowered. They both also agree that empowerment among other benefits increases productivity. In both constituencies there is no formal structure or system designed to promote and encourage the use of personal initiatives to deal with party issues. What officers get for successfully dealing with party issues on their own are verbal communications. Empowerment is one of the drivers of organizations effectiveness and also offers competitive edge in the market place (Abu Kassim, Yusiff. & Fong, 2012).

Culture

The participants in Akatsi South believe that the key value of their party (NDC) is discipline. The findings also indicate that party (NDC) is gradually and steadily consolidating its internal democratic practice. The participants in Effiduasi/Asokore on the other hand believe their party (NPP) is fast losing its position as a party that believes in freedom of expression and internal democracy. They lament that recent disagreement among the top hierarchy of the party is

causing a lot of damage to the reputation and image of the party (NPP). The participants from both constituencies however conceded that there is no mechanism in place to ensure that members of the party especially those who purport to speak on behalf of the party adhere to the party's cultural values.

5.2.3 A Comparative Analysis of the Management of Internal Relationships of the Urban-Marginal Constituencies (Nhyieaso-NDC and Tamale Central-NPP)

Communication

With respect to communication there is little to choose between the two constituencies. The findings from the two constituencies reveal that the systems of communication in both constituencies are similar. Their communication system of both constituencies can be described as both vertical and horizontal communication process. Participants from both constituencies indicate that constituency executive committee meetings are irregular and non-statutory and often convened as and when necessary. However the branches of Nhyieaso constituency meet once every week and the constituency executives make effort to attend those meetings and the same situation exist in the Tamale central Constituency.

Apart from meetings the participants in both constituencies use other mediums of communication such as telephone and social media. The telephone is used when there is the need to disseminate information quickly. With the regards to the social media it is only the whatsapp platform that is largely used. The other social media platforms are not being used because of concerns for security. Participants from both constituencies interact with the regional office more often and rarely communicate directly with the national office.

Conflict management

According to the findings from the two constituencies the major difference between them with regards to conflicts is the rate at which conflict occurs. The rate at which conflicts arise in the Tamale Central Constituency is high than the rate at which the Nhyieaso Constituency experiences conflict. Beside this point, the two constituencies have a lot in common particularly the management of conflict. Both constituencies have CDCs which are mandated to deal with conflict at it surfaces. In both constituencies when the CDC fails to resolve the conflict it is referred to the regional disciplinary committee to deal with. The participants from Nhyieaso believe that their party (NDC) is currently enjoying unity and stability, whereas the Tamale Central participants feel that the perceived factionalism in the party (NPP) is breeding mistrust and conflict.

Partnership and social bonding

The findings from the two constituencies show that participants from both constituencies are making effort to form partnership and establish strong bonds. However the participants from Nhyieaso appear to have much stronger bonds because they relate well without any major disagreement as compared to the Tamale Central constituency where unity is not as strong as it should be because of the perceived divisions in the party (NPP). That said participants from both constituencies agree that forming partnership and establishing bond relationship development.

Competence

With competence there are more similarities between the two constituencies than there are differences. For instance in both constituencies, members who are unlettered are allowed to

contest for any executive post in the party with the exception of the position of secretary in Tamale Central and the secretary and director of elections in Nhyieaso constituency. Both participants also have on-the-job training which is irregular. But the participants in Nhyieaso do have more training sessions per year than the participants in Tamale Central. Another contrasting element is that while participants in Nhyieaso had orientation course before they assumed office, those in Tamale Central had no orientation course before they assumed office. On personal development the findings show that there are opportunities for party officers to go for further studies but it is only those at the national level who often benefit from these opportunities.

Empowerment

The findings from the two constituencies indicate that, the participants are empowered to act independently in deal with party matters without having to refer to the colleagues or superiors. The participants from both constituencies believe that without being empowered it will be difficult to carry out their duties effectively. They both also agreed that empowerment increases productivity. For instance, imagine a party officer going to a remote area and being confronted with an issue that could easily be dealt with by him but he is precluded from acting by a party policy. So the issue has to wait for the officer to go back and obtain a mandate before he can go back and resolve it. The findings also show that officers who are successful in using their own initiatives to resolve party matters are given verbal commendations.

Culture

Whereas the participants in Nhyieaso profess discipline and growing internal democratic practices as the cultural values of their party (NDC) the participants in Tamale Central say that their party is noted for its belief in rule of law, freedom of expression and internal democratic

practices. However, they were quick to bemoan the recent internal wrangling in the party (NPP) and how it can potentially affect the image of the party as a whole. Both participants also lamented the lack of mechanism in place to ensure party officers and members (especially those who speak on behalf of the party in the media) mirror and reflect the party's culture.

5.2.4 Comparative Analysis of the Management of the Internal Relationships of the Sub-Urban Marginal Constituencies (Juaben- NPP and North Tongu- NPP)

Communication

The two constituencies have a lot in common with respect to communication. The both have similar structures of communication, the communication process is both vertical and horizontal— information flow from the national office through the regional office to the constituency office and on the other hand constituency office passes their concerns through the regional office to the nation office. The modes of communication are equally similar – both constituencies interact through meetings, telephone and Whatsapp platform.

In both constituencies the executive committee meetings are irregular and sometimes dictated by party events. Nonetheless, in North Tongu the executives meet more often (two times a month) than the executives in Juaben Constituency who meet once a month. The grassroots structures in Juaben Constituency meet once a week and the constituency executives participate in these meetings. The same situation exists in the North Tongu Constituency. Both constituencies have communication teams headed by the communication officer in Juaben and communication director in the North Tongu Constituencies.

Conflict managements

There is an acknowledgment of the fact that conflict is part and parcel of human beings especially when put in groups. Participants from constituencies agree that once a while they experience conflict. What is necessary therefore is a mechanism to deal with the conflict when it surfaces. In both constituencies there are CDCs which are mandated to deal with conflict. When the CDCs are not successful in resolving the conflict it is referred to the regional disciplinary committee for redress and if the regional disciplinary committee fails to resolve it, it is then referred to the national disciplinary committee.

The participants from Juaben aver that there is some level of unity in their party and so the frequency of conflict is limited as compared to the participants in North Tongu who feels that there is an atmosphere of mistrust and suspicions fueled by the perceived factionalism in the party and this increases the incidence of conflict and tension in the party. The participants from both constituencies observed that if conflict is resolved it can lead to closer relationship.

Competence

The findings of the two constituencies suggest that there is no much importance attached to competence of the party officers. This is manifested in the requirement for those who aspire to manage the parties in both constituencies. Indeed there is no academic requirement for those contesting for executive positions in both constituencies, so party members (literate or illiterate) are qualified to contest for executive positions except for the post of secretary. In both constituencies there is no training schedule to build the capacity of participants.

In Juaben Constituency the participants gets the opportunity to attend training sessions three times a year while participants in North Tongu have at least one training session in a year. Whereas orientation course is organized for newly elected executives in Juaben Constituency, there is no such programme for participants in North Tongu Constituency. There are opportunities for personal development but participants from both constituencies lament that they do not benefit from these policies and that only those at the national offices often get the opportunity to go for further studies at the expense of the party.

Partnership and social bonding

There is little to differentiate the two constituencies when it comes to partnership and bonding. Participants from both constituencies admit that partnership and social bonding are key features of relationship building. The participants in both constituencies indicate that the organizational structures of both parties are designed to facilitate team work and besides it is in the collective interest that they work together. For example in every portfolio there are two or more people who are expected to work together. So regardless of their difference they strive to maintain good relationship in their day-to-day activities.

Empowerment

There is an acknowledgement on the part of participants from both constituencies that empowerment is necessary if they are to perform their duties well. They both also agreed that empowerment brings to an organization a number of benefits. On the reward for excellent use of personal initiative to deal with party matters, participants in both constituencies lament that they only get verbal commendation when they are successful in using their own initiatives to resolve party issues.

Culture

With regards to party culture and climate, whereas the participants in Asawase observed that their party (NDC) stands for discipline, the participants from Oforikrom on the other hand feel that internal democratic practices is the key cultural value of their party (NPP). The participants of the Asawase also posit that there is a growing culture of democratic practices in their party. The participants from Oforikrom Constituency on the other hand express regret about recent acts by party top ranking members which are tarnishing the image of the party (NPP) in the eyes of the general populace. Another common feature of the two constituencies is the lack of mechanism to monitor the behavior of party officers and members to ensure that it reflects the cultural values of their parties.

5.3 Comparative Analysis of the Practice of Relationship Marketing of NDC and NPP

Under this section a comparison of the findings of the four constituencies of NDC and that of the NPP is discussed. The similarities between the findings will be discussed while the key differences are pointed out. This discussion is done according to the six thematic areas that underpinned this study.

Communication

The findings of the eight constituencies indicate that there are many similarities between the two parties – NDC and NPP in terms of communication than there are differences. In the first place, both parties acknowledged the importance of effective communication to relationship development. The communication structures of the two parties are practically the same. It is a two way process that is both vertical and horizontal systems of communication. The constituency

executives communicating within themselves is what is referred to as horizontal communication, whereas the communication between the constituency executives and their superiors is called the vertical communication. The constituencies of both parties correspond with the regional office and rarely communicate directly with the national office. In the same vein the national office route its communication to the constituencies through the regional office.

Participants for both parties use different mediums of communication including meetings, telephone, e-mail and the social media. The constituency executive committees of both parties meet as and when necessary because there is no statutory time scheduled for meetings. The meetings are often dictated by events in the party. On the whole the NPP meets often than the NDC does. The grassroots structures of both parties – the branches in the case of NDC and the polling station executives of NPP meet once in a week and the constituency executives of both parties attend these meetings. These meetings are often used to discuss mainly party matters. Beside meetings both parties do communicate through telephone and social media, specifically the whatsapp platform.

Both parties also have communication teams who meet regularly to strategize. As much as the two parties are making efforts to communicate especially through different mediums, they still need to improve upon the frequency of their communication. Frequency of communication builds relationship quality and ensures customer satisfaction and loyalty (Ndubisi & Wah, 2005; Ndubisi, 2006; Narteh, 2009).

Conflict management

The first element of commonality between the two parties in terms of conflict is that both parties view conflict as inevitable in any human set-up. They also believe that effective management of conflict is essential to relationship formation and maintenance. The findings show that both parties do experience conflicts once a while especially during internal contest like the election of party presidential and parliamentary candidates. The NDC appears to have some unity and therefore experiences limited occurrence of conflict as compared to the NPP who are experiencing difficult times.

The party (NPP) is experiencing a lot of disagreements and conflicts at the very top as well as in some constituencies. These conflicts according to the participants are doing more harm to the brand image of the party than good. The incidence of conflict in the party (NPP) is high than that of the NDC. The happenings in the NPP defy the findings Harmal and Janda (1982) when they observed that party unity is often higher non-election years than in election years.

With regards to the management of conflict both parties have disciplinary committees from the constituencies to the national, which has the mandate to resolve conflict as when it surfaces. The CDC is mandated to deal with conflicts emanating from the lower level structures of the party in the constituency, while conflicts involving constituency executives are dealt with by the regional disciplinary committee. If the regional disciplinary committee fails to resolve the conflict it is then referred to the national disciplinary committee for resolution. It is good to have systems in place to resolve conflicts; however the challenge is whether party officers and members are discipline enough to subject themselves to the internal party structures to resolve their

differences. Dwyer et al. (1987) viewed conflict management as a supplier's ability to avoid potential conflict, solve manifest conflicts before they create problems, and discuss solutions openly when problem do arise. Poorly-handled conflicts could also leadto negative word-of-mouth and eventually customer exit.

Competence

Competence is a key element in relationship marketing; however the findings from the study suggest that both the NDC and NPP have not laid emphasis on the capabilities and skills of the people who run the parties. Indeed both parties' requirements for those contesting for executive positions at the constituencies' level are very low. With the exception of the position of secretary where those who wish to contest for that post are required to be literate, the other positions can be contested for by any member in good standing including illiterates.

The distinction between these two parties is in capacity building. Whereas the NDC organizes orientation course for newly elected executives before they assume office, the NPP has no such programme for their newly elected executives. Both parties endeavour to organize in-service-training for their officers. The difference however is the frequency of such trainings; the NDC has more training sessions for their party officers than NPP does. The NPP's lack of frequent training sessions is blamed on lack of resources. Both parties also have policies that allow party officers to develop themselves. Unfortunately however, party officers at the constituency level do not benefit from these policies. It is only those at the national level who benefit from these policies.

Empowerment

The findings indicate that both parties empower their officers to use their own initiatives to resolve party issues. The participants from both parties are of the view that empowerment is necessary in the discharge of their duties. They also acknowledge that empowerment if not abused and effectively implemented can bring a lot of benefits to the organization. Participants from both parties however regret that the only reward they get for successful dealing with party issues which sometimes require them to use their own resources to resolve is verbal commendations. It is not enough to allow people free room to use their discretion in executing their task but systems ought to be put in place to check abuse of the process. Also party officers need to be motivated and encouraged for the effective use of their discretion.

Partnership and social bonding

Partnership and social bonding as elements of RM in theory is not different from practice. The participants from the two parties asserted that if they are to form and maintain relationships then they should not be any artificial walls between departments or portfolios. Party officers should integrate as one team working towards a collective goal. The participants from the two parties showed that they are making effort to bond well despite their differences. The distinction however is that, the NDC appear to bond better than their colleagues in the NPP. This is because the NPP is operating in an atmosphere of suspicion and mistrust as a result of the perceived factionalism in the party and this does not engender cohesion and bonding. The NDC on the other hand is enjoying relative peace and stability.

Culture

According to the participants the NDC's cultural value is discipline. It is a party that has respect for constituted authority. Besides this, the party is also growing its internal democratic culture. The party has blazed the trail for been the first party in the country to allow all registered party members to take part in key decision making like the selection of party candidates for elections. The NPP according to the findings is a party that believes in the rule of law, freedom of expression and internal party democracy. The participants however expressed regrets that the internal power struggle in the party at the top has the potential to do a lot of damage to the party brand. The study found that both parties have no mechanism that ensures that party officers and members adhere to the cultural value of their parties.

5.4 Discussion of Research Questions and Findings

RQ1: How do political parties manage intra-party relationships at the constituency level?

This question was intended to examine the management of internal relationship by the two parties

Interview question 1: How often do you have constituency executive meeting?

The participants were asked how often they meet as constituency executive committee. The responses from both parties were that they endeavor to meet often even though there is no statutory time for meetings. For instance, one of the participants from NDC had this to say,

“We don't have fixed time meetings but at least we meet once a month”

(AWS- 23rd March, 2016)

Finding: *There were no scheduled time tables for meetings and that; they meet as and when necessary.*

This finding suggests that the two parties have acknowledged the importance of communication to relationship building and maintenance. It is therefore, imperative to acknowledge the role of communication in building relationships between the various functional units within the organization and between the organization and its stakeholders (Rensburg & Cant, 2003).

Response from interview question 2: Is there free flow of information among you the constituency executives and what channels are used to exchange this information?

The findings show that both parties at the constituency level communicate via different mediums including meetings, telephone and social media. It was also found that the communication between the constituency and the regional office is done through mainly meetings except when urgent messages are to be transmitted; it is done through the telephone. One of the NDC participants observed;

“Apart from meetings we also communicate via telephone and whatsapp”
(JCS-25th January, 2016).

Finding: the two parties communicate through different mediums including meetings, telephone and social media.

The other social media platforms are not being used because of concerns for security. Participants from both constituencies interact with the regional office more often and rarely communicate directly with the natural office. According to Banhashemi (2011) face-to-face

communication is one of the most effective forms of communication because it is information rich as a result of the use of multi-channels such as words, facial expressions and bodily demeanour which serves to reinforce the message. Face-to-face interactions also provide instant feedback.

RQ2: What is the character of the organizational climate and culture of the two parties at the constituency level?

The reason behind this question was to find out the effect of organizational climate and culture on relationship building and management.

Response to interview question 8: What is your party culture?

It emerged that the two parties have different cultures and these cultures have the potential to positively influence intra-party relationship development and management. The NDC according to the participants is a party that believes in discipline and respect for party structures and also in recent years has been growing the culture of internal democratic practices. This view was aptly expressed by one of the participants when he was asked what the culture of his party was;

We in the NDC have respect for constituted authority and so when our national officers take a decision whether you agree with it or not you have to obey. (NTC-15TH March, 2016)

The NPP on the other hand is a party that believes in internal democracy, freedom of expression and rule of law. In an answer to the question of the culture of the party a participant had this to say;

We believe in freedom of expression and also the freedom of citizens to go about their lawful business without any hindrance.(OCO-18th January, 2016)

Findings I: The organizational culture of the NDC is discipline and internal democracy.

Findings II: The organizational culture of the NPP is internal democracy and freedom of expression.

Organizational climate and culture are usually the practices and conventions that overtime becomes norms the guides and shape the day to day operations of the entity.

Schein (2004) emphasizes that “perhaps the most intriguing aspect of culture as a concept is that it points us to phenomena that are below the surface, that are powerful in their impact but invisible and to a considerable degree unconscious” (p.8). The cultures of both parties could prove beneficial in fostering internal relationships. This would however depend on the commitment on the part of party leadership and the approach adopted. According to O’Donnell and Boyle (2008) Leadership is clearly important in determining the effectiveness of culture change. The leaders of organizations are at the fore front of understanding and managing culture in the organization and of rewarding or punishing subcultures depending on whether they align or not with the corporate culture espoused by the leaders.

Response to interview 9: Do you have a mechanism that ensures that party officers and any other persons representing your party adhere to your party culture?

The analyses show that the NDC has no mechanism in place at the constituency level to monitor the activities of party officers and members to ensure that it conforms to party’s culture. One of them observes,

At our level here we don't have any system in place that monitors our activities as executives and the party members as a whole. (ASS-October, 2015)

Similarly the NPP equally has no system in place to ensure that party officers and members at the constituency level act in ways that reflect the cultural values of the party. One of the participants noted,

We don't have a mechanism to check the behaviour and actions of party members especially those who engage the media. (TCS-15th January, 2016)

Finding: The two parties have no mechanism that ensures that party officers and members adhere to the parties' culture.

Organization's culture defines the organization's personality. For this reason political parties ought to be concern about the behaviour that party officers and members portray to the public. Political parties need systems that would unconsciously imbibe in party officers and members the values, beliefs and norms of the party. According to Hogg, Carter and Dunne (1998) organizational climate and culture are often influenced by the perceptions of employees about the organization's aspirations and values. Both parties have party communicators who often interface with the electorate through various media. These communicators ought to be given training on how to properly articulate party policies and reflect the party values in the process.

RQ3: How do political parties practice relationship marketing?

This question was intended to examine how well the two parties under study practice relationship marketing.

Response from interview question 12: Do you make conscious efforts to relate well with your colleagues' constituency executives?

The participants of NDC in an answer to the question claimed that the party is enjoying relative peace and has made it easier for them relate well. There is free flow of information among the constituency executives. One of them noted,

Even though we come from different backgrounds we make efforts to effort to relate well. (JCS-25th January, 2016)

On the part of NPP the analyses show that despite the internal wrangling at the top hierarchy of the party, in some of the constituencies executives are able to forge good relationships. Some of them explained that in the interest of the party they shelve their own interest to work together for the party to win power. One of the participants lamented;

Our party in recent years has seen cracks at the top level but we at the constituency here have managed to work together despite our differences (EAC- 5th February, 2016)

Finding I: The NDC appears to enjoy relative peace and so relate well

Findings II: The NPP despite the conflict at the national level, some constituencies executives are able to work together.

The study found that the two parties do practice some of the relationship marketing elements including communication, conflict management, competence, partnership/bonding, empowerment and culture. However they both practice some effectively than others. The findings show that both parties do well with partnership/bonding and communication, with the

only shortfall being the lack of scheduled time for constituency meetings. The rest of the four relationship marketing practices examined by this study are being practiced with serious challenges.

Response to interview question 19: Do you get commendations for taking personal initiatives that promote the party brand?

The respondents from NDC acknowledged that without empowerment the performance of their duties would have been immensely constrained. Party officers at the constituency level sometimes have to use their own resources to solve party problems. Yet the only reward they get in return from the party is verbal praises, as lamented below by one of the participants.

My brother we only get verbal commendations for solving party problems

On our own. (NCO-12th February, 2016)

When the same question was posed to the participants of NPP the response was similar. One of them remarked,

Sometimes we have to use our own resources to deal with party issues

but what we get in return is verbal praises, oh you've done, you've

done well. (OCO-18th January, 2016)

Finding: Constituency executives of both parties (NDC and NPP) only receive verbal praises for successfully solving party problems on their own.

Political parties being human centered entities would be more successful if relationship marketing is adopted and applied properly. Political parties and candidates as well as voters and

citizens at large see political exchanges not as one – off transaction (such as voting for a party or a candidate) but as a continuous social process of interactivity within which they live their daily lives (Sniderman, Brody & Petlock, 1993). O’Shaughnessy (2005) argues that like the traditional business entities, politics of today is moving away from a focus on isolated exchange to a focus on building value – laden relationships and establishing networks.

Table 5.1 Comparative analysis of the findings of NDC and NPP

Variables	NDC	NPP
Communication	The interaction is largely between the regional office and the constituency and the branches	The interaction is largely between the regional office and the constituency and polling station executives
Conflict management	The party experiences limited conflicts.	The party is witnessing an escalation of conflicts
Culture	The key cultural value of the party is discipline	Internal party democracy is the key value of the party
Partnership/ Bonding	The party officers integrate and bond well	The divisions at the top of the party affects integration and bonding
Competence	The party has more (at least twice a year) in-service-training for party officers.	The party has no orientation and also have one training session a year for party officers
Empowerment	The party empowers its officers	The party empowers its officers

Source: researcher’s construct

5.5 Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the analysis, discussion and presentation of the findings of the study. From the presentation thus far it could be said that administrative issues dominated the discussions. The political parties under study have not effectively dealt with their administrative issues. Also contained in this chapter are the comparative analyses of the urban and sub-urban stronghold constituencies, urban and sub-urban marginal constituencies, a discussion of the research questions and findings and finally a comparison of the findings of the two parties (NDC and NPP).



CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

6.0 Introduction

In the last chapter a detailed analysis and discussions of the study findings were presented. This chapter presents the summary of these findings, highlighting the key revelations and lessons therein as well its implications, which will inform the conclusions drawn by the study. The study sought to examine the formation and maintenance of internal relations by political parties. In furtherance of this objective, six relationship marketing practices were adopted by the study to measure the relationships of political parties. Below are the summaries of the findings on the six variables in relation to the objectives of the study. Also included in this chapter are the necessary recommendations and direction for future research.

6.1 Summary of Findings

From the analysis of the data presented in chapter five, six themes or practices of relationship marketing that run through the analysis include communication, conflict management, social bonding and partnership, competence, empowerment and culture. After an analysis of the eight constituencies under the study, followed by a cross analysis of the four constituencies each from the NDC and NPP, it can be said there is little to differentiate between the two parties on the six themes identified. Below is a presentation of the key findings of the study in relation to the research objectives.

The key objective of the study was to examine how political parties manage the internal relationships among party officers and members at the constituency level. An exploratory approach was used to study the two leading parties (NDC and NPP) in Ghana. The findings revealed that political use some of the practices of relationship marketing to manage their internal relations. For example, both the NDC and NPP use communication, conflict management and social bonding and partnership to boost and maintain their internal relationships. The parties have recognized that communication is vital in any relationship. The findings show that the parties' communication process is both horizontal and vertical. In the process of their communication a number of mediums are used including meetings, voice telephony and the social media.

It was also revealed in the findings that the parties make efforts to bond and form partnerships. A situation where party officers see themselves as friends and are ready to support each other and work together as a team instead of functional process. As part of effective management of internal relationship is the issue of conflict management. The parties recognize this and so have put in place conflict resolution mechanisms from the constituency level to the national level.

The second objective of the study sought to uncover the character of organizational climate and culture that underpins relationships in the two political parties and its impact on relationship building. The study found that the two parties have their own distinct cultures as well some features in common. For example the NDC sees itself as a party that believes in respect for constituted authority, the NPP on the other hand values freedom of expression, which allows party members' opinions and suggestions to be heard.

The common feature between the two parties is that they both use empowerment as a tool for relationship development. Both parties have empowered their party members especially those at the local level to take part in key decision making process of the parties. For instance the NPP widened their electoral college to over 150,000 voters in the selection of parliamentary and presidential candidates of the party. The NDC recently took a bold step to allow all registered party members to take part in the selection of the party's parliamentary and presidential candidates. These actions by both parties have the potential to rekindle enthusiasm and political party activism among the rank and file of their parties and in the long run foster internal relationships and bonding.

The findings show that the benefits of good internal relationships are not lost on the two parties. Both parties acknowledge the importance of building internal partnerships and have been making efforts to improve the internal relationships of their officers and members. Some of the benefits identified by participants include increase productivity, party officers feeling valued members of party and quick responses to party issues among others. The findings revealed the parties encounter a number of obstacles in their attempt to build and maintain intra party. Some of these of challenges include, communication breakdowns (which often leads to anxiety and allows rumours to fester), the occasional internal wrangling and disagreement caused some times by 'personality idolation' and the difficulty with monitoring the actions of party members especially those who represent them in the media to ensure there are in line with the party culture.

6.2 Conclusions

This study sought to explore the practice of relationship marketing by political parties. This was done by examining six practices of relationship marketing that have been used in previous studies (see Narteh, Agbemabiese, Kodua & Braimah, 2013; Anabila, Narteh & Tweneboah-Koduah, 2012). The study concludes that political parties practice most of the elements of relationship marketing. However some elements are practiced better than others. For instance, the parties do communicate among themselves even if they are not the best of friends. It is important that the parties realize that they cannot be any relationship without communication. It is through communication that new ideas are generated and campaign strategies are formulated collectively.

With regards to conflict management political parties ought to understand that the occurrence of conflict is not a bad phenomenon entirely and should be seen as an opportunity for aggrieved persons to air their views and solutions found to them. Effective conflicts resolution serves as a motivation for the aggrieved person and this in the long run could increase productivity. The political parties under study have not place premium on the competence of their officers, parties like service firms ought to take the competences of their officers very serious. This is because like in service firms where the perception of service customers about the capability and skills of service firm's employees is important to the organization, so should political parties be concern about how the officers of the party are perceived in terms of competence by the electorate. The general electorate in evaluating the parties which are campaigning for their vote would take in to consideration the capacity and skills of the people who are managing the party.

The potential benefits of empowerment to organizations especially service firms is too significant to be ignored. This observation is true for political organizations. It is imperative that political parties empower party officers and put systems in place to ensure that it is not abused. Relationship marketing is about forging partnership and bonding as a unit; political parties ought to realize that by working as an integrated unit bonded by a common goal, they are able to accomplish the party task effectively. Indeed even if the thinking the function of a party can be accomplished by one person the execution will still need the services of other people.

Organization's culture has an influence on consumer decision making process. Political parties as brands have images that need to be protected. The culture portrayed by party officers can either enhance or damage the brand image of the party. Culture is dynamic and so political parties once a while would have to review their party's cultural values and if need be vary it to conform to the exigencies of time.

6.3 Recommendations

In light of the findings that emerged from the study, the following recommendations are offered;

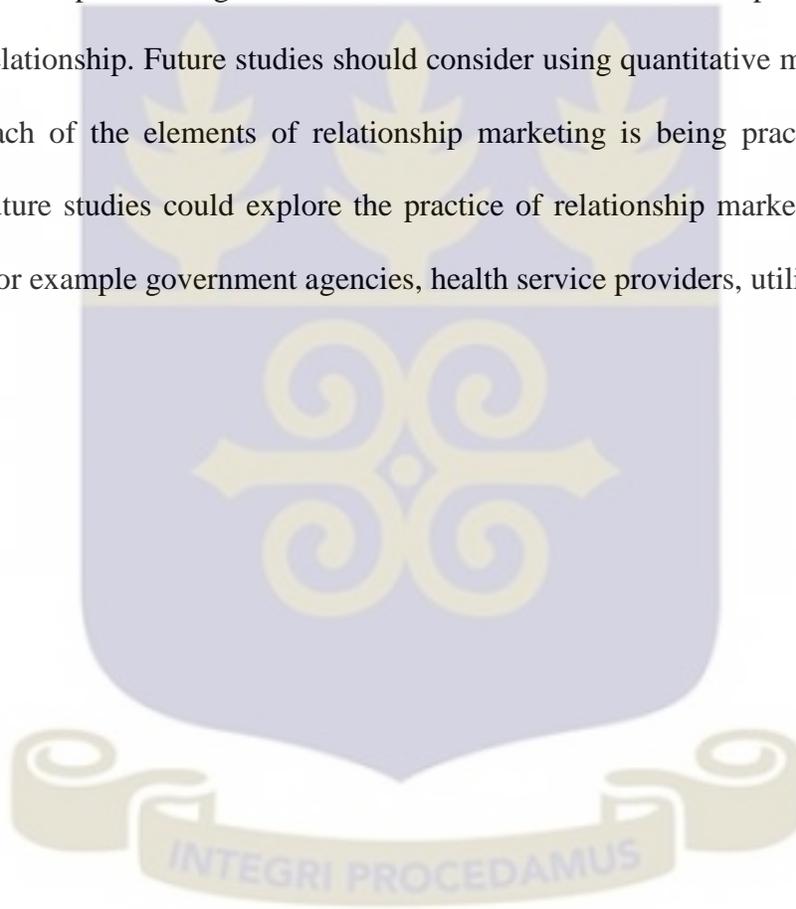
- Political parties need to have statutory constituency executive meeting schedules. The current arrangement where meetings are organized as when necessary does not engender effective communication. If there is mandated time for meetings, the executives will be compelled to hold meetings even in times of conflict.
- Aggrieved party officers and members should be encouraged to channel their complaints to the appropriate party structures like the disciplinary committees. The parties should

consider giving members of the disciplinary committees training on dispute resolution. This way they would become competent enough to manage conflicts in the party.

- Political parties should consider elevating the requirements for the party executive positions, experience is good but if it is blended with formal education it would be more beneficial. There should also be regular training programme for party officers at the constituency level. This is an area that the state should consider helping political parties to fund. Also political parties should ensure fairness in choosing officers to benefit from the personal development policy.
- Empowerment is good but if not monitored can be abused. Political parties should device mechanisms that would aid in monitoring how empowered officers use their discretionary power. There should also be reward system put in place by parties to appreciate the efforts of officers who excelled in using personal initiatives to deal with party issues.
- Political parties should consider designing a mechanism that allows them to monitor the activities of their officers and members especially those who have regular interface with the general public to ensure that it is in conformity with the party culture.
- The parties should consider compensating the party officers at the constituency level. The current arrangement where constituency executives are not given any monetary compensation cannot be allowed to continue. They should be given salary or some allowance to serve as additional motivation for them to give out their best. It is my considered view that if this is done; it could entice many more qualified people to put themselves up for executive positions at the constituency level.

6.4 Suggestions for Future Research

Relationship marketing is the new paradigm of the marketing concept; it is therefore imperative that researches into its suitability for social base organizations are extended. It is recommended that further research into this area should focus on testing all the relationship marketing variables using large sample size. This study has established that political parties do practice some of the elements of relationship marketing but what it could not establish is the impact of each variable on the internal relationship. Future studies should consider using quantitative method to measure how effective each of the elements of relationship marketing is being practiced by political parties. Again future studies could explore the practice of relationship marketing in the public services sector, for example government agencies, health service providers, utility providers etc.



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APPENDIX

Interview guide

Communication

1. How often do you have constituency executive meetings?
2. Is there free flow of information among you the constituency executives and what channels are used to exchange this information?
3. Is there any regular interaction between the constituency executives and the grassroots members of your party?
4. Do you communicate via the social media?

Conflict management

5. In the day to day running of the party do you sometimes experience conflict?
6. If yes, what is usually the nature of this conflict?
7. How do you deal with such conflict when they do arise?

Culture

8. What is the party culture or way of working?
9. How would you describe the atmosphere in your party office?
10. Do you have a mechanism that ensures that party officers and members adhere to the party culture and how do you ensure that this mechanism is adhered to?

Partnership/bonding

11. How would you describe the working relationship among you (the constituency executives)?
12. Do you make conscious efforts to relate well with other constituency executives?
13. Do you use your external relations in persuading people to join your party?

Competence

14. What skills set is needed to run a party office?
15. When party executives are elected do you undergo any training on party management?
16. If yes, what was the content and who provided the training?
17. Is there any policy on party officers' development?

Empowerment

18. Are you allowed to take decisions on party matters without reference to your superiors?
19. Do you get commendations for taking personal initiatives that promote the party brand?
20. What in your opinion account for the empowerment of party officers? Is it based on level of trust, performance or experience?

