
POLITICAL PARTY BRAND COMPETENCE AND VOTERS' DECISION MAKING IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT: *This study examined the relationship between political party brand competence and voters' decision making in Nigeria. The study adopted a cross-sectional survey in its investigation of the variables. Primary data was generated through structured questionnaire. The target population of this study was eighty four million, four thousand and eighty four (84,004, 084). Given an accessible population of twenty six million, six hundred and thirty four thousand six hundred and five (26,634,605) within the six geo-political zones in Nigeria, the sample size of 384 was determined using calculated using the Taro Yamane's formula for sample size determination. The reliability of the instrument was achieved by the use of the Cronbach Alpha coefficient with all the items scoring above 0.70. The hypotheses were tested using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences version 23.0. The tests were carried out at a 95% confidence interval and a 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that there is a significant political party brand competence and voters' decision making in Nigeria. The study concludes that when political parties adopt and build brand competence it has a positive influence on voters' decision making in Nigeria. The study recommends that political parties should always present brands (candidates) for elective positions based on personality of such candidates especially with regards to brand competence.*

KEYWORDS: political party brand competence, voters' decision making, classical rational decision, confirmatory decision making, fast and frugal decision making

INTRODUCTION

President Abraham Lincoln in his Gettysburg address professed "ours is a government of the people by the people by the people and for the people" that to many has become the definition of democracy (Gienapp, 2002) as cited in Epstein (2011). In a constitutional democracy, the primary objective of government is to satisfy the people. Political legitimacy is secured by majority of the people, they constitute the political market and are saddled with the responsibility of deciding who would lead and represent their interest in governance (Achor, Nwachukwu & Udensi, 2017). Reeves and De Chernatony (2009) submit that political thespians can control and adapt to the dynamics of the political market if they perceive voters as their target market and ensure to satisfy, institute, and sustain a long-lasting sincere relationship with them.

Aristotle contended that in politics, to secure the solidity of the constitution, there is a system education suitable to the constitution. To accentuate the importance of education in maintaining a steady socio-political order (Ibeanu & Orji, 2014). Alexis de Tocqueville in Lewis (2008) upheld that most electoral systems would have one better had the existence of educational institutions preceded those of courts. The level of political participation is habitually sturdily correlated with the level of literacy of a population. Democratic nations around the world have used education as a tool for creating responsible and supportive citizenship (Osborne 2000). The Nigerian constitution and international human rights law uphold that the right to vote and be voted for is attained at the age of eighteen (18) years. Therefore, elections indicate the level of political awareness and participation of the citizenry. Voting is the legal, political and social mechanism through which the citizens can express their participation in elections, exercise their interests and needs to their leaders (Basse & Samuel, 2011).

Borhaug (2005) submits that it is important to educate citizens to be politically engaged, active and interested in participating in the political system to build political competence (Solhung 2003). Voters' education creates the knowledge basis for citizens' political participation to help make individual political activity intelligible (McGraw 2000; Monroe, Hankin & Vechten, 2000). However, the knowledge structures acquired from voters' education emanate from individual perceptions and interpretations and may thus differ from one individual to the next (Torney-Purta, 1992). In order to develop these structures each individual must be exposed to ideas and representations of the political world Niemi & Junn (1998) as cited in (Borhaug, 2005). Participatory democracy cannot be achieved without political participation and brand development as brands determine how consumers (voters) perceive products and services.

This is because in elections voters choose among competing political actors who are aligned in [political parties competing for votes (Achor, Nwachukwu & Udensi, 2017). De Chernatony and McDonald (2000) Submits that during a blind test (brands were hidden) most consumers preferred Pepsi over coke but when the brands were exposed, consumers choose coke over Pepsi. Voters are motivated to patronize a political organization or candidate based on their knowledge of the political party brand personality in the political market (Gareth, 2009). Lees-Marshment (2003/2004) submits that the political market is made up of political party staff, appointees who carry out the individual and shared political interest of their parties and affiliated factions. The external political market on the other hand consists of international organizations agencies such as United Nations (UN) and the public, mass media, internet users, opposition parties etc (Nyarwi, 2015). Therefore, political parties and candidates seeking to dominant in the political space cannot avoid marketing. Smith (2009) indicates that political parties are organizations in which political actors seek to interchange ideas, policies and promises for public support. Therefore, the process of analyzing, developing, implementing and managing strategic campaigns to achieve the objectives of guiding public opinion, satisfy the needs and expectations of the voting public, uphold party principles, winning elections, making laws and referendums is paramount (Winchester, Hall & Binney, 2016). Strategic political campaigns offer political parties and candidates to the political market by utilizing the appropriate marketing strategies and tactics to achieve voters' conversion, acquisition, retention and loyalty (Kotler, 1975). These political

campaigns are anchored on the political party brand personality with a thorough understanding of their target market (voters) needs, wants, perception, and preferences (Kotler, 1975).

Achor, et al. (2017) argued that political parties and candidates are established as brands through their names, logo, ideologies, personality which supposedly communicate a message to enlightened voters, party supporters and other stakeholders. Based on the political party brand personality, voters, can make a choice amongst various political parties and candidates in the interest of good governance (Kotler, 1975). Academic scholars in the field of political science and political marketing have explored various determinants of the voters’ decision making process (Downs, 1957, Andrew, 2013; Gorbaniuk, Kusak, Kogut & Kustos, 2014; Guzman et al, 2014; Cwalina & Falkowski, 2014; Opkara, Anuforo & Achor, 2016; Nwachukwu, Achor, Nkwocha & Okwara, 2016). These pundits indicated that the political party and candidates’ ability to develop and adopt top-notch political campaigns to garner support and loyalty, sell party manifestoes, and maintain consistent relevance, influence voters’ decision making in the political market (Achor, et al. 2017). This study therefore examined the relationship between political party brand competence and voters’ decision-making in the context of Nigeria political environment.

Specifically, the following objectives were to:

- i. Examine the relationship between political party brand competence and voters’ classic rational choice in Nigeria.
- ii. Determine the relationship between political party brand competence and voters’ confirmatory decision making in Nigeria.
- iii. Investigate the relationship between political party brand competence and voters’ fast and frugal decision in Nigeria.

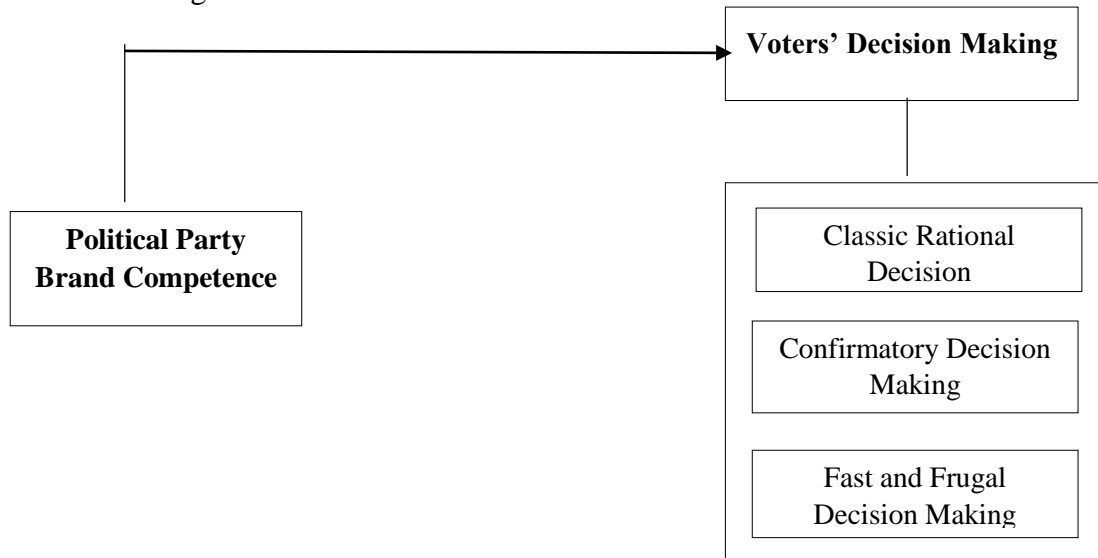


Figure 1 Conceptual model for political party brand competence and voters’ decision making

Source: Researcher (2021)

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Foundation

Rational Choice Theory (RCT)

The rational choice theory can be traced back to the writings of early philosophers; Adam Smith, John Locke, Thomas Hobbes, William Stanley Jevons, and Gary Becker (Becker 1976). They proposed that people make consumption decisions mainly to maximize utility and it subsequently developed into neoclassical economics (Grune-Yanoff, 2012). The rational choice approach has grown beyond conservative economic issues (Green, 2002 citing, Becker 1976; Radnitzky & Bernholz, 1987; Hogarth & Reder, 1987; Swedberg, 1990; Green & Shapiro, 1996). Rational choice theory is a basis for understanding the socio-economic behavior of people. The fundamental proposition of the theory is that collective social behavior is as a result of the behavior of individual members of the society (Michael, 2013). Different scholars of the rational choice theory have their various assumptions about individuals and organizations, but each supposition originates from the individual as the fundamental unit of the theory (Abell, 2000). Elster (1989) submitted that the essence of the rational choice theory is that when people are confronted with different courses of action, they do what they think has the best inclusive consequence. The rational choice theory assumes that every person has preferences among various available alternatives choices that allows them to state which option they prefer (Rafael, 2015).

The theory is focused on the elements of individual choices called methodological individualism. Abell, structures and standards, which regulate a particular course of action, are simply exceptional cases of Oone choice. To the rational choich theory, rationality indicates that people respond to stimuli as if they are balancing costs against paybacks to arrive at actions that exploit personal benefits (Friedman, 1953). According to Rafael, (2015) some assumptions of RCT include (1) people have selfish preferences, (2) they tend to first maximize their own utility, and (3) they behave independently based on their level of education. Rational choice theory has become increasingly employed in social sciences other than economics, such as sociology, evolutionary theory, and political science in recent decades (Aki & Jaakko, 2007). It was first applied to understand voters' behavior and party competition by Anthony Downs in 1957. Since then it has developed into a paradigm of analysis in the political science (Downs, 1957). It has had far-reaching impacts on the study of political science, especially in fields like the study of interest groups, elections, behavior in legislatures, coalitions, and bureaucracy (Dunleavy,1991). In these fields, the use of the rational choice paradigm to explain broad social phenomena is the subject of active controversy. Other directions in which rational choice theory has gone away from the works of Downs include areas of collective action, public choice, rent seeking, among others (Jhingan, 2013).

The Concept of Political Party Brand Personality

Based on self-organization theory, personality can be determined by stabilized behavioral patterns (Li, & Ahlstrom, 2016). Marco, Frank and Alexander (2011) argued that personality variables that were traditionally premeditated by psychologists and merged recently by economists and business practitioners should be linked with the brand. Allen & Olson, (1995) defined personality as a set of implications created by an observer to extrapolate the inward characteristics of another person.

Some empirical indications found that personality variables play vital roles in business processes (Blachflower & Oswald, 1998, Zhao & Seibert 2006). Rauch and Frese (2007). Submitted that “the person component” should be domiciled in business research because success as a political brand is not a random process of actions but is critically influenced by personality. Nwachukwu, Achor, Nkwocha and Okwara (2016) indicated that the political party brand personality is wider than the product, while a political product has different parts like the politician, political policy, party manifestoes: a brand is intangible and psychological.

David Heller in Allen (2013) argues that politics is about symbolism as opposed to actual policy implementation. Images are more transparent than content, it sends messages about who politicians are, and is important to them. An important component of a brand's image is its brand personality (Keller, 1993). Therefore, politicians can be viewed as ‘actors’ acting out in a purpose way to achieve programmed party-political goals and objectives (O’Shaughnessy, 2003). Political actors and parties have palpable personalities which helps to create perception about them. The political party brand personality must be in consonance with political brand image (Jain, Pich, Ganesh & Armannsdottir, 2017). And that is the essence of the political party brand personality (Skarzynska, 2004, Schneider, 2004). The political party brand personality creation is established by the same process as human personality. It has to do with the personification of the brand based on the brand’s observed behaviours, allowing human traits to be inferred from action or stated intended action [Smith, 2009]. Personality traits are created mentally by voters who make inferences based on their observation of the behavior of political actors (Aaker, 1997). Hence, the perception, reception and rejection of the political candidate can be braced by the voters (Jain, et al 2017).

Political party brand personality is a structure, which illustrates that brand can possess human-based attributes. Apparently, voters seek some qualities in the political brands to deal with the mental and material dimensions of politics (Ahmad & Thyagaraji, 2015). Aaker [1997] indicated that a political party brand personality is the set of human characteristics associated with a brand. Explicit appeals like, kind, welcoming and courteous, well-informed, effective and efficient have the chance of universality (Davies, Rojas-Mendez, Whelan, Mete & Loo, 2018). Nyarwi (2015) submitted that a political party brand personality is an associative network of the human characteristics relating to a political party, held in memory and accessible when stimulated from the memory of a voter.

Nwachukwu et al (2016) indicated that the political party brand personality is the overarching human feeling, impression, association, or image the public has towards a politician, or political organization. Political parties and their candidates are modeled as brands through their names and ideological pastures which supposedly communicate a message to voters, and other stakeholders [Smith 2009]. The past and present human behavior linked with a party affects as a brand. The personalities that make up the leadership structure of the party also account for whether such a party will be seen as a brand worthy of being patronized or not (Akhmad & Azhar, 2015). Yesil and Sozbilir (2013) opined that political party brand personality dimensions in politics.

The political party brand personality has direct influence on voters' intention because of the ability to create favorable associations in voters' memory (Keller, 1993; 2003; Phau, 2000). Collins and Loftus, (1975) submitted that brand knowledge is made from individual pieces of informational referred to as nodes that link together in memory to form more complex associative networks [Wyer and Srull, 1989]. Information is recalled from a memory when a node is stimulated from rest by the activation process (De Groot, 1989). Ruther, Hanretty and Lettice (2015) adopted Aaker's brand personality model to explore brand positions in the political market. They found that the two main dimensions on which parties brand personalities differ relate to the trade-off between communicating competence and communicating sincerity and between communicating sophistication and communicating ruggedness. Political party brand personality attributes are feelings attached to a political brand, and the functionality of such brand to some extent depend on the (Cornfield, 2017). For a political candidate or party to achieve a phenomenal support in the vote market, the candidate or party must have brand image, which is the impression the candidate or party creates in the minds of the voters; the political party brand dimensions help voter form robust opinions about a candidate or party (Achor, et al. 2017).

Political Party Brand Competence

The concept of competence is the ability or capability, which enhances the satisfactory performance and completion of some tasks. Although the performance of tasks is directly observable abilities or capabilities that underlie the performance are essentially inferred (Hager & Gonezi, 1996). Epstein & Hundert, (2002) as cited in Yuanjing (2012) defined competence as the typical and thoughtful use of communication, knowledge technical skills, clinical reasoning, emotion, values, and reflection in daily encounters and in the performance of a tasks. Roth (1917) as cited in Hartig, Klieme and Leutner (2008) opine that competence is individual capability as it relates to dispositions for your own action and judgment. Furthermore, Hartig, *et al.* (2008) indicate that maturity should be inferred as competence in three ways: a) self-competence – the ability to take full responsibility of your own action, b) professional competence – the ability to judge in a particular vocation, and be responsible, c) social competence – the ability to conduct oneself and be decisive, and be responsible, in career, societal or political terms. McClelland, (1973) opined that competence are qualities essential for successfully performing activity. From his view point any personal characteristics can be considered “competence” in as much as it enhances and predict success in actual achievement.

Weinert (2001) opined that when competence is considered in the context-dependent ability constructs; it can only be developed through learning process where the individual cooperates with his/ her environment. In other words competence can be acquired through learning or competence can be attained by experience gained from relevant circumstances of demand and they might be influenced by training or other external interventions, by years of practice they might be enhanced to an expertise in the respective domains. Spady (1994) as cited in Vare, Arro, Hammer, Gobbo, Vries, Farioli, Kadji – Mayer, Millican, Nijdam, Reji and Zachariou (2019) opined that competence is considered a combination of knowledge, skills, attitudes that facilitates the performance tasks and solve problems successfully. Competence is the focused knowledge a person has as acquired that enhances his / her cognitive performance, a high level of competence

breeds expertise (Mayer, 2003). Simonton (2003) indicated that competence is a set of assimilated skills and knowledge that creates an important aspect of performance or achievement in each field. Accordingly, to Sleurs (2008) competence is a concept that should not be taught but should be seen, as necessary. In argument with Sleurs (2008), Adombent and Hoffiman (2013) opined that is impossible to communicate competence because it can only be developed. In other derwords, competence cannot be imparted but it can be learned. Similarly, Barth, Godeman, Rieckman and Stoltenberg (2007) considered competence as the interface between the cognitive structure of mental models and non-cognitive component. The achievement and development of competence is a process by which people exhibit behaviours and attitudes beyond their inherent abilities which aids in the successful performance of their tasks.

Yuanjing (2012) submitted that competence is an abstract concept that involves broad capabilities, knowledge, skills, and attitudes. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) submitted that competence is the key to successful life and a well-functioning society. In 1997, (OECE) introduced the defining key competence project (DeSeCo) which provides a conceptual framework for describing and appraising competence. They include the following: knowledge about systems, future thinking, participation in decision making, attentiveness, empathy engagement, trans-disciplinary, innovativeness, action critical thinking, responsibility, decisiveness (Richen & Salganik, 2003).

Classic rational Choice Decision– Making

Rational choice theory has been claimed to be the prevailing view on the political science today (Brogan, 2001). Michael, (2013) indicated that the classic rational choice is a growing paradigm in political science and can be applied to a range of areas in the discipline, especially, voting behavior, policy formulation and implementation, rule formation, amongst others. Classic rational choice began with Downs' (1957) classic study on economic rationality, he argued that rationality is measured by how voters strive for what they desire, or at least

Classic Rational Choice Decision-Making

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this information in making voting decisions. Classic rational choice involves weighing positive and negative qualities associated with each political party/candidate based on the information available (Chong 2013). With the classic rational choice strategy, there is no room for emotion or other variables that could influence the active processing of the information. Downs noted several emotional factors that could influence rational behavior but claimed that he was only looking from a political rather than a psychological perspective (Downs, 1957). Emotion has not been considered as a component of decision making within the rational choice paradigm: instead it has been broadly perceived as irrational and therefore irrelevant. Moreover, Evans (2001) argued that emotions are associated with weakness of both thinking and action.

However, the classic rational choice strategy emanates from the rational choice theory which supposes that voters make their voting decisions in line with their own self-interest (Dean & Croft, 2009). These notions of classic rational choice have suggested that voters make their electoral decisions just as if they were buying products or services. However, Habermas (1992) argued that currently political party/candidate identification and information search has been condensed into images, signs, and symbols, and it weakens the democratic decision-making process. This encourages mostly a homogenous response to political issues which can perpetrate voters manipulation through political communications. Lupia, McCubbins and Popkin (2000) took a more extensive view of classic rational choice and suggested that 'a rational choice is one that is grounded in motives, irrespective of what these motives may be.

Confirmatory Decision-Making

Confirmatory decision-making is one of the decision strategies identified by Lau and Redlawsk (2013) as "models of decision making" that are used by citizens in making voting decisions. However, it started in 1960, when an English psychologist called Peter Wason coined the term "confirmation bias" (Yeung, 2019). Confirmatory decision-making strategy is the direct opposite of the classic rational choice, it occurs when people misconstrue newly existing information as supporting previously held beliefs, even when there is no clear evidence for its validity (Akerlof, 1989). Teri (2018) argued that confirmatory decision-making strategy is the inclination to gather information even in an objective search and make voting decisions that are in consonance with the voters already existing beliefs. This type of bias has led to the perpetration of "fake news" that is passed on without examination on social media platforms and wrong voting decisions (Hunjra, Salman, & Lubna, 2016). Confirmatory decision-making is, in essence, when a voter makes a voting decision in view of new pieces of information from the world around him in a subjective, misguided manner, based on his/her prior opinion (Kosnik, 2007). According to Lodge & Taber (2013) with the confirmatory decision-making strategy, information search is more often passive than active. Eyal, Mani and Far (2017) opined that confirmatory decision-making strategy is a prejudice that seeks, interprets information, and make decisions that endorse pre-existing beliefs. It is insidious because it affects the choices of voters during elections. Once a voter has formed his/her opinion concerning a political party/candidate, the argument goes, further pieces of evidence on the abilities of that political party/candidate can be used to support both a positive, or a negative, assessment of that very same candidate /political party, depending on the initial beliefs of the voter (Hunjra, Salman & Lubna, 2016). Confirmatory decision-making strategy affects how

voters perceive the world around them, how they remember things, how they interpret the information available to them and how they process what is otherwise neutral information -and it tends to be favorable to their beliefs (Ayal et al. 2017). According to Yeoung (2019) confirmatory decision making is a bias and a common mental error that occurs when a pre-existing belief impedes on the way we think, make decisions, and take actions. When voters have a belief or hypothesis in their minds that they think is true knowingly or unknowingly, they are more likely to seek more evidence to prove it right and make decisions that are aligned with their beliefs.

Fast & Frugal Decision-Making

The Fast and Frugal Decision-Making strategy is based On Herbert Simon' s bounded rationality theory Simon (1956; 1972; 1982). It is based on heuristics, that are construed as a trade-off between the confines of the human mind and the computing performance needed for solving complex problems (Schilirò, 2017). Gerd Gigerenzer proposed a psychological approach based on fast & frugal heuristics to examine simple substitutes to a full rationality analysis as a tool between for decision making. He maintained that simple heuristic's habitually lead to better decisions than the theoretically optimal procedure (Gigerenzer, Hertwig and Pachur, 2011). In applied settings, people make decisions under different degrees of obscurity, that is, when risks are unknown or cannot be calculated. In such situations, decisions can be made using fast-and-frugal decision-making strategy or heuristics (Sebastian, Waeger, Marewski, &Gigerenzer, 2016). Fast & frugal decision-making refers to the application of environmentally lucid heuristics, such as the recognition heuristic, which are rooted in the psychological capabilities that we have evolved as human animals (e.g., memory and perceptual systems). It is referred to as "fast & frugal" because they are effective under conditions of bounded rationality "when information, knowledge, time, and the ability to compute are limited (Goldstein & Gigerenzer,2002). Fast and frugal decision-making strategy is a simple, task-specific decision strategy that is an aspect of a voters decision-making repertoire of cognitive strategies for making voting decisions (Gigerenzer& Goldstein, 1996; Gigerenzer& Todd, 1999). According to Lau et al, (2018), fast & frugal decision-making strategy assumes that voters are driven mostly by efficiency, actively seeking only the most diagnostic information that will allow them to quickly make the correct voting choice. They maintained that Information-Seeking should be limited to the one or two most Important/ diagnostic criteria, but those few criteria Should bejustly applied to every alternative in the choice set-that is, shallow but comparable search Fast and frugal heuristics are rules of thumb for decision makings they are easy, task specific decision strategies that are part of a decision maker s collection of cognitive strategies for solving problems and decision tasks (Schiliro, 2017). Reimer and Rieskamp (2007) argued that the fast & frugal heuristics recognizes not only the result of the decision-making process but also the process itself. It consists of Simple building blocks that specify how information is searched for (search rule), when to stop Information search (stopping rule), and how the processed information is integrated into a decision (decision rule). Fast & frugal decision- making strategy yield voters' decisions that is ecologically rational rather than logically consistent.

Political Party Brand Competence and Voters Decision-Making

The cultivation and maintenance of a brand is becoming increasingly important as politicians seek to connect with constituents. through the lens of social cognitive and group dynamics, Benne Malone., Cheatham and Saligram (2019) study on "the impact of perceptions of politician brand warmth and competence on voting intentions was aimed at understanding the impact of evaluations of politician brands on voter intentions. Their three studies utilized the social cognition constructs of warmth and competence from the stereotype content model (SCM) and Brands as Intentional Agents Framework (BIAF) to evaluate the impact of brand perceptions on voting intentions, comparing fit between the models. The data from their study Support Perceptions of warmth and competence as significant predictors of voting intentions. Dependent upon whether the politician is being evaluated as a person. BIAPF or SCM predicts the dimension that will be most impactful. These patterns persist in the absence of full information. As expected, voting intentions increased significantly when the voter was of the same (VS Opposing) party as that of the candidate. Bennett et, al. (2019) Conducted their study during an election year, at which point, evaluations of politicians are susceptible to the current political climate and the predominantly two party political system in which the studies were conducted. The design of Studies 2 and 3 addressed some of the limitations of their study. Results from Bennett el, al., (2019) point toward the interrelated nature of warmth and competence perceptions and the usefulness of applying both BIAF and SCM to understand how voters view politicians and the drivers of voting intentions. practically, their study evidenced the depth to which perception of candidates' impact voting intent establishing politicians' unique position as both brands and people. Kaur and Sohal. (2019) in their study on "examining the relationships between political advertisements, party brand personality voter satisfaction and party loyalty, observed that although the concept of political party brand personality has received substantial recognition in the political marketing literature, however, no study as yet has contributed in identifying a causal relationship between the party brand personality and voter behavior. Therefore, their study was conducted with the aim to address this gap in the academic literature by determining the relationship between the multifaceted advertising-brand personality-satisfaction-loyalty constructs in political context. The sample for their study consisted of 930 responses drawn from the major cities of Punjab state in India through multistage stratified random sampling. AMOS-based structural equation modelling was used to test their proposed model. Results from their study revealed that voters attitude towards political advertisements had a significant effect Ontheir satisfaction andloyalty when brand personality had a mediating role in this effect. Additionally, the influence of party brand personality on satisfaction and loyalty of voters was different for the selected four political parties. The outcome from their study carries strong implications for the political parties and the political marketers to develop pertinent marketing and communication strategies that are consistent with their personality traits, with an endeavor to enhance the satisfaction and loyalty of Voters. Based on the foregoing, this study hypothesizes as followings:

H₀₁: Political party brand competence has no significant relationship with classic rational choice in Nigeria.

H₀₂: Political party brand competence has no significant relationship with confirmatory decision-making in Nigeria.

H₀₃: Political party brand competence has no significant relationship with fast & frugal in Nigeria decision-making in Nigeria.

METHODOLOGY

Primary data was generated through structured questionnaire. The target population of this study was eighty four million, four thousand and eighty four (84,004, 084). Given an accessible population of twenty six million, six hundred and thirty four thousand six hundred and five (26,634,605) within the six geo-political zones in Nigeria, the sample size of 384 was determined using calculated using the Taro Yamane's formula for sample size determination. The reliability of the instrument was achieved by the use of the Cronbach Alpha coefficient with all the items scoring above 0.70. The hypotheses were tested using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences version 23.0. The tests were carried out at a 95% confidence interval and a 0.05 level of significance.

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Table 1: Correlations for Brand Competence and Voters' Decision Making

	Political Party Brand Competence	Classic Rational Decision	Confirmatory Decision	Fast and Frugal Decision
Political Party Brand Competence	1	.988**	.963**	.976**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000
	N	384	384	384
Classic Rational Decision	.988**	1	.984**	.993**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000
	N	384	384	384
Confirmatory Decision	.963**	.984**	1	.988**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000
	N	384	384	384
Fast and Frugal Decision	.976**	.993**	.988**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000
	N	384	384	384

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: SPSS Output

H₀₁: Political party brand competence has no significant relationship with classic rational choice in Nigeria.

The result of correlation matrix obtained between political party brand competence and classic rational decision is shown in Table 1. The correlation coefficient of 0.988 confirms the degree and strength of this relationship and it is significant at $p < 0.000 < 0.01$. The coefficient represents a very strong correlation between the variables. Therefore, based on observed findings the null hypothesis

earlier stated is hereby rejected and the alternate upheld. Thus, there is a significant relationship between political party brand competence and classic rational decision in Nigeria.

Ho₂: Political party brand competence has no significant relationship with confirmatory decision in Nigeria.

The result of correlation matrix obtained between political party brand competence and confirmatory decision is shown in Table 1. The correlation coefficient of *0.963* confirms the degree and strength of this relationship and it is significant at $p < 0.000 < 0.01$. The coefficient represents a very strong correlation between the variables. Therefore, based on observed findings the null hypothesis earlier stated is hereby rejected and the alternate upheld. Thus, there is a significant relationship between political party brand competence and confirmatory decision in Nigeria.

Ho₃: Political party brand competence has no significant relationship with fast and frugal decision in Nigeria.

The result of correlation matrix obtained between political party brand competence and fast and frugal decision is shown in Table 1. The correlation coefficient of *0.976* confirms the degree and strength of this relationship and it is significant at $p < 0.000 < 0.01$. The coefficient represents a very strong correlation between the variables. Therefore, based on observed findings the null hypothesis earlier stated is hereby rejected and the alternate upheld. Thus, there is a significant relationship between political party brand competence and fast and frugal decision in Nigeria.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

One of the thrusts of this study was to investigate the association between political party brand competence and voters' decision making in the political marketing system in Nigeria. This study found positive correlational values and a very strong linear association between the political party brand competence and the three indicators of voters' decision making in the Nigeria political marketing system. The findings from this study is in line with Bennett., Malone., Cheatham and Saligram (2019) study on "the impact of perceptions of politician brand warmth and competence on voting intentions" which was aimed at understanding the impact of evaluations of politician brands on voter intentions. Their three studies utilized the social cognition constructs of warmth and competence from the stereotype content model (SCM) and Brands as Intentional Agents Framework (BIAF) to evaluate the impact of brand perceptions on voting intention, comparing fit between the models. Their first study established the impact of these perceptions on existing politicians. Their second study replicated these effects while controlling for party affiliation and extraneous factors and explicitly studied politicians as brands. Their third study examined the formation of perceptions and assumptions when full information is unavailable. Social cognition and group dynamics drive responses to political brand.

The present study also supports the findings from the study of Kaur and Sohal, (2019) whose study was focused on. "Examining the relationships between political advertisements, party brand

personality, Voter satisfaction and party loyalty". Their study established a strong relationship ship between political advertisements, party brand personality, voter satisfaction and party loyalty" Theoretically, this study confirms the question asked and answer offered by Guzmán and Sierra (2009) who forthrightly asked, "Are Political Candidates Brands?" and argued for a definitive affirmation. Positing that brand image has shifted from the party to the candidate, they built a comprehensive framework for evaluating candidates through 58 traits based on the brand personality schema. Their Study adopted national household survey, their data pointed to five basic dimensions of politician brand personality: capability, openness, empathy, agreeableness, and handsomeness. The most compelling aspect of Guzmán and Sierra's research (2009) is not the attempt to determine whether politicians theoretically merit the appellation "brand," but rather, the confirmation that, consumers (voters in this case) actively perceive and respond to candidates as such (Guzmán & Sierra, 2009). Other results, developed in different contexts, Substantiate the politician's perception as a brand, including those on candidate associations in the 2005 Polish presidential election (Cwalina & Falkowski, 2015), on the role of community organizers in growing local Australian politicians' brands, and on Bill Clinton and Tony Blair's brand efficacy as incumbents. If individual politicians are repeatedly regarded as brands, and are thus Susceptible to the same defining judgments of warmth and competence, to what degree do such Judgments affect voting intentions?

The findings from this present study provides answer to this effect.results from Bennett et al. (2019) point toward the interrelated nature of warmth and competence perceptions and the usefulness of applying both BIAF and SCM to understand how voters view politicians and the drivers of voting intentions. Practically, their study evidenced the depth to which perceptions of candidate's impact voting intent, establishing politicians unique position as both brands and people. Kaur and Sohal (2019) in their study on "examining the relationships between political advertisements, party brand personality, voter satisfaction and party loyalty", observed that although the concept of political party brand personality has received substantial recognition in the political marketing literature, however, no study as yet has contributed in identifying a causal relationship between the party brand personality and voter behavior. Therefore, their study was conducted with the aim to address this gap in the academic literature by determining the relationship between the multifaceted advertising-brand personality satisfaction-loyalty constructs in political context. The sample for their study consisted of 930 responses drawn from the major cities of Punjab state in India through multistage stratified random sampling. AMOS-based structural equation modelling was used to test their proposed model. Results from their study revealed that voters attitude towards political advertisements had a significant effect on their satisfaction and loyalty when brand personality had a mediating role in this effect. Additionally, the influence of party brand personality on satisfaction and loyalty of voters was different for the selected four political parties. The outcome from their study carries strong implications for the political parties and the political marketers to develop pertinent marketing and communication strategies that are consistent with their personality traits, with an endeavor to enhance the satisfaction and loyalty of voters.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The study concludes that when political parties adopt and build brand competence it has a positive influence on voters' decision making in Nigeria.

The study recommends that political parties should always present brands (candidates) for elective positions based on personality of such candidates especially with regards to brand competence.

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