

**INVESTIGATING CONSUMER'S
SOPHISTICATION, CYNICISM AND
EFFICACY ON EMOTION-BASED POLITICAL
BRAND EQUITY USING ANES PANEL DATA:
MODERATING ROLE OF PARTISANSHIP**

by

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**MENKAKAJI SOFISTIKASI POLITIK PENGGUNA, SINISISME, DAN
KEBERKESANAN KEPADA EMOSI-BERASASKAN EKUITI JENAMA
POLITIK MENGGUNAKAN PANEL DATA: PERANAN MODERASI
TERHADAP HUBUNGAN PARTISAN**

ABSTRAK

Kajian data kedua yang dimanfaatkan daripada American National Election Studies, pengkhususan panel 2008-2009, bertujuan untuk menguji hubungan langsung dan hubungan tidak langsung antara sofistikasi politik pengguna dan emosi-berasaskan ekuiti jenama politik. Berasaskan kepada paradigma positif, tesis ini menggunakan kaedah kuantitatif, iaitu deskriptif, dalam menguji premis yang dinyatakan di atas. Hasil dapatan tesis ini menunjukkan bahawa sofistikasi pengguna, sinisisme, dan keberkesanan pengguna secara berkait kepada emosi-berasaskan PBE; hubungan partisan pengguna ini mengukuhkan hubungan mengubah antara sofistikasi pengguna, sinisisme, dan keberkesanan pengguna dan emosi-berasaskan PBE; emosi-berasaskan PBE ialah jangkaan kepada pilihan mengundi pengguna; sofistikasi pengguna adalah secara berkait dengan keberkesanan pengguna dan sinisisme; dan sinisisme pengguna dan keberkesanan pengguna pengantara bagi hubungan antara sofistikasi dan emosi-berasaskan PBE. Merujuk pada perbincangan mengenai dapatan kajian ini, kajian ini memperlihatkan kajian psikologi, politik, dan pemasaran sumbangan dari segi hasil yang dinyatakan di atas. Oleh itu, usaha semasa akan dikemukakan untuk membawa pengisian lebih jelas berkaitan sumber kajian pemasaran, sains politik dan psikologi, sehingga membawa kepada pemahaman, dari perspektif disiplin, sifat hubungan yang mentadbir interaksi dalam rangka kerja tersebut. Dengan kata lain, kajian semasa adalah terhad kepada objektif dan skop.

Oleh itu, beberapa cadangan telah disediakan untuk pertimbangan penyelidik masa depan.

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ABSTRACT

Utilising secondary data from American National Election Studies, namely the 2008-2009 panel study, this research aims to test the direct and indirect relationships between consumer's political sophistication and emotion-based political brand equity, and thereby emotion-based political brand equity predictive power of consumer's voting choice. Grounded on the positive paradigm, this thesis utilises a quantitative methodology, namely, descriptive, in testing the aforementioned premises. The findings of this thesis suggest that consumer's sophistication, cynicism and efficacy are related to emotion-based PBE; consumer's partisanship alters the positive relationship between consumer's sophistication, cynicism, and efficacy and emotion-based PBE; emotion-based PBE is predictive of consumers' voting choice; consumer's sophistication is positively related to consumer's efficacy and cynicism; and consumer's cynicism and efficacy mediate the relationship between sophistication and emotion-based PBE. Extrapolating on the discussion of these findings, the research demonstrated the research psychological, political, and marketing contributions in terms of the aforementioned results. Thus, the current effort is posited to bring greater clarity to the literatures of marketing, political science and psychology, making it possible to understand, from an interdisciplinary perspective, the nature of relationships that governs the interactions within the framework. That said, the current study is limited by its objectives and scope and therefore, a number of suggestions are provided for future researcher's consideration.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

The explananda (i.e., broadening) aspect of marketing instigated Philip Kotler and like-minded scholars to embark on interdisciplinary research (e.g., Kotler and Levy 1969, Luck 1969, Henneberg 2008) in various fields, including non-profit marketing (Roberto and Lee 2000) and political marketing (Lock and Harris 1996). The latter strand of studies is extrapolated on the notion that similarities between campaigning and salesmanship are seemingly ‘superior’ over the differences (Kotler 1981, Scammell 1999). Furthermore, Henneberg (2008) set forth guidance as regards to the development of political marketing theory. He reviewed research and argued that scholarly work on political marketing fall in twofold. They are called objectives or explanada, namely, political marketing management and political exchanges. The first is limited to description of the deployment of marketing applications in the study of political phenomena. This explanada is argued to alienate the larger political environment, offering narrower interpretations. The second is posited to go beyond marketing theories, making research following it more inclusive of all political exchanges. The epistemological nature of this explanada is believed to facilitate structuring ethical frameworks and analyses reading. The notion is justified on the premise that research falling under that category relies on a wider meta-theoretical based research, uses methodological pluralism to improve the understanding about certain political exchange through political marketing theory, and justify the use of political marketing theory as a lens in the political domain.

In inherently complex societal settings, where encountered and projected problems and questions do not confide in a sole field, the urgency to explore and resolve issues of concern combined with technological advances increasingly stimulate multidisciplinary efforts (Committee on Facilitating Interdisciplinary Research 2005). Contemporary marketing and political research, rapidly, becoming more eclectic. Political and marketing scholars adopt prolifically from various disciplines, including but not limited to, psychology, sociology, economics, anthropology, and statistics. As such, premises of the current thesis are extrapolated on two of the main disciplines (political science and marketing) most promising interdisciplinary endeavours of electoral behaviour: political psychology (for review see, Druckman, Kuklinski and Sigelman 2009) and Political Brand Equity (PBE) (e.g., Parker 2012, Needham and Smith 2015). To that end, it is noteworthy that the current endeavour is devoted to the study of forces that maintain influence on voting choice of presidential candidates in United States of America (USA).

Furthermore, positions on political campaigns have long instigated the debate over their influence on voting behaviour, especially, in the areas of political communication and psychology (see, Lippman 1922, Campbell, Gurin and Miller 1954, Dermody and Scullion 2005, Weiwu, et al. 2010, Bartel 2013, Klofstad, Sokhey and McClurg 2013). However, notwithstanding the number of scholarly endeavours, the literature presents dearth on predictive indicators of voting turn out and choice (Miller 2011). To date, voting choice continues to generate scholarly interest and debate. Researchers posit that, among a gamut of factors, political sophistication, attitudes, partisanship and emotion are indispensable forces on political participation (Dermody and Scullion 2005, Karp and Banducci 2008, Johann 2010, Beaumont 2010, Levy 2011). Empirical findings, to some extent,

support that voting turnout, not choice, is associated with the aforementioned determinants (Dermody and Hanmer-Lloyd 2005a, Miller 2011, Bartel 2013). However, political campaigns as informational source might result politically frustrated, demobilised and cynical individuals. Literature in this vein suggests that political campaigns significantly contribute to a spiral where voters' frustration, stimulating political cynicism (Pinkleton, et al. 2012).

To that end, throughout this thesis, theories, perspectives, methods, techniques, and data from the fields of political marketing and psychology are integrated to advance the fundamental understanding in an eclectic way. In reconciliation with Committee on Facilitating Interdisciplinary Research (2005) and Sherif and Sherif's (1969) assessments, this thesis is not limited to appropriating ideas from the literature of political psychology or brand equity. Instead, it pursues the amalgamation of a number of unconnected, yet significantly relevant to each single discipline, elements. Therefore, the selected disciplines are not ascribed and utilised as recipients and donors. To that end, it is noteworthy to mention that an inclusive interdisciplinary effort goes beyond the scope of one research. Thus, it is relatively narrow to draw attention to the issue of concern. For that reason, a clarification of consumers' electoral behaviour from the literature of politics is the appropriate point of departure prior to the crossfertilisation of concepts and applications of significance to the current endeavour. To that effect, theories and ideas from the three dominant schools of electoral behaviour are reviewed.

Firstly, Columbia, posits that consumers' electoral behaviour is predicted in terms of ideological cleavages rather than immediate attitudinal factors (Lazarsfeld, et al. 1944, Berelson, et al. 1954, Katz and Lazarsfeld 1955). That is to say, electoral division of voter blocs on the bases of ethnicity, religion, area of residency, and

socioeconomic status, among other sociological forces, is predictive of voting behaviour. Secondly, Michigan model development came as a response to the shortcoming of the one of Columbia (Campbell and Kahn 1952, Campbell, et al. 1954, Campbell, et al. 1960). The main thesis of that endeavour is that consumers, commonly, compensate immediate environment to existing political information in designating their allegiances to serve as the bases for their behaviour. Thirdly, alternatively Downs (1957) propose the rational choice theory. It sat forth a rule of rational-based political behaviour; that is analogous to the one that governs producers and consumers' exchanges. Downs's (1957) thesis is that the assumption of rationality is effective in reading the market; therefore, it can clarify electoral behaviour (for a detailed review on the three schools of electoral behaviour, see chapter two).

However, notwithstanding that each perspective contributes to the understanding of customer's voting behaviour, rational choice theory's (Downs 1957) utilisation is dominant throughout political branding literature (Needham and Smith 2015). One might argue that such conceptualisations are stimulated by the use of Bagozzi's (1975) exchange theory. Bagozzi's exchange paradigm is posited to parallels with Downs's theory in terms of the conceptualised political decision making process. Hence, the latter demonstrates the process through the flow of benefits of voting for voters, which in turn manifest in electoral outcome, and thereby, benefits customers, candidates, and political parties (for review see, O'Leary and Irendale 1976). Bagozzi's main thesis is that customers make decisions to maximise the benefit of voting decision (Lock and Harris 1996, Newman 1999a, b). One can readily observe the similarities between that paradigm and rational choice

theory. More fundamentally, political marketing is defined on the bases of exchanging promises of value with customers (see, Hughes and Dann 2009).

The exhaustive review of political branding research unveil ascribed contextual differences in comparison with mainstream branding concepts and applications, emphasis on the significance of political brands, and candidates' brands impact on political exchanges, namely, the electoral process (e.g., Needham 2005, 2006, Parker 2012, Needham and Smith 2015). Table 1-1 depicts the summary of that research contribution to the knowledge on the impact of political branding. That said, notwithstanding a number of empirical research on political branding (e.g., Phipps et al. 2010, Smith and French 2011, Parker 2012), the area is merely conceptual (e.g., Smith and Saunders 1990, Needham 2005, 2006, Smith and French 2009). Conceptual and empirical research in the political branding vein relied on Downs' (1957) rational choice, in proposing models that capture political brands of parties and candidates (Smith 2009). In addition, the mere empirical contribution is in constructing measures for political brands, namely, political brand image, equity, and personality (Needham and Smith 2015). They also, although tentatively, linked these brands to voting intention (e.g., Parker 2012). Additionally, campaigning industry strategists posit that political brands are significant tools that allow voters to compare between competing parties and candidates (Draper 2000, Singer 2002, Walsh 2007, Westen 2007, Potter 2008, Grannell 2008, Daye and VanAuken 2012). However, it is important to note that the adoption of marketing concepts and application has motivated political actors to use in simplistic and populist "follower" mentalities in the utilisation of concepts and applications, eliciting consumer's alienation and stimulating political cynicism (Scammell 1995, Henneberg 2006, Henneberg 2008).

Table 1-1 Summary of the contribution of research on political branding

Number	Contribution	Citation
1	A party and its candidate brands are, statistically, distinctive entities.	(Scammell 2007, Davies and Mian 2010, Phipps, Brace-Govan and Jevons 2010, Smith and French 2011)
2	Political brand equity is a measureable constructs.	(Guzmán and Sierra 2009, French and Smith 2010, Phipps et al. 2010, Smith and French 2011, Parker 2012)
3	Political brands operate as informational shortcuts.	(Lock and Harris 1996, Barwise, Dunham and Ritson 2000, Smith 2001, Wring 2002, Lees-Marshment 2004, Needham, 2006, Scammell 2007, Smith and French 2009, Phipps, Brace-Govan and Jevons 2010, Smith and French 2011)
4	Consistent development of political brands is a strategic task.	(Kavanagh 1995, Kotler and Kotler 1999, Schweiger and Adami 1999, Smith 2001)
5	Consumers rely heavily on political brands in guiding their political behaviour, specifically, voting.	(Lock and Harris 1996, Barwise, Dunham and Ritson 2000, Smith 2001, Harris and Lock 2001, Chernatony 2002, Wring 2002, O'Shaughnessy and Henneberg 2002, White and de Chernatony 2002, Lilleker and Negrine 2003, O'Cass 2003, Lees-Marshment 2004, Trevail 2004, Needham 2005, 2006, Klein 2006, Scammell 2007, Butler, Collins and Fellenz 2007, Phipps et al. 2010, Smith and French 2011)
6	Political brand equity functions as a valuation measure of presidential candidates and an indicator of voting intention.	(Scammell 2007, Parker 2012)
7	Party associations are critical part of candidate's brand equity.	(Scammell 2007, Phipps et al. 2010, French and Smith 2010, Smith and French 2011, Parker 2012)

Nevertheless, an emotion-based political brand equity as a concept is absent in the literature of political marketing, let alone the psychological forces that maintain an influence over it, and its impact on voting choice. For this reason, the researcher narrowed the psychological description, in this section, to a widely used and researched political psychological account, namely, affect-driven dual process models (see, Iyengar and Kinder 1987, Lodge, Taber and Verhulst 2011). Findings from social and cognitive psychology and more recently neuroscience suggest that

thinking and reasoning are explainable through affect-driven dual process models (Zajonc 1980, Lodge and Taber 2000, 2005). The separation of two types of processes, namely, unconscious (implicit, automatic, unsystematic, heuristic, associative: aka, system 1) and conscious (explicit, deliberative, analytic, propositional: aka, system 2) is a fundamental assumption of the aforementioned models (Evans 2008). The implicit (system one) process is governed by little or no cognitive effort, which occurs unconsciously and without consumers' control. System two or the propositional process reflects verbal thoughtful and reasoning which is the crystallisation of customer's controlled response. The explicit process is effortful, deliberative and slow (LeDoux 1996). Conscious and unconscious information processes are continuously activated; not only when propositional processing alter the implicit one but even when individuals engage in highly critical reasoning (Lodge, Taber and Verhulst 2011). Political scholars devoted a number of studies in which dual information processes are utilised in the study of political behaviour (see, Erisen, Lodge and Taber 2007).

However, with the exception of Nevid and McClelland (2010) study, the literature of political marketing, to the researcher knowledge, has not shown any study in which such conceptualisations are utilised. That said, the use of dual models is still in its infancy in mainstream marketing and advertising research. Based on Russell's (2003) core affect theory and existing utilisation of dual affect process models in the literature of marketing, emotion-based political brand equity is extrapolated. In that sense and in reconciliation with Keller (1993), Gawronski and Bodenhausen (2006), and Russell's (2003, 2009) assessments, the concept is defined as the differential effect of dual brand emotion (i.e., implicit brand's core affect and explicit brand categorisation) on consumers' response.

As such, emotion-based political brand equity is suggested to differ significantly from existing theoretical and empirical research on political branding. To the best of the researcher knowledge, scholars of political brand equity extrapolated on mainstream branding research and briefly, often one to three sentences, built nexus with Downs (1957) theory of rational choice. In other words, at the conceptual level, they utilised associative network memory model and justified the significance of political brand through the notion that consumer, to the largest extent, lack or attain limited political knowledge (e.g., Lock and Harris 1996, Scammell 2007, Parker 2012). However, notwithstanding that Phipps et al. (2010) investigated, qualitatively, the role of brand equity across highly informed customers; the conceptualisation of the construct and its designated dimensions is guided by the aforementioned conceptualisation. Alternatively, Russell's (2003, 2009) theory is utilised to allow probing consumers of different levels of political knowledge. Additionally, this endeavour is argued to allow the alignment and integration with the ones of classical and modern models and theories of electoral behaviour, given its definition of emotion (i.e. socio-cultural constructs) (Moors 2009). For that reason, the employment of this theory is believed to meet Henneberg's (2008, 2002) second marketing explanada and Committee on Facilitating Interdisciplinary Research's (2005) recommendations regarding interdisciplinary research.

As such, Russell's (2003) theory is recognised as an emotion causation theory that fits the study of the electoral phenomenon (see, Barrett 2006). In that sense, emotions are defined as socio-cultural constructions of acquired conceptual knowledge that manifest in experienced core affect and explicit emotional categorisation, eliciting action urgency. Core affect theory posits different processes

and role of the two blocks of emotional episode. This theory guides hypothesising the model of this thesis. Thus, it worthwhile to mention that a thorough review of electoral behaviour and political branding (e.g., Campbell, Gurin and Miller 1954, Scullion 2005, Scammell 2007, Phipps et al. 2010, Needham and Smith 2015) research suggest a crucial influence of a number of psychological factors, such as political cynicism (or alternatively trust), interest, knowledge, internal and external efficacy, and partisanship. In other words, empirically, the investigation of factors that maintain influence over political brand equity and its predictive power of actual voting behaviour are absent in the literature of political marketing and psychology. Therefore, the researcher endeavours to fill a gap in the literature which hitherto has hindered further conceptual development of the areas of political marketing and psychology.

To that end, it is noteworthy that observations about consumers' political attitude, knowledge, interest, efficacy, cynicism, partisanship, and emotion-based political brand equity might provide a clearer picture of the electoral exchange. Such picture can capture the interplay between consumers' political sophistication, efficacy, and cynicism, in one hand, and the multiple paths to emotion-based political brand equity, in the other. In consumers' knowledge to, attitude towards, partisanship, and emotional response toward presidential candidates lay behavioural crystallisation and thereby, experience of democracy and campaigners' endeavours to aid or attack candidates. It is critical for the land of elections to seek credible measures of consumers' knowledge, attitudes, emotions and electoral behaviour. The reason is that during every election, scholars, media and practitioners endeavour to capture such constructs and predict consumers' voting choices.

Moreover, fulfilling such scholarly pursuit requires credible, multifaceted, and large datasets. The scholarly value of electoral research instigated scientific communities to provide high-quality surveys. Notably, the USA is one of the first nations to take such an initiative. In surveying public opinion about a wide range of political, economic, and social phenomena, reputable institutes utilise concepts, methods and measures that are prominent in scholarly discussion. It is noteworthy that their public opinion surveys deep commitment to interdisciplinary research and intellectual openness has facilitated seminal theoretical and empirical works (Krosnick and Lupia 2011). The American National Election Studies (ANES) is one of the most influential public opinion surveys, covering perceptual, attitudinal, emotional, behavioural, ideological, demographic, and many other factors (Schneider, DeBell and Krosnick 2011). To that effect, it is worthwhile to mention that while the 2008-2009 ANES's panel study includes the in depth pre-election and post-election interviews, that cycle marks one of the most ambitious and disciplinary broad surveys (Schneider, DeBell and Krosnick 2011). The 2008-2009 ANES's panel study's data allow measuring emotion-based political brand equity, partisanship, and consumer's voting choice, political sophistication, cynicism, and efficacy. In other words it is the only study that utilises a questionnaire which is inclusive of all scale of measure of constructs of the hypothesised model. To that end, the current endeavour utilises the aforementioned data set in the operationalization of its premises.

1.2 Problem Statement

Campaigning in the USA, namely, presidential elections are multi-million dollar industry. According to the Centre of Responsive Politics, during 2004 and 2008 elections estimated 717.9 million, 1.3 billion dollars respectively were spent on

America's presidential elections (Center for Responsive Politics 2009). Statistics attained from International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (2008) indicate that the previous figures reflect elections cost per vote at 5.87 and 9.89 USD accordingly. Guzmán and Sierra (2009) suggested that the "implications of the cost of elections are important for the development of a country, as the electoral machinery can generate economic and social wealth through employment generation, the consumption of services and the election of a particular candidate with a specific economic and social agenda that ultimately affects the entire products and services market" (P. 208). Moreover, during the 2008 and 2012 presidential campaigns, the Democratic and Republican's candidates spent 1,063,000,000 and 1,116,828,064 dollars respectively (Center for Responsive Politics 2012). Bell and Wilson (2012) noted that resources allocation to the state of Ohio by the Democratic and Republican parties, the two major parties, is, respectively, at 41,574,704 and 30,900,466 American's dollars at 20 June 2012. Comparing these figures with data of raised and spent campaigning funds obtained from Center for Responsive Politics (2012) indicates that Republicans and Democrats spent 18.9 and 15.8 per cent of their total campaigns spending on advertisements in Ohio. Norman Robbins, Northeast Ohio Voter Advocates, estimates the number of legible Ohioan voters at 8.7 million (Robbins 2011). These statistics suggest that campaigns' cost per Ohioan vote is 8.33 dollars: 3.55 and 4.78 for republican and democratic campaigners accordingly. That said, the current endeavour investigates its premises using secondary data from across all states.

Furthermore, positions on political campaigns have long instigated the debate over their influence on voting behaviour, especially, in the areas of political communication and psychology (see, Lippman 1922, Campbell, Gurin and Miller

1954, Dermody and Scullion 2005, Weiwu, et al. 2010, Bartel 2013, Klofstad, Sokhey and McClurg 2013). However, notwithstanding the number of scholarly endeavours, the literature presents dearth on predictive indicators of voting turn out and choice (Miller 2011). To date, voting choice continues to generate scholarly interest and debate. Researchers posit that, among a gamut of factors, political sophistication, cynicism, efficacy, partisanship and emotion are indispensable forces on political participation (Dermody and Scullion 2005, Karp and Banducci 2008, Johann 2010, Beaumont 2010, Levy 2011). Empirical findings, to some extent, support that voting turnout, not choice, is associated with political sophistication, efficacy, and emotion (Dermody and Hanmer-Lloyd 2005a, Miller 2011, Bartel 2013). However, political campaigns as informational source might result politically frustrated, demobilised and cynical individuals. Literature in this vein suggests that political campaigns significantly contribute to a spiral where voters' frustration, stimulating political cynicism (Pinkleton, et al. 2012). In this sense, political cynicism is viewed as a suppressive force that undermines voting turnout but not choice.

According to Henneberg (2008) second political exchange explanation and Committee on Facilitating Interdisciplinary Research's (2005) guidelines, the researcher extrapolates on a wide range of marketing, political, and psychological concepts and applications in positing arguing the controversy surrounding the impact of political sophistication, cynicism, efficacy on emotion-based political brand equity and thereby, its predictive power of voting choice. As noted, in addition to partisanship three individual-based constructs emerged as central in studying electoral behaviour. These variables are consumer's political cynicism, sophistication and efficacy. To that effect, the thorough review of voting behaviour across the

selected fields portrays a fascinating, yet elusive, conceptualisations and empirical findings. Among a number of factors, the ambiguity of electoral behaviour emphasised the research of factors that elicit emotional responses towards a presidential candidate and the state's behavioural consequence. As such, the American presidential election phenomenon is selected for theoretical, empirical, and industrial reasons.

Recent accounts and findings from the three schools of voting behaviour provide evidence on the impactfulness of political sophistication, cynicism, efficacy, partisanship, and emotion on voting turnout (Lazarsfeld, et al. 1944, Downs 1957, Campbell, et al. 1960, Dermody and Hanmer-Lloyd 2005a, Miller 2011, Bartel 2013, Pinkleton, et al. 2012). However, the aforementioned research left a number of untested claims open for further inspection. In addition, emotion-based political brand equity as a concept is absent in the literature of political marketing, let alone the psychological forces that maintain an influence over it, and its impact on voting choice. However, with the exception of Nevid and McClelland (2010) study, the literature of political marketing, to the researcher knowledge, has not shown any study in which dual processing conceptualisations are utilised. That said, the use of dual models is still in its infancy in mainstream marketing and advertising research. As such, emotion-based political brand equity is suggested to differ significantly from existing theoretical and empirical research on political branding.

To that end, it is noteworthy that the cited political research, political, psychological, and marketing, mere interest is voting turnout rather the choice of presidential candidate. To that end, guided by the aforementioned gap, the researcher endeavours to provide evidences on the critical impact of the underpinning variables and their ambiguous interconnectedness across a wide array of available literature.

Firstly, partisanship (a.k.a., party-identification) is believed to be central for the study of electoral behaviour. It refers to stable and enduring affinities toward a political party (Miller and Shanks 1996). In that sense, identification with a party is expected to elicit favourable attitudes toward the party's candidate and might foretell their voting intention. Based on Campbell, et al.'s (1960) explanatory assessment, the relationships between constructs encompassed in the model of electoral behaviour are governed by funnel of causality. That is to say, a chain of events that begins with distal factors (e.g., group membership, values, attitudes, and historical and socioeconomic factors), which in turn get filtered by party-identification, eliciting an influence over proximal factors' (e.g., the economic and political situation of the country, candidates, issues, campaign, the government roles and actions) evaluations, and finally, ends in voting decision (Niemi and Weisberg 2001). Though, extensive research supports partisanship multiple influences (Bartels 2000). Moreover, contemporary political marketing research argued and supported the influential value of partisanship in shaping a number of forceful determinants of voting choice (e.g., Lock and Harris 1996, O'Cass 2003, Trevail 2004, Klein 2006, Smith and French 2011, Needham and Smith 2015).

Yet, to the researcher knowledge, the role partisanship in altering the impact of consumer's political sophistication, cynicism and efficacy on emotional responses towards an office candidate is still unaccounted for. Therefore, it is argue that examining the moderating effect of this construct is worthwhile. As mentioned earlier, the argued moderating influence is still vague across the research of marketing, politics, and psychology.

Secondly, cynicism refers to an attitudinal tendency that manifest in lack of trust and confidence in the people running a government (Pinkleton, Austin and Fortman 1998, Kaid and Tedesco 2000). In political lingo, the term is synonymous with distrusting, showing contempt, doubting, disappointment in public officials (Leon, Shawn and Elaine 2010). As such, cynicism holds few meaning and defined merely in terms of political trust (Leon, Shawn and Elaine 2010). Bewes (1997) stated that cynicism is the crystallisation of public's perception of politicians, parties and the government. Furthermore, cynicism reflects a state of mind that promotes suspicions in the structural objectives of political organisations. The ANES reported public trust in the government and politicians from 1958 to 2008. This report indicates that political cynicism reached the peak in 1980 and 2008 at 73 and 74 per cent respectively (American National Election Studies 2010). As such, a significant segment of the American population is posited to be cynical about politicians and the electoral process. In a political sense, this attitude results low voters' turnout, implying the disempowerment of representative democracy.

From marketing perspective, cynics' negative attitude is associated with explicit thoughtful information processing. For instance, Helm (2006) suggested that cognitive effort that consumers undertake in making a decision as a determinant of their cynicism. In this respect, De Veerse (2005) linked the intensity of research people pursue in order to determine their voting decisions to the levels of political cynicism. It is argued that people who consider their local newspaper and news channels as an important source of political information are less cynical than those who rely on various sources (Caroline, Ramona and Daniel 2003). Furthermore, from political marketing perspective, the increasing levels of political cynicism, during the

last decade, are believed to be the manifestations of the variety and availability of online public-based political information (Panagopoulos 2012).

A number of scholars suggested that there is a negative relationship between consumers' cynicism and voting turnout (Pattie and Johnston 2001, Wolfinger, Glass and Squire 1990, Weiwu, et al. 2010, Janine, et al. 2010). While some studies argued that cynicism is a key factor in lowering voting intention and turnout (Bromley et al 2001; Pattie and Johnson 2001; Russell et al 2002), the scope of the aforementioned research is narrowed to youth political attitude and behaviour. Comparing Statistics obtained from International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IIDEA) and American National Election Studies (ANES) indicates that among cynics a respectively high proportion do vote (see Figure 1.1). Specifically, during the 2008 election the percentage of cynics were at 74 and the one of non-voters 70.33. This implies, even if one assumes that all non-voters are cynics, there are other determinants of this behavioural consequence.

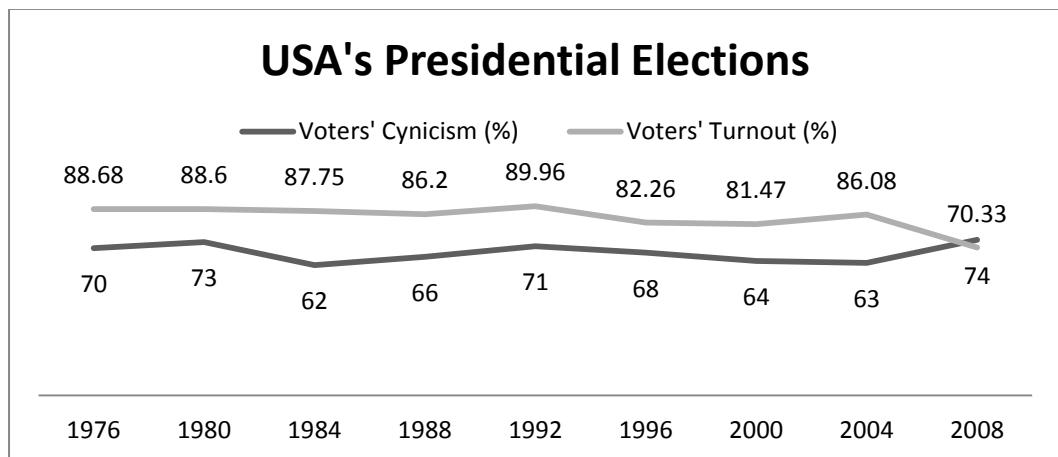


Figure 1-1: Political Cynicism and Voting Turnout (The researcher utilised data from IIDEA and ANES in producing this figure)

Source: International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (2008) and American National Election Studies (2010)

As such, it is important to note that political cynicism does not necessarily demotivate consumers from voting (Kligemann 1999). In fact, it is suggested that the attitudinal construct of cynicism stimulates ‘democratic dissatisfaction’, which in turn manifests in high motivation to express dissatisfaction through casting a vote. Such vote is expected to reward politicians of whom consumers are less cynical about.

Bearing in mind the conflicting accounts on the role of cynicism, research in so far left the question on the role of cynicism in multiple emotional responses towards presidential candidates unanswered, let alone whether it elicits emotion based political brand equity. In this research, the gap is felled through examining consumer’s political cynicism directly and indirectly, albeit moderated by partisanship, influence over emotion-based political brand equity.

Thirdly, political sophistication is defined as the combination of political interest and knowledge (Lupia and Philpot 2005, Miller 2011). Political interest refers to consumer’s “willingness to pay attention to political phenomena at the possible expense of other topics” (Lupia and Philpot 2005, P. 112). It is significantly influential over the consumers’ exposure to and attainment of political information (Delli Carpini and Keeter 1996, Steenbergen and Lodge 2003). Political knowledge in the other hand is resulted from political education, interpersonal discussion, and the news media (Kenski and Stroud 2006). Scholars suggest that political sophistication could be a strong trigger for the need to engage in the political process (e.g., Delli Carpini and Keeter 1996, Jennings and Zeitner 2003). In other words, sophisticated consumers possess strong capability in assimilating and processing political data, motivated for being politically up to date, and they desire the exposure to political information.

Scholars from the domain of political psychology noted that in the course of campaigns, parties and candidates strive to convince consumers of their political offering through crafting a salient image that emphasizes on particular issues and personal traits (Miller, Wattenberg and Malanchuk, Schematic Assessments of Presidential Candidates 1986, Jacobs and Shapiro 1994). Moreover, the schematic approach and rational choice literature consider presidential campaigns as an influential force that shapes consumers' perception of parties and their candidates (Lau and Sears 1986, Miller, Wattenberg and Malanchuk, Schematic Assessments of Presidential Candidates 1986, Iyengar and Donald, News That Matters 1987, Neuman, Just and Crigler 1992, Krosnick and Brannon 1993, Just, et al. 1996, Hetherington 1996). Retrieving from an earlier statement, partisanship, political sophistication combined with cynicism could be useful indicator of voting (not voting choice) (e.g., Russell, et al. 2002, De Vreese 2004, 2005, Dermody and Scullion 2005, Dermody, Hanmer-Lloyd and Scullion 2010).

To date, to the researcher knowledge, there is only one study that accounted for the impact of political sophistication of emotion (see, Miller 2011). However, that endeavour is limited to the examination of political sophistication influence on explicit emotions. Although, the current study, similar to the one of Miller (2011) employs, employing ANES panel study in examining its premises, the researcher test the impact of consumer's political sophistication on emotion-based political brand equity. That is to say, the study fills a gap in a literature by testing sophistication elicitation of the dual emotional experience rather than only the explicit. Additionally, the moderating role over the aforementioned relationship is still not examined, reflecting another gap this endeavour attempts to cover.

Fourthly, consumer's efficacy is attitudinal construct with direct association to behavioural consequences. So far, it has emerged as one of the strongest valid and reliable determinant of political participation (Easton and Dennis 1967, Beaumont 2010, Levy 2011). The concept reflects a belief that ones' action can influence the government (Campbell, Gurin and Miller 1954, Becker 2005, Beaumont 2010, Levy 2011). Politically efficacious Americans display favourable attitudinal tendencies for political involvement (Bell 1969, Cohen, Vigoda and Samorly 2001), attached to the news media (Tan 1981, Newhagen 1994), more likely to votes (Campbell, Converse, et al. 1960, Pollock 1983, Guyton 1988, Cohen, Vigoda and Samorly 2001), motivated to communicate with or contact public officials to address issues of their concern (Sharp 1982, Pollock 1983, Hirlinger 1992), and involved in political activism, particularly when they affiliate with a political party (Tygart 1977, Paulsen 1991, Abrams and DeMoura 2002). It is a worthwhile to mention that individuals desires for a specific political outcome is thought to elicit, positively, political efficacy (Levy 2011).

A stream of research concludes that consumers' political efficacy increase when they get involved in campaigns-related activities, like promoting partisan candidates, attending political meeting and debates, etc. (Finkel 1987, Stenner-Day and Fischle 1992) or even if they simply vote (Finkel 1985, Ikeda, Kobayashi and Hoshimoto 2008), especially when they strongly desire a certain candidate to win (Clarke and Acock 1989, Bowler and Donovan 2002). The researcher utilised data from American National Election Studies (2009b) and International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (2008) (see figure 1.2) to detect trends of efficacy and cynicism. The Figure indicate that both indicators, to some extent, rise and decrease in similar fashion. In addition, scholars posit a positive relationship

between American consumers' political learning and their political efficacy (Levy 2011). Political discussions also believed to have a positive impact on their political efficacy (Hahn 1999, Morrell 2005). A number of studies argued when consumers watch televised news or read newspapers, their internal political efficacy increase (Kenski and Stroud 2006, Lee 2006, Wells and Dudash 2007). Nevertheless, research also suggested that consumers' experience a decline in their external political efficacy and an increase in cynicism when they encounter negative or confusing political information (Miller, Goldenberg and Erbring 1979, Lee 2006). Moreover, a thorough review of research on political psychology, marketing, and communication implies that political cynicism, sophistication, and efficacy operate through a framework of relationships, making single factor influence on consumers' behaviour unclear (Bandura 1986, Capella and Jamieson 1997, Pinkleton, et al. 1998, Wring, Henn and Weinstein 1999, Pinkleton and Austin 2002, Vreese 2004, 2005, Dermody, Hanmer-Lloyd and Scullion 2010). For instance, politically efficacious cynics might engage in facts finding and validation prior to taking a political action. To that end, it is worthwhile to mention that studies in this area mostly cover European young voters. To that end, it is important to note that while it is evidential that consumer's sophistication, cynicism, and efficacy maintain an influence on each other (e.g., Elenbaas, Vreese and Claes 2008, Jackson 2011, Lariscy, Tinkham and Sweetser 2011), the nature and direction of such relationships are still ambiguous. Moreover, the current thesis extrapolates on Miller and Krosnick (2004) and Valentino, Gregorowicz and Groenendyk's (2009) studies in conceptualising the relationship between consumer's political efficacy and emotion-based PBE. Nevertheless, those two studies were limited to probing the role of internal efficacy on negative, explicit emotional states.

As such, the current research covers an existing gap through examining the impact of the consumer's overall sense of political efficacy on emotion-based political brand equity; a construct inclusive of implicit emotional states and positive emotional responses. Additionally, it accounts for the role of consumer's partisanship which was left unaccounted for in the aforementioned studies. Correspondingly, this thesis covers the outlined gap in the literature.

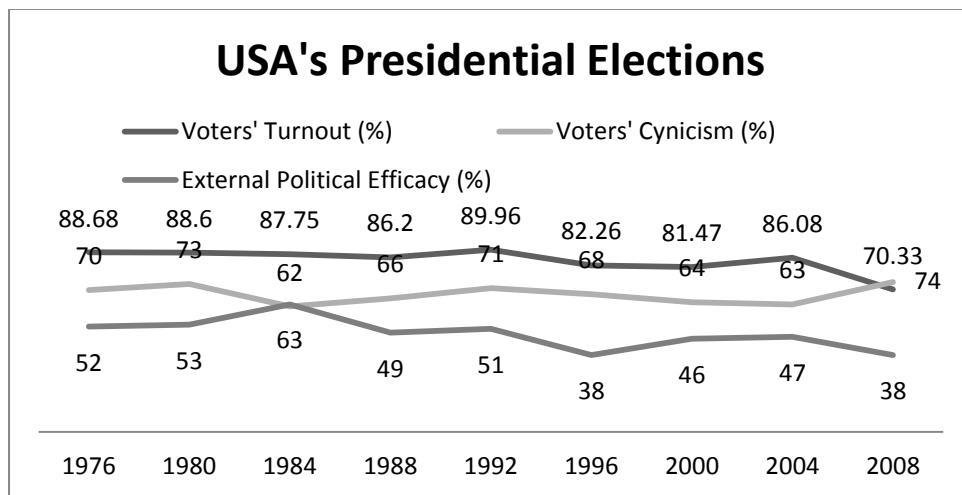


Figure 1-2: Voters' Turnout, Cynicism, and External Political Efficacy (The researcher utilised data from IIDEA and ANES in producing this figure)

Source: American National Election Studies (2009b) and International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (2008)

Last but not the least, political emotions, generally, are believed to result in political actions, like, voting (Miller 2011). Extrapolating on Russell's (2003, 2009) and in reconciliation with marketing research on dual information processing, emotion-based political brand equity is posited to be a determinate of voting choice. However, the nature of relationships between this type of political brand equity and the outlined variable is still ambiguous. As mentioned earlier, Miller' (2011) paper is the only study that investigates the impact of emotional response on voting.

Nevertheless, it only conceptualised and tested this relationship at the explicit level for the two aforementioned relationships, leaving four gaps.

That is to say, the first is covered through this thesis by examining the role of consumer's political sophistication on emotion-based political brand equity which is inclusive of implicit and explicit emotion experience. The second is felled through examining the predictive power of emotion-based PBE of consumer's voting choice rather than the chance of voting. The third is tackled by probing partisanship moderation of consumer's political sophistication and emotion-based political brand equity. The fourth is demonstrated through the investigation of consumer's political attitudes, namely, cynicism and efficacy, mediation sophistication and emotion-based political brand equity relationship. To that effect, notwithstanding that core affect theory is built around the notion that emotions are socio-cultural artefacts (Russell 2003, 2009), the relationships between the constructs were not tested.

Taken altogether, the central purpose of this research is to investigate, guided by an integrative interdisciplinary crossfertilisation, the impact of consumer's cynicism, sophistication, and efficacy on emotion-based political brand equity directly and moderated by consumer's partisanship. The researcher also endeavours to probe emotion-based political brand equity predictive power of consumer's voting choice. Additionally, the relationships between consumers' cynicism, sophistication and efficacy called for further research. Thus, the investigation of such nexuses is pursued to disambiguate vagueness. As such, this thesis is expected to contribute to the broader understanding of electoral behaviour through filling gaps in the literature of marketing, politics and psychology. Moreover, the researcher attempts to clarify the relationships that govern the direct and indirect interaction between customer's sophistication cynicism and efficacy. The review also unveils that, to the best of the

researcher's knowledge, scholars have not tested the direct and indirect (mediated and moderated) relationships between customers' sophistication and emotion-based political brand equity. As such, the researcher designates a number of objectives, in the next section, to fill the aforementioned gaps.

1.3 Research Objectives

The specific objectives of this thesis are as follows:

1. To examine consumer's political sophistication, cynicism, and efficacy direct relationships with emotion-based political brand equity.
2. To examine whether consumer's partisanship moderates consumer's political sophistication, cynicism and efficacy relationships with emotion-based political brand equity.
3. To examine the relationship between emotion-based political brand equity and voting choice.
4. To examine consumer's political sophistication direct relationships with cynicism and efficacy.
5. To examine whether consumer's political cynicism and efficacy mediate the relationship between sophistication and emotion-based political brand equity.

1.4 Research Questions

Guided by the aforementioned objectives, the researcher lists the following question to fill the highlighted gaps:

1. Are consumer's political sophistication, cynicism, and efficacy directly related to emotion-based political brand equity?

2. Does consumer's partisanship moderate consumer's political sophistication, cynicism, and efficacy relationships with emotion-based political brand equity?
3. Is emotion-based political brand equity related to consumer's voting choice?
4. Is consumer's political sophistication directly related to cynicism and efficacy?
5. Do consumer's political efficacy and cynicism mediate the relationship between consumer's political sophistication and emotion-based political brand equity?

1.5 Significance of the Study

This thesis is believed to have potential to make significant theoretical and practical contributions. In the following sections the researcher outlines the aforementioned contributions.

1.5.1 Theoretical Contribution

Findings of this study are expected to benefit the broader understanding of voting choice. This effort is posited to bring greater clarity to the literatures of marketing, political science and psychology, making it possible to understand, from an interdisciplinary perspective, the nature of relationships that governs the framework. In the following sections, the various theoretical contributions are demonstrated.

1.5.1.1 The field of psychology

The current endeavour is believed to contribute to existing theories of emotions, including Barrett's (2006) conceptual act theory, affect program theory (e.g., Tomkins 1962, Izard 1977, Panksepp 1998, 2000, Ekman 1992, 2007), and appraisal (e.g., Arnold 1960, Scherer 2001, 2004), network (e.g., Baeyens, Eelen and Van den