

**STRATEGIC IMPACT OF VICE-PRESIDENTIAL
CANDIDACY ON THE NEW PATRIOTIC PARTY'S 2024
ELECTORAL PROSPECTS: A SURVEY OF PUBLIC
PERCEPTIONS AND PREFERENCES**

SEPTEMBER 2024

Executive Summary

Background and Aim

As Ghana approaches the 2024 elections, the selection of a vice-presidential candidate for Dr. Mahamudu Bawumia, representing the New Patriotic Party (NPP), has become a pivotal aspect of the campaign strategy. This study aims to evaluate public perceptions of Dr. Mathew Opoku Prempeh's candidacy and assess how various potential running mates might influence the electoral success of the NPP. The analysis considers recent economic commentary, the performance of potential candidates, and voter preferences to provide a comprehensive overview of the current political landscape.

Methodology

A survey was conducted with a sample of 1,402 respondents across Ghana to gauge opinions on Dr. Prempeh as a vice-presidential candidate. The survey used a mixed-method approach, combining online and face-to-face questionnaires to ensure broad demographic representation. Data collection focused on awareness of Dr. Prempeh, his impact on the campaign, satisfaction with his performance, and perceptions of other potential candidates.

Findings

The study revealed that 85.45% of respondents are aware of Dr. Prempeh's candidacy. However, opinions on his influence are divided, with 47.29% believing he negatively impacts the campaign and 32.24% viewing him positively. Satisfaction with Dr. Prempeh's performance is largely negative, with 36.31% very unsatisfied. In contrast, Dr. Yaw Osei Adutwum is preferred by 53.14% of respondents as the ideal running mate and is seen as having the most positive impact by 58.56%.

Conclusions

The findings indicate that while Dr. Prempeh is widely recognized, his candidacy faces significant challenges due to dissatisfaction and mixed perceptions of his impact. Dr. Yaw Osei Adutwum is perceived as a more favourable choice, suggesting that his proven track record and public appeal could offer strategic advantages for the NPP. To enhance campaign effectiveness, addressing public dissatisfaction and aligning candidate selection with voter expectations will be crucial for the NPP's success in the 2024 elections.

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1. Introduction

The 2024 elections in Ghana represent a crucial turning point for the country's democratic process. As the ruling New Patriotic Party (NPP) seeks to secure a third consecutive term in office, the stakes are higher than ever. Ghana's political landscape is marked by intense competition, particularly between the NPP and the National Democratic Congress (NDC), making strategic decisions such as the selection of a running mate vital for electoral success. With Vice President Dr. Mahamudu Bawumia chosen as the NPP's presidential candidate, the choice of his running mate has become a topic of national interest and debate.

Globally, the selection of a vice-presidential candidate is recognized as a strategic move that can influence voter turnout and sway undecided voters. In the United States, for instance, running mates are often chosen to provide geographical or ideological balance to a ticket, as seen in the 2008 election when Barack Obama chose Joe Biden to appeal to working-class voters in the Rust Belt. Similar dynamics are at play in African elections. Studies of African democracies have shown that running mates often help bridge regional, ethnic, or ideological gaps, making them critical to election strategy.

In Ghana, the role of the running mate has been pivotal in determining electoral outcomes. A notable example is the NPP's selection of Dr. Bawumia as Nana Akufo-Addo's running mate in 2008, a choice that helped the party appeal to voters in Northern Ghana, a region traditionally loyal to the NDC. The strategic significance of running mate selection in Ghana is underscored by the balancing of ticket dynamics - whether in terms of ethnicity, region, or expertise.

Ahead of the 2024 elections, Dr. Bawumia's running mate selection generated considerable debate, with Dr. Mathew Opoku Prempeh emerging as a frontrunner. Dr. Prempeh, the current Minister of Energy and a former Minister of Education, was seen as a candidate who could bolster the NPP's appeal among the party's base urban, middle-class voters particularly in the Ashanti Region (his home region). Supporters of his candidacy pointed to his technocratic expertise and successful track record in government, particularly in the education sector, which resonates with many Ghanaians. His role in implementing key educational reforms, such as the Free Senior High School policy, positioned him as a figure capable of driving policy-focused conversations in the campaign. Nonetheless, some critics argued that his lack of strong grassroots connections could be a drawback in appealing to rural voters.

Despite the merits of Dr. Prempeh, there were other strong contenders for the vice-presidential slot, each of whom brought unique strengths to the table. Dr. Yaw Osei Adutwum, for example,

was also considered for his impressive work as Minister of Education and his appeal to younger voters and the middle class. Additionally, Frema Osei Opere, the Chief of Staff, was a potential candidate who could have appealed to female voters and those advocating for greater gender inclusion in high-level politics. Bryan Acheampong, the Minister of Agriculture, was another name in the mix, known for his security credentials and strong political influence, particularly in the Eastern Region.

The eventual choice of Dr. Prempeh has sparked discussions about whether other candidates might have provided a stronger advantage in the race. Dr. Prempeh's focus on policy and governance is seen as a continuation of the NPP's technocratic approach, but the party will need to balance this with efforts to connect more effectively with grassroots voters. Given the significant role that vice-presidential candidates play in elections, assessing the potential impact of the other candidates is critical to understanding the NPP's overall electoral strategy.

The study sought to evaluate the potential advantages that other vice-presidential candidates, who were in contention with Dr. Prempeh, could have brought to the NPP's ticket in the 2024 elections. By examining the strengths and weaknesses of these candidates, this research seeks to shed light on the broader strategic considerations behind running mate selections and how they influence voter behavior in Ghana.

2. Methodology

To assess the potential electoral impact of various vice-presidential candidates for the New Patriotic Party (NPP) in Ghana's 2024 elections, a comprehensive survey was conducted targeting the voting population across the country. The survey aimed to gauge public opinion and perceptions regarding the different candidates who were considered for the vice-presidential position alongside Dr. Mahamudu Bawumia.

The target population for this study was the voting population of Ghana, estimated to be several million individuals. A sample size of 1,500 was chosen to provide a statistically significant snapshot of voter preferences with a confidence level of 95% and a margin of error of approximately 2.5%. This size is deemed appropriate for national-level surveys aiming to reflect a wide range of demographic and geographical segments within Ghana. The final analysis included 1,402 valid responses, accounting for a response rate of approximately 93.5%, which is quite robust for surveys of this nature. The rationale behind the sample size is supported by methodologies commonly used in political science research, where sample sizes ranging from 1,000 to 2,000 are typical for national surveys.

Data was collected through a mixed-method approach combining online and face-to-face survey questionnaires. This method was selected to ensure broad demographic coverage and to account for varying levels of internet access across different regions of Ghana. Online surveys were distributed via email and social media platforms, while face-to-face surveys were conducted in high-traffic public areas such as markets, universities, and community centres, ensuring a diverse sample. The questionnaires were designed to be brief yet comprehensive, focusing on respondents' perceptions of the candidates' qualifications, likability, and potential impact on the electoral success of the NPP.

The collected data were analyzed using both Microsoft Excel and Stata software. Excel was utilized for preliminary data cleaning and coding, ensuring that the dataset was free of duplicates and inconsistencies. This dual approach leverages Excel's accessibility for basic tasks and Stata's advanced capabilities for detailed statistical analysis, a methodology supported by recent studies in survey data analysis.

The methodology adopted for this study aligns with established practices in the field of political polling and electoral studies. For instance, the combination of online and face-to-face data collection methods has been highlighted in the literature as a robust approach for achieving high response rates and reducing sampling bias. Furthermore, the use of Excel and Stata for data analysis is consistent with best practices in quantitative research, providing a balance between user-friendly and technically rigorous analysis tools.

3. Results/Findings

3.1 Demographic Statistics of Respondents

The gender distribution of respondents in this study was nearly equal, with 697 males (49.71%) and 705 females (50.29%). This balanced representation of both genders is consistent with the gender composition of Ghana's national population, where females slightly outnumber males, as reported by the Ghana Statistical Service (GSS) in the 2021 Population and Housing Census, which found that 50.7% of the population is female and 49.3% is male. This alignment ensures that the survey results are representative of the broader electorate and reflect diverse perspectives from both male and female respondents, providing a balanced view of voters' attitudes toward potential vice-presidential candidates.

In terms of education, 580 respondents (41.37%) had attained tertiary education, making up the largest portion of the sample. This was followed by 421 respondents (30.03%) with senior high school (SHS) or technical and vocational education and training (TVET) qualifications,

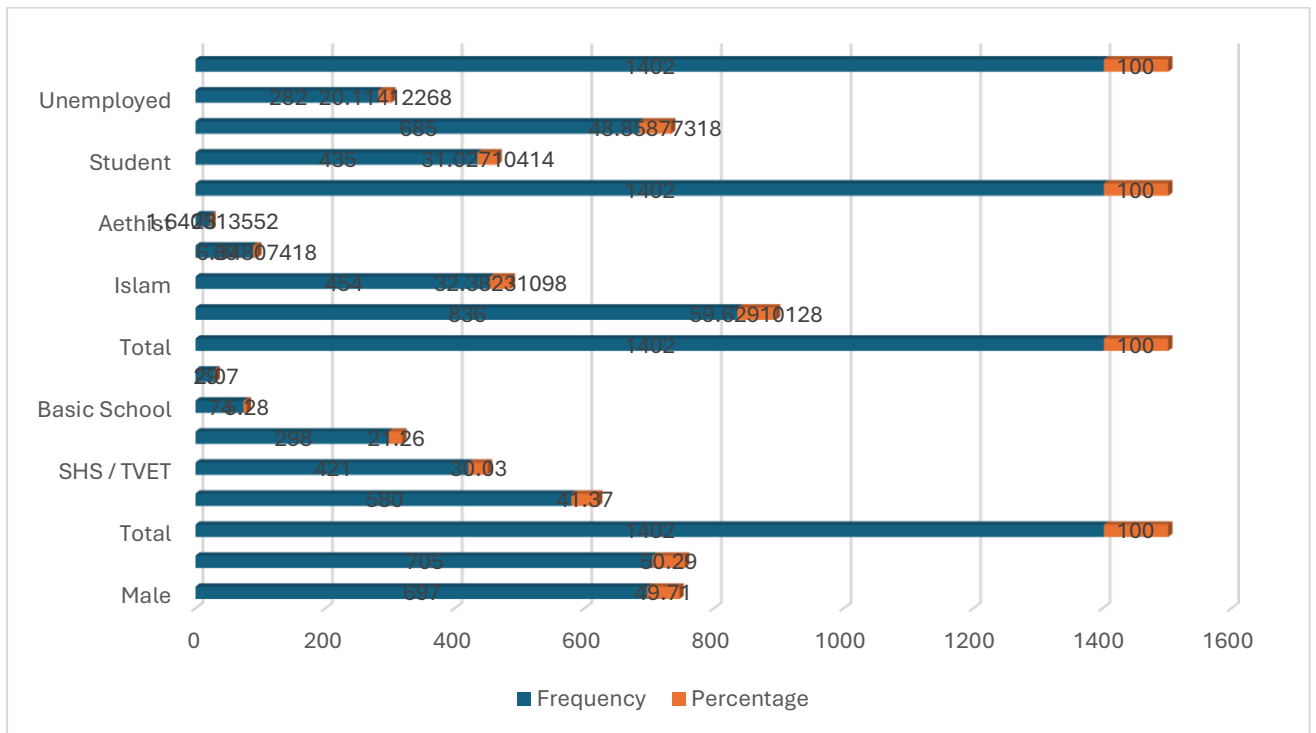
298 respondents (21.26%) with a master's degree, 74 respondents (5.28%) who had completed basic school, and 29 respondents (2.07%) with a PhD. When compared to national statistics from GSS, which show that only 19% of Ghanaians aged 15 and above have completed tertiary education, the sample appears skewed towards more educated individuals. This overrepresentation of highly educated respondents may reflect the urban and digital sampling methods used in the survey, where those with higher education are more likely to participate.

Christianity was the predominant religion among respondents, with 836 individuals (59.63%) identifying as Christians. This was followed by 454 respondents (32.38%) identifying as Muslims, 89 respondents (6.35%) as traditionalists, and 23 respondents (1.64%) identifying as atheists. Nationally, the GSS 2021 census data also reports that Christianity is the largest religion in Ghana, with approximately 71% of the population identifying as Christians, while about 18% identify as Muslims. The slightly higher representation of Muslims in the survey could indicate an effort to capture more diverse views, especially in regions where Islam is the dominant religion.

Employment data showed that 685 respondents (48.86%) were employed, 435 respondents (31.03%) were students, and 282 respondents (20.11%) were unemployed. Comparatively, the GSS data from 2021 reported a national unemployment rate of 13.4%, indicating that unemployment is slightly overrepresented in this survey. However, this could reflect the current economic conditions, as well as the fact that students, who are often not yet employed, made up a significant portion of the sample. The inclusion of many students provides insight into the younger, possibly first-time voter demographic, which is crucial for understanding the voting patterns and preferences of a key voting bloc in the upcoming elections.

Overall, the survey sample provided a well-rounded demographic mix as shown in Figure 1 below, although slightly skewed toward higher educational attainment and unemployment. These variances provide valuable insight into how different segments of the population, particularly more educated and economically active individuals, view the potential impact of vice-presidential candidates on the ruling New Patriotic Party's (NPP) chances in the 2024 elections.

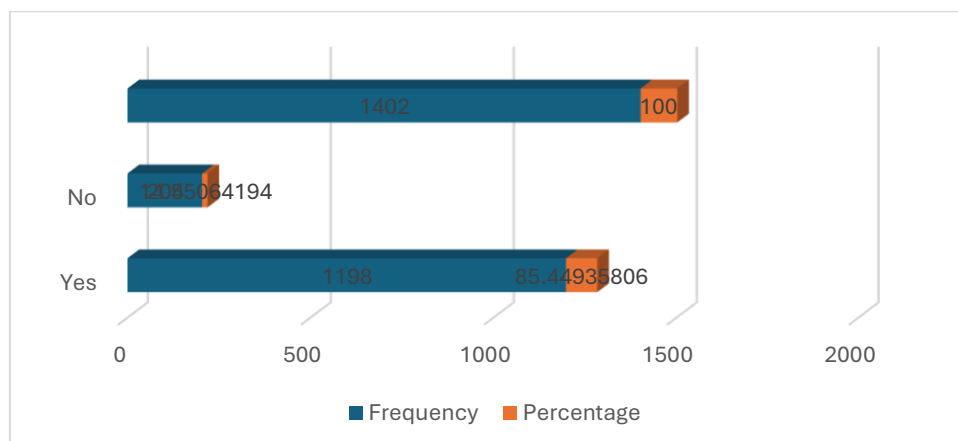
Figure 1: Demographic Statistics of Respondents



3.2 Awareness of Dr Prempeh as VP Candidate to Dr Bawumia

The data as shown in Figure 2 below reveals that a significant majority of respondents, 85.45%, are aware of Dr. Mathew Opoku Prempeh's candidacy as the vice-presidential candidate alongside Dr. Mahamudu Bawumia for the New Patriotic Party (NPP) in the 2024 elections, indicating strong public awareness and effective communication by the party. However, 14.55% of respondents are not aware of Dr. Prempeh's candidacy, highlighting a gap in outreach. While the high level of awareness is promising for the NPP, targeting the less informed minority with additional campaign efforts could further strengthen voter engagement and support.

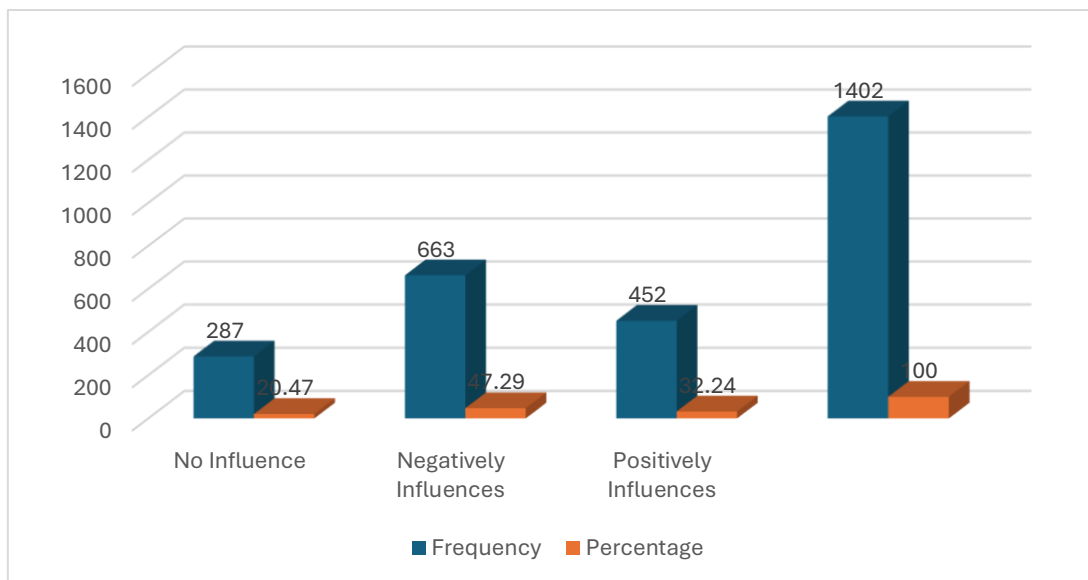
Figure 2: Awareness of Dr Prempeh as VP Candidate to Dr Bawumia



3.3 Influence of Dr Prempeh as VP Candidate to Dr Bawumia’s Campaign

The data on the influence of Dr. Mathew Opoku Prempeh on Dr. Mahamudu Bawumia's campaign reveals mixed perceptions among respondents. A notable 47.29% of respondents believe that Dr. Prempeh negatively influences the campaign, suggesting concerns or dissatisfaction with his impact on the electoral strategy. In contrast, 32.24% feel that Dr. Prempeh positively influences the campaign, indicating a portion of the electorate sees potential benefits in his candidacy. Meanwhile, 20.47% believe that Dr. Prempeh has no influence on the campaign. This distribution highlights a significant divide in perceptions of Dr. Prempeh's role and impact, suggesting that the NPP may need to address concerns and reinforce positive aspects to enhance overall campaign effectiveness.

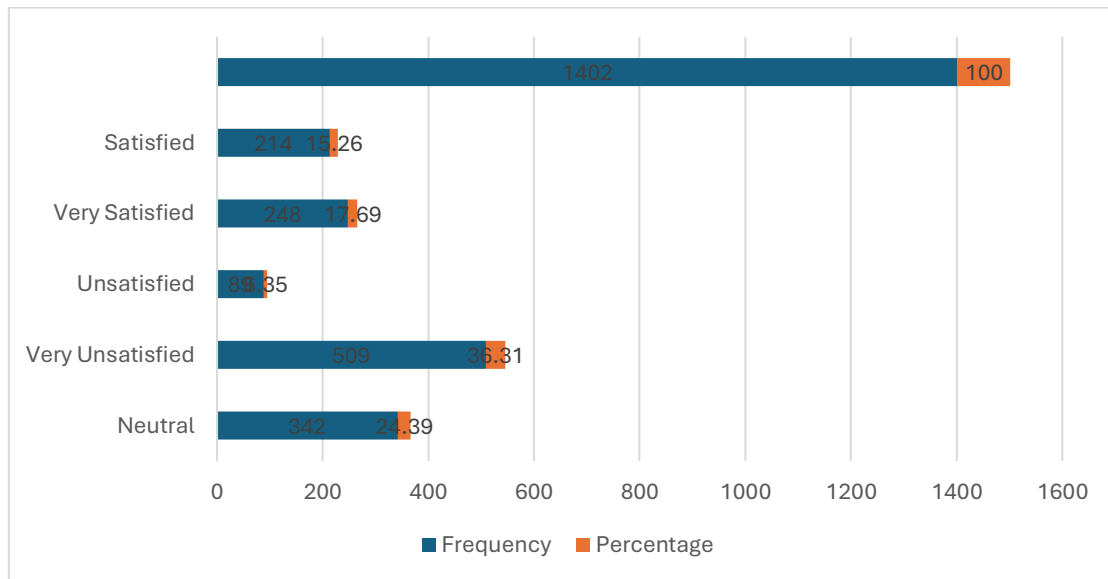
Figure 3: Influence of Dr Prempeh’s VP Candidature on Overall Campaign of Dr Bawumia



3.4 Satisfaction With Dr Prempeh as VP Candidate to Dr Bawumia

The data on satisfaction with Dr. Mathew Opoku Prempeh's performance as the vice-presidential candidate shows a predominantly negative response from respondents. A significant 36.31% are very unsatisfied, and 6.35% are unsatisfied, indicating considerable discontent with his performance. In contrast, 24.39% of respondents remain neutral, suggesting uncertainty or indifference. Meanwhile, 17.69% are very satisfied, and 15.26% are satisfied, reflecting some positive feedback but not enough to counterbalance the dissatisfaction. This distribution underscores a need for the NPP to address the concerns of the dissatisfied respondents and work on improving perceptions around Dr. Prempeh to strengthen support for Dr. Prempeh's candidacy.

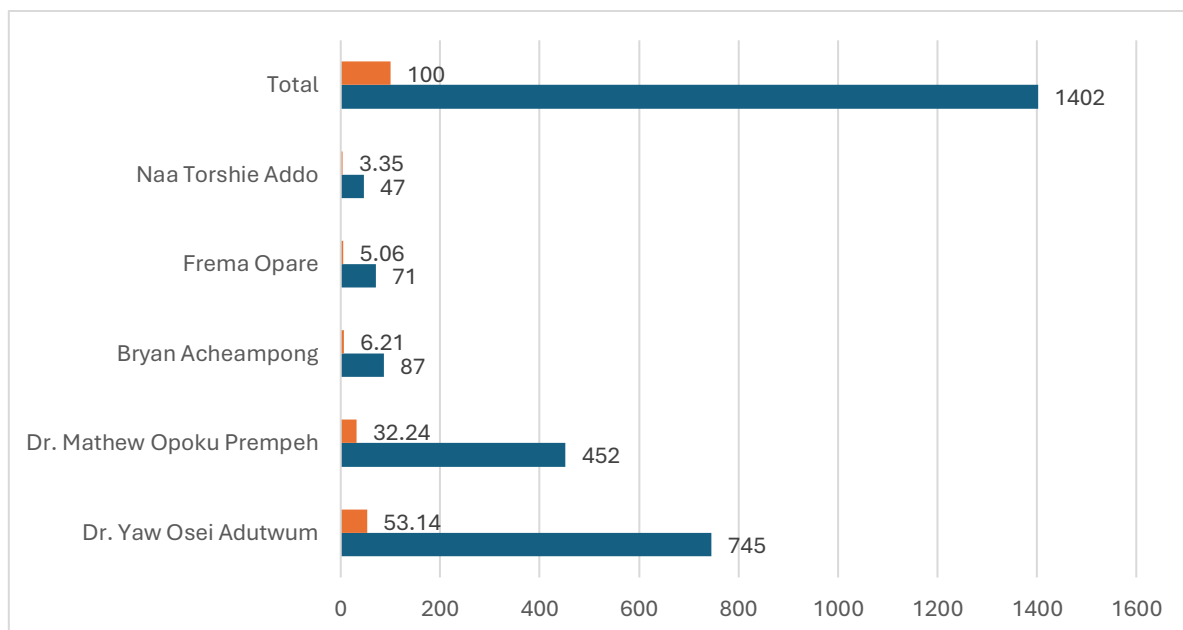
Figure 4: Satisfaction with Dr. Prempeh as VP Candidate to Dr. Bawumia



3.5 Ideal VP Candidate for Dr. Bawumia

The data on the ideal running mate for Dr. Mahamudu Bawumia reveals that Dr. Yaw Osei Adutwum is the most favoured candidate, with 53.14% of respondents considering him the best choice. Dr. Mathew Opoku Prempeh is the second most popular option, garnering 32.24% of the votes. Bryan Acheampong, Frema Opare, and Naa Torshie Addo receive significantly less support, with 6.21%, 5.06%, and 3.35% respectively. This distribution indicates a strong preference for Dr. Adutwum as the vice-presidential candidate, suggesting that his potential running mate appeal could have been more favourable compared to the other contenders.

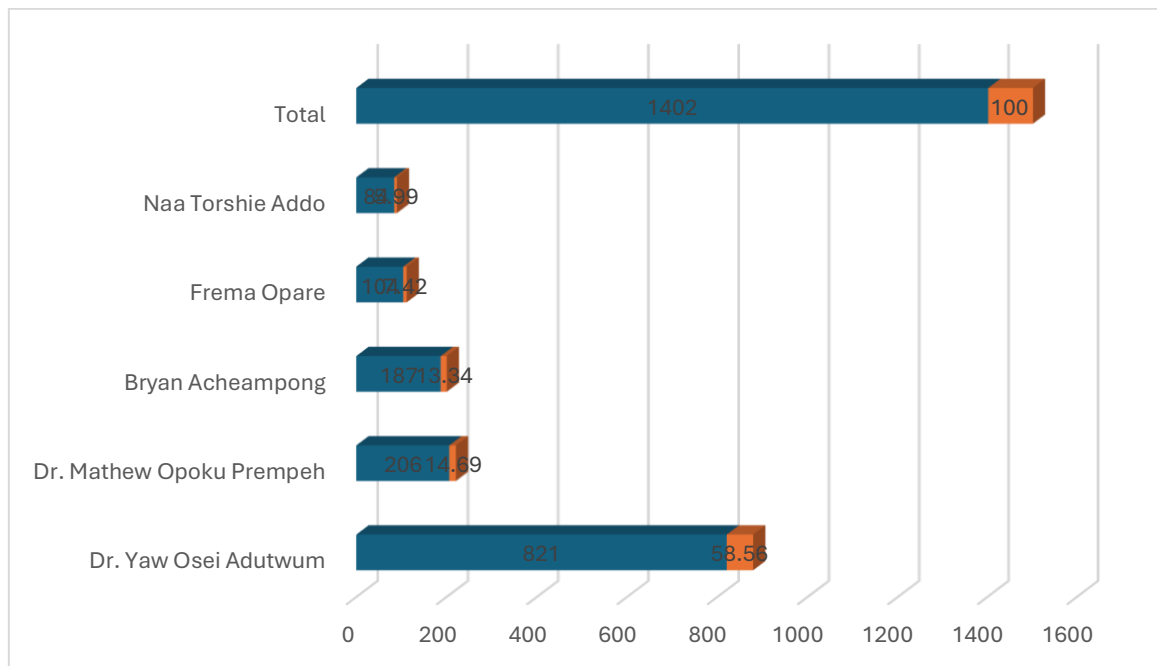
Figure 5: Ideal Potential VP Candidate to Dr Bawumia



3.6 Potential Candidate That Could Have Had the Most Positive Impact on Dr Bawumia’s Campaign

The data on which candidate could have had the most positive impact on Dr. Mahamudu Bawumia’s campaign in Figure 6 shows that Dr. Yaw Osei Adutwum is seen as the most beneficial, with 58.56% of respondents believing he would have the greatest positive influence. Dr. Mathew Opoku Prempeh is viewed as having a positive impact by 14.69% of respondents, while Bryan Acheampong is considered influential by 13.34%. Frema Opare and Naa Torshie Addo are seen as having a less significant impact, with 7.42% and 5.99% respectively. This suggests a strong preference for Dr. Adutwum as the candidate who could have potentially enhanced the campaign's effectiveness the most.

Figure 6: Candidate That Could Have Had the Most Positive Impact on Dr. Bawumia’s Campaign



4. Discussion of Findings

The survey results provide a nuanced understanding of public perceptions regarding Dr. Mathew Opoku Prempeh as the vice-presidential candidate for Dr. Mahamudu Bawumia and the broader implications for the NPP's campaign in the 2024 elections.

Recent public commentary in Ghana has been heavily influenced by economic challenges, including inflation, debt levels, and unemployment. According to news sources, there is widespread concern about the current economic management and direction of the country under the NPP government. This economic backdrop has shaped voter expectations and

dissatisfaction with current leadership, influencing perceptions of political candidates. The emphasis on economic performance might explain why some respondents view Dr. Prempeh's influence negatively, as his track record in education and energy could be scrutinized in the context of broader economic performance.

Dr. Prempeh's tenure as Education Minister saw significant initiatives, including the implementation of the Free Senior High School policy, which was widely praised. However, his performance as the Minister of Energy has been less highlighted, and some critics have pointed to challenges in energy sector management. His public utterances before and after his vice-presidential candidacy have been scrutinized, with some arguing that his focus on populist demands may not align with policy and governance demands of the current electorate. Critics, as reported various news sources, argue that his populist approach does not resonate as strongly with the grassroots voters, impacting his perceived effectiveness and satisfaction levels.

Dr. Yaw Osei Adutwum, perceived favourably by 53.14% of respondents as the ideal running mate, is acclaimed for his contributions as Education Minister, particularly his efforts to modernize the education sector. His proactive stance on educational reforms and his ability to communicate effectively with various stakeholders have earned him a positive reputation. Dr. Adutwum's performance and public perception highlight his strong alignment with voter expectations for effective governance and innovative leadership.

Bryan Acheampong, Frema Opere, and Naa Torshie Addo, while noted as potential candidates, received significantly lower support. Acheampong, known for his security credentials, may not appeal as strongly to voters concerned with economic and educational issues. Frema Opere, with a background as Chief of Staff, and Naa Torshie Addo have niche appeal but have not garnered the broad-based support seen for Dr. Adutwum and Dr. Prempeh. These variations reflect differing voter priorities and the specific qualities they value in potential vice-presidential candidates.

Generally, recent polls by Global Info Analytics and Fitch Solutions highlight similar trends in voter dissatisfaction and preferences. For instance, Global Info Analytics' recent polls indicate a growing discontent with the ruling party's economic management, which could impact the effectiveness of any vice-presidential candidate. The Economic Intelligence Unit also reports heightened voter sensitivity to economic issues, influencing perceptions of political candidates. Globally, the dynamics of running mate selection, as seen in U.S. elections, suggest that

balancing ticket appeal is crucial, a factor that Ghanaian voters are evidently weighing in their preferences.

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1 Summary of Findings

The survey of 1,402 respondents provided a detailed view of the electorate's opinions on Dr. Mathew Opoku Prempeh's candidacy as vice-president alongside Dr. Mahamudu Bawumia. Demographically, the sample was nearly balanced between genders, with 49.71% male and 50.29% female respondents. A high level of awareness about Dr. Prempeh's candidacy was noted, with 85.45% of respondents confirming they were aware of him as a vice-presidential candidate. However, opinions on his influence were mixed; 47.29% felt he negatively impacts the campaign, while 32.24% believed he positively influences it. Satisfaction with Dr. Prempeh's performance was largely negative, with 36.31% very unsatisfied and 6.35% unsatisfied, against 17.69% very satisfied and 15.26% satisfied.

Regarding preferences for a vice-presidential running mate, Dr. Yaw Osei Adutwum emerged as the top choice, with 53.14% of respondents favouring him, while Dr. Mathew Opoku Prempeh was preferred by 32.24%. The potential impact of different candidates on Dr. Bawumia's campaign showed a strong preference for Dr. Adutwum, with 58.56% believing he would have had the most positive effect. In contrast, Dr. Prempeh, despite being a current candidate, was seen as having a less positive impact by 14.69% of respondents. These findings suggest a complex landscape of voter opinions, where Dr. Adutwum is perceived as the most favourable choice for enhancing the campaign's effectiveness.

5.2 Conclusions

This study provides critical insights into the perceptions of Dr. Mathew Opoku Prempeh's vice-presidential candidacy and the broader implications for Dr. Mahamudu Bawumia's campaign in Ghana's 2024 elections. The high level of awareness (85.45%) about Dr. Prempeh's candidacy underscores effective communication strategies by the NPP. However, the mixed opinions regarding his influence (47.29% view him negatively, while 32.24% see a positive impact) reveal underlying divisions in voter sentiment, potentially reflecting broader concerns about the party's current direction and economic management.

The dissatisfaction with Dr. Prempeh's performance, with 36.31% of respondents being very unsatisfied, highlights significant challenges in his public perception. This dissatisfaction is critical in understanding the limited enthusiasm for his candidacy compared to other potential

running mates. Dr. Yaw Osei Adutwum emerges as the most favoured and positively impactful candidate, with 58.56% believing he would have a substantial positive effect on the campaign. This preference aligns with his successful tenure as Education Minister and suggests that his skills and reputation might have been more beneficial to the campaign.

In contrast, the lower support for other candidates such as Bryan Acheampong, Frema Opare, and Naa Torshie Addo, as well as the relatively modest support for Dr. Prempeh as an ideal running mate (32.24%), indicates a nuanced voter perspective that favours candidates with proven track records and clear alignment with current voter concerns. This study emphasizes the importance of aligning campaign strategies with voter expectations and suggests that the NPP may need to address dissatisfaction and enhance their appeal to effectively capitalize on electoral opportunities.

5.3 Recommendations

To address the significant dissatisfaction with Dr. Mathew Opoku Prempeh's candidacy and mixed perceptions of his impact, the NPP should implement a robust strategy to enhance his public image. This involves highlighting his achievements in both education and energy sectors more effectively, ensuring that his contributions are well-communicated and aligned with voter expectations. Engaging in proactive public relations efforts, including media appearances, community engagements, and targeted messaging.

Also, addressing economic concerns should be a central focus of the NPP's campaign strategy. With public dissatisfaction regarding economic management, it is crucial for the party to present a clear and actionable plan for economic recovery and growth. Emphasizing how Dr. Bawumia's policies will address these economic issues can help bridge the gap between public dissatisfaction and the party's vision. A strong, coherent economic strategy communicated through Dr. Bawumia and reinforced by other party leaders will be vital in regaining voter confidence and support.

Finally, given the strong public preference for Dr. Yaw Osei Adutwum as the ideal running mate and his perceived positive impact, the NPP should consider leveraging his popularity to bolster the campaign. Dr. Adutwum should be visibly involved in supporting both Dr. Bawumia and Dr. Prempeh, reinforcing a united front and backing their candidacies. His active involvement can help to align campaign efforts, address voter concerns, and strengthen the overall appeal of the ticket. By showcasing a unified leadership and Dr. Adutwum's support, the NPP can enhance its campaign effectiveness and appeal to a broader electorate.