

THE ROLE OF POLITICAL MARKETING IN THE BEHAVIOR OF VOTERS IN ELECTIONS

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***Abstract:** Political marketing is used by the most democratic political systems. They should be supported by people for the stability of their power. Marketing has a significant impact on the political parties' methods. Political parties are market oriented and developed their policies and programs in order to frame public opinion and the results of market surveys in elections. The purpose of this study is the role of political marketing in the behavior of voters in elections. The descriptive correlative method has been used in this study which is practical in political marketing tools and successfulness for those who are active in politics. Population of this research includes Lorestan University students and faculty members in political science. Given the population size (N = 120) 92 participants were selected as sample. In this study, simple random sampling method was used. Also a questionnaire designed by the researcher for gathering data. For data analysis, application of structural equation modeling and Amos 18 were employed and the 95% was determined for confidence level that showed political marketing, comparative advertising, destructive advertising plans, and the use of pre-election campaigns affect voters' behavior.*

***Keywords:** Democratic system; Marketing; Politics; Political marketing; Behavior of voters.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Nowadays democracy is the dominant thinking and one of the main governments' virtue criteria. As time passes, more people and countries will be swallowed. This epidemic is such that even the most despotic governments prefer to took out people's vote according to their wills and sometimes overdo it stupidly and decrease the number of opponents' votes unbelievably (Naejei, 2007, 7). Public participation in politics in a meaningful way is necessary for the realization of democracy but not sufficient. The simplest form of political participation is voting of citizens to parties, people and policies (Bashiriyeh, 2005, 375). Open competitive elections are an integral part of electoral democracy. These elections are the only institutionalization opportunities for citizens to choose their rulers. Campaigns open the pores of a political system and elections put the votes and voters in the context of the past and the future priorities of the parties at their disposal (Kavanak, 2000). The indifference of people in different

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communities to participate in determining their fate in the election and decision-making processes in other areas is a serious challenge for the governments all around the world (Gholipour Sanglaj *et al.*, 2010). Decreasing of motivation in different nations around the world to participate in the electoral process and increasing competition among players in the world of politics led to using all strategies on the part of candidates. The main purpose of a political party is electoral success and political parties use strategies to be winner and take control of the government. Therefore, in most democracies of the world, politicians and political parties are seeking strategic and tactical marketing techniques to connect themselves to voters and elected or re-acquire benefits of election (Osugwu, 2008). According to Wester and McKenna (1991), modern institutions, including political parties are trying to use the concept of marketing in a beneficial and effective way. Political marketing is a new concept in 1985 that was recognized by the American Marketing Association through adding the "idea" term in the definition of marketing (Mennon, 2007). Political marketing in general sense is synonymous with the use of commercial marketing effectively in political processes. According to Clemente, political marketing, marketing ideas and beliefs are related to the current public and political issues (such as inflation and unemployment) or due to Candida. The ultimate goal of designing a program and political marketing system is to influence the voters' choices (Kheiri & Abbas Ali Zadeh, 2008). Political marketing is designed to influence people's votes in the election (Osugwu, 2008). Cultural development in developed communities, developing and least developed countries have distinct political effects. Therefore, the effect of these tools for optimum utilization and achieving maximum effectiveness help in elections.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Specifically, the main question of the study is to investigate the role of political marketing in the behavior of voters in elections. Old-world democracies are facing the weakness of their fundamental basis i.e., decreasing the public participation in political choices. The reason may be the inability of the political processes of these democracies in gaining public support. In recent years, Western countries saw a decline in participation in the elections, lack of attention to membership in political parties and ignorance of civil partnerships. Most researchers to overcome this hard situation have given attention to political issues such as the use of marketing techniques and professional markets, the media and political economy of communication (Mohammadian, 2009, 21).

Political marketing can be defined as applying marketing concepts, principles and procedures in political issues by individuals, groups, organizations and nations. The main aim of the political marketing is to guide perspectives and public opinion, development of political ideologies, victory in the competition and political elections and codification and establishment of referendum according to the needs, wants and desires of the target market segments (Osugwu, 2008).

Some experts believe that the use of marketing, allowing parties apply the diverse needs of their voters through marketing analysis, implementation and control of political campaigns and their identification better than before. In their opinion, the main goal of political marketing is to enable political parties and voters to make the best and most satisfying. (Mohammadian, 2009, 27). Hughes and Dan have provided a comprehensive definition of political marketing which can be considered as a last resort and the most comprehensive definition of political marketing (Hughes & Dann, 2006).

“Political marketing is an organizational unit for political communication and or set of processes of establishment and communications maintenance and delivering value to voters who tries to manage the relationship in a way that is beneficial for both the organization and stakeholders”.

In general political marketing is presented to influence people’s votes in elections. It differs with normal marketing and the difference is that the concepts are sold instead of products and services. Although the same techniques are used in product marketing such as advertising, direct mail and publicity (Clemente, 1992).

Johnson (2001) believes that more researches are needed to understand the activities of political parties and how to apply theories and marketing techniques not only in the election campaigns but also in the routine tasks and activities in the world of policy (Johnson, 2001).

Hayes and McAllister (1996), about the impact of political marketing on voters claim that floating voters have the least knowledge about politics and the lowest participation among other groups in the elections. Therefore, probably it is the smallest group which is convinced through political marketing. They suggest that the political parties should use marketing techniques before election campaigns and plan on voters’ vote one or two years before the election.

Yanas (2002), about Greek voters and the effect of marketing on them claims that media has a high impact on the Greece electorate. According to research findings, Private Media has been seen as influential media. Finally, it seems that participants in the elections change their votes in order to benefit from political parties to rule in political side of Greece.

Oposury and *et al.*, (2005) showed that more than 50% of voters in elections has a negative perception of marketing tools that have been used in politics. Pistulas (2008), tried to discover the role of political marketing on decisions of different parts in the elections. It seems that in general all parts of the elections know that the effect of political marketing is high, but they do not want to admit that they have been influenced by it. It seems that only poll and television advertising have different effects.

Elections in today’s world, indeed is an important tool for reflection of public’s opinions, wants, and their preferences. General activities in election for some weeks

provide the opportunity for voters to be aware of the politicians' defenses from their experiences, their criticism of opponents and their proposal's policy for futures. Thus, the quality of the electoral campaign by politicians and the range of choices available to voters are an important issue that should be considered.

As in Iran, the parties are young and there is not essentially partisan behavior, individuals determine the electoral scene. Therefore, political behavior and political behavior's tools should be analyzed. The pure individualism of many senior politicians who are willing to implement their own menu should be noticed in analyses (Kavanak, 2000).

3. HYPOTHESES AND METHOD

3.1. Main hypotheses

Political marketing affect the behavior of voters in the election.

3.2. Secondary hypotheses

- Using comparative advertising has an impact on the voters' behavior.
- Using destructive advertising plan affects voters' behavior.
- Using pre-election campaign affects voters' behavior.

4. METHOD

This study is in the field of marketing management and political science as well. The method of the study was descriptive - correlative survey. The expected results of this study can help politicians in using political marketing tools and achieving success in the election and it will be practical. Since the research is done in a real context, it will be considered as a field studies. In the study, after gathering data, analysis and test hypotheses through structural equation modeling will be discussed. The population in this study consists of students and professors of political science at the University of Lorestan. In this study Morgan table was used to determine the sample size and considering 120 member as population, 92 participants were selected as sample. In this study simple random sampling method was used and data were gathered through questionnaire.

5. DATA ANALYSIS

After collecting the data, to test the hypotheses, structural equation modeling and AMOS18 software were used. Results of the test hypotheses are presented in the following figure.

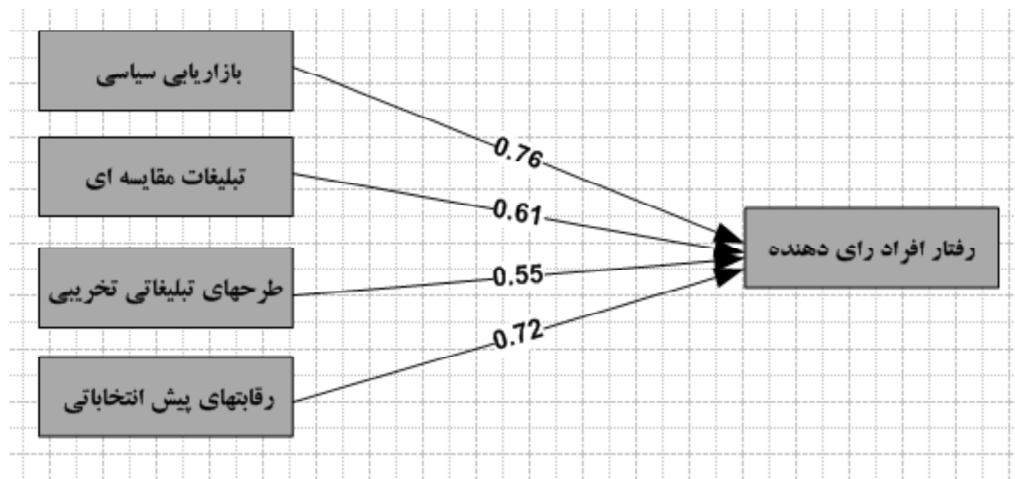


Table 1
Fitness indicators of the conceptual model

χ^2/df	RMSEA	IFI	NFI	CFI	GFI
2.68	0.005	0.91	0.95	0.89	0.92

According to the data in Table 1 (Fitness model) we can see that the model fits very well.

According to the results of model analysis, we examined the hypotheses that are presented in Table 2.

Table 2
Hypotheses

result	P	Critical value	The regression coefficients	hypotheses
confirmed	0	2.76	0.76	Political marketing has an impact on the voters' behavior
confirmed	0.006	2.39	0.61	Using comparative advertising has an impact on the voters' behavior
confirmed	0	3.85	0.55	Using destructive advertising plan affects voters' behavior.
confirmed	0.002	2.28	0.72	Using pre-election campaign affects voters' behavior

Table 2 shows that political marketing, comparative advertising, destructive advertising plan and pre-election campaigns affect voters' behavior with 95% confidence level.

6. CONCLUSION

According to the results, political marketing, comparative advertising, destructive advertising plan and pre-election campaigns (independent variables) are effective on voters' behavior (dependent variable). Therefore, it is recommended to those who work in politics use these five strategies based on the circumstances and their priorities for determining promotional activities in election and pre-election period in order to influence voters to support a particular candidate. The noteworthy point is that, although it cannot be determined what kind of work is moral and what kind is immoral in political behavior but ethics in political behavior should be observed based on social norms.

Finally, with regard to the reduction of public participation and engagement of the communities, it is recommended to authorities and the government in countries with democratic structure, according to results of this study, use political marketing in accordance with the requirements of society to increase people's motivation and their participation in the elections.

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