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Political Marketing Success: An Investigation on 2015 Iranian Parliamentary Elections

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Abstract

This study investigates factors affecting the success of political marketing by basing on a fieldwork. To evaluate proposed hypotheses, a questionnaire was used to collect data. This research's statistical society includes citizens of Arak city by using proportional sampling method and reaches 287 completed questionnaires. According to the data analysis, the results indicate that the market-oriented strategy adoption, doing of effective research about voters, voters division, candidates status and creation and management of mental image have the positive effect on the political marketing. Given the importance of political marketing and proper use of the marketing techniques in the campaigns and realizations of successful political marketing, this study introduces advantages of political marketing and explains how to use it and provides a conceptual model.

Keywords: Mental image management, Market-oriented strategy, Candidate place, Successful political marketing.

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Introduction

In the political systems, the competition among policy actors with the aim of activity power or influence on intraparty decisions considerably depend on their marketing method about themselves, their political public and social activities against public ideas. The best and most effective way to implement democracy in modern societies is elections in which the present competitors that is candidate to spare no effort to elect. The campaigns are the most costly marketing efforts. Today, it is devoted the special attention to the concept of political marketing and it has been known as shaping and communicative tool (mean) of political party. This new knowledge is derived from communication science, political science and marketing literature and can explain and capture the election fundamental changes.

Political marketing consists of a series of activities that aim to create, maintain, or change attitudes or behavior towards people and society related to the party or a political group or an election candidate. Many people or political groups has been that have most abilities to be elected in a campaign but have failed to achieve success in elections due to their lack of familiarity with the techniques to introduce better themselves to the community (Khatib, 2012). Given the importance of political marketing in the country and proper use of the marketing techniques in the campaigns and realizations of successful political marketing, in this study, we have tried to introduce more political marketing and explained how to use it and provided to the conceptual model in order to candidate and people use it in campaign in country.

Problem statement

Political marketing is a new concept that was recognized with the addition of the word “idea” in the definition of marketing by the American Marketing Association in 1985. In a general sense, political marketing is synonymous with effective use of commercial marketing in the political processes. Accordingly, political marketing, ideas and beliefs marketing is related to public or political current issues (such as inflation and unemployment) or related to the candidate. The ultimate goal of designing a program and political marketing system is to influence the choice of electorate (Kheiri and Gholipour, 2012). In general, political marketing seeks to increase the political group power in political disputes, especially in the area of elections (Kafashpour et al, 2008). Political Marketing is about the political organizations (political parties, interest groups and local councils) that the concepts and

techniques of business-marketing is as a mean to achieve their goals, guide market intelligence to identify the concerns of citizens to change their behavior to meet these demands (Khatib, 2012).

The indifference of people in different communities, to participate to self-determination in the electoral process and other decision-making processes in other areas has put serious challenge for governments around the world. Competitive environment causes that all the candidates to use of all their strategies to attract public support benefit (Kheiri and Gholipour, 2012). Today, on the one hand, politicians challenge to show the distinct face of themselves and to excel over the competitors and on the other hand, try to attract maximum participation of people in elections, it has been indicated the political marketing importance more than ever before (Nargesian et al., 2016).

People participation reduce and the lack of their belong in different societies cause the authorities to use the political marketing in accordance with the society circumstances to increase interest and people maximum participation in election in countries having democracy structure and specially Iran (Kheiri and Gholipour, 2012). Since the interest to political marketing is increasing and because of political marketing is related to adequate and efficient structure creation of political methods, in this research it will be tried to consider the efficient and important factors on political marketing success that it will be achieved through response to research main question in following: what are the key elements of political marketing success?

Background

The advent of political marketing theory can be seen as a result of the fusion of two knowledge of marketing and policy. Since the main goal of political marketing is the exchange facilitating and benefit creation for political groups, in this process, the special instruments and methods are considered that their efficiency application makes political marketing different from other areas such as goods marketing (Kafashpour et al., 2008). 1920s was accompanied with the rise of advertising in newspapers and costly campaigns, and 1967 with the arrival of media to marketing, policy was entered in media. Many available successful experiences can greatly defend the importance of political marketing in social and political relations (Kafashpour et al., 2008).

Ring (1996) relates the historical development of marketing methods in Great Britain to 20th century and in the continuous structure has represented, introduce America the developer of this modern knowledge (cited in Nargesian et al., 2016). On the other hand, the experts have considered Margaret Thatcher as a milestone in the development of political marketing in the United Kingdom. Thatcher's experience in 1974 compelled her to restructure her political group, and created the good correlation with marketing agencies. Her famous slogans because of the segmentation of the market and selection of appropriate marketing messages for each of these sectors led to her political market promotion, leader face, group and their political fulfillments (Kafashpour et al., 2008). Shama (1976), explaining how the campaign in the early sixties as the supply of candidates were recruited, claims that Reagan began marketing major work from campaign in the election in America eighties election campaign (cited in Nargesian et al., 2016). However, the development of the concept of political marketing in recent years is subjected to changes and dynamics that indicates the marketing themes and applications in today policy world. However, many believe that the growth and development of this area of research is related to the development of the media. Of course, other factors are enumerable in this respect (Kafashpour et al., 2008). Kheiri and Abbas Alizadeh (2008) say that the political marketing is not limited to only short-term election, but it is a continuous activity in all the inter-election period that continues uninterrupted. Also, Kheiri and Gholipour (2012) concluded in their research that the use of political marketing instruments according to society circumstances is essential to increase people's political participation.

The theoretical framework and conceptual model

The present research paradigm is derived from a research under title *Factors Affecting on Political Marketing Success: Jordan Voters Viewpoint* that was done on 650 people as voters in Jordan by Khatib in (2012). In this study, we tried to consider the benefits of some marketing concepts in the field of political marketing. For this purpose, a literature-based framework to identify and explore factors affecting on political marketing success is used. Aron O'Cass (1996) has defined the political marketing as analysis, planning, implementation, monitoring of political and electoral programs to create, build and maintain good political relations between party and voters to achieve political marketing purposes (cited in Khatib, 2012). Political marketing is to influence people's votes in elections (Kheiri and Gholipour, 2012). The most important goal of political marketing consists of visions guiding and public opinions, political ideologies progress, victory in competitions and

political elections and legislation and referendum related to needs, demands and desires of target market sections (Osugwu, 2008). The main purpose of a political party is electoral success and political parties to use the strategies that lead to win enough votes in the general election to take control of the government. So in most world democracies, politicians and political parties seeking to utilize the techniques of strategic and tactical marketing on order to relate themselves to voters and re-earn the benefits of choice (Kheiri and Gholipour, 2012). Factors affecting on the success of political marketing which include market-driven strategy, effective researches about voters, voter division, candidate status, is creation and management of mental image.

The purpose of market-oriented strategy is an approach that focuses to maintain and develop the loyalty of voters and long-term relation. Also, the effective researches about voters is as the informative gates of political groups that shape the future strategies of these groups and the political groups success in political campaign depending on the quantity and quality of this information and its strengths and weaknesses. Division of voters in the political markets on the basis of data obtained from the voters, according to needs, power and expectations of the political groups is segmented and targeted. A candidate can obtain the certain amount of potential voters support with the same idea and determination in achieving that goal through the separation of attitudes and opinions by determining their proper position in the market. Finally, in order to create and manage mental image, the voters decide or choose based on mental image that candidates or parties create in their mind. This image must have the highest credit rating until the voters believe the candidate's pledge. Finally, based on the theoretical framework of the research, conceptual model shown in Figure (1) and accordingly, the research hypotheses are as follows:

H1: Adoption of market-oriented strategy has a direct and positive impact on the success of political marketing.

H2: Doing effective research about voters has a direct and positive impact on the success of political marketing.

H3: Voters division has a direct and positive impact on the success of political marketing.

H4: The candidates' status has a direct and positive impact on the success of political marketing.

H5: Creation and management of a strong mental image has a direct and positive impact on the success of political marketing.

According to the variable represented model (market-oriented strategy, effective research about voters, voters division, candidates status, the establishment and management of mental image) are as independent variables of model, and variables (successful political marketing) as dependent variables of model. Thus, according to the description provided, the analysis of the conceptual model is as follows:

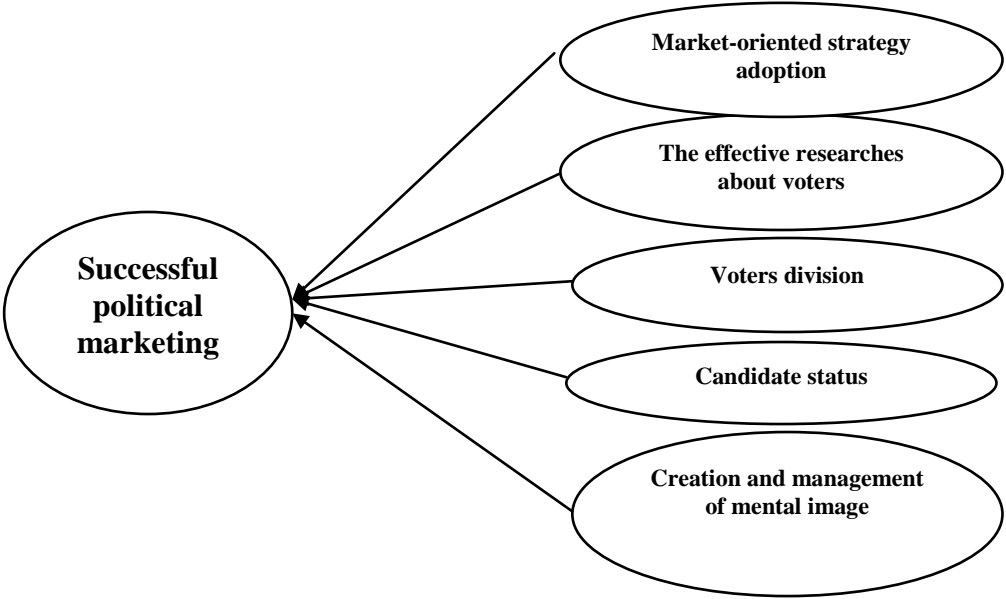


Figure (1): Conceptual model

Research Methodology

This study is functional in research directions and is casual in method and nature, in this path has been used of statistical technique of LISREL software structural equations that is a way to evaluate causal relations between the variables. In the present study, according to the objectives and its executive procedures, the statistical society is citizens of the Arak city. The questionnaire used in this study has 30 questions that has been designed and developed using Khatib’s study (2012). It has been used of Likert five-item scale to measure indices in questionnaire. The initial validity of the questionnaire was provided by the opinions of experts and university professors and questionnaire reliability has been used of Cronbach's alpha scale method. At this stage, the numbers of 327 questionnaires were distributed to assess the reliability, then the software SPSS was used to determine the credit.

Table (1): Cronbach's alpha coefficients of the variables

Dimension	Cronbach's alpha
Market-oriented strategy adoption	0/871
The effective researches about voters	0/823
Voters division	0/775
Candidate status	0/772
Creation and management of mental image	0/787
Successful political marketing	0/893

Data analysis

The demographics of the respondents is provided in the table (2). To evaluate the research model, before verification of the structural relationships must be ensured the appropriateness and model good fitness. The model developed in this study were evaluated based on the fit indices (Asfydany and Mohsinin,2013) which its results have been reported in Table (3).

Table (2): The demographics of the respondents

	Dimensions	Abundance	Percentage		Dimensions	Abundance	Percentage
Gender	Man	174	60.6	Age	18-25	40	13.9
	woman	113	39.4		26-35	80	27.9
Education	High school and Diploma	136	47.4		36-45	115	40.1
	Associate Degree	33	11.5		46-55	41	14.3
	Bachelor	88	30.6		55-65	11	3.8
Marital status	Master and Higher	30	10.5				
	Single	198					
	Married	89	31				
			69				

Table (3): Evaluation of the indices of the fitness of the research model

GFI	IFI	CFI	NNFI	RMR	RMSEA	χ^2 / df	Indices of Fitness
Up to 0/8	Up to 0/9			Less than 0/08		Less than 3	Standard
0.81	0.93	0.93	0.92	0.053	0.075	2.61	research

Figure (2) indicates the standard coefficients for measurement model (standardized for questions and variables associated with them) and the structural model (path coefficients for

proposed routes between variables in the model). Described paths from exogenous variables towards endogenous variables of model with gamma coefficient route and route among all endogenous variables with Beta coefficient route are introduced and called. Figure (3) shows coefficient t for the measurement model (t coefficients for questions and variables associated with them) and the structural model (t coefficients for the proposed routes in the model among variables). It is used of this model to consider the relationship meaningfulness of present proposed variables in model and if the calculated t coefficient be not in error level of 0/05 percent in meaningless period (-1.96 and +1.96), there is a meaningful relationship between the two considered present variables can be concluded.

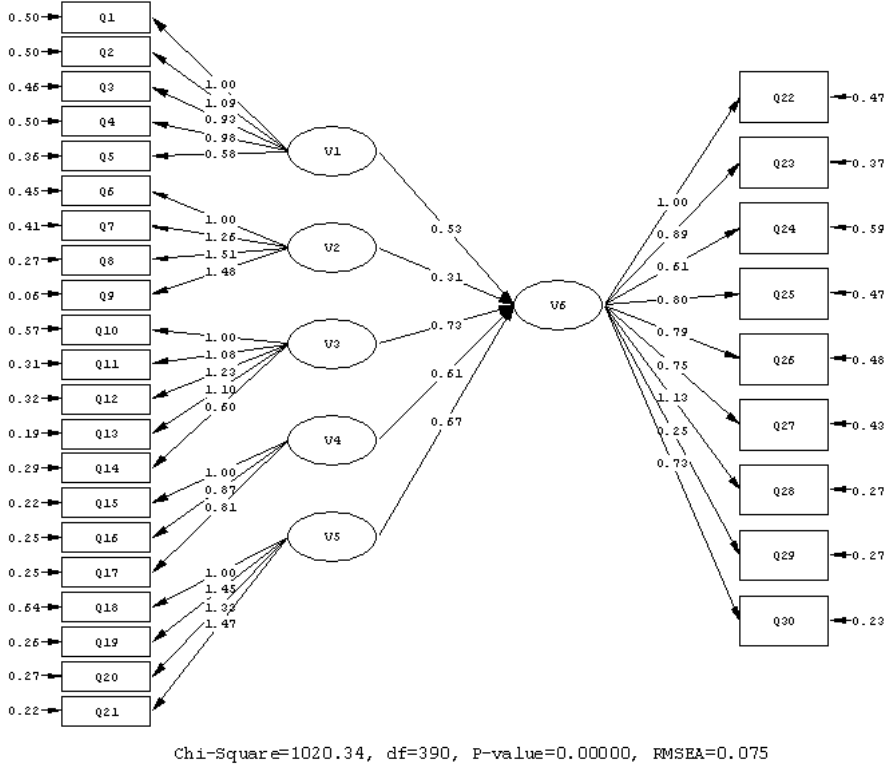


Figure (2): Measuring the overall model and the results of relation in standard mode

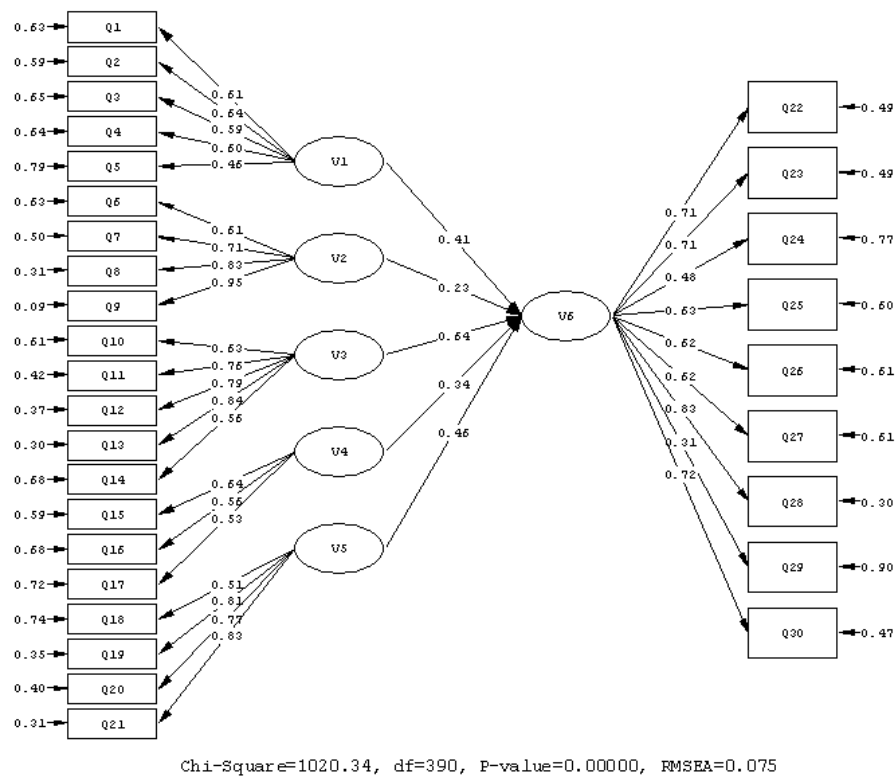


Figure (3): Measuring the overall model and results of relations

In the software output for a general consensus about being good or bad of the fitted model, must consider several indicators to draw conclusions. According to obtained values in the table (3), the present research model demonstrates excellent fit and is approved in total. After confirming proper fit of the model and factorial loads, the results derived from the analysis of measurement model will be considered now. Regarding to path coefficients and meaningful numbers (in parentheses) obtained in Figure (2) and (3), the research hypotheses tested that the results is provided in table (4).

Table (4): Hypothesis and Results

Results	Path Coefficient	Significance	Direction
Confirmed	0.41	3.36	Market-oriented strategy adoption → Successful political marketing
Confirmed	0.23	3.63	The effective researches about voter → Successful political marketing
Confirmed	0.64	5.03	Voters division → Successful political marketing
Confirmed	0.34	3.54	Candidate status → Successful political marketing
Confirmed	0.46	5.28	Creation and management of mental image → Successful political marketing

Conclusions and research recommendations

In this article we have tried to consider the effect of political factors influencing on the successful political marketing. To do called research, 327 questionnaires were collected from the citizens of Arak city and were finally completed 287 questionnaires, then the research hypotheses were tested with research conceptual model test using LISREL structural equations technique.

Regarding to obtained results of this hypothesis, it is specified that the adoption of market-oriented strategy has the positive effect on political marketing success by citizens of Arak city. Accordingly;

- Candidates with people surveys and opinions by their trusted people identify the people's needs, desires, and problems.
- It is recommended that show the list of programs and their goals by CD or other means through magazines to people.
- It is recommended that candidates to choose people among others that can recognize and feel the people's problem by them.

Regarding to obtained results of this hypothesis, it is cleared that doing of effective researches about voters has the positive effect on the political marketing among Arak citizens opinions and this hypothesis is verified, so the recommendations in this line are that:

- It is recommended that the persons be responsible to attend among people and completely insensible note the gestures and behaviors of people about the candidate.
- Ask about the candidate, and by speaking with them seek their opinions about the candidate so that can survey people by done reviews and find their status among people.

Considering the obtained results of this hypothesis, it is cleared that the voters division has a positive effect on the political marketing in the opinion of the citizens of Arak, and this hypothesis is verified so it can be concluded that the increase/decrease of voters division, political marketing success increases/decreases. The recommendations in this line:

- It is recommended that considering the voters division based on psychology criterion and also tribal criterion to deal with it such that by combining the opinions of elders and tribal chiefs, draw the tribe comments and ideas to their side and can properly and well implement the political marketing in different areas according to their customs and culture.

- It is recommended that by the voters division based on education, programs and their goals, they don't think confused.

Regarding to the obtained results of this hypothesis, it is specified that the candidate status has a positive effect on the political marketing in the opinion of the citizens of Arak, and this hypothesis is verified. The recommendations in this line:

- It is recommended that is not used of the Machiavelli policy that is they obtain any situation, to consolidate their own position, but by the legal and appropriate negotiation with other candidate demonstrate their competence.
- Also it is recommended that what they are and what they can do, show the voters and say rather than what people want to hear, they express and with lie and deception try to promote their status rather to other candidates.

Regarding to the obtained results of this hypothesis, it is specified that the creation and management of mental image has a positive effect on the political marketing in the opinion of the citizens of Arak, and this hypothesis is verified, so it can be concluded that the increase/decrease of creation and management of mental image increase/decrease the political marketing success. So the recommendations in this line:

- It is recommended that the election candidates represent the advertisements in the shadow of rules and regulations issued by the ministry of the interior, and with respect to these laws and dealing with their around people who want to advertise in any way, create the positive image among the voters.

One of this research limits is that some uncontrolled variables such as age, education, sex and the cultural characteristics might be influenced on the research results. Further limitations are the limitation of time and place, that is; this research results are related to the present time period and it is possible to obtain different results in other periods, also this research has been considered in Arak city, and it is possible to obtain the other results in another places or areas due to cultural differences. Since this research has been considered about marketing and consumer behavior, cannot be generalized this research results to other areas definitively.

It is recommended to the future researchers to consider the themes such as the effect of influenced factors on the political marketing on positive oral advertisements and also the impact of reputation of candidate on marketing success and finally to consider the demographic items such as age, sex, and education on political marketing success.

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