Original Article

The Effect of Political Marketing Tools on the Behavior of Voters in Iran's 11th Presidential Election (Case study: the Attitudes of Citizens of Mashhad city)

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ABSTRACT

Marketing science has earned a special status among industrialists and academic circles over the past few decades. Scientific marketing has entered into business arena for a long time. Moreover, in the last three decades, we have seen that marketing science has entered to politics affairs which have its own proponents and opponents. Political marketing is a well-known phenomenon in western liberal democracies and has many similarities with free market economic system, so we can consider political marketing as a very complicated business which competition is the most important factor in this field like commercial market. The aim of this study is to investigate impact of political marketing tools on the behavior of voters and their priorities in the eleventh Iranian Presidential Elections. The statistical population included people living in Mashhad city which 384 persons selected randomly. The results showed that TV Ads, comparative advertising ,Network Advertising, finding someone's fault, automated messages, pre-election campaigning, and using celebrities have a significant impact on voters' behavior. However, there was not significant relationship between fake polls, destructive promotional plans, video imaging and voters' behavior.

Keywords: Marketing, Politics, Iranian Elections, Voters, Political Marketing.

Introduction

Nowadays, democracy is the most common political system. Modern democracy was firstly Western European phenomenon, but it has gradually spread to other lands in the past several centuries. In the twentieth century, political systems of one-party, totalitarian and fascist were common; however, they were eventually replaced with types of democratic rule because of various crises. Free competitive elections are the best tool to reflect the needs and preferences of

people and also are an integral part of democracy (Bashiriyeh, 2005).

These kinds of elections are opportunities that citizens can choose their rulers. In recent years, the indifference of people in different communities to participate in the electoral and other decision-making processes so as to determine their fate has become a serious challenge facing governments around the world (Naeigi, 2005).

Political marketing provides political candidates with effective tools to overcome these problems. Additionally, it increases power of political groups in political disputes and their promoting activities that has already done only by using traditional ideas and tactics of political science through using a consistent framework of marketing and modifying basic concepts of commercial marketing so that be applicable to parties or political individuals.

The aim of this study is to examine effect of political marketing tools on the behavior of voters and their priorities in Iranian Presidential Elections.

The Importance of Political Marketing and Voter Behavior

political marketing is a political communications [organizational] function and a set of processes for creating, communicating and providing value to customers and for managing customer relationships so that benefit the political organization and its stakeholders (Hughes &Dann ,2006).

According to advocates of using marketing practices in politics, introducing marketing techniques to the elections world has led to fundamental change in method of presenting politicians and political parties to voters so that presentation methods or approaches to delivery of political message have become the most important issue in the political advertising. Wining debates is not only

requires knowledge and appropriate programs but it also requires the ability to select and convey the desired concepts to voters and to have an appropriate campaign style (Lilleker & Darren, 2002).

Scammell (1999) stated that political marketing increases the information quantity and quality of parties and candidates about voters, and they become more sensitive and responsive to the voters' needs. For this reason, political marketing can improve communication channels between politicians and voters.

Voters' Behavior: Voting behavior is the way in which people tend to vote**.** Therefore, we have to examine the factors that influence this behavior. In voting behavior discussions, the key question is that what makes voters come to the decision voting for a particular party or person (Social and Political Studies Office, 2008).

Political Marketing Tools

Despite the growth and development of political marketing and consolidation of its theoretical and practical position in the field of marketing and politics, many political organizations do not have required dynamism to use all capabilities of the new political marketing. Its reason should be sought in several aspects. First, politics is the realm of traditionalism, and Politicians are trying to avoid a violation of society customary frameworks, so political world has inherently high stability. Second, because political organizations are dealing with an overwhelming number of people as clients, they use mass media and do not pay attention to personalize their messages. Finally, political marketing, unlike commercial marketing, is not considered as continuous and permanent activity and fever of political marketing is only limited to holding periods of each elections (Kippen, 2005).

As it is shown in Table 1, List of political marketing tools is stated.

Table 1. Political marketing tactics (Kheyri & Abasalizadeh, 2008).

Political marketing tactics	The Application
Using celebrities	Use of the individual or entity to transfer part of their reputation and popularity into organization or political people.
Comparative advertising	It clearly targets the weaknesses of competing parties or candidates.
Destructive Promotional plans	Measures to destroy the opponent's position or improve his position so that competitors and fans take a defensive position.
finding someone's fault	Scrutinizing characteristics of competitors including stances announced personal life, military service status and financial resources with the aim of finding records that undermine the credibility of rival.
pre-election campaigning	Extending period of the election campaign in a way that political organization has a comprehensive program for the campaign
Network Advertising	Deployment of information technology network, especially internet, to communicate with voters.
TV Ads	The use of Audio-visual Media Advertising, speeches and television interviews to better introduce candidates and political parties to voters who are familiar with images and thoughts of political candidates only through the press and newspapers.
Fake polls	The use of unscientific questionnaires to collect misinformation and publicize it with the purpose of communicating with the public or collecting financial assistance funds for solving the artificial problem
Automated Messages	The use of automated mass contact tools to remind voters of candidates' names, to encourage voters to participate in elections, to response to rival attack ads, and to Send targeted messages to specific groups.
video imaging	Image Manipulation by using graphic design software

Research Hypotheses

The Main hypotheses

H1*:* The uses of political marketing tools affect voters' behavior significantly.

Sub-hypotheses

SH1: The use of celebrities affects voters' behavior positively.

SH2: The use of comparative advertising affects voters' behavior significantly.

SH3: The use of destructive promotional plans affects voters' behavior significantly.

SH4: The use of finding someone's fault affects voters' behavior significantly.

SH5: The use of pre-election campaigning affects voters' behavior significantly.

SH6: The use of network advertising affects voters' behavior significantly.

SH7: The use of TV Ads affects voters' behavior significantly.

SH8: The use of fake polls affects voters' behavior significantly.

SH9: The use of automated messages affects voters' behavior significantly.

SH10: The use of video imaging affects voters' behavior significantly.

Research Model

The research model investigates the effects of political marketing tools on the behavior of voters in the Eleventh Iranian Presidential Elections. In this research, using celebrities, comparative advertising, destructive promotional plans, Network Advertising, pre-election campaigning, finding someone's fault, TV Ads, fake polls, automated messages and video imaging are independent variables

and voters' behavior dimensions which are social confirmation of candidates, recommendations of candidates to others,
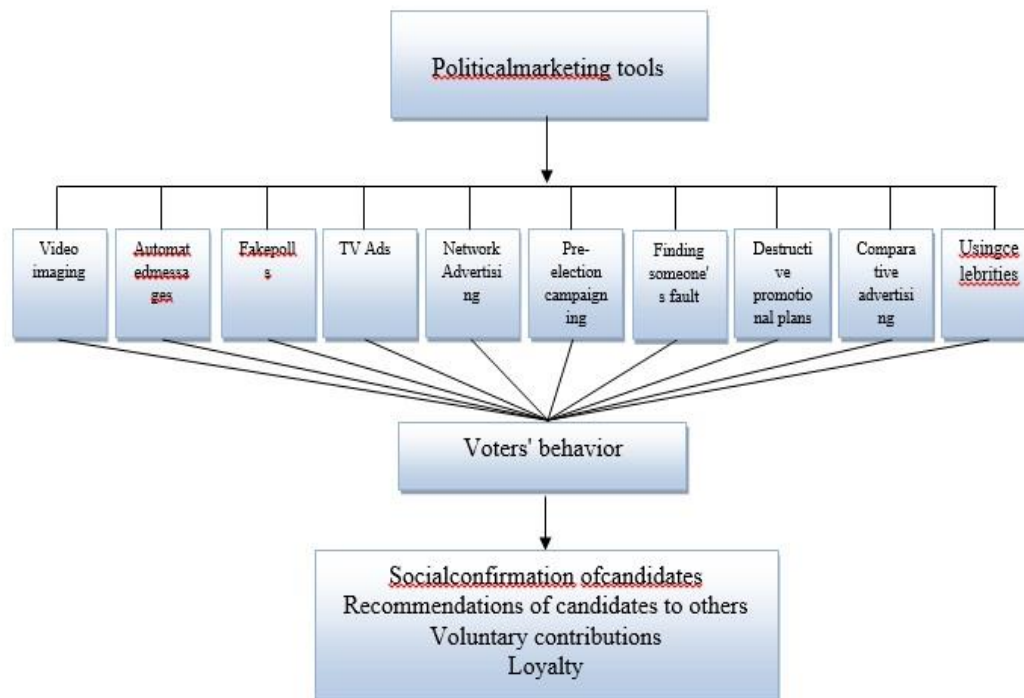
voluntary contributions and loyalty are dependent variable**.**

Figure 1. Research model

Research Methodology

This study is in terms of practical and descriptive-correlation approach; moreover, SPSS software, LISREL software and SmartPLS software were used to analyze data. Besides, questionnaire was used to collect the required information. In this study, method of content validity was used to assess the validity of the questionnaire so that validity of questionnaire was confirmed by experts and university professors in the field of marketing and political science. In addition, Cronbach's alpha was used to determine the reliability of questionnaire. As is shown in the table below, we can say that the questionnaire has a high reliability.

Table 2. Results of Cronbach's alpha test

variable	Cronbach's alpha
Independent variables	0.92
dependent variables	0.63

Statistical Sample

Statistical population of this study includes all citizens who live in Mashhad city and have circumstances attending the election. In order to determine Sample size, we used Cochran's formula that according to this formula, sample size is equal to 384 persons.

Model Validation by Using Confirmatory Factor Analysis and Structural Equation Models

To answer this question, chi square test and other appropriate criteria for model fitting should be evaluated. According to the initial model, it is specified that t index is greater than 1/96, so above four hypotheses are confirmed. Approval of the measurement model means that the effects of these variables on the other variables of model are reliable. At this stage, the researcher has made sure that structure of the

latent trait has been measured appropriately. When implied covariance matrix is equivalent to the observed data covariance matrix, it is said that the model fits the observed data series; i.e., when the remaining matrix elements are near zero. However, this fitness estimation method depends on model, the characteristics of the observed data and so on.

The most important goodness-of-fit index is chi-square test. However, this test involves a series of assumptions regarding the possibility that some of these assumptions are violated. The widespread dissatisfaction with chi-square test was caused to create set of secondary indexes. Secondary indexes, such as GFI, NFI, and AGFI, are model fit indexes. In these indexes, the higher value index, the better the model fit. In Figure 1 and Table 3, the most important model fitting parameters are shown.

Analysis of Research Hypotheses

In this research, due to existence of autocorrelation between some independent variables, we applied Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) Techniques Using SmartPLS software. PLS estimation method determines the coefficients in such a way that the resulting model has the greatest power to interpret and explain which means the model can predict the final dependent variable with the highest accuracy. Method of partial least squares (also sometimes called PLS) is a multivariate statistical method that can model one or more response variables against several explanatory variables simultaneously. The results of this method are as follows:

Table 3. Results of research hypotheses

	Research Hypotheses	Path coefficient (β)	T-statistic	R square	p-value	result
The main hypothesis	Political Tools→ Voters' behavior	0.852	11.511	0.727	<0.05	H_0 accepted
Sub-hypotheses	using celebrities→ Voters' behavior	0.141	3.830		<0.05	H_0 accepted
	comparative advertising→ Voters' behavior	0.140	3.680		<0.05	H_0 accepted
	destructive promotional plans→ Voters' behavior	-0.031	-0.925		>0.05	H_0 Rejected
	finding someone's fault→ Voters' behavior	0.224	5.767		<0.05	H_0 accepted
	pre-election campaigning→ Voters' behavior	0.164	4.183		<0.05	H_0 accepted
	Network Advertising→ Voters' behavior	0.239	6.323		<0.05	H_0 accepted
	TV Ads→ Voters' behavior	0.255	6.371		<0.05	H_0 accepted
	fake polls→ Voters' behavior	0.051	1.506		>0.05	H_0 Rejected
	automated messages→ Voters' behavior	0.184	4.460		<0.05	H_0 accepted
	video imaging→ Voters' behavior	-0.007	-0.205		>0.05	H_0 Rejected

Goodness of fit Statistics: (χ^2/df=1.655<3), RMSEA=0.042<0.09, GFI=0.92>0.9, CFI=0.97>0.9, NFI=0.92>0.9, NNFI=0.95>0.9, IFI=0.97>0.9, RFI=0.91>0.9

Conclusion

The findings showed that the use of TV Ads has the most effect on voters' behavior, followed by Network Advertising, finding someone's fault, automated messages, pre-election campaigning, using celebrities and comparative advertising. The results also indicated that there is not significant

relationship between fake polls, destructive promotional plans, video imaging and voters' behavior.

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How to cite this article: Samane Jabar, Tooraj Sadeghi, Vahid Sinaee, The Effect of Political Marketing Tools on the Behavior of Voters in Iran's 11th Presidential Election (Case study: the Attitudes of Citizens of Mashhad city). *International Journal of Advanced Studies in Humanities and Social Science*, 2017, 6(3), 193-198. http://www.ijashssjournal.com/article_83925.html