

Enhancing Voters' Satisfaction towards Political Marketing through Party Characteristics (Policy, Issue) and Candidate Image

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Abstract

This research examines the influence of party characteristics and candidate image on voters' satisfaction of political marketing industry in the context of Jordan. The researcher employed partial least squares - structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) technique to test the influences resulted from party characteristics and candidate image on voters' satisfaction. Moreover, to determine the relationship between each variable. The results show that the proposed model of party characteristics and candidate image explains voters' satisfaction well. Accordingly, this paper discusses these factors for enhancing voters' satisfaction by party policy, party issue, and candidate image.

Keywords: party policy, party issue, candidate image, voters' satisfaction.

1. Introduction

1.1 Research Background

The democratic process around the world includes participation in the parliament elections as its integral part (de Miguel, 2015). Additionally, in order to decide who has a voice in political affairs, it is crucial to know who turns out to vote. Unfortunately, as mentioned by Brownlee (2011), it is seldom that the popular participations in the elections receive systematic attention. This, according to de Miguel (2015), has sparked interest among researchers in certain Western democratic countries to examine the determinants of participation (turnout) in the parliament election. However, considering that many non-democracies also have elections that are at least rather competitive with considerable degrees of citizen involvement on a regular basis, such phenomenon is surprising (de Miguel, 2015).

The industry of political marketing is no different from other sectors of marketing. For instance, billions of dollars are used for funding the political related matters including political brand and winning each session of election. All these, as mentioned by Weber (2016), contribute to democratic life which allows the relevant parties to impose their policy on the public which in turn will change the nation, state or country's landscape of politics and policy. In the USA for instance, the overall amount of expenditure of political parties in the 2012 elections in the run of election win was recorded at approximately \$7 billion. According to Buttrill (2016), the amount spent may increase to \$11.4 billion in the next elections (2016 elections). In other words, within the domain of political marketing, political parties are perceived as multi-billion-dollar industry (Alsamydai & Khasawneh, 2013) in influencing the decision making of voters and in increasing the share of political market (Guzzman, Paswan & Van, 2015; Winchester, Hall & Binney, 2014).

1.2 Research Motivation

Election has become a common event to nearly all Arab monarchy states (Michael, 2009). Although a momentous event, it should be noted however, that the reality of elections in these countries may not be as it should be. As shown by past studies, the turnouts for Arab voters were increasingly of those either from the party or independent candidate from an election session to the next election session (De Miguel, 2015).

Since the re-establishment of election in Jordan in 1989, there is a steady drop in the percentage of Party affiliation and the number of electoral voters. As reported by IECR (2016), the percentage had dropped to 37% in 2016 from 68.8% in 1989. This demonstrates a necessity to find out the factors that cause such drop (Al-Momani, 2016). As such, this study sees the importance in examining the elements that could impact voters' satisfaction as an attempt to enhance voters' satisfaction towards political party.

2. Literature Review

Past studies in literature (e.g., Gad, 2014; Cwalina et al., 2010; Mahmud & Gray, 2011) described political marketing as one of the important subjects in the field of marketing that has been re-established. Political marketing in the present times has started to distinguish itself as a line of study from the marketing context (Thukur, 2014). O'Cass, (2001), explains it as a combination of two social science disciplines which are: marketing and political science. Currently, political marketing has become a widespread topic explored in the marketing field as highlighted by Akhmad and Azhar (2015) and Farrag & Shamma (2014). On the line of these studies, other studies also revealed the penetrating role of political marketing in the current election campaigns

context.

2.1 Definition of party characteristics. The researchers in this study deal with party characteristics as two characteristics which are: party policy, and party issue. Literature shows that the issues related to the party also plays a key role in shedding light on the choices, satisfaction, and loyalty of the voters, and current analysis indicates their role in elections (Alvarez & Nagler, 2001; 1998; Alvarez, Bowler & Nagler, 2000; Carmines & Stimson, 1980; Page & Brady, 1972; Pomper, 1972; Popkin, 1991; Landau, Ozbudun & Tachau, 2015).

Dow (1999) indicated that both policy and ideology is core to the behaviour of the French elections and that the issue brought forward by the candidates also affect the voters' choices during the elections. Also, policy and party policy changes may affect the choice and satisfaction among voters (Ezrow, Homola & Tavits, 2014). In this regard, election models have consistently indicated the existence of a relationship between political parties and votes distribution (e.g., Downs, 1957; Enelow & Hinich & Munger, 1994; Schofield et al., 1998), while other studies (Adams, 2001; Adams et al., 2005; Clark & Leiter, 2014) indicated that voters took into account factors other than the current policy in their voting choice.

Policy

Policy terms a series of articulated ideas about what should be done in certain areas that are often prescribed in studies, and often formally accepted and adopted by the relevant decision-making bodies. This is different from the plan/plans, in the term of plans are in more detail how the objectives to be achieved, while the policy is usually formulated on a more general level, only indicate the purpose and direction of the change in question. In the academic context, the policy terms are not usually limited to official policy that is acceptable, because the lack of action and the continued status even if unofficially approved, is itself a policy Sociology Oxford Dictionary (<http://www.enotes.com/oxsoc-encyclopedia/policy>). Policy in this study refers to the perception of voters for the policies that brought about by a political party.

Issue

The issue is the subject matter or issue. Each party supposed to have own issue. In addition, each party is said to have the advantage in terms of issues compared to other political parties (Dewan dictionary, 1994). In this study, referring to the issue of voters' perception of the issues brought about by the political parties.

2.2 candidate image

Hacker's (2004) defines candidate images as "clusters of voter perceptions of candidates" oriented around personality traits. Furthermore, Hacker clarifies that candidate image judgments are "cognitive representations made in the process of voter perception of candidate messages. Candidate image is thus a function of campaign communication because candidate image is a receiver-based trait—it is not an actual characteristic but rather the perception of a trait that influences voters.

The overall perception of a candidate in the minds of receivers' accounts for the internal contributors to perception such as unconscious assumptions and cultural predispositions.

Candidate image includes ambiguous, unconscious often influences and predispositions that may make differences in the minds of voters regarding to the candidates (Garzia, 2013). In contrast, Paterson and McLure (1976) struggled that candidate image relies on what the candidate represents to receivers (voters), such as affiliation to the party, past performance as a public figure, and if the candidates say they truth represent.

2.3 voters' satisfaction

Satisfaction is a response accomplishment users' loyalty (Oliver, 1997). This study uses the definition of Voters Satisfaction by O'Cass (2005), which refers to the process of voter satisfaction psychology used by users in the evaluation and assessment conclusions user satisfaction.

3. Research Design

3.1 Research Framework

This research designed a framework of influences from party characteristics and candidate image to voters' satisfaction. Figure1. Shows the research framework

3.2 Measurements of party characteristics (policy, and issue)

Table 1 shows question items adapted and modified to this research to party characteristics.

A survey instrument, which incorporated all the variables of interest, was developed. The survey measures party's policy, party's issue. Most of the variables were adopted and modified from prior researches. This study's framework comprises independent variables of party's policy, party's issue, candidate image, and the dependent variable namely voters' satisfaction. Five points Likert scale have been used from 1 strongly disagree to 5 strongly agree. In this regard, each dimension has been measured by various items as illustrated in the tables 1,2,3

3.2.1 Measures of party's issue

Party's policy is measure using 7 items. These items are the most commonly utilized instruments to measure party's policy. Five points Likert scale have been used from 1 strongly disagree to 5 strongly agree. Party's policy has been measured by seven items as illustrated in the table 1

Table 1

Items for party's policy

Items
1. The party that I support fights for the interest of all human rights.
2. The party that I support fights for a particular religion.
3. The aim and principle of the party that I support are to create a fair society.
4. The aims of the party which I support is to create wealth and distribute it equitably
5. The objectives of the party which I support are satisfied my needs and want.
6. The programs of the party which I support are modified to cope with changes in my wants.
7. The programs of the party which I support are developed based on my opinions and wants.

Source: Adapted from. (Lees-Marshment 2001a, b, 2008; Newman 1999; Ormrod 2005).

3.2.2 Measures of party's issue

party's issue has been measured by using 8 items adapt from (Lees-Marshment 2001a, b, 2008; Newman 1999; Ormrod 2005). Five points Likert scale have been used from 1 strongly disagree to 5 strongly agree.

Table 2

Items for party's issue

Items
1. The party which I support concerns about the increase of cost of living.
2. The party which I support concerns about the high crime rate.
3. The party which I support concerns about the problem of an illegal immigrant.
4. The party which I support concerns about social problems.
5. The party which I support concerns about price hike of goods on people.
6. The objectives of the party which I support tend to discuss my main actual issues.
7. The party which I support make a great effort in understanding my wants before introducing their candidates.
8. The party that I support and vote for has a reputation as the most appropriate to represent me.

Source: Adapted from (Lees-Marshment 2001a, b, 2008; Newman 1999; Ormrod 2005).

3.3 Measures of candidate image

Aaker (1997) defined candidate image as "a set of human characteristics associated with the brand". The author conducts a several works to develop framework the dimensions of candidate image and a valid, reliable, and generalizable scale to measure the candidate image dimensions. The measures used five point Likert scale 1 strongly disagree to 5 strongly agree. Therefore, this study is depending on this measurement to measure the candidate image, and the following table 3 illustrate the items.

Table 3

Items for candidate image

Items
1. The candidate that I support and vote for, offers persuasive promises
2. The candidate that I support and vote for keeps and fulfils his/her promises.
3. Candidate that I support and vote for gives a great intention to his/her image (the past, relations, expressions, appearance).
4. The candidate that I support and vote for, exploits all media tools: web, television, radio, news, etc., as advertisement tools to market him/ her.
5. The candidate that I support and vote for has a great control over keeping and creating an internal cohesion.
6. The candidate that I support and vote for chooses the convenient location where to meet his/her targeted voters.
7. the candidate that I support and vote for makes great efforts to make available needed information to voters.
8. I take into consideration candidate's image and reputation when voting.
9. The candidate that I support and vote for has a strong image, and enhances continuously his/her image.

Source: Adapted from Qualter (1985); Newman (1999); O'shaughnessy (2002).

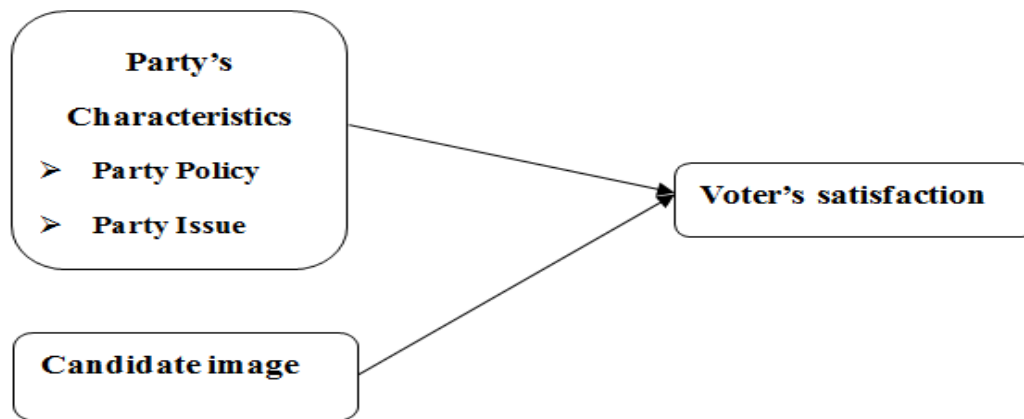


Figure1. Research framework

3.4 Measures of voters' satisfaction

Voters' satisfaction was measured using (9) items as shown in table 4 Used (Sahin et al., 2011, 2012), were adopted this measurement and combine them to become 9 and they found that great result for the reliability. However, every item rates how often the consumer (voter) satisfaction. The construct was measured used five point Likert scale from 1 strongly disagree to 5 strongly agree.

Table 4

Items for voters' satisfaction

Items
1. I am very satisfied with the service provided by this party/candidate.
2. This party/candidate does a good job of satisfying my needs.
3. The services provided by this party/candidate are very satisfactory.
4. I believe that dealing this party/candidate is usually a very satisfying experience.
5. I made the right decision when I decided to deal with this party/candidate.
6. I am addicted to this party/candidate in some way.
7. I am very satisfied with this party/candidate.
8. This party/candidate fulfils my expectations completely.
9. I have a positive attitude toward this party/candidate.

Source: Adapted from (Ganesan, 1994); Grace & O'Cass (2005); Fornell et al (1996). Used Şahin, A., Zehir, C., & Kitapçı, H. (2012).

3.4 Building Hypotheses

According to the literature review, party characteristics are positively related to voters' satisfaction (Halim, & Ishak, 2014). Therefore, this study proposes the following hypotheses:

H1: *There is a significant relationship between party characteristics (policy, and issue) and voters' satisfaction.*

The candidate image enhances and increase the voters' satisfaction, the voter satisfaction inclusion in the relationship is due to satisfaction is crucial in building a long-term association between voters and political parties and the candidate (De Miguel, Jamal & Tessler, 2015). Therefore the following hypothesis:

H2: *There is a significant relationship between candidate image and voters' satisfaction.*

4. Data Collection and Analysis

The population for this research is the individual voters. According to the independent election commission in Jordan (2016), there were 1.588043 million voters who are voted in general Jordan election in 2016. This study concentrates three regions in Jordan were chosen (Irbid in the north, Amman in the middle, and Tafilah in the south). However, the main objective of conducting a survey research is to collect data by e-mail and manually which are representative of a target population to be studied (Cavana, Delahaye, & Sekeran, 2001). It is appropriate for the research with quantitative approach to have a sample size which is 30 or larger than (Sekaran, 2003). Then again, Hair *et al.* (1998) inform that the larger the sample size is, the better the findings are, also the findings can be generalized smoothly. For this study, probability sampling was preferred because it permits the researcher to have a precise generalization of the population.

Sampling technique researchers used multistage area probability sampling as recommended by Depoy and Gitlin (2015). In brief, this study was consistent with prior studies that used multistage sampling (O'Cass & Pecotich, 2005); systematic random sampling (Halim, Ishak, 2014; Mishra & Mishra, 2014; Patel, Sadie,

Graham, Delaney, & Baldry, 2014) and mall intercept survey (Mishra & Mishra, 2014).

Data collection was conducted more than seven weeks (i.e., between November 20, 2016, and January 13, 2017) this after a pre-test and a pilot study were conducted. The researchers used the self-administered questionnaires for data collection from voters who voted in Jordanian election that took place in 2016. After inventory preparation respondents, the questionnaires then distributed to them. The researchers and assistants systematically and randomly picked every first of five-visitor aged 17 and more after finishing their shopping.

4.1 Measurement Reliability

This study examined the measurement reliability of Party characteristics and candidate image. The higher CR (composite reliability) value is better (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Table 5 shows that all CR values are higher than 0.6, which is typically the bottom line for reliable measurement (Hair et al., 2014).

4.2 Measurement Validity

Fornell & Larcker, (1981) informed that the average variance extracted (AVE) values shown in Table 5 also exceeded 0.50, indicating measurements convergence validity. The factor loadings results were displayed in table 6 from confirmatory factor analysis. Most items demonstrate high measurement validity of constructs for their loadings higher than 0.70. (Hair et al., 2014).

Table 5. Evaluation of measurements

Constructs	(CR)	(AVE)
Party Policy (PO)	0.913	0.642
Party Issue (IS)	0.912	0.732
Candidate Image (CI)	0.945	0.659
Satisfaction (SA)	0.841	0.776

Table 6. Confirmatory factor analysis and associated factor loadings

	PO	IS	CI	SA	EX	VO	LO
PO2	0.802	0.342	0.349	0.687	0.249	0.300	0.534
PO3	0.801	0.271	0.230	0.518	0.117	0.326	0.414
PO4	0.819	0.384	0.263	0.569	0.223	0.297	0.510
PO5	0.777	0.354	0.383	0.707	0.261	0.311	0.555
PO6	0.793	0.252	0.241	0.516	0.081	0.338	0.423
PO7	0.813	0.401	0.252	0.570	0.217	0.305	0.501
IS1	0.306	0.863	0.393	0.343	0.632	0.471	0.258
IS2	0.365	0.879	0.398	0.383	0.427	0.433	0.329
IS3	0.399	0.862	0.360	0.368	0.428	0.462	0.293
IS4	0.349	0.827	0.499	0.392	0.591	0.495	0.380
IS5	0.327	0.847	0.453	0.375	0.575	0.479	0.310
IS6	0.325	0.832	0.317	0.329	0.377	0.388	0.264
IS7	0.440	0.874	0.424	0.397	0.421	0.489	0.346
IS8	0.369	0.857	0.483	0.395	0.630	0.525	0.354
CI1	0.555	0.316	0.802	0.612	0.183	0.294	0.592
CI2	0.256	0.504	0.928	0.367	0.420	0.455	0.387
CI3	0.245	0.474	0.791	0.318	0.342	0.391	0.356
CI4	0.231	0.434	0.848	0.362	0.275	0.328	0.395
CI5	0.204	0.463	0.817	0.278	0.280	0.393	0.348
CI6	0.529	0.288	0.741	0.579	0.158	0.272	0.553
CI7	0.242	0.486	0.830	0.347	0.400	0.441	0.356
CI8	0.236	0.466	0.751	0.306	0.331	0.385	0.337
CI9	0.220	0.429	0.783	0.346	0.258	0.306	0.389
SA1	0.646	0.430	0.433	0.925	0.305	0.297	0.684
SA2	0.675	0.370	0.404	0.870	0.262	0.369	0.658
SA3	0.634	0.380	0.387	0.884	0.253	0.216	0.663
SA5	0.699	0.375	0.407	0.888	0.186	0.264	0.685
SA6	0.662	0.316	0.376	0.782	0.167	0.417	0.560
SA8	0.634	0.380	0.387	0.884	0.253	0.216	0.663
SA9	0.646	0.430	0.433	0.925	0.305	0.297	0.684

4.3 Hypotheses Testing

Using PLS software, structural equation models (SEM) examined the relationship between party characteristics:

(party policy, issue, and candidate image) and satisfaction for the Jordanian voters respectively. The results show the modelling significance of both. Table 7 indicates that several important goodness-of-fit indices lie in the suggested range (Hair et al., 2014). Thus, this study shows the powerful relationship between party characteristics: (party policy, issue, and candidate image, and voters' satisfaction).

H1: There is a significant association between party characteristics (policy, issue) and voters' satisfaction. Was examined by using PLS-SEM bootstrapping approach. Empirical result of PLS-SEM indicates that the proposed relationship between PC and SA was highly significant at ($\beta = 0.567$, $t = 15.758$, $p < 0.000$) and thus H-1 was supported (refer to Table 7).

H2: There is a significant association between candidate image and voters' satisfaction. The outcome of the PLS-SEM bootstrapping analysis shows that there is a positive significant association between candidate image and voters' satisfaction, among Jordanian voters' at ($\beta = 0.166$, $t = 3.97$, $p < 0.000$), (refer to Table 7).

Table 7

Path coefficient of the Main Hypotheses (Direct Path)

H	Relationship	Std. beta	Std. Error	t-value	p-value	Decision
H1	PC -> SA	0.567	0.036	15.81	0.00	Supported
H5	CI -> SA	0.166	0.042	3.97	0.00	Supported

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