INFLUENCE OF POLITICAL MARKETING ON VOTING INTENTION: AN EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

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The firms who are employing marketing smartly have a big lead in terms of profitability. They are able to obtain their essential resources to use the resources and to forecast the consequence of their efforts. The success of corporate organizations owing to effective application of marketing has inspired the politicians to think about the intelligent use of marketing in politics as well. The sample size is 385 when the levels of significance are set at 95% (z = 1.96), 5% (e = +.5), and 5% (p =.5). Only 330 respondents made it through the screening process due to being both full and consistent.

Firms that use marketing wisely have a big advantage in terms of profitability. They can get their core resources to use the resources and predict the consequences of their efforts. The success of corporate organizations through the effective use of marketing has inspired politicians to think about the wise use of marketing in politics as well. The sample size is 385 when the significance levels are set at 95% (z = 1.96), 5% (e = +.5), and 5% (p = 0.5). Only
330 respondents went through the selection process due to the fact that they were complete and consistent. Money was utilized by politicians in Lebanon during voter registration, party primaries, and the general election. Politicians in the state of Lebanon were found to have utilized fast-burning cash to purchase voters or permanent voters' cards and to compromise electoral staffs. Voter turnout was impacted by this illegal conduct. The importance of money in a democracy stems from the fact that most political action requires financial backing. There has been a marked decrease in the usage and mentions of its politicians, particularly on Twitter, despite the fact that the internet world has simplified access to celebrity culture. According to the data, these well-known people were not very influential on Twitter.

**Keywords:** political marketing; endorsement; media campaign; vote buying

**Introduction**

The firms who are employing marketing smartly have a big lead in terms of profitability. They are able to obtain their essential resources to use the resources and to forecast the consequence of their efforts. The success of corporate organizations owing to effective application of marketing has inspired the politicians to think about the intelligent use of marketing in politics as well according to Ufen (2006).

Political marketing method might be of help for the politicians to attain their desired outcome in election. However, numerous obstacles, such as mistrust from the people, not to go to cast their ballots, etc. are being encountered by the politicians. It is a new phenomenon that political parties are in serious risk according to Takeuchi (2013).

Political surveys indicated that political marketing can systematically deal with the issue of the politicians. In most of the political polls, a considerable proportion of voters claim that they did not establish any clear voting preference for candidates.

**Problem Statement**

Election is the universal method used to choose leaders in today's democracies. That is to say, elections are the bedrock of a democratic society, and without them, there would be no democracy. Unfortunately, the series of elections in Lebanon lacked the openness and justice essential to a genuine democratic political process. Instead, the incumbent, politicians, and the corrupt electoral officials in the nation tend to manipulate the different phases of the electoral process to their own advantage. Riots, protests, party fights, political assassinations, looting, arson, thuggery, and abduction are just some of the significant outcomes that might result from this scenario.

Democracies, which are under attack in Lebanon, are the finest form of governance according to most people throughout the globe. Unfortunately, it seems that money politics has become the dominant force in Lebanon's political system. There is no doubt that during elections in Lebanon, candidates for elective offices always utilize money as incentives in order to win the support of the electorates, as opposed to the traditional campaign procedure of selling their manifestos to the electorates.

Political elites' focus on politics as a means to amass fortune rather than as a vehicle for bringing about widespread social change and improving people's access to basic services is a big issue. This leads them to resort to a wide range of corrupt political tactics such as vote
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buying, violence, and thuggery in order to secure power. In light of this context, the study will analyze the prevalence of money's strategic use in politics in Lebanon, including vote buying.

Literature review

Politician endorsement and political marketing

This article examines the role of celebrities in politics and marketing campaigns. Political marketing emerged in the United States in the 1970s and 1980s as a result of applying the tenets of marketing theory to governmental transactions. This made political marketing a component of the broader idea that also included nonprofit and social exchange phenomena according to Selb & Lutz (2015).

However, political marketing has been in use since political parties began using marketing strategies to run their operations and advance their goals. It has been stated that the scope of exchanges investigated by political marketing must be expanded to include parliamentary and government contacts, even if party/candidate-voter interactions are often viewed as its core emphasis and the electorate occupies a key place in the literature as mentioned by Nichter (2008).

To be sure, political marketing has a special place in the arena of campaigning, and optimizing voter turnout and electoral outcomes is one of its primary goals. A political offering that reflects and articulates the wishes of target constituencies is developed after this goal is established; however, this goal alone is insufficient to define the political marketing orientation, which consists of using commercial marketing tools to identify these constituencies' wants according to Schedler (2013).

To effectively market a political candidate, political marketers must first learn about their target audience's wants and then create a public-focused strategic campaign whose "product" is the candidate's reputation, the party's reputation, and the leadership's reputation. Therefore, it is important to emphasize 'its exchange character in a competitive market, its enlarged, concept of a marketing-orientation; its multi-level character of being a philosophy and a technology; its service character,' as the 'political consumer/voter is at the center of political marketing.

Milazzo & Karp (2013) stated that political endorsements are one strategy that may be included into political marketing management, which refers to the procedures and strategies that political parties and strategists use to win over voters. Relationships between political marketing and celebrities are founded, thematically, on the fact that political marketing employs theatrics in crafting an electorate's perception of candidates. It is to be anticipated that celebrities would have an impact on politics, given their pervasive role in popular culture. However, the specific literature addressing the relationships between political marketing and celebrities is still scarce.

Leader preference and political marketing

A leader is someone who has the expertise and skills to rally a group of people around a common goal and guide them toward its achievement. When it comes to politics, a leader is someone who can rally supporters behind their cause and use their charisma and expertise to sway voters' choices according to Kramon (2009).
The capacity to rally support and oversee the implementation of policies is a hallmark of political leadership. The fundamental distinctions between a politician and a leader lie in the impact and direction they provide. The fulfillment of both is unquestionably dependent on the dynamics between the voters' emotional processes and the political leader. In commercial marketing, like in political marketing, the image of the provided product influences the attitudes of the buyers and the voters. It is crucial to the success of a political party that the image of its leader, a key component of the political marketing mix, matches the picture that voters develop of that leader in their own thoughts.

A person's public persona is an artifice constructed from a series of sham behaviors intended to get positive attention from the general public. The leaders that are successful in crafting a more appealing image for their constituents are favored above their peers according to Kitschelt & Wilkinson (2007).

Candidates need to guard their reputations for this reason. When crafting an impression, it is crucial to think about things like outward look, temperament, posture, level of education, and general style. Politicians in the contemporary world are expected to create visuals and utilize them in their communication efforts, since success in politics goes to those who can embrace a more centralized system rather than the fringe beliefs. When power moves to a prominent figure, their self-perceptions become more of a focal point in the political discourse. A leader has to have the ability to communicate effectively and the flexibility to adjust to new situations. It is important that leaders to strike a healthy equilibrium between the two competing forces of continuity and disruption according to Jensen & Justesen (2014).

Media campaign and political marketing

A more favorable public perception of a political party or candidate may be achieved via strategic media marketing and promotion. 'Two-way communications' between political parties and voters may help cultivate a positive brand identity where voters feel welcome and appreciated. This research has led to the selection of three variables as potential predictors: media campaigns, promotional strategy, and two-way communications according to Ibrahim (2016).

More and more people are realizing the value of effective communication in the realm of local politics. Communication in politics is the dissemination of information about political actions to the public. Those that want to have an impact on politics are known as political protagonists, and it is their job to get their message out to voters. These protagonists are primary the parties or the candidates who compete in the political environment.

The research of Hicken (2007) stated that in order to reach out to voters, political elites use a wide range of communication channels, including public meetings and gatherings, newspapers, television, radio, and, more recently, the internet and social media. In light of these changes, modern political factions have adapted their methods and tactics for making "profitable" use of the media. Known in the academic community as "the influence of mass behavior in competitive contexts," these strategies originate in the business sector.

Marketing a political campaign is similar to marketing a product or service in that both aim to reach and persuade their respective target markets. That can only be done in a competitive market if the voter-consumer has several options from which to pick through mass media channels.
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Political parties evaluate their performance in terms of voter turnout and electoral strength, therefore it stands to reason that the character of the political product would vary from that of the commercial product. But many of the same ideas and methods used in business marketing, where the end result is increased sales and market share, are also used in political marketing according to Guardado & Wantchekon (2014).

Digital media in recent years have enabled political protagonists to be in constant, direct even bilateral contact with customers and their needs and to be able to adjust their strategy promptly. Consequently, the ideological backdrop is no longer present, and instead, the result consists of themes and subjects of interest. There are, however, groups that will not budge from promoting and supporting their ideology according to Christensen & Colvin (2007). Through this study, we want to catalog the various promotional approaches used by the Attica regional election candidates.

Further, Finan & Schechter (2012) looked at how politicians integrate problems into their political agenda throughout the campaign and how party support might alter the marketing technique a candidate decides to use. Candidates' use of conventional and digital campaigning methods, as well as their preference for bottom-up vs top-down promotion techniques, and an estimation of the impact of these choices on their election prospects, are all crucial according to Franklin (2004).

The role of money and vote buying

Vote buying is not random; voters may request incentives, and politicians can provide them if they so want. In Ghana, for instance, a group of people may feel obligated to ask a visitor (candidate) for "chop money" if that person proclaims political ambitions while there and begs for the people's support (Carey & Shugart, 1995).

Again, community leaders, chiefs, and elders might use this opportunity to approach a candidate with issues like access to clean water, inadequate infrastructure, and inadequate educational opportunities. However, in other contexts in Ghana, paying a visit to an old person and bringing a gift is highly valued. It is a welcome sign that encourages people to interact with an outsider. When guests bring gifts to share with hosts, it is a nice gesture of hospitality. Therefore, paying a first-time guest a visit and giving them a gift is a great way to show them you care and make them feel welcome (Chang, 2005).

Politicians often base their offers of incentives to voters and communities on this idea. The term "vote buying" may be interpreted in several ways. Not only do these interpretations differ based on socioeconomic status, but also on factors such as religious affiliation, ethnic background, educational attainment, and so on (Blais & Lago, 2009).

All citizens of Ghana who are eighteen years or older, of good moral character, and who are natural born or naturalized citizens are entitled to cast a ballot in all general, parliamentary, district assembly, and unit committee elections. It has long been said that in the run-up to these elections, politicians in Ghana provide incentives and presents to the voters in the form of motorbikes, building supplies (particularly roofing sheets and sacks of cement), outboard motors, mobile phones, t-shirts, food items, and cash.

"Last-minute" initiatives, which supposedly help certain towns by providing things like new roads, schools, power, and bathrooms, are also a thing. Vote buying, or bribing voters with benefits like free food or money in order to influence their ballot choices, is on the rise at an alarming pace according to Baldwin (2016).
A vote buying incentive may or may not carry the same meaning for a giver or a recipient. An incentive to vote for a candidate might be interpreted in several ways by voters. This is because not all distributors will explain the motivation behind the incentive or gift. Given the above, a voter may misinterpret an operative’s offer of enticement as a gift rather than a binding payment. According to Aspinall et al (2017), people's beliefs and assumptions regarding vote-buying serve as the foundation for their actual understanding on the topic. It is therefore important to explore the range of meanings vote buying incentives or gifts may hold, not only to givers, but to recipients as well. The giving out of vote buying incentives conveys a positive message to some voters.

**Methodology**

This study makes use of a descriptive research strategy. The strategy relies heavily on statistical analysis, sample design, and survey questionnaires. At first, we use a 5-point Likert scale with the anchors 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, and 5 = Strongly Agree to quantify the variables of interest.

About 11025 students from the Faculty of Business Studies (FBS) from several Lebanese universities make up the sample units for this study. Stratified random sampling is used to choose the samples.

Secondly, the sample size is 385 when the levels of significance are set at 95% (z = 1.96), 5% (e = +.5), and 5% (p =.5). Person-to-person interviews were used to distribute the questionnaire to the chosen samples. Only 330 respondents made it through the screening process due to being both full and consistent.

Third, four independent factors were first included in a multivariate regression analysis to explain the dependent variable (voting intention) found in the literature study. Factor analysis is performed, and then the factors are used as explanatory variables in a multiple regression analysis due to multicollinearity among the independent variables.

**Reliability**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1 - Validity and Reliability</th>
<th>(source: SPSS Version 20)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cronbach Alpha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Politician Endorsement</td>
<td>.828</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leader Preference</td>
<td>.904</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media Campaign</td>
<td>.813</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role of Money</td>
<td>.802</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Marketing</td>
<td>.797</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Referring to the Tab.1, the validity and reliability analysis aims to validate the data collected based on an indicator called Cronbach Alpha. Referring to the rule of thumb, it can be noted that if Cronbach Alpha < 0.5, data is not validated, if Cronbach Alpha between 0.5 and 0.7 the data is validated but contains bias and if Cronbach Alpha >0.7 then the data are validated.
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Referring to the mentioned results it can be noted that “Social Influence” scored a Cronbach Alpha of 0.828, “Politician Environment” scored Cronbach Alpha 0.904, “Leader Preference” scored a Cronbach Alpha of 0.813, “Media Campaign” scored a Cronbach Alpha of 0.802, “Role of Money” scored 0.797,” and at last “Political Marketing” scored Cronbach Alpha of 0.687. This implies that all the variables are statistically validated as all Cronbach Alpha are greater than 0.7.

Validity
To be called reliable, the data generated by an instrument must accurately and meaningfully reflect a theoretical concept.

To put it another way, the data must take into account all important factors. Once the data has been verified, conclusions must be accurate and appropriate. Being able to use a wide range of facts to support a research makes it more credible.

Table 2 - KMO Validity Test
(Source: compiled by the authors)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>KMO</th>
<th>P-Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Political Endorsement</td>
<td>.801</td>
<td>0.011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leader Preference</td>
<td>.703</td>
<td>0.012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media Campaign</td>
<td>.693</td>
<td>0.015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role of Money</td>
<td>.772</td>
<td>0.015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Marketing</td>
<td>.785</td>
<td>0.026</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In this research, we used KMO and Barlett's validity tests to check the reliability of our data. Surveys based on this metric require the use of a correlation matrix or a correspondence process.

The KMO variance of a metric has to be between 0.000 and 1.0, and its accuracy needs to be more than 0.6, for it to be regarded accurate. All variables in the research had values more than or equal to 0.06, as shown in the table.

Therefore, all the factors investigated may be used in other investigations.

Regression Analysis

Table 3 - Regression Analysis
(Source: results of SPSS Version 20 calculation)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model Summary&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Model</td>
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<tr>
<td>-------</td>
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<td>1</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<sup>a</sup> Predictors: (Constant), Politician Endorsement, Leader Preference, Media Campaign, Role of Money and Political Marketing

Referring to the above model, it can be noted that the addressed independent variables which include politician endorsement, leader preference, media campaign, and role of money
scored R (0.887) which means that the association between these variables and political marketing is 88.7%.

In other words, these independent variables mentioned tend to impact the political marketing by 88.7% and that 11.3% of the variables are not addressed in this model.

However, the R2 scored in this model is 78.7% which means that 78.7% of the variation in the political marketing is explained by the variation in the independent variables mentioned.

Table 4 - Regression Analysis - 2
(Source: results of SPSS Version 20 calculation)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Coefficientsa</th>
<th>Standardized Coefficients</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unstandardized Coefficients</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Std. Error</td>
<td>Beta</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-.011</td>
<td>.102</td>
<td>-.108</td>
<td>.914</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Politician Endorsement</td>
<td>.499</td>
<td>.043</td>
<td>.107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Leader Preference</td>
<td>.460</td>
<td>.061</td>
<td>.359</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Media Campaign</td>
<td>.434</td>
<td>.048</td>
<td>.335</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Role of Money</td>
<td>.441</td>
<td>.055</td>
<td>.436</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above regression studies the relationship between the independent variables, which are politician endorsement, leader preference, media campaign, and role of money, and the dependent variable, which is political marketing. The significance level for all independent variables mentioned shows a level lower than 0.05 which means that there is significant relationship between politician endorsement, leader preference, media campaign, role of money and political marketing.

Since the variables scored a margin error lower than 0.05, then the null hypothesis which indicates that there is no relation between these independent variable and political marketing is rejected. The alternative hypothesis will be accepted which states that there is relation between independent and dependent variables. The following equation can be formulated:

\[ Y = A + BX_1 + BX_2 + BX_3 + BX_4 + BX_5 \]

Political Marketing = -0.011 + 0.099 politician endorsement + 0.060 leader preference + 0.034 media campaign + 0.441 role of money

This implies that:
- For every 1% increase in politician endorsement, political marketing will increase by 9.9%.
- For every 1% increase in leader preference, political marketing will increase by 6%.
- For every 1% increase in media campaign, political marketing will increase 3.4%.
- For every 1% increase in role of money, political marketing will increase 44.1%.
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Discussion

Money was utilized by politicians in Lebanon during voter registration, party primaries, and the general election. Politicians in the state of Lebanon were found to have utilized fast-burning cash to purchase voters or permanent voters’ cards and to compromise electoral staffs. Voter turnout was impacted by this illegal conduct. The importance of money in a democracy stems from the fact that most political action requires financial backing. However, while discussing the origins and consequences, it is important to emphasize the potential for serious political difficulties to arise from the inappropriate use of financial resources.

The election cycle saw the most spending of money in the primary elections and on Election Day itself. In Lebanon, politicians often resort to monetary and in-kind gifts in order to win voter support. Bribery of voters and election officials is practiced by a political party and its candidates. They promised voters anything from automobiles to free meals to short-term jobs to bribes of maggi, salt, rice, wine, soap, wrapping, and more. It is the "infrastructure of the stomach," to use a technical term. During campaigning and the voting process, it was uncovered that politicians in Lebanon used agents to provide maggi, salt, sugar, clothing, money, and other goods to the people.

Further, religious leaders were often paid to influence their followers to vote for the candidate who offered the biggest sum of money. By its very nature, vote buying undermines the democratic principles of open government and individual responsibility. Vote buying is only one example of political entrepreneurship, which also includes other connected topics. Accordingly, politicians who are motivated by money perceive their actions as investments in a bigger political harvest, which promotes electoral fraud and other forms of corruption that undermine representative government.

If a candidate has invested a lot of money before being elected or appointed, they should be able to recoup their investments after they get into government. When this happens, the hallmarks of good government and a democratic society—transparency and accountability—become flotsam. It encourages elite rule and little citizen involvement. As a result of the dominance of money in politics, only the wealthy can run for office and ultimately be elected. Dung claims that this will allow only those with financial means to enter political posts in Lebanon, discouraging nationalists from seeking political leadership due to financial limitations. The core of political matters is commercialized. The party with the most financial clout, however, can assure its dominance. This has tarnished the reputation of our political system abroad.

Politicians in Lebanon do not have a pristine reputation in the international system. Democracy is ineffective in the country's political structure. The credibility of the government has suffered as a result of this situation. And since the current government is so corrupt, money politics may even lead to calls for military action. A military may seize power if the benefits of democracy are not realized. Disillusionment with the civilian leadership has even some Lebanese asking for and pushing for military control.

Practical Contributions

There has been a marked decrease in the usage and mentions of its politicians, particularly on Twitter, despite the fact that the internet world has simplified access to
celebrity culture. According to the data, these well-known people were not very influential on Twitter.

Because there are so few celebrity-related tweets overall, any findings from studies that include concerns about celebrity involvement in politics need to be read with caution. It is important to remember that as compared to the conservatives' overall Twitter effort, details like the sort of strategic axis, the functional attributes of celebrities, and the endorsement mechanisms are numerically quite minor despite their qualitative significance.

Moreover, it is important to emphasize that the scope of the following conclusions is limited to data on Twitter and is not a foundation for evaluating the whole strategy in the online and offline arenas. While it is true that conservatives used celebrities in conventional media, their strategic use of Twitter was far from optimum; in other words, they failed to take advantage of one of the most crucial communication tools in modern campaigns.

Lebanese conservatives' use of social media to further their political agenda runs counter to the notion that celebrities are a regular fixture on the "front-end," or "front stage," of politics, the "communication façade" of it.

Some people chose a strategy of diversity with extremely various aims, creating the idea that each post had a partial mission, while others opted for a concentrated approach for two primary purposes—to serve as a news agenda, and to support the views expressed by the presidential candidate. Clearly, there was no coherent Twitter marketing plan in place.

Although functional attributes of a rational kind, competence, knowledge, and trustworthiness are not always linked to "something new and unusual." It is hard to tell the difference between the functions of celebrities and those of conventional politicians since they have many of the same characteristics.

**Conclusion**

Political parties and politicians (election candidates) may adapt to the ever-changing political landscape by "positioning" themselves, or even "repositioning," with the help of political marketing ideas and methods. Similarly to previous empirical research, this study has some caveats. First, a random sample of students from each of Lebanon's nine Business Faculties was surveyed. They have a broad understanding of the political climate in Lebanon. However, they fall within a certain age range, have completed a specific number of years of schooling, and have grown up in an urban setting.

This study's findings may thus be invalid and inaccurately portray the current political climate in Lebanon. Consequently, future studies should include a variety of demographics (voters) such as age, education, location (urban vs. rural), region, gender, and so on. Second, the data for this study were collected quickly and only once, making it a descriptive (cross-sectional) study. Consequently, it has the drawback of not being able to monitor how the electorate's voting intention may shift as a result of changes in the underlying causes (e.g. implementation of the proposed public policy, etc.).

To further illustrate the scenario, a political party as an organization and/or a politician as a person could do longitudinal study. In addition, exploratory studies may be done to identify the nature of the link between potential cause variables (factors) and the impact variable (such as voting intention) in order to forecast the latter in a controlled setting.
At last, it is of high importance to stress on social achievements and services, and to focus on the role of alliances with political or social figures mainly those who can transfer votes throughout focusing on emotional speech. In the case of Lebanon and the current electoral law which is based on the proportional law, it is highly important to be in a strong list. Operations may play a major role mainly through delegates where many votes could be lost if there no one to attend the calculation and approve the final signing of each election center final result and by that direct marketing is highly important in adding to direct meetings (direct sales).

References:


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