

## Structural equation modelling of political marketing strategies adopted by political parties

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### Abstract

Political Marketing is a recent phenomenon, gaining importance quickly around the world. Politicians and their political parties are using a large number of strategies to attract and retain the voters. The present study has made an attempt to understand the perception of voters toward various political marketing strategies adopted by various politicians in India. The study has empirical research design with non-probability sampling techniques. A survey of registered voters was made; their perceptions were recorded and analyzed with various statistical tools like Garrett ranking, exploratory factor analysis, confirmatory factor analysis, structural equation modelling and path diagram. The study has derived three major factors viz. direct political marketing, relationship political marketing and transactional political marketing influencing the perception of voters toward various strategies adopted by Indian Politicians. The study has been able to frame a hypothetical model for these strategies. At the last, the study has also felt the need of further studies in this direction.

**Keywords:** Political marketing, Strategy, Perception, Voters, India.

### Introduction

India is one of the largest parliamentary federal democracies around the globe. Election is almost a routine phenomenon here. 28 states and 7 union territories keep themselves busy here with various types of elections throughout the year. There are a large number of political parties of national and regional importance in these political constituencies. These political parties use various strategies to woo the electorates. Each political party through marketing of their ideologies, vision, mission, candidates and party itself, want to establish their own brand in the political market. Hence politics become ultimately a platform for arduous campaigning, branding, communication, collaborations, collisions, coalition & de-coalition, strategies and marketing like a commercial market place.

Brar and Goel (2014) have observed that there used to be the time when political parties, with simply their ideologies, used to win the elections and even without much hassles. But now, with the advent of social media and Web 2.0, digitalization of broadcast media, growth of print & electronic media and the entry of campaign experts & professionals in politics, has compelled these parties to think differently. Political campaigns and communication need to be managed professionally. This is the reason, why politics entered into world politics. It does not mean, new tactics of commercial marketing in politics will take the place of traditional practices. Rather a proper political marketing mix of traditional and modern political strategies, will not only mold the attitude, behavior and perception of the voters, but will also help the parties to convert swingers into loyal partisans for them.

The history of marketing in politics is not very old. It can be traced back to the year 1700 when the voter turnout declining was observed and a concrete political action was needed at that time (Beznosov 2007). In Britain, during the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century, a dire need of proper channelized political communication and campaigning was felt. United States of America has seen a complex form of political marketing in the beginning of nineteenth century from where it spread later to whole Europe, Asia and other continents.

After partition in India in 1947, Politics was more in patriotic form and there was a huge need to reconstruct the devastated economy. Prime Minister Pundit Jawaharlal Nehru was the first political brand who with brand Gandhi took initiative to develop political system. Later on the rise of other political parties set the foundation of marketing in politics. The period of emergency in 1977, the rise of reservation and quotas in early 1980s, the corruption and scams in late 1990s, the rise of coalition governments gave a new shape to Indian politics. It was felt that politics needed to be communicated and campaigned strategically. The advent of broadcasting, digital, print and electronic media changed the shape of Indian politics. The innovation of Web 2.0 and evolution of social media made the electorates more aware and information seeker. Indian general election 2014 has witnessed the importance of social media in national elections.

Politicians, in India, are now using various marketing tactics along with traditional devices to woo Indian voters. Pre-election campaigns are getting replaced with permanent campaigns. In-house party experts and marketing by senior leaders are getting due assistance from technically trained and highly professionals teams of campaign experts. Banners,

hoarding and bills are getting elaborated coverage on the roads along with published posts on social media and websites. The modern modes of political marketing are complementing traditional mode of political campaigning. The present study has identified and focused mainly upon the major political marketing strategies adopted by Indian politicians in India. To confirm these strategies, a comprehensive literature review has been done.

### Literature Review of Political Marketing Strategies

Lazarsfeld et al (1944) has studied voters' intention in United State of America and explained that these voters build some major voting intention in any election process. The authors have tenaciously evaluated socio-structural variables which have due capability to impact these voters intentions. Downs (1957) has done an essential job of developing the concept of political marketing. He has understood politicians and electorates as rational actors in any political process. Harrop (1990) has studied political marketing as party positioning in a factual way to change the behavior of voters. The literature on political marketing has shown that voters' turnout (Ordeshook and Zeng (1997; Hercus 2011), better governance (Virmani 2004), ethnicity (Alabi & Alabi 2007), strategic and effective leadership (Reeves 2009), permanent campaigning (Lees-Marshment 2009; Brar & Goel 2014), celebrity endorsement (Veer et al 2010), voter segmentation (Ediraras et al 2013), print media (Robideaux 2013), social media (Ndavula and Mueni 2014), advertising (Shahin 2016) are other important political marketing strategies used world-wide.

Adolphson (2010) has considered branding as one of the other eminent strategies in successful political marketing and communication. In order to prove his study, the author has made a content analysis of political campaigns run by Barack Obama and Hilary Clinton in the year US Presidential elections 2007-08. The study has observed an insignificant difference in the campaign of both the contenders. But the branding done through social media helped Barack Obama to become a successful brand and change the mood of voters. Gorden (2010) has quite different view. As per the study conducted by the author, it is mainly manifesto which can change the overall perception of the voters. The author studied the contents of manifestos of labor party and the conservatives. These manifestos contain promises likely to be fulfilled by these branded politicians. These brands should essentially focus upon the contents and keep the trust of voters intact as per promises made. Otherwise, very soon, they will be exposed and faded out of the market like any commercial brand. The study has focused upon consistency and maintaining the trust. The author has stressed upon consistency as an essential factor in maintaining his or her brand by a politician. Goel and Brar (2016) have studied Swaraj (Self-Rule) as a recent

tenet of political marketing. The authors have studied the crucial concept of Gandhian Swaraj and seen its relevance in recent Indian elections. Where Aam Aadmi Party supremo Arvind Kejriwal used the philosophy of Swaraj and won Delhi Assembly election in 2014. His philosophy change the style of Indian politics and most of the parties added this concept in their vision and mission.

### Need of the Study

In order to understand the extent of marketing strategies used in world politics, an extensive literature review on political marketing and strategies used has been conducted. The review of literature and published academic works have exposed that, in spite of sufficient number of studies in concerned field, no systematic study has been made to perceive those strategies which influence the voters the most. An attempt has been made in the present work to determine the factors influencing voters to vote in the favor of a particular political party. The present study on determining factors influencing political strategies has made an endeavor to enrich the existing literature.

### Hypothetical Research Questions

The present study is based upon following set of three hypothetical research questions:

- RQ1: Which political strategies influence the electorates the most?  
 RQ2: Which political marketing techniques and strategies determine factors coaxing the voters?  
 RQ3: Does any relationship exist between the factors influencing political marketing strategies?

### Objectives of the Study

Keeping in mind the above mentioned hypothetical research questions; the present study has laid down the following objectives:

1. To determine the most influencing political marketing strategies in India.
2. To ascertain the fundamental associations between measured variables
3. To determine the factors influencing political marketing strategies in India.
4. To establish a theoretical model based upon the factors influencing political marketing strategies.

### Research Methodology

The present study has made use of empirical research design with a non-probability sampling design. Registered voters in India form the target population in the study. Sampling unit of the study is mainly from northern part of India. A structured questionnaire was prepared and the requisite information was collected on the same.

A survey of 300 respondents from 16 different cities covering above mentioned region was made. Out of these 300 respondents, 261 valid responses were

selected and studied. These respondents were mainly those voters who casted their valuable vote in recently held Indian general election 2014 and various Vidhan Sabha Elections held in 2016 and 2017.

Voters were given two set of strategies to rank them. These set were bifurcated into nine traditional and nine modern political strategies on the basis of literature review. The voters were requested to rank them as per their perception. Voters were expected to rank ‘one’ to the strategy, they like the most and ‘nine’ to the strategy, they prefer the least among all. Then the same set of respondents were told to rate their preference of a set of eighteen statements on 5-point Likert Scale. An exploratory factor analysis was performed and the factors influencing political marketing strategies were determined. On the factors, so determined, later on re-analyzed with confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) and Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) with Path Diagram.

Their recorded preferences were analyzed with the help of statistical software SPSS version 22, AMOS version 24 and Microsoft Excel. The statistical tools used for analysis are Garrett Ranking (RQ 1), Exploratory Factor Analysis-EFA (RQ 2) and Confirmatory Factor Analysis, Chi-Square and Regression (RQ 3)

**Hypothesis under Study:**

H<sub>01</sub>: There is no significant difference in the political marketing strategies;

H<sub>02</sub>: The Pearson correlation matrix is an identity matrix;

H<sub>03</sub>: The factors, so obtained, are sufficient to explain the variation in the observed variables;

H<sub>04</sub>: There exists a positive relationship between latent constructs and Manifest Variables

**Results and Discussion**

The first hypothetical question is whether there exist any set of political strategies influence the electorates or not. To answer this statement, respondents were asked to rank these strategies. Respondents have ranked various traditional and modern political marketing strategies from one to nine separately. Then these ranking have been summarized, analyzed with the help of Garrett Ranking. The technique of Garrett’s ranking helped in finding the most effective political marketing strategy among the voters. The study has considered ranking of 261 respondents where they have ranked one to the most effective strategy existing in their opinion and ranked nine to the least preferred strategy. After collecting and tabulating the data in a structural manner, these ranks have been converted into percent positions. Then their corresponding Garrett values were obtained from the Garrett Table and ranking technique was performed. The Individual scores, for traditional and modern political marketing strategies, so obtained, have been summarized in the Table 1 given below

**Table 1: Individual scores for each traditional and modern political marketing strategy**

Traditional Political Strategies (Part A)	Strategies	Banners & Hoardings	Direct Mailers	Public Rallies	Partisan-ship	Door to Door	Score card	Caste & Religion	Free Gifts	Manifesto
	1	50	22	26	12	40	38	29	32	12
	2	41	19	24	23	40	14	32	37	31
	3	45	20	24	35	27	14	35	35	26
	4	24	29	24	26	41	19	28	29	41
	5	19	26	38	29	30	28	27	33	31
	6	23	33	33	35	25	38	27	15	32
	7	23	25	36	45	34	29	23	21	25
	8	20	38	37	38	14	29	22	28	35
	9	16	49	19	18	10	52	38	31	28
Modern Political Strategies (Part B)	Strategies	Broadcasting and Electronic Media	phone and audio Calling	paid professionals	paid news on Media	social media	Celebrity endorsement	Mural and Wraps	slogans	sarcasm
	1	90	19	30	17	23	30	23	15	14
	2	44	20	30	26	22	51	31	21	16
	3	24	26	33	40	22	32	32	35	17
	4	25	22	25	34	34	34	35	27	26
	5	27	42	29	32	26	31	22	27	25
	6	14	27	27	22	32	35	29	36	38
	7	19	21	28	28	46	12	36	26	44
	8	8	25	32	34	29	15	29	44	45
	9	10	59	27	28	27	21	24	30	36

Garrett ranking results on traditional political marketing strategies (Part A of Table 2) have a clear significance for the political parties, in-house party

experts and hired professionals to think in this direction. The political parties can frame and may rely on the results obtained, for the formation of their future

political strategies. The results have shown that banners, posters and hoardings have been appeared as the most preferred political marketing strategy to influence voters. Door to door campaigning stands at number two position. The study has shown that free gifts distribution still an accurate strategy for politician to attract voters and stand at number three. Caste and region card of the politicians seems lost little relevance owing to awareness among masses. Public rallies, Manifesto and promises and loyal partisanship lie at fifth, sixth and seventh position consequently. Previous score card of the parties stand at number eighth, seems that voters pay less attention and forget during re-elections about the economic and development activities undertaken during the reign. So parties need not to worry on this issue much. Direct mailers like leaflets, brochures and handouts still seem least preferred and need little attention and budget allocation on this.

Garrett Ranking results obtained on modern political marketing strategies (Part B of Table 2) have their separate importance. The results have shown that

broadcasting and electronic media has been appeared as the most preferred modern political marketing strategy to influence voters. Celebrity endorsement stands at second position. It shows that the celebrity from non-political backgrounds have significant influence on the voters. Voters pay due attention to them. The study has shown that paid hired professional have a power to tilt the results and is an accurate strategy for politicians to attract voters and stand at number three. Mural and Wrap advertising seems have little attraction among masses. Paid news on media, social media, caste and slogans lie at fifth, sixth and seventh position in the ranking. Sarcasm campaigning stand at number eighth, shows that voters pay less attention toward such ill words spoken by politicians to harass their opponent. These sarcasms have short life and people forget them. Phone and audio computerized calls to the voters on the name of politicians still seems least preferred and needed little attention by political parties and budget allocation on this.

The results and rankings have been summarized in Table 2 given below.

**Table 2: Final ranking for each traditional and modern political marketing strategy**

Traditional Political Marketing Strategies (Part A)↓	Rank →	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Composite Scores	Ranks	
	TPMS↓												
<b>Banners &amp; Hoardings</b>		4050	2829	2790	1344	950	1035	874	620	304	14796	1ST	
<b>Door to Door</b>		3240	2760	1674	2296	1500	1125	1292	434	190	14511	2ND	
<b>Free Gifts</b>		2592	2553	2170	1624	1650	675	798	868	589	13519	3RD	
<b>Caste &amp; Religion</b>		2349	2208	2170	1568	1350	1215	874	682	722	13138	4TH	
<b>Public Rallies</b>		2106	1656	1488	1344	1900	1485	1368	1147	361	12855	5TH	
<b>Manifesto</b>		972	2139	1612	2296	1550	1440	950	1085	532	12576	6TH	
<b>Partisanship</b>		972	1587	2170	1456	1450	1575	1710	1178	342	12440	7TH	
<b>Score card</b>		3078	966	868	1064	1400	1710	1102	899	988	12075	8TH	
<b>Direct Mailers</b>		1782	1311	1240	1624	1300	1485	950	1178	931	11801	9TH	
Modern Political Marketing Strategies (Part B)↓	Rank →	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Composite Scores	Ranks	
	MPMS↓												
	<b>Broadcasting &amp; Electronic Media</b>		7290	3036	1488	1400	1350	630	722	248	190	16354	1ST
	<b>Celebrity endorsement</b>		2430	3519	1984	1904	1550	1575	456	465	399	14282	2ND
	<b>Paid professional</b>		2430	2070	2046	1400	1450	1215	1064	992	513	13180	3RD
	<b>Mural and Wraps</b>		1863	2139	1984	1960	1100	1305	1368	899	456	13074	4TH
	<b>Paid news on Media</b>		1377	1794	2480	1904	1600	990	1064	1054	532	12795	5TH
	<b>Social media</b>		1863	1518	1364	1904	1300	1440	1748	899	513	12549	6TH
	<b>Slogans</b>		1215	1449	2170	1512	1350	1620	988	1364	570	12238	7TH
	<b>Sarcasm</b>		1134	1104	1054	1456	1250	1710	1672	1395	684	11459	8TH
<b>Phone and audio Calling</b>		1539	1380	1612	1232	2100	1215	798	775	1121	11772	9TH	

These rankings have shown that voters have their own criterion of explaining their perception. Now next hypothetical question arises here which political marketing techniques and strategies determine factors

coaxing the voters and measure their vital perceptions. So exploratory factor analysis is the best statistical technique to answer this question. Hence the perception of voters toward above mentioned significant political

strategies were judged from the same set of respondents on 5-point Likert Scale. On this scale, the respondents were asked to rate 5 to the strategy influencing them the most and 1 to that strategy, perceived by them as the least influencing. These different statements explaining perception of voters were recorded and analyzed with the help of Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 22. The Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was performed to ascertain the fundamental associations between measured variables and to develop latent constructs for the pre-defined manifest variables related to political marketing. The mean scores and standard deviation of the manifest variables were computed and has been summarized and shown in the table 4. The calculated mean score and standard deviation has not posed any technical problem in the data. Then it is essential to perform Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) and Bartlett's Test on these observed variables. KMO test is a statistical measure of the

sampling adequacy and a test the suitability of the data for performing exploratory factor analysis. Bartlett's test of sphericity discusses the relationship between various manifest variables.

The extracted KMO value of 0.667 is satisfactory enough to perform EFA. The approximate value of Chi-Square 496.742 with 136 degree of freedom (d.o.f.) and 0.000 significance value against p-value of 0.05 in Bartlett's Test of adequacy shows the suitability of EFA on collected data shows that the correlation matrix so obtained is quite significantly different from identity matrix. The correlation between different observed variables is almost zero. The component matrix with 17 observed variables cannot be retained and it was pre decided in the study that not more than 3 factors with highest variance explained will be further considered to perform Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) later. The factors so extracted has been discussed in the table 3 given below:

**Table 3: Total variance explained with extraction method (Principal Component Analysis)**

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	2.778	16.342	16.342	2.778	16.342	16.342	2.305	13.560	13.560
2	1.777	10.450	26.792	1.777	10.450	26.792	1.867	10.982	24.542
3	1.340	7.881	34.673	1.340	7.881	34.673	1.722	10.132	34.673
4	1.214	7.142	41.815						
5	1.086	6.386	48.201						
6	1.066	6.270	54.471						
7	.962	5.658	60.129						
8	.900	5.297	65.426						
9	.875	5.148	70.574						
10	.825	4.855	75.429						
11	.746	4.388	79.817						
12	.706	4.150	83.968						
13	.628	3.697	87.664						
14	.604	3.552	91.216						
15	.559	3.288	94.504						
16	.499	2.936	97.440						
17	.435	2.560	100.000						

With the help of principal component analysis (PCA), top 3 factors with Eigen value more than 1 has explained almost 37% of the total variance. Rotated sum of square loadings has explained relationship between the factors and manifested variables. The

factor loadings of the factors so determined have absolute value more than 0.4. The rotated component matrix containing these factors influencing political marketing strategies for any political party in India has been given as below:

**Table 4: Rotated component matrix with rotation method (Varimax with Kaiser Normalization)**

Perception of voters toward political marketing strategies	Mean Score	Standard Deviation	Component		
			Direct Political Marketing	Relationship Political Marketing	Transactional Political Marketing
			(Factor 1)	(Factor 2)	(Factor 3)
I read political information on banners and hoardings (Banners & Hoardings)	4.34	0.792		0.433	
I trust on broadcasting and electronic media for political information (BEM)	4.17	0.865			

I usually offer my vote to a candidate of my caste and religion(Caste & Religion)	4.23	0.981		0.7	
Celebrity endorsements are sufficient to attract a voter(Celebrity)	4	1.081		0.448	
Knocking by politicians at my door attract me a lot (Door-to-Door)	4.15	1.063		0.519	
Direct mailers at my place are sufficient to win my vote (Mailers)	3.43	1.28	0.678		
I am fascinated by free gifts and offering from politicians (Free Gifts)	4.03	1.104			0.527
Hired campaign professionals have a capability to change my perception (Hired Experts)	4.24	0.951			0.483
Mural and wrap seems to be very attractive to me (Murals)	3.7	1.032	0.442		
Sarcasm campaigning amused me a lot (Sarcasm)	3.22	1.251	0.697		
Paid news has enough power to influence voters (Paid News)	3.73	1.211			0.651
I first check manifesto before offering my vote (Manifesto)	3.66	1.124	0.548		
I believe in loyalty, partisanship and association with a party to vote (Partisanship)	3.85	1.156			0.607
I verify previous track record and score card of a party before voting (Score Card)	3.76	1.211	0.601		
From campaign slogans of a party, I make up my mind to vote (Slogans)	4.22	3.266			
The gathering in public rallies can change my perception about party (Rallies)	4.19	0.904			
Social Media and websites are sufficient enough to change my mood to vote (Social Media)	4.33	0.949		0.489	

These EFA has been able to determine three factors viz. direct political marketing, relationship political marketing and transactional political marketing. Now the last hypothetical question arises whether there exist any relationship between manifest variables and their corresponding underlying latent constructs. The study of existing literature and theory has been used to perform Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA). So with

the help of existing theory and present empirical analysis, a relationship between three unobserved variables with their corresponding statements has been established. CFA has been performed with IBM SPSS AMOS version 24. The model specified has not been able to retain all the statements. The Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) technique has been used to see the model fitting.

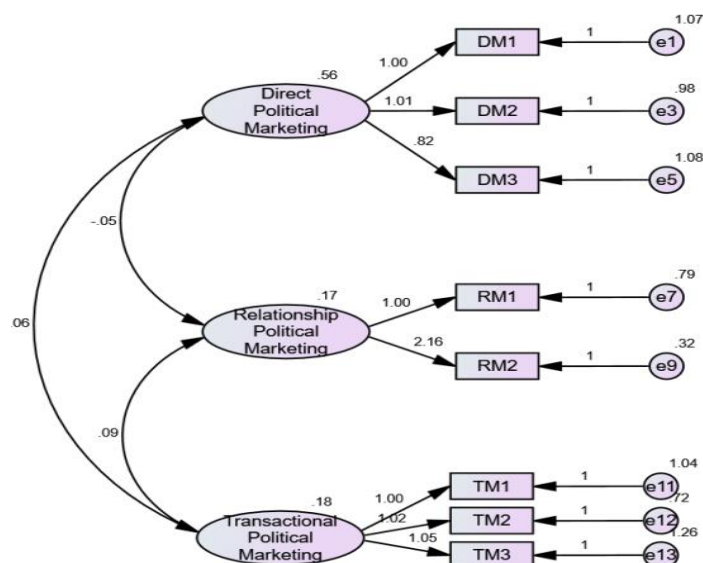


Fig. 1: Structural equation modeling (SEM) for political marketing strategies

The model fit has shown that there is covariance among latent constructs (LCs). In the first LC, Direct political marketing (DPM), there were 5 observed variables in EFA. Out of these 5 variables, only 3 could be retained by SEM Path diagram. These are mailers, score card and sarcasm campaigning. In second LC, Relationship political marketing (RPM), only caste &

religion and door-to-door could be retained in model fitting. In the third LC, Transactional political marketing (TPM), free gifts, hired experts, and paid news could become part of final model fit. The Amos output so obtained has been described in the table 5 given below:

**Table 5: Computation of degree of freedom in AMOS-Output**

Number of various Sample Moments	36
Number of various parameters to be estimated	19
Degree of Freedom (dof) (i.e. 36-19)	17

There are total 36 sample moments, out of which 19 free parameters have been estimated and rest of the 17 are fixed parameters. These 19 parameters include 5 regression weights, 3 co-variances among LCs, 11 variances for 8 error terms and 3 LCs.

The structural equation model fit has adequately described the available sample data. Now the next step is to validate the goodness and badness of the fit of the data. The absolute, incremental and parsimony fit indices have been calculated and summarized as below.

**Table 6: Model fit indices in AMOS-Output with satisfactory or unsatisfactory results**

Fit Measures	CMIN	CMIN/DF	RMR	GFI	AGFI	CFI	p-Ratio	RMSEA
<b>Standard Recommended Values</b>	chi-Square Value	Less than 2	Less Than 0.08	More than 0.95	More than 0.95	More than 0.90	Less than 0.8	Less than 0.08
<b>AMOS Output</b>	25.437	1.496	0.066	0.976	0.949	0.944	0.607	0.044
<b>interpretation</b>	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

All the fit indices fall in the satisfactory range shows the model specified above has been able to reproduce the observed covariance matrix. Hence a similarity exists between observed correlation matrix and consequent expected covariance matrix.

The above SEM has been able to propose a theoretical model which understand the factors influencing political marketing strategies

### Future Scope of the Study

The study has laid a primary theoretical background for future studies in this area. The number of factors can be increased cautiously so that the model fit should not be over identified. The literature survey has lacked a cemented work in this regard. With more additions and deletions, this work can be extended further and will prove useful for various political parties around the globe.

### Conclusion

The study on political marketing has shown that political marketing is a blend of traditional and modern political marketing strategies. It can be dangerous for any political party to ignore any single strategy. The choice and marketing mix will diverge from one place to another place and one constituency to another constituency. The choice of any strategy may go beyond direct, relational and transactional political marketing strategies.

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