Evaluation of the Political Marketing Model with a Focus on Individual Behavior Components

Mohammad Marandi[1], Hossein Safarzadeh[2]* ,Mansoureh Aligholi[1]

1.Department of Business Management, Central Tehran Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tehran, Iran.
2.Department of Business Management, Central Tehran Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tehran, Iran (Corresponding author).

* Corresponding author email address: hr.safarzadeh@gmail.com

Abstract

The present study aims to design and explain a political marketing model with a focus on individual behavior components. The data collection method in this study was conducted using both library research and field research. The data collection tool in the quantitative section was a researcher-made questionnaire, developed based on the results of the qualitative section and distributed among 310 individuals using non-probability random sampling. For qualitative data analysis, inductive qualitative content analysis was employed. For quantitative data analysis, descriptive statistics were used, and for examining the research questions, inferential statistics and the partial least squares (PLS) method were applied using SPSS and SMARTPLS software. The study's findings indicate that individual factors, including variables such as political awareness, vote market needs assessment, and value creation for voters, play a key role in stimulating and directing voter behavior. Marketing and media factors include variables such as media framing, effective marketing and advertising, branding, and the development of a new paradigm in political marketing. Additionally, environmental and technological factors encompass variables such as technological changes, international pressures, and continuous environmental monitoring. These factors, as external variables, shape the political and social environment and influence marketing strategies. However, leveraging voters' political awareness to develop targeted electoral messages and designing political marketing strategies with an emphasis on technology and media can create greater impact.

Keywords: *Marketing, Political Marketing, Individual Behavior.*

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1. Introduction

Political marketing is recognized as one of the vital tools in electoral processes and the promotion of political messages in the contemporary world. This approach, utilizing the principles and techniques of commercial marketing, assists political parties and candidates in effectively conveying their messages to the audience. However, what distinguishes political marketing from other forms of marketing is its particular emphasis on influencing individual voter behavior [1]. In this regard, the components of individual behavior, as key elements in political decision-making, play a fundamental role in the success or failure of a political campaign.

In today's world, where digital media and social networks significantly shape individuals' attitudes, decisions, and behaviors, a deep understanding and precise analysis of individual behavior are essential for political marketing. Especially in societies experiencing rapid and dynamic political changes, assessing how electoral decisions are influenced through identifying and understanding individual behaviors can help candidates and political parties implement their strategies more effectively [2]. Components of individual behavior, such as attitudes, beliefs, personal identities, emotions, motivations, and personal preferences, all influence political decision-making. Individuals unconsciously make political decisions under the influence of factors such as a sense of belonging to social groups, past experiences, information received from various news sources, and even their cultural and ethnic identities. Therefore, understanding these factors and identifying them as integral parts of individual behavior is a fundamental prerequisite for designing effective political marketing campaigns [3].

The theoretical framework of the political marketing model generally focuses on identifying and analyzing voter behavior and designing effective strategies to gain their votes. This model, emphasizing individual behavior components such as needs, beliefs, values, emotions, and motivations, seeks to develop mechanisms for effective communication with the audience and build trust among them. The primary goal is to enable candidates and political parties to optimize their branding and advertising strategies based on data-driven analyses [4]. The theoretical foundation of political marketing based on individual behavior is derived from several psychological and communication theories, which include key components such as individual behavior and voter psychology, political

decision-making processes, and political messaging and communication. Individual behavior and voter psychology examine factors such as values, beliefs, motivations, and emotions, which significantly shape voter decisions. Understanding these factors helps candidates identify what influences electoral decisions and how they can align their campaign messages accordingly. One of the most relevant theories in this area is Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, which prioritizes human needs from physiological needs to self-actualization. According to this theory, political candidates should design their strategies based on the psychological and social needs of voters. For instance, voters from lower-income classes might be more concerned with economic security and job opportunities, while those from higher-income classes may prioritize civil rights and individual freedoms [5]. These differences in needs can significantly influence electoral strategies (Alizadeh et al., 2024). Another relevant theory is self-control theory, which argues that individuals must regulate their impulses to achieve their goals. In political marketing, this theory suggests that candidates should craft messages that help voters align their choices with long-term motivations and aspirations. For example, campaign messages emphasizing a brighter future, economic growth, or national progress can encourage voters to make strategic, long-term electoral decisions. Alongside motivation theories, Rational Choice Theory plays a crucial role in this model. This theory posits that individuals make decisions by rationally evaluating their options, choosing the one that maximizes their benefits [6]. In political marketing, this means candidates should present clear, evidence-based arguments showcasing the benefits of their programs. For instance, campaign advertisements emphasizing economic reform, tax reductions, or social policies can effectively persuade voters who prefer logical, data-driven decision-making. Additionally, Information Processing Theory suggests that individuals actively process and respond to information based on past experiences and existing beliefs [7]. In political marketing, this theory highlights the importance of presenting information in a structured, evidence-based manner so voters can easily interpret and evaluate campaign messages. This is particularly useful for voters who rely on factual, well-documented arguments when making decisions. Regarding communication strategies, Social Influence Theory is particularly relevant to political marketing. This theory posits that people's decisions are shaped by social groups, family, peers, colleagues, and media [8]. Political campaigns can leverage these social influences by targeting specific community

groups through celebrity endorsements, social media engagement, and group-based political messaging. Persuasion Theory is another key component in political marketing, emphasizing how messages can change attitudes and behaviors through strategic messaging [9]. Politicians can use persuasion techniques to transform neutral or negative attitudes into positive support, employing emotional appeals, compelling narratives, and credible data to influence voter perception. Another essential factor in political marketing is understanding voter motivations, including social, economic, and psychological drivers that influence political choices. Political candidates who focus on economic issues, such as job creation and financial security, can attract voters primarily concerned with economic stability. Similarly, campaigns that highlight social justice, equity, and democratic values may appeal to voters with strong ideological commitments. Emotions also play a pivotal role in political decision-making, as feelings such as fear, hope, optimism, and anxiety can strongly impact electoral behavior. For example, campaigns can use hopeful, forward-looking messages ("A better future for all") or fear-based messaging (highlighting potential crises or policy failures) to mobilize voter participation. Political branding also relies on the strategic application of voter psychology and emotional engagement [10]. Candidates who successfully establish a strong political identity through branding strategies (such as memorable slogans, consistent messaging, and distinctive visual identity) can create a lasting impression among voters. Additionally, ideological alignment plays a significant role in voter behavior, as individuals tend to support candidates whose policies align with their existing beliefs and values. By integrating these theoretical insights, political marketing models can help candidates develop highly targeted campaign strategies, refine their communication approaches, and ultimately increase voter engagement and support. The objective of designing and explaining a political marketing model centered on individual behavior components is to provide a systematic approach through which candidates and political parties can effectively engage with voters and persuade them to offer their support. This model should employ precise psychological, social, and cultural analyses to gain a deeper understanding of voter behavior and subsequently utilize this information to develop marketing strategies [11].

In this study, the fundamental concepts of political marketing and the application of marketing techniques in the political sphere will first be analyzed. Then, by examining various components of individual behavior, the factors influencing political decision-making will be identified. Finally, a political marketing model based on individual behavior will be designed, and its applications in electoral campaigns will be explored. This model can assist candidates and political parties in adjusting their strategies in a manner that directly and effectively influences individual electoral behavior, thereby increasing their chances of victory. Given technological advancements and the increasing influence of media in shaping public opinion, developing and implementing political marketing models based on individual behavior analysis is not only essential for achieving electoral goals but also for enhancing political participation and strengthening democracy.

2. Methodology

The data collection method in the qualitative section was conducted through library research. In this study, semi-structured interviews were used to identify the components of the political marketing model with a focus on individual behavior components. The statistical population in the quantitative section consisted of voters with experience in participating in presidential elections. Given the nature of the target population, the sampling method was non-probability random sampling, and the sample size was determined to be 310 individuals using G*Power software.

In the quantitative section, field data collection was conducted through a researcher-made questionnaire designed based on the criteria obtained from the qualitative phase. Furthermore, in this study, a questionnaire was used to present the political marketing model centered on individual behavior components. The questionnaire was developed according to the indicators derived from influential characteristics and was distributed online to participants. After ensuring validity (construct validity using factor analysis) and reliability (Cronbach's alpha coefficient), the questionnaire was provided to respondents, who were invited to participate voluntarily.

3. Findings and Results

In the quantitative section, considering the maximum variance and a 5% error level, more than 400 questionnaires were distributed electronically to increase the response rate and facilitate the research process. Among these, 310 participants completed the questionnaire, forming the basis for data analysis and hypothesis testing. The selected variables in this study were examined based on a conceptual model. The normality of the data was assessed using

skewness and kurtosis indices. The sample included 310 respondents.

The validity and reliability of the constructs were evaluated using the measurement model, and hypothesis testing and model fit were assessed using covariance-based structural equation modeling with SPSS (version 20) and SmartPLS (version 2). The application of structural equation modeling in assessing latent variables provided a better representation of conceptual relationships. As stated by

Mittal et al., "The partial least squares (PLS) approach assumes that individual variables change one-to-one with the rest of the model, and the model fit indices obtained in the measurement model phase are controlled." Moreover, this method calculates an autonomous standard error and generates approximate t-values for testing the significance of structural paths. Therefore, as observed in Table 1, all variables are in an acceptable condition.

Table 1. Descriptive Indices for Research Variable Dimensions

Research Variable	Sample Size	Mean	Standard Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
Digital Infrastructure	86	3.26	3.092	-0.291	0.577
Digital Integration	86	3.17	3.381	0.210	-0.284
Environmental Characteristics	86	3.47	4.628	-0.318	-0.737
Behavioral Patterns	86	3.86	2.329	-0.609	-0.322
Value Creation	86	3.19	2.014	-0.598	-0.344
Competitiveness	86	3.69	4.444	-0.247	-0.704

To assess questionnaire reliability, Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability were used. The reliability results for each variable indicate that all values exceeded 0.7, demonstrating acceptable reliability. For validity assessment, convergent and discriminant validity were

applied. Table 3 presents the findings related to convergent validity. The obtained results for the latent variables in the model exceeded 0.5, indicating an acceptable level of convergent validity.

Table 2. Variable Validity Assessment Results

Variable	R²	Cronbach's Alpha (CA > 0.6)	Reliability (rho_A > 0.7)	Composite Reliability (CR > 0.7)	Average Variance Extracted (AVE > 0.5)
Political Structure	0.615	0.818	0.822	0.880	0.648
Individual Factors	0.583	0.794	0.897	0.867	0.766
Ideological Factors	0.823	0.875	0.878	0.906	0.616
Laws and Policies	0.284	0.752	0.857	0.817	0.690
Competitor Identification	0.640	0.771	0.772	0.867	0.686
Political Situation	0.674	0.860	0.865	0.900	0.643
Political Group Identification and Segmentation	0.751	0.876	0.882	0.915	0.729
Electoral District Ranking	0.785	0.844	0.846	0.895	0.682
Technological Changes	0.016	0.748	0.732	0.845	0.732
Media Framing	0.612	0.837	0.837	0.902	0.754
International Pressures	0.770	0.828	0.829	0.897	0.745
Political Awareness	0.772	0.772	0.774	0.868	0.688
Effective Marketing and Advertising	0.804	0.804	0.837	0.885	0.720
Vote Market Needs Assessment	0.185	0.745	0.753	0.854	0.662
Value Creation for Voters	0.642	0.870	0.872	0.911	0.720
Designing a Product Aligned with Market Demand	0.651	0.779	0.799	0.871	0.693
Continuous Environmental Monitoring	0.117	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000
Effective Networking in Elections	0.185	0.751	0.761	0.857	0.666
Developing a New Paradigm in Political Marketing	0.677	0.866	0.871	0.904	0.653
Branding	0.824	0.824	0.826	0.895	0.740
Political Discourse Development in Elections	0.663	0.840	0.850	0.903	0.758

This index indicates the consistency between the structural model and the measurement model. If the goodness-of-fit value exceeds 0.4, it signifies an acceptable model fit. The calculated goodness-of-fit index was 0.622, demonstrating an appropriate model fit.

The second category of findings in this study examines the structural model test, which evaluates the structural model of the research after confirming its validity and reliability. This model enables the assessment of research frameworks. Figure below presents the results obtained from the SMARTPLS2 software output. According to this model, the factor loadings were significant at a 95% confidence level, and all t-statistics were outside the range of -1.96 to +1.96.

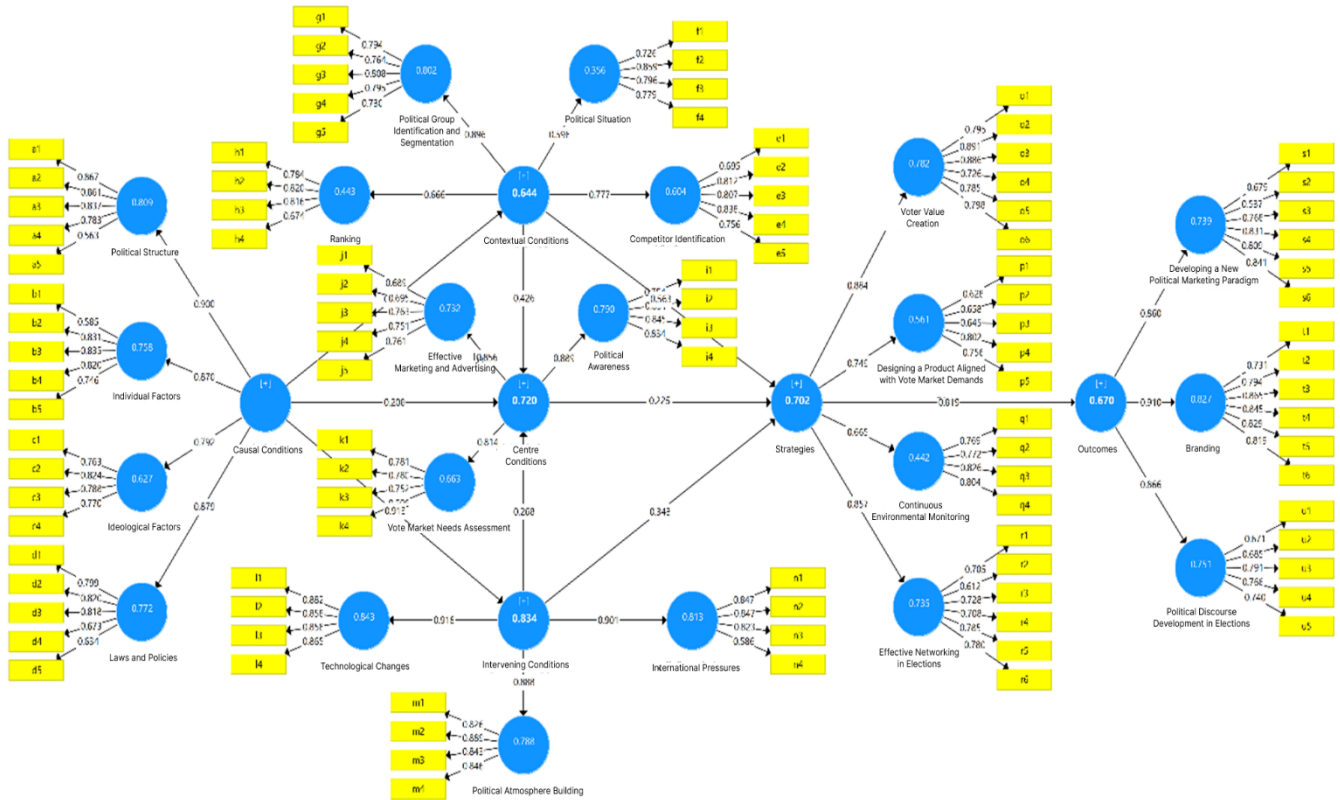**Figure 1.** Structural Model of the Research in Significance Mode

Figure 2. Structural Model of the Research in Standard Mode

4.   Discussion and Conclusion

The present study was conducted to develop a political marketing model with a focus on individual behavior components. The data collection tool involved expert interviews. Participants included election campaign managers, directors, supervisors, senior consultants, and marketing managers. In the quantitative section, a structured questionnaire was designed to create the quantitative research model.

The quantitative model was analyzed using SmartPLS software. This analysis included identified variables, their relationships, and comparisons with previous studies. The variables were categorized into four main groups. Political and ideological factors included variables such as political structure, laws and policies, political situation, competitor identification, and political group identification and segmentation. These variables directly influenced environmental conditions and voter behavior. The average scores for these variables (ranging from 3.36 to 3.83) indicated their significant impact on decision-making processes.

Individual factors included variables such as political awareness, vote market needs assessment, and value creation for voters, which played a crucial role in stimulating and guiding voter behavior. The high average scores of these variables (ranging from 3.58 to 3.86) reflected their strong and significant influence. Marketing and media factors included variables such as media framing, effective marketing and advertising, branding, and the development of a new paradigm in political marketing. These variables played a critical role in shaping public opinion and delivering political messages. Their average scores (ranging from 3.52 to 3.79) underscored their importance in electoral processes.

Environmental and technological factors encompassed variables such as technological changes, international pressures, and continuous environmental monitoring. As external variables, they shaped the political and social environment and influenced marketing strategies. The average scores of these variables (ranging from 3.38 to 3.94) indicated their strong impact on electoral success.

The internal relationships within each category demonstrated high correlations among variables. For instance, within political factors, political structure and laws

and policies directly influenced the political situation and competitor identification. Among individual factors, political awareness served as the foundation for vote market needs assessment and value creation for voters. In marketing and media, effective marketing and advertising provided the groundwork for branding and the formation of a new paradigm in political marketing.

The relationships between categories also revealed significant interactions. Political and ideological factors heavily influenced individual factors. For example, political structure affected political awareness and political group identification. Similarly, environmental and technological factors influenced marketing and media factors. For instance, technological advancements provided new tools for media framing and effective marketing.

These findings align with previous research. Studies [1, 3, 9, 12, 13] confirmed that political structure and political conditions have a direct impact on electoral behavior. The results of this study also indicate the strong influence of these variables. The role of laws and policies in shaping political behavior has been validated in multiple studies. The findings align with Bartels (2008), who emphasized the influence of political awareness and vote market needs assessment. Research has shown that voter political awareness plays a crucial role in their political choices. The importance of branding and effective marketing in attracting voters [3, 13] was also evident in this study.

All variables had a significant impact on the model, and the internal and external relationships between them were well-defined. The most critical variables, based on mean values and t-statistics, included technological changes, political awareness, and electoral district ranking. These findings align with many previous studies, although some differences were observed in the weighting of certain variables. It is recommended that advanced models such as structural equation modeling (SEM) be used to explore nonlinear relationships among variables. Additionally, comparative studies across different countries or political environments are suggested to examine the generalizability of the findings. Utilizing voter political awareness to develop targeted electoral messages and designing political marketing strategies with an emphasis on technology and media can enhance effectiveness.

Most studies in political marketing are theoretical rather than empirical; however, this research not only provides an extensive review of domestic and international studies on the subject but also incorporates empirical evidence from expert perspectives and various viewpoints on the phenomenon.

Moreover, among previous studies, no research was found that comprehensively identified political marketing with a focus on individual behavior, its consequences, and its presentation as a theory, model, or extracted framework. In previous research, only a limited number of factors were theoretically or empirically discussed without full explanation.

However, this study systematically and comprehensively identifies, describes, and explains the phenomenon of political marketing with a focus on individual behavior and proposes a comprehensive model for its successful implementation. Some concepts and extracted insights from this study have not been considered in previous research. Therefore, this study provides additional insights that can enhance political marketing models based on individual behavior. Based on this, the following recommendations are proposed:

Effective Networking in Elections

- **Establishing and Strengthening Real-World Communication Networks**: Developing strong, real connections with various political movements and influential figures to increase campaign support and influence. This includes regular meetings, participation in political events, and collaboration with governing institutions.

- **Leveraging Virtual Networks**: Utilizing social media and digital tools to build and strengthen voter engagement and expand campaign reach. Interactive content such as online polls, live videos, and engaging posts can enhance campaign support.

- **Producing Documentary and Educational Content**: Developing and broadcasting documentaries and educational materials that introduce different political orientations and their role in the electoral process. These materials can increase voter awareness and understanding of electoral issues while promoting political dialogue.

- **Maintaining Continuous Engagement with Key Figures and Reference Groups**: Building and sustaining effective relationships with key figures and reference groups that can directly or indirectly support the campaign. These relationships may include collaboration with social activists, intellectual leaders, and popular public figures who can enhance campaign credibility and support.

Developing a New Paradigm in Political Marketing

- **Formulating New Political Marketing Frameworks**: Creating structured and adaptive

frameworks for political marketing that align with evolving environmental and social conditions. These frameworks should include principles, strategies, and tools that enable campaigns to adapt to new electoral conditions and conduct more effective marketing.

- **Encouraging Critical Thinking and In-Depth Political Analysis**: Promoting critical thinking and deeper analysis of political issues to increase awareness and understanding of electoral processes. This can be achieved through workshops, analytical articles, and educational content that encourage voters to critically assess political matters.

- **Utilizing Soft Power in Marketing**: Employing persuasive and engaging strategies without relying on coercion or direct pressure. This includes social campaigns, charitable programs, and cultural activities that build voter trust and support.

- **Analyzing Sources of Power in Society**: Identifying and analyzing influential institutions, prominent figures, and supportive groups that can help campaigns expand their reach and influence.

Branding

- **Developing a Unique Identity for Candidates**: Creating and strengthening a distinctive identity for candidates that voters can easily recognize and remember. This identity may include logos, slogans, color schemes, and a unique communication style that differentiates candidates from competitors.

- **Enhancing Social Media Presence**: Effectively using social media to strengthen political branding and increase voter engagement. Consistent, engaging, and interactive content can boost candidate recognition and support.

- **Improving Electoral Advertising Standards**: Enhancing the quality and standards of electoral advertising through professional methods and techniques, including high-quality designs, well-produced content, and strategic, targeted advertising campaigns.

- **Increasing Information Exchange in Support Networks**: Strengthening communication and awareness among supporters and voters through emails, newsletters, and educational programs that share critical campaign information regularly and effectively.

Developing Political Discourse in Elections

- **Designing Election Policies Aligned with Voter Needs**: Formulating and implementing policies that address voter concerns and preferences, ensuring alignment with core electoral issues.

- **Influencing Voter Attitudes through Effective Messaging**: Using targeted and impactful messages to shape voter attitudes and values. These messages should resonate with voter emotions and motivations, reinforcing their support for the candidate.

- **Conducting Market Research for Electoral Strategy Development**: Performing qualitative and quantitative research to identify voter needs and priorities, helping campaigns tailor their election strategies accordingly.

This study was conducted within a limited timeframe and resource constraints, which may have affected the depth and scope of the analysis. Limited time for interviews, data collection, and field analysis may have restricted more comprehensive examinations of certain political marketing aspects. Additionally, financial constraints and limited access to necessary resources may have posed challenges to fully implementing all stages of the research.

Authors' Contributions

Authors equally contributed to this article.

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Declaration of Interest

The authors report no conflict of interest.

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Ethical Considerations

All procedures performed in this study were under the ethical standards.

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