

Voters' Behaviour and the Decision to Vote a Political Leader

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Abstract: In a contemporary context, the role of political marketing is essential in promoting a candidate, a political party or the political projects. Also, political marketing is a tool by means of which one can mobilize all resources in order to fully meet the voters' needs and wishes. The main objectives of the study are: 1). presenting the political leader's personality and its importance; 2). theoretical issues regarding the main endogenous and exogenous influences on voters' behaviour in granting a vote to a political leader; 3). a representative model of the influence of endogenous and exogenous factors on the voters' behaviour in an electoral context; 4). determining sample size and choosing sampling method; 5). analysis and interpretation of survey data. A set of themes and policies used by a candidate in a campaign that can influence the voters' behaviour are presented in this study.

Keywords: political marketing, political leader, personality, voters' behavior, emotional intelligence

JEL Classification: M31

1.Introduction

Political marketing is useful for political organizations when setting organizational goals and outlining tasks to be performed. According to a model from literature, the main themes and policies election eloquent for voters will be presented,we will identify events that may contribute to drawing a politician’s image in the minds of voters and epistemic core values of the Romanian electoral market will be presented.

2.Political leader’s personality and its importance

Lees-Marshment (2003) notes that “political marketing is not only interesting to study, but it is important to be studied” because “political marketing can help organizations meet demand”, “although marketing has its origins in the business scope, its concepts and techniques have considerable applicability providing value to the political scope” (Lees-Marshment, J, pp.26-28). Political marketing significantly helps to meet the voters’ needs, and what is more important is how some parties and politicians implement certain policies to meet these needs, in order to make parties and politicians more responsive to the needs of the electorate.

Alport și Scheldon quoted by Milca (2007, p.23) mention that personality represents “the dynamic organization of individual’s cognitive and physiological aspects” (Milca, V., 2007, p.23). In this context, personality covers few essential characteristics, namely: “temperament, character traits , biological functions, body shapes and sometimes cultural conditioning”(Milca, V., 2007, p.23).

The connection between personality and politics is perhaps the essence of political leadership because one can say that a political leader is that leader who possesses a well defined personality, political skills and organizational competences. The internal factors but also the qualities acquired in time can be a starting point for a political leader when he/she is organizing his/her activity.

Goleman, McKee și Boyatzis (2007, p.62) mention the following areas of emotional intelligence as are shown in the below table:

Tabel no. 1 – Emotional intelligence areas and adjacent skills

Personal skills	Self-knowledge Self-confidence Self-control
Social skills	Social consciousness Managing the relationships

Source: adapted from Goleman, D., Boyatzis, R., McKee, A. (2007), Inteligență emoțională în leadership, Editura Curtea Veche, București, pp.62-63.

A good political leader must be an example through his/her behavioural traits for all those who gave him/her the final vote but also for the other part of the electorate who didn’t have enough confidence in his/her political program. So, it is important to mention the fact that effective leaders create a resonance and harmony with the people they lead facilitating in this way concentration (Goleman, D., 2016, p.15).

When a leader has a social conscience - especially empathy – he/she can resonate and create a suitable climate for the team he/she leads. Similarly, the political leader who conveys empathy towards his/her citizens can only obtain good results because for each part communication is efficient.

3. Theoretical issues regarding the main endogenous and exogenous influences on voters' behaviour in according a vote to a political leader

Voters can involve emotionally when they answer to the political messages and they cannot get back the vote if after their decision appears a state of discontent, dissatisfaction, while in consumption decisions, if there is a cognitive dissonance, consumer can demand the product repayment. So, the decision to vote must be rational. Voters vote once a day and they need to use with their choice whether they like it or not. So, in political marketing enthusiasm and emotions are stronger than in commercial marketing. On the other hand, voters are also very rational and critically engaging more when they think about who to vote, then when they face with the experience of purchase / use of goods and / or services (Peng, N., Hackley, C., 2009, p.180).

Thus, voters can assume certain risks because any action will produce "consequences that cannot be fully anticipated, and some of them could be sometimes unpleasant" (O' Cass, A., 2003, p.65).

O' Cass (2003) considers that "probability and also the outcome of each event of the election is uncertain", "the perceived risk of the consumer being a subjective feeling that occurs following an election that could lead to an undesirable outcome", including "financial risk, physical, psychological or social" (O' Cass, A., 2003, p.65).

The main endogenous factors of influence on individuals' behaviour are: perception, learning, motivation, attitude and personality. There are presented the definitions, as it follows:

Kotler and Keller (2008) consider that perception is "the process whereby an

individual selects, organizes and interprets the information received, to create an image about the world that has a meaning for him" (Kotler, P., Keller, K.L., 2008, p.279).

Kotler et.al. (1998) consider that learning involves "the occurrence of some changes in the individual behaviour, changes that result from accumulated experience", being "the result of the combined actions of impulses, inputs, suggestions, answers and knowledge consolidation" (Kotler, P., Armstrong, G., Saunders, J., Wong, V., 1998, p.363). Cătoiu and Teodorescu (2004) note that motivation is considered, in a general sense, as an "inside condition mobilizing a body, in order to fulfil a purpose" (Cătoiu, I., Teodorescu, N., 2004, p. 19).

Schiffman and Kanuk (2007) specify that "an attitude is a learned predisposition which consists in manifesting a constant favourable or unfavourable behaviour regarding a certain object", "a considerable importance in understanding attitudes in the consumer's behaviour", consisting in "assessing the structure and composition of an attitude" (Schiffman, L.G., Kanuk, L.L., 2007, p.268). Cătoiu and Teodorescu (2004) consider that personality represents "those features of a consumer that make him have a distinctive behaviour in purchase and consumption, compared to other consumers" (Cătoiu, I., Teodorescu, N., 2004, p.71). The same authors consider that personality represents "those consumer's personality traits who make him/her to have a distinct purchasing and consumption behaviour compared to other consumers" (Cătoiu, I., Teodorescu, N., 2004, p.71).

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distinct purchasing and consumption behavior compared to other consumers" (Cătoiu, I., Teodorescu, N., 2004, p.71).

Another approach to the concept of <personality> is specified by Schiffman and Kanuk (2007, p.144) : "personality can be described as constituting psychological characteristics that determine and reflect how a person answers her surroundings" so, "even though, the personality tends to be constant, it can change abruptly in response to major events in life" , and three prominent personality traits are gradually being considered in the study of consumer behaviour, namely: "psychoanalytic theory, neo - Freudian theory and the theory of traits".

The three theories can be described as follows : psychoanalytic theory - assumes that the unconscious aspects of personality "undoubtedly have an important influence on consumer behaviour - including consumer behaviour (...)" (Datculescu, 2006 p.82); neo-Freudian theory - "tends to emphasize the fundamental role of social relations in training and personality development" (Schiffman and Kanuk, 2007, p.144); traits theory - assumes that individuals have certain innate psychological traits" (innovation, the desire to seek, need to know, materialism) to a greater or lesser trait that can be measured by scales specially designed (...)" (Schiffman, L.G., Kanuk, L.L., 2007, p.144).

The main exogenous factors of influence on individuals' behaviour are: family, membership, group of reference, social classes, culture and subculture. There are presented the definitions, as it follows:

Cătoiu and Teodorescu (2004) note that family represents "the exogenous variable exerting the strongest influence on the consumer's behaviour", this influence being significant "both for each individual member and at the level of the entire family" (Cătoiu,

I., Teodorescu, N., 2004, p.79). The same authors note that the membership represents "a type of social structure where people have the awareness that they belong to such a group having: a common objective, a feeling of unity and certain common rules" (Cătoiu, I., Teodorescu, N., 2004, p.81).

Kotler and Armstrong (2008) note that reference groups are "comparison or reference benchmarks, either direct (face to face) or indirect, in the formation of attitudes or behaviour of a person" (Kotler, P., Armstrong, G., 2008, p.191).

Kotler and Armstrong (2008) define social classes as "relatively permanent and hierarchically ordered divisions from within a society, whose members share similar values, interests and behaviours" (Kotler, P., Armstrong, G., 2008, p.190).

Kotler and Keller (2008) define the concept of culture as "the fundamental determinant factor of the desires and behaviour of a person", because "as it grows, the child assimilates by means of his family and other essential institutions from the society, a certain set of values, perceptions, preferences and behaviours" (Kotler, P., Keller, K.L., 2008, p.261). Cătoiu and Teodorescu (2004) note that subculture is another exogenous influence on the behaviour of the individual consumer, in a society one being able to identify several cultures, respectively "distinctive cultural groups constituted based on geographic, ethnic, religious, age criteria" (Cătoiu, I., Teodorescu, N., 2004, p.83).

4. Representative model on the influence of endogenous and exogenous factors on voters' behavior in an electoral context

The present study is based on the model of Ben-Ur and Newman (2010, p. 253).

The chosen model sets forth five separate and distinct cognitive domains that will determine voters' behavior, the key idea being that according to which one or more combinations of these areas will be operational in a given campaign. The model consists of the following five areas: a. topics and policies - this dimension refers to policies that the candidate promises to adopt if elected; b. social image – which represents a stereotype for the candidate to tempt voters to make associations between the candidate and a selected segment of society; c. the candidate's personality - according to this dimensions the candidate outlines personality traits to better strengthen his image in the voter's mind; d. current events - this dimension aims at hypothetical problems that are described by competing parties and candidates during the election campaign in order to influence a voter's voting decision; e. epistemic values – refer to the satisfaction that the voter feels as a result of the curiosity and need for new which a candidate could induce (Ben-Ur, J., Newman, B. I., 2010, pp.523-524).

5. Determining sample size and choosing sampling method

Research area consists of non-institutionalized adults from Bucharest, over 18 years old.

The research volume consists of 400 subjects from Bucharest, leading to a theoretical error margin of error is +/- 5% at a confidence level of 95%.

The sample was stratified in proportion to the number of people on administrative sectors of Bucharest.

A random selection of survey areas (areas circumscribed to polling stations

within the sectors included in the sample) was performed.

The selection of households was made randomly through random route method around polling stations and that of individuals within households through first birthday method - subjects over 18 years old in the house chosen.

The interviews were face-to-face and were made at the respondents' house. The method of performing the questionnaire was implemented by the students of the Faculty of Administration and Business, University of Bucharest. The interview/ data collection was conducted at the beginning of the campaign for European Parliament elections in Romania in 2014.

6. Analysis and interpretation of survey data

From this study only few questions important for the subject of the article were chosen.

- Respondents answered to several questions, namely:

- Which are the most important values to you? (1)

- What do you consider to be the most respected values in the European Union? (2)

- What do you consider to be the most respected values in Romania? (3)

- The alternatives indicated to choose were the following: peace, respect for the environment, tolerance for those who are different, respect for family, individual's freedom, civic participation, equality of opportunity, Belief in God, self-achievement, prosperity, democracy, reliability beyond, patriotism, respect for the culture of other people, trust in other people. Respondents consider "peace"

as the most important value for themselves, the same value was outlined for the European Union, but for Romania, the interpretation of the survey data revealed that the value "equality of opportunity" should be the most respected value.

-To another question from the questionnaire respondents were asked to indicate which is the main source of information on politics.

Analyzing the lowest and highest percentages per district, was choose the highest percentage obtained for each source of information (discussions with relatives, friends, colleagues, school, workplace, newspapers, magazines, television, radio, internet etc.) and the conclusion was that television is the main source of information on politics (the highest percentage being 69.84% in district 4).

This means that respondents have more trust in traditional media than new media when discussing political issues.

-Respondents were asked at a different question to indicate to what extent they would vote a candidate if he/she has certain characteristics, such as: perseverance, entrepreneurial spirit, creativity, fairness and effective abilities of communication.

Following the analysis on districts the highest percentage (77.5% respondents district 6) was registered by option associated in the questionnaire with "fairness". These respondents probably voted with a candidate with this value, for them "fairness" being the most important trait of a successful politician.

-At another question respondents were asked to express their opinion on current events during the election campaign.

These current event presented in the questionnaire were:

- a).if during the election campaign he/she would be involved in a political conflict?
- b).if during the election campaign he/she is involved in an open conflict with the media?
- c). who comes from among the people?
- d). who have administrative experience?
- e). who claims to defend human rights?

The analysis on districts showed the highest percentage (60% of respondents from district 6) for option d (he/she has administrative experience) in the questionnaire.

This means that respondents would vote in a large number for a candidate with administrative experience, being important in their opinion for him/her to have the ability to lead and manage well material and human resources.

-Also, at the next question in the survey respondents were asked to indicate to what extent they would vote for a candidate who has certain epistemic values, such as:

- a).is he/she has an eccentric lifestyle?
- b).if he/she has a flexible attitude towards change?
- c).if he/she was an athlete?

Following analysis on districts the highest percentage (71.42% of the respondents in district 2) was obtained by option b ("he/she has a flexible attitude towards change") in the questionnaire. This means that respondents would vote in a large number for a candidate who has a flexible attitude towards change, which means that he/she is a politician who can adapt to any unforeseen circumstances and can take the best decisions.

It is important for the accuracy of the dates to mention in this study the following demographic dates.

The data in the above table reflects the interviewed respondents' age by each sector. The graphical representation is presented in Excel.

Respondents' Age: F3

	18-24 years	25-34 years	35-44 years	45-54 years	55-64 years	>65 years
	F3_18-24	F3_25-34	F3_35-44	F3_45-54	F3_55-64	F3 >65
SECTOR 1	7	4	7	7	4	16
SECTOR 2	13	13	13	21	8	3
SECTOR 3	19	20	17	16	2	5
SECTOR 4	18	9	6	13	9	8
SECTOR 5	15	10	12	11	6	3
SECTOR 6	23	24	8	6	10	7

7. Conclusions

Information obtained by marketing research have certain features that have been broadly analysed in the paper. Respondents mentioned key elements that contributed to obtaining relevant information on the subject of the study. Research objectives have been set according to the hypotheses established in the methodology of quantitative research. Knowing voters' behaviour is a priority for

political organizations. Although, lately, new marketing techniques and tools can be use by a number of specialists in the fields, participants in the political life if they are more and more interested in understanding voters' behaviour, in order to be able to satisfy more effectively their needs and desires. The results from this study can provide to specialists in the area key-elements about how to implement electoral marketing campaigns close to elections.

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