

## **A THEORETICAL MODEL OF POLITICAL MARKETING MIX IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES: CASE OF BANGLADESH**

**Tamgid Ahmed Chowdhury<sup>1</sup>, Shahneela Naheed<sup>2</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>Corresponding Author:

### **ABSTRACT**

This paper as a pioneer attempt offers indicators of the political marketing mix for developing countries. In order to identify influential political marketing mix components, 2357 primary data were collected from general voters through a survey. The paper offers 43 important indicators of the political mix, grouped under eight dimensions namely product, party, price, place, promotion, persuasion, people, and physical evidence. Based on the findings of the quantitative study, a number of recommendations have been made which can be useful to political parties, candidates, and political marketing consultants.

**Keywords:** Political marketing, marketing mix, voters, developing country, Bangladesh

### **1. INTRODUCTION AND RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY**

This paper argues that the way external variables such as media, military, and administration are used, and democratic practices are institutionalized in political markets, are different in developed and developing nations (Menon, 2008; Lilleker and Lees-Marshment, 2005). Also, electoral expectations from the party and candidates during an election in developed and emerging countries are not the same. As a result, the current study suggests not using too rigid marketing framework (heavy reliance on 4 P's only) for politics in developing nations as proposed in traditional marketing and political marketing models of developed countries. The use of marketing tools (especially 4 P's) by political parties has been acknowledged in the literature, and there are examples where parties or candidates used marketing mix components and strategies to win the election office (see, for instance, Klein and Calkins, 2016; Appelbaum, 2016; Shama, 1976; Niffenegger, 1988). Lees-Marshment (2001a, p. 692) defined that, 'Political marketing is about political organizations adapting to business marketing concepts and techniques to help them achieve their goals'. A detailed comparison between traditional and political marketing may divulge many commonalities between the marketing of goods and services and that of political candidates. Thus, heavy reliance upon media (strategy for the 1960s and 1970s) and public appearance (philosophy of 1980s and

---

<sup>1</sup> Associate Professor, School of Business and Economics, Department of Marketing & International Business North South University, Bangladesh.

<sup>2</sup> Lecturer, School of Business and Economics, Department of Marketing & International Business North South University, Bangladesh

beyond) in political marketing can be considered as a too narrow focus to win the battle of election (Reid, 1988). This makes the political marketing consultants/agencies to believe the multidimensionality of the discipline.

As rational choice theory postulates that people (in this case voters) make decisions based upon a set of individual preferences in a logical manner to maximize gain while minimizing costs, political parties need to identify the diverse demands of various voters (Lees-Marshment, 2001b). Like a typical marketer, a political consultant needs to design political speech and campaigns according to the requirements of varied voter segments (such as followers, floating voters, and competitor's supporter) (Kotler and Kotler, 1999).

Kelley (1956) is the first academician to talk about political marketing and since then researchers had continuously been working on broadening the concepts and philosophies of the same. Considering the available literature, it can be seen that the existing studies: a) suggested political marketing process/orientations (see for instance, Lees-Marshment, 2001a) and b) (few works) offered political mix variables (such as Shama, 1976; Niffenegger, 1988). Shama (1976) in his seminal paper (qualitative) has pointed the similarities between political and mainstream marketing and also talked about political marketing orientations, marketing mix components, and voter segmentation to conceptualize political marketing process. Niffenegger (1988) signified the importance of market research and cost consideration to political marketing process with a flowchart. That study for the first time emphasized the relevance of personal characteristics of the candidate and use of negative advertising in political marketing.

Lees-Marshment (2001a) in her ground-breaking study offered comprehensive political marketing (CPM) process and reminded not to rely heavily on communication and advertising. The study also provided types and stages of different political marketing philosophies (namely product/candidate, sales, and market orientation. Harris (2001b) expanded the concepts of political marketing by rationalizing the incorporation of voters' involvement in the election, personalization, use of public relation, and scientification of political campaigning.

Considering the existing studies (see, Ormrod, 2011a for a detailed review) and the evolutions of conceptualizing political marketing, it can be said that there exists a small literature on the said discipline. We are making this statement because most studies are based on the practices in developed countries and surprisingly there are very few papers written on developing nations (see, for instance, Babeiya, 2011 on Tanzania; Menon, 2008 on Pakistan; Gbadeyan, 2011 and Osuagwu, 2008 on Nigeria; Agomor and Adams, 2014 on Ghana). Existing studies on developing countries have two major pitfalls, 1) they tried to apply the models and marketing mix offered for the developed and purely democratic nations without considering the democratic status of their own, and 2) in most cases environmental contexts and their relationship to the political mix are ignored. O'Shaughnessy (1990) suggested not

using too rigid marketing framework for politics, and thus we believe that voter's requirements need to be customized to local priorities. This is because; the influence of external variables, democratic practices, electoral expectations from the party and candidates in developed and developing countries may not be the same.

In several developing nations (such as Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Nigeria), military personnel is involved in politics; they establish political parties (e. g. Jatiyo Party in Bangladesh) and brand themselves differently from their actual profession (Menon, 2008; Gbadeyan, 2011). Even there are evidences to argue that political parties in developing countries have used money and muscle power to influence local administration, election commission, and voters (Asia Foundation, 2012; Babeiya, 2011, Vaishnav, 2011). Above mentioned examples demonstrate that the external variables which are not controllable in pure democratic nations are, however, manipulated in developing countries.

Based on our earlier discussions, it can be hypothesized that voters' expectations (political marketing mix) from the candidates and the parties, and the way parties practice political marketing (marketing orientation) might be different in developed and developing nations. Also, there are disparities between Western and emerging countries in many socio-economic-cultural issues such as poverty and literacy rate, per capita income, and rate of unemployment which have impacts on political decision making (Gbadeyan, 2011). However, there is a lack of studies that addressed the above-mentioned issues adequately. This paper will try to minimize that lacuna. In doing so, the current study by addressing the following research question and by using quantitative data will suggest influential political mix determinants for a developing country:

a) What are the striking political marketing mix variables in Bangladesh?

## **2. WHY BANGLADESH ?**

There are several reasons to choose Bangladesh as the sample country for this study. For example, 1) after the independence in 1971, the country experienced different types of political structures such as one-party socialism, military ruling, prolonged caretaker government, presidential parliament, and democratic parliament. There are only a few developing countries that experienced such 'diverse' political structures within such a short time span, 2) Bangladesh has shown commendable progress in reducing poverty and increasing the rate of literacy, empowerment & participation which support that citizens of Bangladesh are becoming more conscious about politics, and 3) there is lack of studies on political marketing in South Asian region.

## **3. A BRIEF POLITICAL HISTORY OF BANGLADESH**

Bangladesh earned its independence through the liberation war in 1971. Since then the country experienced different types of political government with the varying use of political marketing strategies. These are summarized in Table 1.

**Table-1: Political philosophies and marketing practices in different political regimes**

Political regime	Time span	Political philosophy	Political marketing practices
Awami League (AL) led by Sheikh MujiburRahman	1971-75	Socialist structure (Hossain, 1996). One-party presidential form of government and restriction on freedom of press (Khan, 2011)	Use of personal image of Father of the nation, emotional campaigning, grass-root level distribution
Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) led by ZiaurRahman	1976-1981	Military leadership, Islamization of politics (Jahan, 2005)	Bureaucrat-military nexus, visited rural areas as a normal citizen to contact with the voters, strategic alliances with Islamic parties
Jatiyo Party led by General Ershad	1982-1990	Military ruling, autocracy (Khan, 2011)	Village-level campaigning, re-branding the leader as the leader of people, large scale promotion through TV and radio.
BNP led by Khaleda Zia	1991-1995	Partial democracy	Promotion through TV and radio, decentralization of politics, use of national and local icons in campaigns
AL led by Sheikh Hasina	1996-2001	Parliamentary democracy	Alliances with smaller parties, building national consensus against corruption and political violence, promotion in TV, billboard, newspaper.
BNP led by Khaleda Zia	2001-2006	Parliamentary democracy	Large scale alliances with Islamic parties, revising election manifesto, use of money in politics, re-branding the leader.
AL led by Sheikh Hasina	2006 - present	Parliamentary democracy	Large scale campaign across the country, use of volunteers, visit by party chair at the village level, voter segmentation, re-branding the leader

#### **4. LITERATURE REVIEW ON INDICATORS OF POLITICAL MIX**

Authors did an extensive literature review to explore as many variables as possible that can be used to fulfill the objective of the study. The available items would then be customized to the priorities of Bangladeshi voters.

Shama (1976, qualitative study) worked on the promotional side of politics and proposed rallies, campaigning, use of mass media, use of printed materials, and individual marketing as crucial determinants. The study is qualitative in nature and the results lack statistical significance. Niffenegger (1988, qualitative work) suggested items such as image of the party, psychological cost if a candidate wins, past records of the candidate, and debate before election as vital. Newman (1994, on US election) extended the list by adding economic cost of the candidate, party manifesto, candidate positioning, and grass-root level campaigning. Kress (1993) argued that candidate's image as a social person is crucial too.

Wring (1997) in his study on the UK pointed that party ideology, public relations, voter research, focus of the party towards national interest, and nominating grass-root leaders are important among voters. Kevin (2004) added items such as negative campaigning, stage performance, connection to local elites, and lobbying with party HQ. Henneberg (2004) argued that network building, using newer technology and celebrity endorsement can be helpful in UK market. Langer (2006) worked on political advertising only and suggested that use of emotional appeal (both negative and positive), logical advertisement, and source credibility is important to the electoral. Soberman (2010) also argued the need for political promotion and recommended to put emphasis on qualities of the candidate and carefully selecting the contents. Dezelan and Maksuti (2012) studied on the effectiveness of using posters and suggested items such as size, message types, font issues, and using photos of leaders.

There are few other noticeable studies that also worked on promotional aspect of political marketing. For instance, Stromback and Kiouis (2013) emphasized on using public relation and volunteers in the constituencies. Stokes (2005) talked about the effects of negative advertising in politics. Shachar (2009) discussed about the possible effects of using individual media such as television, radio, billboards and direct mail. However, the study didn't compare available media with respect to their effectiveness. Gordon and Hartmann (2011b) have shown how TV can affect the election results and thus suggested to put focus on contents, emotional appeal, and use of sensitive ads. Campaign tone is another important issue as suggested by the study.

A comprehensive study on European nations by Shafferer (2004) explored promises made by the party, ideology of the party, use of money, and extensive campaigning as important among voters. Funk (1996) mentioned about competence, trustworthiness, and loved by people as the desirable qualities of a candidate. Gibson and Rommele (2009, study on

Germany) found direct mail, use of phone in campaign, internet communications, setting up election offices, and opposition research as important determinants. Savigny (2010) added items such as depth of campaign, candidate's image as a leader, policy of the party, relation of the party with outer world, and economic cost to the candidate.

Downer (2013) argued that political branding is important for the parties and the candidates. Cwalina and Falkowski (2013, study on Poland) mentioned about desirable qualities of a candidate such as professionalism, honesty, simplicity, extrovert, political background, and connection of the candidate with the party HQ. Ustaahmetoglu (2014, study on Turkey) proposed to concentrate more on the use of mass media, and national icons in the election campaign.

Che et al. (2007) on their quantitative study on USA proposed negative advertising and buying voters through compensation as important criteria. Garber et al. (2011) added items such as ads on TV, using direct mail, and invitation over phone. Hoegg and Lewis (2011) talked about few qualities such as intelligence, charming, reliable, and good judging ability. Argan and Argan (2012) in their study on Turkey explored that honesty, personality, bonding in the family, good looks, occupation, and position in the party are desirable qualities of a candidate. Yousif et al. (2012) discussed about impacts of using Facebook on political promotion.

There are few existing works on developing nations. However, as mentioned before, there is lack of studies on political marketing in South Asian region. Kobby's (2007) qualitative study on Ghana proposed items such as image of the candidate, party's ideology, reputation and modesty of the candidate, and economic cost of the candidate. Osuagwu (2008) in a qualitative study on Nigeria argued that direct marketing, polling, negative ads, and lobby with the local admin are vital issues in political market. Gbadeyan (2011) added items such as party policies towards utility services, use of money in campaign, and politeness of the candidate as important in Nigeria. Agomor and Adams (2014) in their quantitative study on Ghana suggested personality, educational background, and political experiences of the candidate as crucial qualities. The study also added campaign message, employment creation ability of the party, and social cost in the list. Ndavula and Mueni (2014) in their quantitative study reported that use of Facebook and Twitter, catchy message, colorful advertising, and careful tone in speeches are important determinants. Nazar and Latif (2015) in their study on Pakistan pointed about public relation, fund management ability of the candidate, and parallel campaigning. However, as mentioned before, there is lack of study in offering a comprehensive model of political marketing in developing nations. This study intends to address that issue.

## **5. CONCEPTUALIZING POLITICAL MARKETING**

Political marketing, in course of time, has been defined from varied perspectives (see, for details, Wring, 1997; Ormrod, 2011a). In this paper, we will be using the definition (due to its multi-dimensionality nature) offered by Wring (1997). Wring (1997, p. 6) conceived of political marketing as:

*“The party or candidate’s use of opinion research and environmental analysis to produce and promote a competitive offering which will help realize organizational aims and satisfy groups of electors in exchange for their votes.”*

## **6. METHODOLOGY**

Our main objective is to identify influential political marketing mix indicators. As the political parties are supposed to prepare their marketing mix according to the need preferences of the target voters, we need to gather information from the general electoral to identify their preferences which influence the voting decision. According to Malhotra & Dash (2016) and Hair et al. (2011), quantitative survey method is appropriate and statistically significant to collect data from a large pool of respondents.

To address our research question – exploring influential political marketing mix items – authors collected 2357 primary quantitative data (refer to Table-2) by the way of survey from twelve districts (including six divisional headquarters) of Bangladesh. Respondents (age 18+) were chosen randomly by considering that they voted at least once in their lifetime. Data were collected through face-to-face interview by using professional surveyors. In cases where respondents were uneducated, surveyors read the questions and answers and collected the information. Authors did an extensive literature review and accumulated a pool of 69 political mix variables from the existing studies (see, Ormrod, 2011a and Agomor and Adams, 2014 for details). This variable list was then presented to a 5-person expert panel consisting of academicians who have experiences in teaching higher level marketing courses. Experts were requested to: 1) find those variables that are less relevant to the current study, 2) suggest changes in the wording of the variables if required, and 3) suggest adding missing variables. After incorporating the suggestions of the experts, a total of 73 items were found to be appropriate for the study. A formal questionnaire was utilized to facilitate quantitative data collection. The questionnaire was first developed in English and then translated to Bengali(local language) for the convenience of data collection. The first section of the questionnaire asked demographic questions such as gender, educational qualifications, age, and occupation. In the second section, questions relevant to 73 political mix variables were asked. A five-point Likert scale was utilized to capture the opinions of general voters regarding the extent to which the political mix variable was important for a candidate to win, where 1= not at all important and 5 = most important.

Decision criteria: Descriptive statistics especially mean and significance of mean values have been used to report the findings of the quantitative study. It was decided to consider those political mix variables as crucial that are significant (sig. <0.05 in one sample t-test)

**Table-2: Respondent profile of the quantitative study**

Demographic feature	Urban areas		Rural areas	
	Total number	Percentage	Total number	Percentage
<b>Gender</b>				
Female	460	40.35	431	35.4
Male	680	59.65	786	64.6
<b>Educational qualification</b>				
Less than primary	51	4.5	141	11.6
Primary passed	85	7.5	172	14.1
SSC passed	104	9.1	307	25.2
HSC passed	277	24.3	233	19.1
Honor's passed	401	35.2	204	16.8
Master's passed	187	16.4	106	8.7
Above master's degree	35	3.1	54	4.4
<b>Occupation</b>				
Students	429	37.63	219	18
Government services	150	13.15	113	9.3
Private job	185	16.2	167	13.7
Businesses	122	10.7	231	19
Self-employed	79	6.9	175	14.4
Housewife	175	15.35	312	25.6

## **7. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION: AN EXTENDED POLITICAL MARKETING MIX FOR BANGLADESH**

An extensive review of existing literature can reveal that most available studies (such as Shama, 1976; Lees-Marshment, 2001 and 2008; Ormrod, 2011; Babeiya, 2011) on political marketing emphasized on process and management orientations. Very few studies (especially on developed countries, for instance, Niffenegger, 1988; Wring 1997; Osuagwu, 2008) have suggested a small number of indicators of the political mix even though Niffenegger (1988) stressed the need for exploring influential personality traits of candidates and other mix components. This section of the paper, based on the findings of the quantitative survey (N = 2357), will try to suggest crucial political-mix components (written in italics) for Bangladesh (refer to Figure-1).

### **7.1 Product**

It is well documented in the political marketing literature that the party and the candidates are considered as the organization and the products respectively (see, for instance, Kotler, 1975; Shama, 1976; Niffenegger, 1988; Wring, 1997; Kotler and Kotler, 1999). Our results suggest that candidate's *level of education* is the most important (mean is 4.25, sig. = 0.00) attribute among voters (77% of our respondents marked as very to most important). This finding is consistent with the published news of a survey which reported that 85.4% respondents said that they wanted an MP candidate with at least graduate degree (The Daily Star, October 24, 2008). This is an important message to the political parties that as the literacy rate in Bangladesh has increased significantly, voters would like to see educated people as their representatives. *Candidate's stand against corruption and violence* is the second most influential (mean is 4.19 with sig. = 0.001) item in the list (74.3% of our respondents marked as very-most important). As the literacy rate and degree of empowerment are rising in the country, voters would like to see their candidate vocal against the stated problems. This is another message for the parties that changes are coming and they need to adapt to the requirements of the voters. For example, BNP was in power between 2001 and 2006 with 193 seats in the parliament. However, in the election of 2008, BNP got only 30 seats mainly because of its record of corruption and criminality in the earlier regime (International Crisis Group, 2008).

Our results (72% of our respondents marked as very-most important) revealed that whether the *candidate is known in the area* or not is vital (mean = 4.06 with sig. 0.00). During the survey, many of our respondents argued that they don't like to vote a 'stranger' who is unknown to them and doesn't *live in the area round the year* (3.81 sig. 0.003). These findings have special implication for the political marketers/policy makers that they should nominate popular local leaders instead of selecting an unknown candidate with a bigger donation. Many of our respondents argued that they prefer to have MPs from the locality so that citizens can *have easy access* (mean = 3.84 sig. 0.00) to the candidates to share their concerns.

*Image of the candidate as a community person* is another desired attribute (mean = 4.02 sig. 0.00) among Bangladeshi voters. Many of our rural voters (73% marked as very to most important) said that they would like to see their representative available to them during their good and bad times. This finding supports that more *frequent public appearance* (mean = 3.81) can be a convincing feature of a political candidate. Our respondents also mentioned that an ideal candidate should be 'one of their own'.

According to our results, Bangladeshi voters value *past political record* (mean = 3.52 sig. 0.00) and *leadership ability* (3.80 sig. 0.001) of the candidate significantly (71% said this item is very important). Many of our urban voters opined that a candidate should get party nomination based on his/her contribution to and degree of involvement in district and national level politics. Kotler (1982) suggested that voters rarely meet the candidates, and thus the image of the candidate as a leader is important which is also evidenced in our results. Our results revealed few other influential attributes such as *commitments* made by the applicant (mean = 3.75), *professional background* of the candidate (3.18), candidate's *position in the party* (3.35), and *voice* of the candidate (3.10).

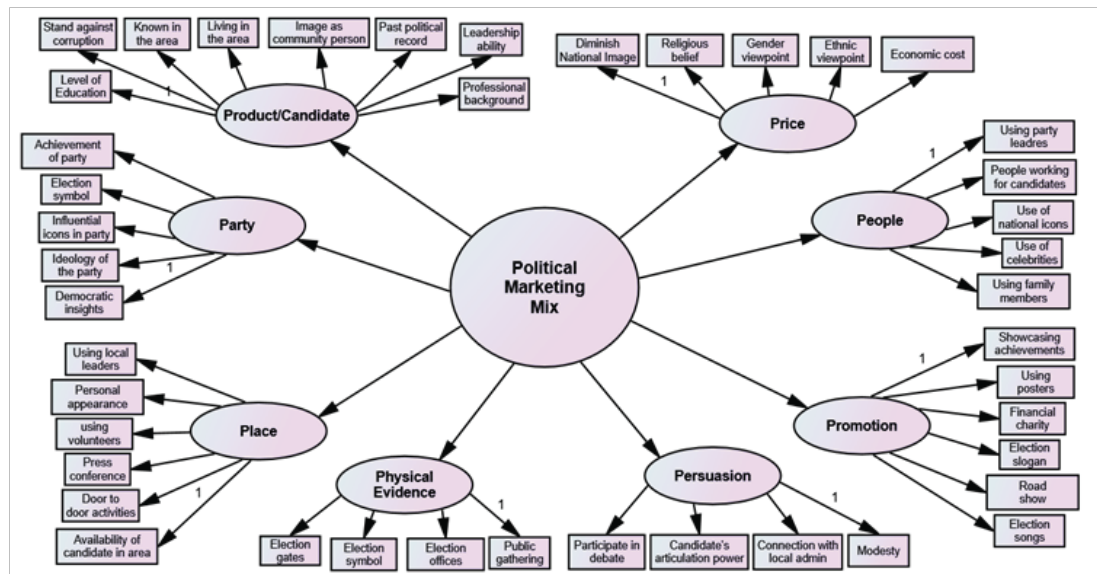
## 7.2 Price

Price to the voters is the combination of those costs that electoral have to bear if the candidate wins. Our results found that if electing a candidate would *diminish the national image* is of highest (mean 3.86, sig. 0.00) concern among Bangladeshi voters (72% marked as very to most important). This result has an important message for the party elites that nominating candidates with the controversial national image can be detrimental in the election. Many of our respondents (especially urban voters) claimed that BNP lost in 2008 election due to forming an alliance with Jamat-E-Islami, the party which was against the independence of Bangladesh (similar report published in the Daily Star, December 8, 2008). *Candidate's religious belief* is another crucial (mean 3.55, sig. 0.00) determinant in the political market (67% marked as very important). Many of our rural voters argued that winning of a fundamentalist may put liberals into trouble after the election. As Bangladesh is a Muslim-majority country, there are evidences that parties capitalized religious sentiment to win votes. For instance, Ziaur Rahman incorporated 'Bismillah-ar-Rahman-ar-Rahim' (In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful) in the constitution and announced Islam as the religion of the state to get popularity among the voters. We recommend that political marketers should prepare a voter demographic list for each constituency and then nominate the candidate that best suite with the demographic composition of the same.

*Psychological costs* to the voters if the candidate wins are of high interest (mean = 3.15) among Bangladeshi citizens (71.7% of our respondents marked as very-most important). Our rural respondents by giving examples argued that winning of a controversial (such as violent, hooligan, extortionist) candidate may enhance post-election violence, the killing of opposition leaders and supporters, and political harassment.

Considering the above-mentioned findings, it can be argued that Bangladeshi voters not only prefer educated candidates but also like to have liberal representatives – an important note for the political marketers. Our results revealed few other price-relevant determinants that parties should consider. These *are* candidate's gender viewpoint (mean = 3.16), ethnic background of the candidate (3.18) and economic costs (3.07) if the candidate wins.

**Figure-1: Influential political marketing mix in Bangladesh**



### 7.3 Party

In political marketing literature, party has been considered as synonymous to the company or organization offering the product (Kotler and Keller, 2006). According to our results, party's *democratic insights* is vital (mean 3.83, sig. 0.00) among voters in Bangladesh (67% of our respondents marked as very to most important). Our respondents, during the survey, argued that if a party doesn't practice democracy in its decision-making process, it can't promote the same in the country as a ruling party. As an example, our urban respondents said that a senior MP lost his parliamentary seat as he opposed non-democratic practices of a political party. Voters that time didn't like this outcome as it was against the norms of democracy.

The *ideology of the party* is found to have significant (mean = 3.58) influence on voting behavior (63% marked as very important) in Bangladesh (Lees-Marshment, 2001 proposed ideology as an important item). According to many of our respondents, since 1991, AL had been trying to establish itself with a 'pro-independence image' (refer to Picture-1 of the appendix) and that significantly helped the party to win the election of 2008 and 2014.

We strongly recommend that political marketers in Bangladesh should heavily focus on communicating the ideology of the party with the voters during election campaigns.

Our results revealed *influential icons in the party* as a major determinant (mean = 3.50, sig. 0.00) of the political market (68% marked as very-most important). During the survey, many of our respondents said that they support AL and vote for the party because they love and respect Sheikh Mujibur Rahman – the father of the nation and the founder of AL. This is why it is found that in the election posters, banners, billboards, and leaflets, candidates always put the faces of party icons (refer to top left corner of the poster in picture-2 of the appendix). Considering the above-stated result, we strongly recommend using party chair and other national icons during election campaigns.

Like other developing countries (as mentioned in Osuagwu, 2008), *election symbol (Marka)* and the *party of the candidate* are found to be influential (mean = 3.16 and 3.27 respectively) factors (however, not the most important ones) in voting. It can be argued that voters have less chance to meet with the candidates or may know less about the same and thus election symbol plays a significant role. Again, voters mentioned that in the election of 1996, Dr. Kamal Hossain – chair of *Gono Forum* and one of the writers of the constitution of Bangladesh - lost with a less-known candidate only because that candidate contested under the banner of Awami League (AL). Thus, *party affiliation* matters (69% said this item is very important).

Our results found few other crucial factors under party dimension. Notable ones are *achievements of the party* (mean = 3.39), *party's connection to the outer world* (3.29), and *image of the party in the country* (3.18).

#### **7.4 Place**

Place strategy deals with the methods by which a candidate can get to the voters in a personal way (Niffenegger, 1988). As a candidate can't be in different places simultaneously, both personal appearance and use of volunteers are helpful. Most of our respondents mentioned that *availability of the candidate in the area* throughout the year is the best way (mean 3.79, sig. 0.00) to deliver him/herself because it creates good position in voters' mind that the 'candidate is always with us' (81% marked as very to most important). This finding has a strong message for the political parties that Bangladeshi voters do not like to see their representatives living in the capital city after winning the election – which is a usual practice in Bangladesh. *Door to door activities* including visiting shopping malls and local bazaars are found to be effective (mean = 3.50 with sig. 0.00) especially in rural Bangladesh (73% marked this item as very important). As female voters in developing countries like Bangladesh usually do not participate in political meetings due to social and religious norms, they also expect to see the candidates in their door steps. We strongly recommend that

candidates should visit rural marketplaces (*called Hat*) during weekly gathering. Our results revealed that press conference by the candidate is another crucial (mean = 3.48) determinant as perceived by the voters. This is a new finding for Bangladesh because *press conferences* are mostly arranged centrally by the party headquarters and less by the candidates. We believe as electronic media has wide-spread presence in Bangladesh (even in rural areas), press conference by the candidates can be an effective tool for communication (63% of our respondents marked as very-most important). Our result also suggests that *using volunteers* to distribute badges, giving voter numbers, and informing the electoral about their vote centers is a demanding factor (mean 3.17) among the voters especially in rural and sub-urban areas (71% marked this item as very important). During the survey, many of our respondents said that helping voters through volunteers creates ‘empowerment effect’.

In addition to the above-stated indicators, our results found few other important place-related items such as *personal appearance* (mean = 2.82), *delivering short speeches* to the religious places after weekly prayer (2.80), and *using local leaders as surrogate speakers* (2.65).

### **7.5 Promotion**

The promotion has always been viewed as the key marketing tactics in political marketing irrespective of the type of election (presidential or parliamentary). Our respondents rated *showcasing the achievements* (such as, stand against corruption, a record of social works during natural calamity) of the candidate during the election campaign as the top (mean 3.65, sig. 0.001) promotional strategy (83% considered this as very important). Many of our urban voters said that they would like to compare what a candidate promised and how much s/he could deliver. Thus, showcasing achievements can help that evaluation process. Candidates can put big billboards in their constituencies to portray the remarkable works they have accomplished.

Historically, *the poster* has always been a common tool of promotion before the election in Bangladesh. Our result found that poster is still effective (mean = 3.35) in Bangladesh (61% of our respondents marked as very effective). Our respondents mentioned that posters work as a reminder to the election and it is convenient to see and read election posters. We, thus, suggest that candidates should prepare informative posters demonstrating election symbols, achievements of the candidate, and few vital promises made by the candidate. Financial charity (in religious institutions, orphanage, and hospitals) by the candidates is found to be useful (mean = 3.29, sig. 0.00) before the election. According to many of our respondents (around 69% marked as very useful), these charities create an immediate emotional appeal among voters.

*Election slogan* and the way candidate deliver speeches are important (mean = 3.22). Many of our respondents exemplified that in the election of 2008, AL candidates changed their slogan from, ‘I will solve your problems if I am elected’ to ‘Tell me your problems

because I want to feel them'. Our respondents also said that it is always better to be *liberal* and *ignoring the propaganda* of oppositions while delivering speeches.

In addition to the above-mentioned items, we would like to suggest using *billboards* and *direct postal mail*, *public appearance with the family members*, arranging *road shows*, and preparing *election songs* by using local languages for effective promotion of the candidate and the party.

## 7.6 Persuasion

When voters have less information about candidates, typical promotional tools may not be very effective in political marketing. Thus, Word of Mouth (WOM) and reference (such as, from local elites or religious leaders) can influence voting decisions. For instance, in 2001 election, BNP convinced *Imams* (influential Islamic leader of a mosque) to promote their candidates. AL, on the other hand, in the election of 2008 used many school headmasters to work with their candidates. According to our results, the *modesty* of the candidate is one of the most influential (mean 4.13, sig. 0.00) attributes of the candidates especially to the floating voters (84% respondents marked it as very important). Many of our respondents said that they would like to see respect in the eyes of candidates.

Candidate's *articulation power* is another vital (mean = 3.95) issue as perceived by our respondents (73% voters marked it as very important). By considering this finding, we have two recommendations; 1) use of local language in delivering speeches, and 2) participate in the election debate so that voters can compare among candidates based on their articulation ability, goals, and promises. It is important to mention that there is no culture of participating in the election debate in Bangladesh. It was also found that candidate's *connection with the local administration* is an influential (mean = 3.12) issue in political marketing. There are evidences that political parties rigged parliamentary by-election with the help of local administration which created several violent events and finally led to the caretaker government system in Bangladesh (The Daily Star, March 8, 2015).

## 7.7 Physical Evidence

Our respondents claimed that the *size of public gathering* for the candidate is a dominant (mean 3.68, sig. 0.00) sign of his/her popularity (79% of respondents rated it highly). In order to create an effective public gathering, we would like to suggest using volunteers and local leaders. We also feel that attendance of party icons in the gathering can make it more attractive to the voters. *Election* offices of the candidate work as a reminding factor (mean = 3.40), especially in the rural areas. Many of our respondents said that volunteers stay in those offices, broadcast speeches of the candidate, play election songs on the mike, and provide information to the voters about their polling centers. In Bangladesh, candidates build election gates. However, most of our respondents especially in metro areas said that now a days

people do not like to see election gates that create traffic congestion. In such respect, we would like to suggest candidates using bigger billboards demonstrating achievements of the candidate. Setting up a decorative sculpture of election symbol can be entertaining to the voters. In rural areas, billboards and sculptures can be used in *bazars* (markets), bus stands, boat landing stations, and roundabouts. As election symbols and party play a major role in Bangladesh election, setting up more sculptures of those symbols is seen as an effective way of continuously reminding the voters about the party and the candidate.

## **7.8 People**

*Image of the people* working for the candidate is an important issue (mean 3.66, sig. 0.00) to the electoral (75% marked it as very important). Many of our respondents said that they consider the past records and recent activities of the people working for the candidate while judging him/her. As an example, voters mentioned that in 2008 election, AL has shown and warned voters about the violent and corrupted people working for their opposition. Use of nationally renowned party *leaders* (mean = 3.1523) and especially the Chairperson in the election campaign enhances (68% respondents marked it highly) the likelihood of winning of the candidates (especially for new and less popular ones). When party chairperson promotes the candidate, it works as both motivating and confidence factor among the voters. Our recommendation would be that party chair should attend the campaigns of those areas which are strategically located such that he/she can cover several constituencies simultaneously.

*Use of celebrities* in political campaigns is a common practice in developed nations. However, in Bangladesh, celebrities do not like to label them as a political supporter of a particular party, and thus this concept is rarely used. As our voters rated this item highly (mean = 3.43), we would like to recommend parties to initiate this culture in Bangladesh (especially in rural and sub-urban areas). *Use of national icons* found to be effective for candidates in urban Bangladesh.

We asked our respondents about the current practice of *showing off muscle power* during the election campaign. Most of our respondents said that they consider this behavior as a negative marketing (mean 0.89). However, while discussing with the voters, we found few more important indicators such as the use of *influential members of the civil society*, use of family members in campaigns, and using educated spokes-persons.

## **8. MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSION**

This study argues that there are significant differences in the way the political actors and variables influence political marketing in developed and developing nations. As there is a lack of studies on political marketing especially offering political mix items in developing countries, this paper can be considered as a guideline for future research in this growing field.

This paper by collecting a large pool of quantitative data from general voters proposed a significant number of new political marketing indicators that are grouped under several new dimensions such as party, persuasion, people, and physical evidence in addition to the typical mix (4 P's) suggested in the existing studies.

Based on the current political marketing practices and by considering the opinion of the voters and experts in Bangladesh, following suggestions seem useful for political marketing consultants and candidates:

- As voters in the developing countries are becoming more literate and conscious about their political rights, political marketing consultants require building sophisticated information system in order to conduct market (voter) research to realize the qualities of the candidate voters like the most. A popularity survey by the party on the candidate pool can be rewarding to the party and can empower the electoral.
- Parties should nominate more educated local leaders with a good political record and having an acceptable image of a community person. It is strongly recommended not to nominate a person based on donation who has no political record in the society.
- Political consultants are suggested to prepare candidates in a way that they show modesty and liberal attitude during the election campaigns.
- Parties should ensure democratic practices in their decision-making process and must communicate their democratic insights with the voters frequently.
- As public gathering is a sign of the popularity of the candidate in Bangladesh, we would suggest applicants to use party chair or national icons and celebrities in their meetings to boost the size of the crowd. Also, candidates need to focus on the social image of their activists.
- We recommend using more billboards, posters, and road shows demonstrating the achievements of the party and the candidate.
- To encourage WOM promotion, we suggest that party elites visiting the constituencies and sit with the local elites and religious leaders after a certain interval.

It is important to mention that this study is limited to explore influential political mix components and thus, it could not account the effects of external variables (such as media, election monitors, new technologies, and so on) in the voting decision making process. Future researchers can check the applicability and validity of the political mix variables suggested in this paper in other developing nations through quantitative data by using more sophisticated statistical tools. A comparative analysis between electorates of rural & urban areas and male & female voters with respect to their expectations from the party and candidates can be of interest to the readers. Also, the effect of WOM promotion on the voting decision in the election can be worth of research. Finally, exploring the expectations of different voter segments (based on religion, educational background, etc.) can be useful in formulating strategies before the election.

## REFERENCES

- Agomor, K. S., and Adams, S. (2014). Determinants of Voting Behavior in Ghana. *Global Awareness Society International 23rd Annual Conference –Montego Bay Jamaica, (May), 2014*.
- Appelbaum, Y. (2016). The Ingenious Marketing Strategies Behind Trump's Success, Politics, 28 November.
- Asaduzzaman, E. A. M. (2008). The Daily Star (2008), "No vote" Campaign against Anti-liberation Elements", Dhaka, Bangladesh, December 8, (available at <http://www.thedailystar.net/news-detail-66576>).
- Asia Foundation. (2012). *Strengthening Democracy in Bangladesh. Occasional Paper no-13*, by Tim Meisburger, Director, Elections and Political Processes, The Asia Foundation, Bangladesh.
- Babeiya, E. (2011). Electoral Corruption and the Politics of Elections Financing in Tanzania. *Journal of Politics and Law*, 4(2), 91-102.
- Bryan, S., and Denise, B. (2005). *Money in Politics: A study of Party Financing Practices in 22 countries*. Washington, DC: National Democratic Institute for International Affairs.
- Democracy Watch. (2009). *Representation and Violence against Women in Politics in Bangladesh*. 7 Circuit House Road, Ramna, Dhaka.
- Gbadeyan, R. A. (2011). Political Marketing Strategies and Democracy in Nigeria. *Asian Journal of Business Management*, 3(1), 8-17.
- Harris, P. (2001b). To Spin or Not to Spin, That is the Question: The Emergence of Modern Political Marketing. *The Marketing Review*, 2, 35-53.
- Harrop, M. (1990). Political Marketing. *Parliamentary Affairs*, 43, 277-291.
- IDEA (Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance). (2016). Voter Turnout Data for Bangladesh. Stockholm, (available at <http://www.idea.int/vt/countryview.cfm?id=20>)
- International Crisis Group. (2008). *Bangladesh: Elections and Beyond. Policy Briefing*, Asia Briefing No-84, Dhaka, Bangladesh.
- Jahan, R. (2005). *Bangladesh Politics: Problems and Issues*, new expanded ed, The University Press Limited, Dhaka-Bangladesh.
- Kelly, S. Jr. (1956). *Professional Public Relations and Political Power*, Baltimore: The John Hopkins Press, USA.
- Khan, Mo. T. (2011). Working of Democracy in Bangladesh. Paper prepared for the Project on State of Democracy in South Asia as part of the Qualitative Assessment of Democracy, Lokniti (Programme of Comparative Democracy), Centre for the Study of Developing Societies, Delhi, India.
- King, R. (1965). The Marketing Concept, in *Science in Marketing*, edited by G. Schwartz, New York: John Wiley and Sons.
- Klein, R., and Calkins, T. (2016). How marketing helped Donald Trump win the 2016 election by 2016. Washington Post, November 17.
- Kotler, P. (1982). *Marketing for Non-profit Organizations*, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Kotler, P., and Nancy, K. (1999). *Political Marketing: Generating Effective Candidates, Campaigns, and Causes*. In Bruce I. Newman (ed.) *Handbook of Political Marketing*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 3-18.

- Kotler, P., and Keller, L. K. (2006). *Marketing – Management*. Twelfth ed., New Jersey: Pearson Practice Hall.
- Lees-Marshment, J. (2001a). The Product, Sales and Market-oriented Party: How Labour Learnt to Market the Product, Not Just the Presentation. *European Journal of Marketing*, 35(9-10), 1074-1084.
- Lees-Marshment, J. (2001b). The Marriage of Politics and Marketing. *Political Studies*, 49, 692-713.
- Lees-Marshment, J. (2008). *Political Marketing and British Political Parties*, Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Lilleker, D. G., and Lees-Marshment, J. (2005). *Political Marketing: A Comparative Perspective*, Manchester University Press, Oxford Road, Manchester, UK.
- Liton, S. (2015). Non-partisan Government Needed for LG Polls Too? The Daily Star, Dhaka, Bangladesh, March 8 (available at <http://www.thedailystar.net/non-partisan-government-needed-for-lg-polls-too-13463>).
- Lock, A., and Phil, H. (1996). Political Marketing – Vive la Difference. *European Journal of Marketing*, 30(10-11), 21-31.
- Menon, S. V. (2008). *Political Marketing: A Conceptual Framework*. ICFAI Business School. Ahmadabad, India.
- Nazar, M. S., and Abdul, L. (2015). Scope of Political Marketing in the Context of Pakistani Political Environment. (available at: <http://www.aabri.com/LV2010Manuscripts/LV10016.pdf>)
- Newman, B. (1994). *The Marketing of the President: Political Marketing as Campaign Strategy*. Sage Publication, London.
- Niffenegger, P. B. (1988). Strategies for Success from the Political Marketers. *Journal of Service Marketing*, 2(3), 15-21.
- Ormrod, R. P. (2011a). Political Market Orientation: An Introduction. Management Working Paper Series 2011-1, Aarhus University Department of Economics and Business.
- Osuagwu, L. (2008). Political Marketing: Conceptualization, Dimensions and Research Agenda. *Marketing Intelligence and Planning*, 26(7), 793-810.
- O'Shaughnessy, N. J. (1990). *The Phenomenon of Political Marketing*, Palgrave Macmillan, London.
- O'Shaughnessy, N. J., and Henneberg, S. C. (2009). Political Relationship Marketing: Some Micro/Macro Thoughts. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 25, 5-29.
- Reid, D. (1988). Marketing the Political Product. *European Journal of Marketing*. 22(9), 34-47.
- Shama, A. (1976). The marketing of political candidates. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 4(4), 764-77.
- The Daily Star. (2008). Election Opinion Poll-2008. Dhaka, Bangladesh, November 21 (available at [http://archive.the.dailystar.net/suppliments/2008/opinion%20poll/o\\_poll.htm](http://archive.the.dailystar.net/suppliments/2008/opinion%20poll/o_poll.htm))
- The Daily Star. (2015). Magura: Polls then and now, Dhaka, March 8, can be found at: <http://www.thedailystar.net/magura-polls-then-and-now-19000>
- Vaishnav, M. (2011). *Caste Politics, Credibility and Criminality: Political Selection in India*, Department of Political Science, 420 West 118th Street, New York, NY.
- Wring, D. (1997). Reconciling Marketing with Political Science: Theories of Political Marketing. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 13, 651-663.
- Ziring, L. (1992). *Bangladesh: From Mujib to Ershad: An Interpretative Study*, Dhaka: University Press.

## Appendix

**Table-A1: List of 73 items used in the questionnaire**

Sl. no.	Items used in the questionnaire	
1.	Past political records of the candidate	38. Showcasing achievements of the candidate
2.	Image of the candidate as a leader	39. Election slogan of the candidate
3.	Image of the candidate as community person	40. Election music of the candidate
4.	Promises made by the candidate	41. Registering voters by the volunteers
5.	Frequent public appearance	42. Use of posters of the candidate
6.	Candidate is known in the area	43. Billboards of the candidate
7.	Candidate living in the area	44. Direct postal mail by the candidate
8.	Candidate's stand against corruption	45. Visit by the candidate to the grass-root level
9.	Candidate's thoughts on religious issues	46. Use of social media by the candidate
10.	Candidate's level of education	47. Rallies by the candidate
11.	Candidate's honesty as known in the society	48. Public relationships maintained by the candidate
12.	Professional background of the candidate	49. Financial charity made by the candidate
13.	Candidate's position in the party	50. Visit to social organizations
14.	Candidate's family tie with the politics	51. Candidate's Participation in the debates
15.	Physical smartness of the candidate	52. Candidate's articulation power
16.	Voice of the candidate	53. Candidate's modesty
17.	Ease of access to the candidate	54. Candidate's connection with the party headquarter
18.	Economic cost if the candidate is elected	55. Use of financial means before the election
19.	Psychological cost if the candidate is elected	56. Candidate's connection with the local admin.
20.	Diminishing national image if the candidate wins	57. Mutual trust building ability of the candidate
21.	Religious belief of the candidate	58. Candidate's connection with the local elites
22.	Ethnic background of the candidate	59. Election offices of the candidate
23.	Gender view point of the candidate	60. Election gates of the candidate
24.	Political party of the candidate	61. Large sculptures with election symbol
25.	Ideology of the party candidate belongs to	62. Public gathering for the candidate
26.	Democratic insight of the party	63. News clippings in favor of the candidate
27.	Age of the party candidate belongs to	64. Use of national leaders in the campaigns
28.	Connection of the party with the outer world	65. Use of celebrities in the campaigns
29.	Showcasing remarkable achievements of party	66. Use of national icons in the meetings
30.	Symbol ( <i>Marka</i> ) of the party candidate supports	67. Image of the people working for the candidate
31.	Influential Icons in the party	68. Use of family members in the campaigns
32.	Public meetings with personal appearance	69. Showing off muscle power by the candidate
33.	Volunteer network building by the candidate	70. Collecting information about the voters of the area
34.	Door to door activities by the candidate	71. Popularity survey before applying by candidate
35.	Press conference of the candidate	72. Listening from the voters before preparing the election manifesto
36.	Distribution of badges by the workers	73. Collecting information repeatedly to detect the change of popularity
36.	Distribution of badges by the workers	73. Collecting information repeatedly to detect the change of popularity
37.	Availability of candidate in area round the year	

Picture-1: Poster portrays image of the party



Picture-2: Poster of the political party demonstrate party icons (top left), election symbol (bottom left), and achievement (top boxed)



## **AUTHOR'S BIOGRAPHY**

**Dr. Tamgid Ahmed Chowdhury** is an Associate Professor and currently the Director of MBA and EMBA Programs at North South University, Bangladesh. He received his PhD from Macquarie University, Australia. He has numerous publications in the internationally reputed journals such as Journal of Contemporary Asia, Australian Journal of Career Development, Journal of Developing Areas, and so on.

**Ms. Shahneela Naheed** is a Lecturer at the Department of Marketing and International Business at North South University. She completed her MBA from Cal Poly Pomona, USA. Her current research interest includes promotional management and behavioral economics.