



Article

The Impact of Political Marketing on Voting Behaviour of Cypriot Voters

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Abstract: The present study concentrates predominantly on the statement that the voter is influenced by and consumes the political communication marketing formed through political structures, content which is partially created based on the political matters of a country. Consequently, this study is founded upon the point that voting actions reflect what kind of content voters consume; therefore, the elector is the potential customer of the “electoral marketplace”. Accordingly, the primary goal of this study is to explain the effect that the political marketing of various parties might have on voters’ behaviour. Correspondingly, we introduce the framework of the planned research; identify the vital research principles; and clarify the intentions of the study and the required theoretical background, together with the data gathering and analysis methods used at this stage for the implementation of the envisaged project. In this context, primary research has been conducted quantitatively, the conclusions of which confirm the presence of the relationship outlined above. In conclusion, this research demonstrates that there is a certain correlation between broader political marketing and electoral perceptions. According to the survey results, we conclude that there is a positive linear correlation between the values of all four elements of the marketing mix, which is statistically significant. We found that there are three different levels of correlation between the pairs of the political marketing mix. Accordingly, it appears that there is a stronger correlation between Price and Product and between Place and Promotion, respectively, while there is a slightly weaker correlation between Place and Product and Promotion and Product. At the same time, there is an even weaker but still positive and statistically significant correlation between Promotion and Price and Price and Place, respectively. In addition, “Promotion” falls behind the rest of the elements of political marketing, a fact that partially confirms the given picture with regard to political marketing and considers “Promotion”, and thus the actual political/pre-election campaign, to be less influential compared to other components of the political marketing mix (Product, Place, and Price), which, according to the specific results, appear to influence, indirectly but more strongly, the voting choices of Cypriots.

Keywords: political marketing; voter behaviour; 4Ps of political marketing



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1. Introduction

This study attempts to explore how the political marketing mix of political parties is perceived and consumed by potential voters and, therefore, aims to analyse the influence of political marketing on the behaviour and electoral actions of Cypriot voters.

Accordingly, this paper identifies a vital research principle. Therefore, the following sections aim to specify the research aims and objectives and to make an introduction to the required theoretical background, as well as the data gathering and analysis methods that have been used in this research.

However, before presenting the approach and the outcome of the conducted research, we introduce the theoretical background of this study to clarify the core study principles

and specify the research aims and objectives, as well as the data gathering and analysis methods used in this work.

1.1. Research Context

This paper introduces the electoral environment and political situation of Cyprus and the electoral process specific to this research in order to specify the characteristics of local electoral activity and to clarify this research field.

The Electoral Behaviour of Voter vs. the Political Reality

Cyprus is a democracy, where the President of the Republic is mutually the leader of the state and the government. Administrative authority is employed by the government. On the other hand, legislative authorisation is approved both by the administration and the legislature. Legal authority is autonomous of the administration and parliament.

As it has already been stated, “Cyprus is partitioned from the time when Turkey occupied the north in reaction to a military coup (1974), which was supported by the Greek regime”. Consequently, the established Republic of Cyprus began to administer the south, while the so-called Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, recognised only by Turkey, began to administer the north of the island. The Authority of the Republic of Cyprus has remained the only worldwide recognised power; however, its authority only extends to the legal government-regulated region. Cyprus’s political establishment has a multiparty structure, with the right-leaning Democratic Rally and communist AKEL making up the electoral front. Moderate DIKO and minor parties frequently develop an alliance with the governmental party and are assigned a few offices in the governing cabinet.

The 1960 Cypriot Constitutional order delivered a presidential structure of administration with autonomous executive, legislative, and judicial partitions, and a multifaceted arrangement of equilibriums with a subjective administration–allocation procedure was planned to defend the concerns of the Turkish Cypriot community. Accordingly, the administrative government was employed by a Greek–Cypriot Head of State, and a Turkish–Cypriot Vice President, voted in by their corresponding groups for 5-year terms and both having a right to veto over specific forms of the legislature and administrative choices.¹

Accordingly, the following sections identify in an investigative manner our research principle. The following sections aim to introduce the theoretical background regarding the notion of political marketing and its components (4Ps), as they have been presented in previous research. Moreover, the following sections present the data gathering and analysis methods used in this research, and then the findings and implications of this study are discussed.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Political Marketing Campaign Issues

In a manner closely related to our research scope, Harrop (1990) describes political marketing as a comprehensive procedure concerning the entire extent of party positioning within the voting marketplace, and therefore decision making.

Kavanagh (1995, 1996) considers electoral promoting to be campaigning, i.e., using a number of approaches and implementations to study public opinion prior to and during an election campaign in order to develop campaign communications and assess their impact (Kolovos and Harris 2005; Newman et al. 2022; Baumgartner 2020).

Maarek (1995) explains political promotion as a multifaceted procedure, the result of a more inclusive attempt associating all of the aspects of politicians’ political campaigns and points, stating that “electoral promoting’ is the overall process of political communication” (Peng and Chris 2007).

Moreover, the emphasis of political marketing has frequently been on administrative issues, such as in the work of Kotler and Kotler (1999), O’Cass (2009), Butler and Neil (1994), and Lock and Harris (1996), which all have a solid promotion organisation emphasis. “As grounds of concern in the electoral—promotion works are connected with the practice

of the marketing notion and the essential and development features of party-electoral marketing and promoting approach" (O'Cass 1996; Butler and Neil 1994; Lock and Harris 1996; O'Shaughnessy et al. 2012; Irshaidat 2022; Lipsitz and Padilla 2021). Political communication researchers who examine the influential outcomes of electoral adverts regularly presume that there is a linear association between advertising volume and ballot selection.

Although works focusing on advertisement have acknowledged that promoting has mutually "wear in" and "wear out" outcomes, only a limited number of electoral communication researchers deliberate this prospect.

In their research, Lipsitz and Padilla (2021) clarify why it is mutually normatively and methodically significant to verify the accurate correlation between advertising and vote choice, and they determine this through exploring three modes of archetypal campaigning outcomes using a more tight-fisted method.

In a manner closely related to our research scope, Harrop (1990) describes political marketing as a comprehensive process concerning the entire extent of party positioning within the voting marketplace, and therefore voters' decision making (Kolovos and Harris 2005).

In a similar manner, Kotler and Kotler (1999) add that the political field, dissimilar to the business sphere, is exceedingly inspired by ideas, emotions, conflict, and partisanship. Furthermore, O'Shaughnessy (1999) argues that the use of negative advertising does not apply to conventional marketing. As Kotler and Kotler (1999) indicate, "conscious marketing only promises to maximise the candidate's potential". They also note that "Applying standard marketing techniques to political campaigning will at least ensure that the campaign's planning is systematic, efficient, and voter oriented". Moreover, the emphasis of political marketing has frequently been on administrative issues, such as in the work of Kotler and Kotler (1999), O'Cass (1996), Butler and Neil (1994), and Lock and Harris (1996), of which their studies all have a sturdy marketing management emphasis. "Such grounds of attention in the political-marketing works have been related to the function of the marketing perception and the fundamental and procedure features of political marketing and marketing strategy" (O'Cass 1996; Butler and Neil 1994; Lock and Harris 1996; O'Shaughnessy 1999; Irshaidat 2022; Lipsitz and Padilla 2021).

Electoral marketing researchers who examine the influential results of electoral adverts regularly presume that there is a direct association between promoting capacity and elect selection. Although the product advertising literature has acknowledged that advertisements have both "wear in" and "wear out" effects, few political communication scholars have considered this possibility.

2.2. Political Marketing and the 4Ps

Moreover, the relevant research works have acknowledged that parties and contenders are consuming various types of marketing, particularly in terms of Political Product, Price, Place, and Promotion. Candidates then attempt to be voted into positions in this manner (Niffenegger 1988; Kotler and Kotler 1999; Lees-Marshment 2001a; Irshaidat 2022; Lipsitz and Padilla 2021). Political events also appear to correspond to conventional marketing situations (Kotler and Kotler 1999; Kaskeala 2010); consequently, in political communication vocabulary, the political system is identical to industries, while candidates are comparable to additional business merchandise (Niffenegger 1988; Kotler and Kotler 1999). Recently, electoral communication has started to escalate its range from modest promoting through communicating and comprehensive marketing in a manner that constructs a durable connection linking electorates in terms of voting, the practice of public relations, word of mouth, and by an enhanced consideration of the desires of voters (Lees-Marshment 2001a). In the field of free media, citizens have more chances of being engaged in electoral activities. Political Product is a complicated outcome in which electorates not only choose their preferred candidate based on the limited view of their characteristics but also deliberate the entire set of candidates once they have the ability to be involved in electing (Winchester et al. 2016).

Correspondingly, political parties and candidates have to adjust and apply different types of marketing to particular strategies/agendas and elaborate on and communicate these in order to bring about the desired outcome in political procedures, and also to make sure that voters feel a sense of gratification from the outcome of the election. This keeps political actors informed of the importance of electoral marketing.

Niffenegger (1988) categorizes the wider notion of the electoral communication mix into the four P's; more specifically, these include the following: Product (program, previous records, individual characteristics), Price (paid advertisements, public relations, and contest), Place (economic and emotional expenses, nationwide appeal), and Promotion (private presence, acquaint agenda). In a similar manner to Widagdo et al. (2014), Chowdhury and Naheed (2019) presented a 38-piece nine-dimensional statistically acceptable organisational model of electoral communication for an emerging state. Moreover, what follows provides some particular references in regard to each of the 4Ps of political marketing, as they have appeared in previous research.

2.2.1. Product

In the broader field of electoral studies, it is widely acknowledged that candidates are considered to be products (Kotler and Kotler 1999). Niffenegger (1988) highlighted various characteristics, for example, previous electoral documentation, individual features, and their standpoint against corruption. Hodge and Kress (1993) emphasised "the persona as a popular leader and social being, the contestant's education, and persuading capability". Osuagwu (2008) stated the importance of a candidate's specific experience, education, and promises in terms of prior voting. (Chowdhury and Naheed 2019; Widagdo et al. 2014).

2.2.2. Price

Price, as it is thought of by the electorate, is the cost that electorates have to pay in the case of a particular candidate winning. Mensah (2007) stated that this expense is equally financial (such as a rise in tax and amounts if voted) and psychological to voters. However, other studies stated that whether choosing a candidate would reduce the nationwide presence of a particular nation is also fundamental to consider. (Chowdhury and Naheed 2019; Widagdo et al. 2014).

2.2.3. Place

The Place approach involves the techniques by which a candidate can contract electorates in a specific manner.

Previous research favoured sustaining interactions with ordinary people, door-to-door events, and being presented throughout the region during the year. More specifically, previous studies, recommended solid publicity, arranging media meetings, etc. (Chowdhury and Naheed 2019; Widagdo et al. 2014).

2.2.4. Promotion

The promotional mix involves the key tool of electoral promotion, regardless of the nature of the type of vote (local or nationwide) (Ndavula et al. 2015). Mensah (2007) stated that promotions with individual presences, usage of the media, mainly TV, and adapted communications are beneficial. Hodge and Kress (1993) declared monitoring the successes of candidates and parties, exploiting home language in dialogue, and mailing voters to be successful, whereas Gerber et al. (2011) proposed the techniques of telemarketing, digital marketing, and radio and poster promotion. (Chowdhury and Naheed 2019; Widagdo et al. 2014).

In this manner, Widagdo et al. (2014) and Chowdhury and Naheed (2019) produced a research model concerning the outcome of the political marketing mix (Political/Electoral Product, Price, Location, and Promotion) on the decision to select candidates and political parties. This present study is a theoretical one which aims to disclose the connection between these study variables in the context of legislative elections. Accordingly, according to theoretical studies, it can be argued that, theoretically, Political Product, placement,

promotional mix, and electoral decisions are connected to voters' choices, whereas Political Price is not.

3. Methodology

3.1. Problem Statement

This paper attempts to investigate how the political marketing of Cypriot political parties is produced and adapted through communication that occurs during the pre-electoral period campaign in order to attract and keep voters.

Moreover, this projected research will try to clarify how, from what perspective, and why the average Cypriot voter and their electoral behaviour is affected by a particular marketing and communication mix, as well as the 4Ps.

Research Question/Hypothesis

According to the above indicative overview, the following specific research questions could be distinguished in a way that may enhance the formulation of clear aims and objectives, thus enabling the accomplishment of the proposed research.

Hypotheses are provisional responses to research questions and are stated in the manner of a correlation among independent and dependent variables. Hypotheses are tentative since their veracity can be evaluated only after they have been tested empirically (Nachmias and Nachmias 1976).

Hypothesis 1. *The perceptions and voting behaviour of the elector.*

Pre-election communication and the wider political marketing mix influence electing culture and the motives and perceptions that comprise the basic dimension of the communication process (Gerbner 1956, 1964); therefore, to a certain extent, they influence the voter, their electoral behaviour, and the electoral map.

Hypothesis 2. *The impact of political marketing mix on consuming behaviour.*

Each element of the political marketing mix/4Ps has a certain level of impact on shaping the perceptions of voters and thus influencing their electoral motives, their electoral behaviour (Sniderman and Levendusky 2007), and their electoral actions.

3.2. The Design of the Primary Research Tools

To meet the requirements of the proposed objectives, certain research methods and tools have been deployed. Accordingly, primary research is the only way through which a particular organisation can generate answers relevant to its own situation.

3.2.1. Survey with Cypriot Voters

An empirical survey took place to assess how Cypriot customers are likely to perceive a foreign franchised brand. According to McQuarrie and Mick (1996, p. 52), "...the broad term survey can be applied to any procedure in which a fixed set of questions is asked of a sample of respondents". Moreover, the proposed survey has the format of a structured questionnaire and aims to respond to the study's objectives by investigating the voting perceptions of the Cypriot voter in order to be able to firstly examine the effect of electoral campaigns; secondly, assess the impact of institutions on the electoral culture of Cypriot voters; and thirdly, investigate the extent of primary voting as part of the contemporary voting culture of Cypriots. Accordingly, a quantitative survey took place with structured interviews with voters of the Republic of Cyprus. The following sub-sections provide more detailed references regarding the proposed survey.

Section A involved testing the following four items referring to the wider element of "Place" as a basic component of the political marketing mix:

- The frequency of the candidate's appearances in public;

- Whether or not the candidate is recognised in the region;
- Whether or not the candidate lives in the region;
- The dispersal of the candidates throughout the region.

Section B involved testing the following three items referring to the wider element of “Product” as a basic component of the political marketing mix:

- The previous political archives of the candidate;
- The persona of the candidate as a leader;
- The persona of the candidate as a social entity.

Section C involved testing the following three items referring to the broader element of “Price” as a basic component of the political marketing Mix:

- The financial cost if the candidate is voted for;
- The emotional cost if the candidate is voted for;
- The candidate’s perspective on both genders.

Section D involved testing the following five items referring to the element of “Promotion” as a basic component of the political marketing Mix:

- The central slogan of the candidate;
- The candidate’s election music;
- Use of the candidate’s voters;
- The candidate’s election signs;
- The candidate’s meetings/appearances.

3.2.2. The Population and Sample of the Survey

According to [Gill and Johnson \(1997, p. 82\)](#): “...questionnaires are concerned with identifying the ‘research population’, which will provide all the information necessary for tackling the original research problem”.

Before starting the actual research process, it was necessary to define Cypriot voters as the targeted research population and to proceed with the selection of a representative sample using an applicable method. According to [Gay and Diehl \(1992, p. 128\)](#), “...selection of a sample is a very important step in conducting a research study because the quality of the sample determines the generalizability of the results”.

For this reason, it is useful to define a sample representative of the proposed research population. In this respect, respondents that are likely to form the sample of the proposed survey are to be randomly selected. According to [Gay and Diehl \(1992, p. 129\)](#), “...random sampling is the process of selecting a sample in such a way that all individuals in the defined population have an equal and independent chance of being selected for the sample”.

According to [Saunders et al. \(1997, p. 162\)](#), “...Stratified random sampling is a mortification of random sampling in which you devise the population into, or more relevant and significant strata based on one or a number of attributes.” In this respect, the survey involved a structured questionnaire which was allocated through the use Electronic Message, and the researcher gained access to the participants through the use of social media platforms, in particular Facebook, with the use of a particular profile with 5000 connections/friends all taken from the research population; therefore, the participants were accessible, meaning that it was not necessary to provide a consent form.

The survey took place during March–April 2022 with Pancyprrian Geographical coverage; the research population of the survey comprised Cypriot voters, and the sample size was 503 Cypriot citizens with voting rights. Sampling took place through the use of simple random sampling.

The reason why a ‘random sample’ technique, such as simple random sampling and systematic random sampling ([Saunders et al. 1997](#); [Gill and Johnson 1997](#)), was preferred over any other sampling methods, is because this method provides a very thorough representation of the research population, composed of Cypriot voters. More specifically, random sampling is the only sampling method that provides a thorough and comprehen-

sive sample representative of the geographical and demographical coverage of the research population.

4. Research Results and Discussion

4.1. The Perceptual/Electoral Impact of Political Marketing

The survey involved 15 items/elements and examined the impact of the political marketing mix, as it was indicated in the literature review, and this mix has been addressed by previous scholars (Kotler and Kotler 1999). Therefore, the political marketing mix comprises the first of the five major thematic parts of the given questionnaire, in a manner similar to the approaches that have previously been used by other researchers (Widagdo et al. 2014; Chowdhury and Naheed 2019; etc.) upon researching electoral behaviour, and these consist of four subsections, each responding to each of the four elements (Ps) of the political marketing mix (Place, Product, Price, Promotion). More specifically, our survey asked the following question: “To what extent can the following elements affect your electoral behaviour?”, assessed with the use of a five-point Likert scale, with 1 denoting not at all, 2 a little, 3 moderate, 4 enough, and 5 very.

4.1.1. The Reliability and Validity of the Marketing Mix Scale

Finally, both the reliability and validity tests of the particular scale/part of the given questionnaire of the marketing mix had a positive outcome; this might reflect that the specific quantitative tool efficiently supported the accomplishment of our research aims and objectives.

The reliability of the questionnaire was assessed using a pilot test. Reliability could be measured in terms of three main methods: test–retest reliability, alternate form reliability, and internal consistency reliability. These are examined below. Test–retest correlation shows slight stability over time. Additionally, construct validity is the degree to which the lengths used, often questionnaires, essentially test the hypothesis or theory they are calculating. Construct validity should display that the scores on a certain test do forecast the theoretical attribute they propose.”

Accordingly, Cronbach’s alpha of the entire political marketing scale was 0.815 for 15 items, which is relatively good if we consider that the general rule of thumb is that a Cronbach’s alpha of 0.70 and above is good and 0.80 and above is very satisfactory (Anastasiadou 2013; Papademetriou et al. 2022). More specifically, for the element of “Place”, Cronbach’s Alpha was 0.874 out of four items; for the element of “Product”, it was 0.770; for “Price”, it was 0.798 out of three items; and for “Promotion”, it was 0.852 out of five items, and all of these values are satisfactory (Anastasiadou et al. 2014). Moreover, (Table 1) displays the validity of the scale as this emerged through the use of principal components analysis (Anastasiadou 2013).

The subsequent guides, called the Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin measure of sampling adequacy (KMO = 0.842) and Bartlett’s test of sphericity (Chi-Square = 4153.468, df = 105, $p < 0.001$), are acceptable and permit the use of principal components analysis (Anastasiadou 2013). The following indices, Eigenvalue, %variance, loadings, and communalities, are acceptable and revealed the constructed validity of the MIX MAPKETIG scale and its conceptual constructs, named Promotion, Place, Price, and Product.

The subsequent guides, called Eigenvalue (5.666), %variance (21.434%), loadings (1D_PROMOTION4, 1D_PROMOTION3, 1D_PROMOTION2, 1D_PROMOTION1, and 1D_PROMOTION5, equal to 0.899, 0.887, 0.797, 0.649, and 0.544, correspondingly), and communalities (1D_PROMOTION4, 1D_PROMOTION3, 1D_PROMOTION2, 1D_PROMOTION1, and 1D_PROMOTION5, equal to 0.842, 0.830, 0.666, 0.533, and 0.491, correspondingly), are acceptable for the Promotion conceptual construct (Table 1).

The following indices, named Eigenvalue (2.331), %variance (19.844%), loadings (1A_PLACE3, 1A_PLACE2, 1A_PLACE4, and 1A_PLACE1, equal to 0.875, 0.850, 0.785, and 0.698, correspondingly), and communalities (1A_PLACE3, 1A_PLACE2, 1A_PLACE4,

and 1A_PLACE1, equal to 0.803, 0.804, 0.746, and 0.645 correspondingly), are acceptable for the Place conceptual construct (Table 1).

Table 1. Political marketing validity statistics.

Construct	Eigenvalue	Variance%	Loadings	Communalities	Cronbach's α	M	SD
MIX MAPKETIG-Scale		70.533			0.879		
PROMOTION	5.666	21.434			0.852		
1D_PROMOTION4: Candidate's Pre-election Signs			0.899	0.842		2.10	1.107
1D_PROMOTION3: Candidate's Posters			0.887	0.830		2.10	1.091
1D_PROMOTION2: Candidate's Music			0.797	0.666		1.96	1.037
1D_PROMOTION1: Candidate's Slogan			0.649	0.533		2.68	1.228
1D_PROMOTION5: Candidate's Appearances			0.544	0.491		3.17	1.251
PLACE	2.331	19.844			0.874		
1A_PLACE3: Candidate lives in the area			0.875	0.803		3.14	1.328
1A_PLACE2: Candidate is known in the area			0.850	0.804		3.16	1.267
1A_PLACE4: Availability of Candidate			0.785	0.746		3.42	1.317
1A_PLACE1: Frequent Pub. Appearance			0.698	0.671		2.98	1.280
PRICE	1.532	15.675			0.798		
1G_PRICE2: Psychological Cost			0.821	0.757		3.64	1.240
1G_PRICE1: Financial Cost of Election			0.801	0.677		3.43	1.225
1G_PRICE3: Genders Perspective			0.789	0.679		3.68	1.253
PRODUCT	1.051	13.580			0.770		
1B_PRODUCT2: Candidate's Leader Image			0.817	0.748		3.60	1.201
1B_PRODUCT1: Candidate's Previous Records			0.789	0.671		3.24	1.216
1B_PRODUCT3: Candidate's Social Image			0.675	0.688		3.87	1.097

Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin measure of sampling adequacy: KMO = 0.842. Bartlett's test of sphericity: Chi-Square = 4153.468, df = 105, $p < 0.001$).

The subsequent guides, called Eigenvalue (1.532), %variance (15.675%), loadings (1G_PRICE2, 1G_PRICE1, and 1G_PRICE3, equal to 0.821, 0.801, and 0.789 correspondingly), and communalities (1G_PRICE2, 1G_PRICE1, and 1G_PRICE3, equal to 0.757, 0.677, and 0.679 correspondingly), are acceptable for the Price conceptual construct (Table 1).

The subsequent guides, called Eigenvalue (1.051), %variance (13.580%), loadings (1B_PRODUCT2, 1B_PRODUCT1, and 1B_PRODUCT3, equal to 0.817, 0.789, and 0.675, correspondingly), and communalities (1B_PRODUCT2, 1B_PRODUCT1, and 1B_PRODUCT3, equal to 0.748, 0.671, and 0.688 correspondingly), are acceptable for the Product conceptual construct (Table 1).

4.1.2. The Element of “Place”—Strengths and Weaknesses

Accordingly, the general outcome of these particular findings is that the element of “Place”, as it is presented in Figure 1. with mean values of (2.98; 3.16; 3.14; 3.42) as a

component of the wider political marketing mix, appeared to have enough impact on the vast majority of the respondents. However, it falls behind the elements of “Product” and “Price”, which indicated an even higher impact on the voting behaviour of Cypriots.

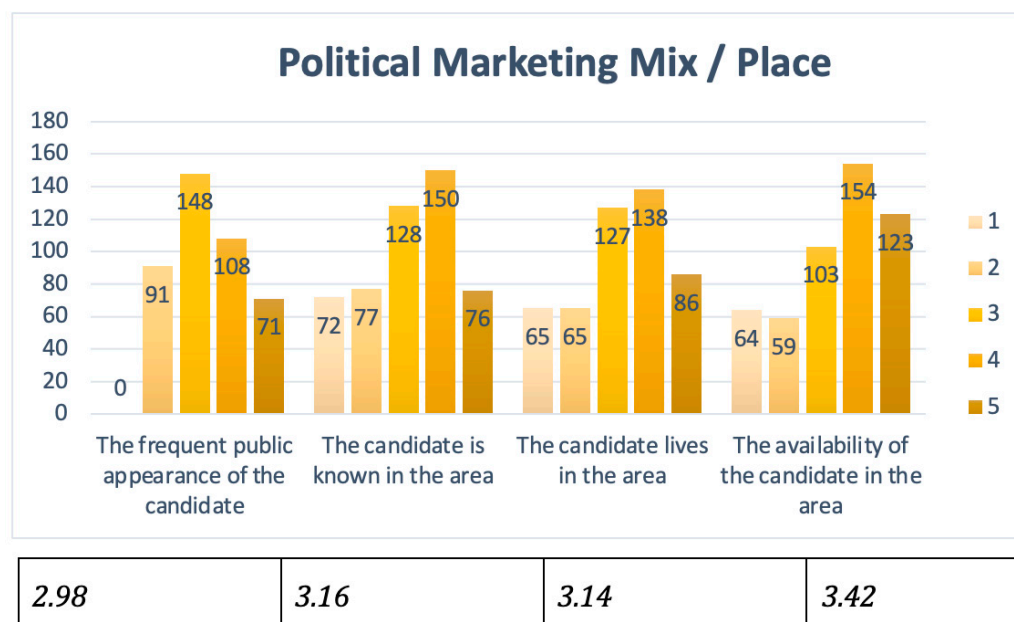


Figure 1. Political marketing/place.

As is reported by the given results of “The Frequent public appearance of the candidate” (2.98), the fact that it presents a mean value higher than average appears to be the weakest point of the wider element of “Place”, while “The availability of the candidate in the area” (3.42) appears to be the strongest point of the wider element. This fact suggests that the element of “Place” does not present an actual weakness.

However, its actual strength is placed around the accessibility of the candidate in the region, and thus the concentration around local interest rather than a general public appearance. Nonetheless, the latter also appears to be relatively important as a campaign element.

4.1.3. The Element of “Product”—Strengths and Weaknesses

In a comparable way, the general outcome that can be derived from these particular findings is that the element of “Product” (see Figure 2) as a component of the political marketing mix, with mean values of (3.24; 3.60; and 3.87), presents an even stronger impact on the voting behaviour of Cypriots. Even though “the previous political records of the candidate” (3.24) demonstrated a relatively high impact on voting behaviour, it lies behind “the persona of the contestant as a leader” (3.60) and “the image of the contestant as a social entity” (3.87), a fact that suggests that both the leader and social figures should be the major priorities of parties and candidates in terms of the element of “Political Product”.

As reported by the given results, “The Frequent public appearance of the candidate” (2.98), even the fact that it presents a mean value higher than average, appears to be the weakest point of the wider element of “Place”, while “the accessibility of the contestant in the region” (3.42) appears to be the strongest point of the wider element. This fact suggests that the Element of “Place” does not present an actual weakness. However, its actual strength is placed around the accessibility of the candidate in the region, and thus the concentration around local interest, rather than general public appearance. Nonetheless, the latter also appears to be relatively important as a campaign element.

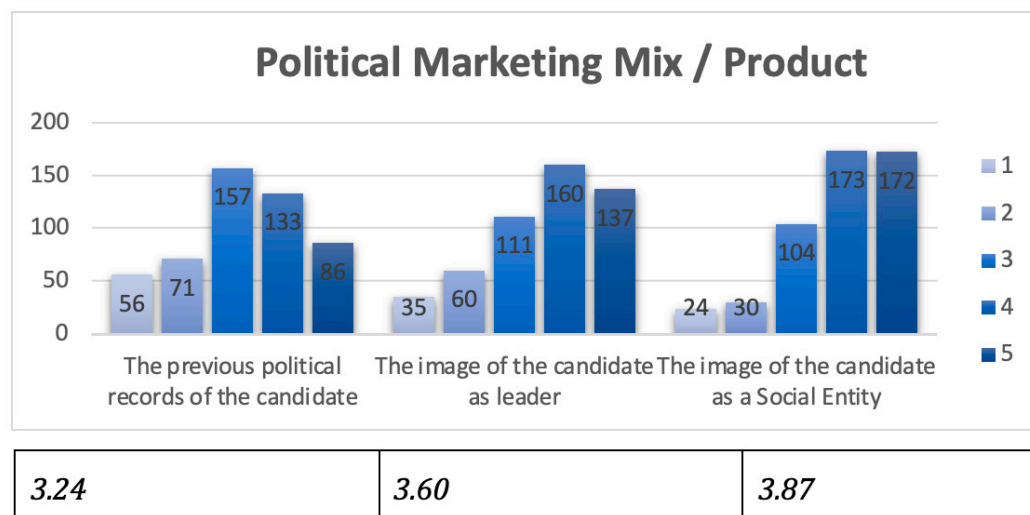


Figure 2. Political marketing mix/product.

4.1.4. The Element of “Price”—Strengths and Weaknesses

In a very similar manner, the general outcome derived from the particular outcome is that the element of “Price” (see Figure 3) as a component of the political marketing mix, with mean values of (3.43; 3.64; 3.68), seems to be the most influential element of the wider political marketing mix.

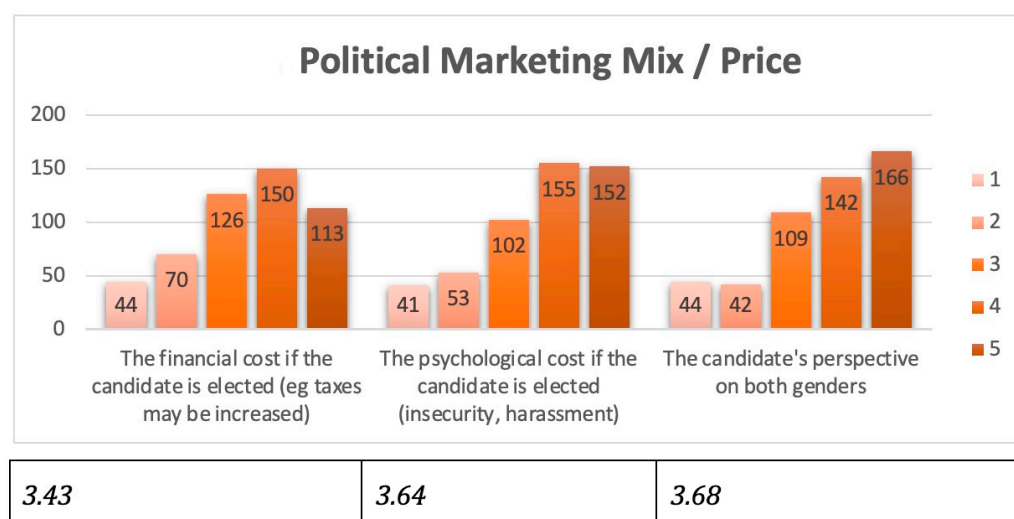


Figure 3. Political marketing/price.

Moreover, our results contradict the findings of [Widagdo et al. \(2014\)](#), who claimed that “Product”, “Place”, and “Promotion” are connected to voters’ choice; however, Price is not. Even though “the financial cost if the candidate is elected” (3.43) demonstrated a relatively high impact on voting behaviour, it falls behind “the psychological cost if the candidate is elected” (3.64) and “the candidate’s perspective on both genders” as a social entity” (3.68), a fact that suggests that both social and psychological cost require greater emphasis rather than actual economic cost in regard to the element of “Political Price” as an element of “Political Marketing”.

4.1.5. The Element of “Promotion”—Strengths and Weaknesses

In a different manner from the other “3Ps”, the general outcome that derives from this particular research is that the element of “Promotion” as a component of the political marketing mix (See Figure 4), with mean values of (2.68; 1.96; 2.10; 2.10 and 3.17), has less

impact on the vast majority of the respondents in relation to the other elements of the wider political marketing mix (“Place”, “Product”, and “Price”).

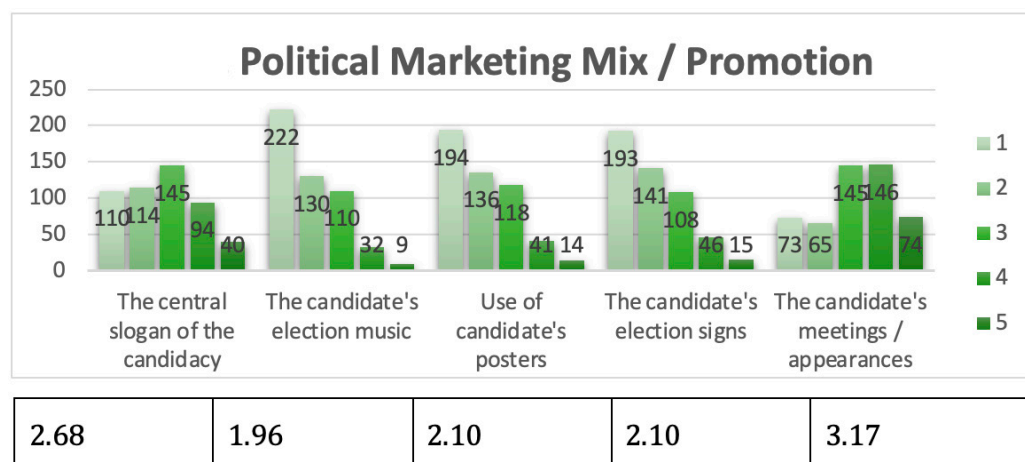


Figure 4. Political marketing mix/promotion.

From the five factors, “the meetings of the candidate” factor appears to be the strongest of the elements of promotion, followed by “Central Slogan of the Candidacy” (2.68). Accordingly, the combination of a distinctive central slogan and a sound public appearance appeared to be critical for the wider political marketing of a candidate or a party. However, “Promotion” in general lies behind the rest of the elements of political marketing, a fact that, in a way, confirms the given picture in regard to political marketing and considers “Promotion”, and thus the actual political/pre-election campaign, to be less influential compared to the other elements of the political marketing mix, which might influence indirectly, but more strongly, the voting choice of Cypriots.

4.2. Correlation of Variables Political Marketing

4.2.1. Correlation of Variables (Place and Product)

In order to examine the correlation between the two variables of (Place and Product), we consider the null and alternative hypotheses: H_0 , PLACE and PRODUCT variables do not show a statistically significant linear correlation, and H_1 , the variables PLACE and PRODUCT show a statistically significant linear correlation. From the results, we draw the following conclusions:

The Pearson correlation coefficient of the two examined variables PLACE and PRODUCT is $r = 0.405$; therefore, there is a low and positive linear correlation between the values concerning PLACE and PRODUCT ($r = 0.405$, $p < 0.01$), which is statistically significant, meaning that because the variables PLACE and PRODUCT show a statistically significant linear correlation, the alternative hypothesis H_1 is accepted.

4.2.2. Correlation of Variables (Price and Place)

In order to examine the correlation between the two variables (Price and Place), here we consider the null and alternative hypotheses: H_0 , PRICE AND PLACE variables do not show a statistically significant linear correlation, and H_1 , the variables PLACE and PRODUCT show a statistically significant linear correlation. From the results, we draw the following conclusions: the Pearson correlation coefficient of the two examined variables PRICE AND PLACE is $r = 0.289$.

4.2.3. The Impact of Political Marketing on Voting Behaviour

Consequently, there is a low and positive linear correlation between the values concerning PRICE AND PLACE ($r = 0.289$, $p < 0.01$), which is statistically significant, meaning that

because the variables PRICE AND PLACE show a statistically significant linear correlation, the alternative hypothesis H1 is accepted.

4.2.4. Correlation of Variables (Price and Product)

In the same manner, in order to examine the correlation between the two variables (Price and Product), here we consider the null and alternative hypotheses: Ho, PRICE and PRODUCT variables do not show a statistically significant linear correlation, and H1, the variables PLACE and PRODUCT show a statistically significant linear correlation. From the results, we draw the following conclusions: the Pearson correlation coefficient of the two examined variables PRICE and PRODUCT is $r = 0.504$. Therefore, there is a low and positive linear correlation between the values concerning PLACE and PRODUCT ($r = 0.504, p < 0.01$), which is statistically significant; therefore, the alternative hypothesis H1 is accepted because of the variables PRICE and PRODUCT.

4.2.5. Correlation of Variables (Promotion and Place)

To examine the correlation between the two variables (Promotion and Place), here we consider the null and alternative hypotheses: Ho, PROMOTION and PLACE variables do not show a statistically significant linear correlation, and H1, the variables PROMOTION and PLACE show a statistically significant linear correlation. From the results, we draw the following conclusions: the Pearson correlation coefficient of the two examined variables PROMOTION and PLACE is $r = 0.512$.

Therefore, there is a low and positive linear correlation between the values concerning PROMOTION AND PLACE ($r = 0.512, p < 0.01$), which is statistically significant; hence, because the variables PROMOTION and PLACE show a statistically significant linear correlation, the alternative hypothesis H1 is accepted.

4.2.6. Correlation of Variables (Promotion and Price)

Here we consider the null and alternative hypotheses: Ho, PROMOTION and PRICE variables do not show a statistically significant linear correlation, and H1, the variables PROMOTION and PRICE show a statistically significant linear correlation. From the results, we draw the following conclusions: the Pearson correlation coefficient of the two examined variables PROMOTION and PRICE is $r = 0.243$. Therefore, there is a low and positive linear correlation between the values concerning PROMOTION and PRICE ($r = 0.243, p < 0.01$), which is statistically significant, meaning that because the variables PROMOTION and PRICE show a statistically significant linear correlation, the alternative hypothesis H1 is accepted.

According to the above correlations of the survey's results, it can be argued that there is a positive linear correlation between the values of all four elements of the marketing mix, which is statistically significant; therefore, the alternative hypothesis H1, because the variables show a statistically significant linear correlation, is accepted in every single case. In particular, it emerged that there are three different levels of correlation between the pairs of the political marketing mix.

Accordingly, it has arisen that there is a stronger correlation between Price and Product (0.504) and between Place and Promotion (0.512), respectively, while there is a slightly weaker correlation between Place and Product (0.405) and Promotion and Product (0.34). At the same time, there is an even weaker but still positive and statistically significant correlation between Promotion and Price (0.243) and Price and Place (0.289), respectively.

5. Research Implications and Conclusions

The Perceptual Impact of Political Marketing

The given research results and findings might support the view that political events also appear to be equivalent to conventional marketing circumstances (Kotler and Kotler 1999; Kaskeala 2010); thus, in electoral promoting language, parties are equal to businesses,

while candidates are comparable to other commercial products (Niffenegger 1988; Kotler and Kotler 1999; Kaskeala 2010).

Another fact that derives from the findings of this specific research is that, currently, electoral marketing is intensifying its range from modest campaigning through political marketing to constructing continuing connections by linking electorates in terms of votes, the use of public relations, word of mouth, and by an enhanced understanding of the desires of voters (Lees-Marshment 2001a).

Additionally, this research points out that the blend of a distinctive central slogan and a sound public appearance appear to be critical for the wider political marketing of a candidate or a party.

However, “Promotion” in general lies behind the rest of the elements of political marketing, a fact that, in a way, confirms the given picture regarding political marketing and considers “Promotion”, and thus the actual political/pre-election campaign, to be less influential compared to the other elements of the political marketing mix (Product, Place, and Price). According to the specific results, this appears to influence indirectly, but more strongly, the voting choices of Cypriots.

In addition, another critical point of the specific findings that contributes to the existing relevant literature is that, according to the survey’s results, there is a positive linear correlation between the values of all four elements of the marketing mix, which is statistically significant. Therefore, the alternative hypothesis H1 is accepted because the variables show a statistically significant linear correlation in every single case. In particular, it emerged that there are three different levels of correlation between the pairs of the political marketing mix: There is a stronger correlation between Price and Product (0.504) and between Place and Promotion (0.512), respectively, while there is a slightly weaker correlation between Place and Product (0.405) and Promotion and Product (0.340). At the same time, there is an even weaker but still positive and statistically significant correlation between Promotion and Price (0.243) and Price and Place (0.289), respectively.

Another explanation of the result that presents “Promotion” as the less influential element of the marketing mix to voters is the way and the extent to which the political message is consumed by voters according to their perceptions and the perceptual dimension of the communication process (Gerbner 1956); thus, this refers to an actual segment of voters who are loyal to political parties. Accordingly, it seems that Cypriot voters do not judge the views expressed by different parties with the same criteria, and therefore they do not consume the political messages of these parties in the same way. Consequently, the view from the party they support is judged more leniently and with much more positive thinking than the views of other parties.

According to the correlations of the survey’s results, there is a positive linear correlation between the values of all four elements of the marketing mix, which is statistically significant; therefore, the alternative hypothesis H1 is accepted because the variables show a statistically significant linear correlation in every single case. In particular, it emerged that there are three different levels of correlation between the pairs of the political marketing mix: There is a stronger correlation between Price and Product (0.504) and between Place and Promotion (0.512), respectively, while there is a slightly weaker correlation between Place and Product (0.405) and Promotion and Product (0.340). At the same time, there is an even weaker but still positive and statistically significant correlation between Promotion and Price (0.243) and Price and Place (0.289), respectively.

6. Limitations

Even though the reported research outcomes respond to the accomplishment of the formulated aims and objectives; confirm the basic hypotheses of the project in general terms; and, at a satisfactory level, verify the perusable model of the circular co-relationship between ideological clarity–political agenda–political marketing, voters’ behaviour, reason for voting, voting perceptions, and voters’ involvement, a number of research limitations have emerged. Firstly, sufficient interconnection of the electoral results, ideological clarity,

and political agenda has not occurred in a way that verifies, in its entirety, the proposed cyclical model of interconnection between political communication and electoral behaviour.

Moreover, it is beyond the scope of this study to employ to a further extent the findings concerning “reason to vote”, “voters involvement”, “information seeking”, and “stability”; therefore, the data collected on “word of mouth” firstly might not be as representative and secondly, might not reflect the actual impact of word of mouth on the electoral process.

Moreover, the finding which indicates that the vast majority of voters do not vote for the same party is in contrast to the other elements of this research which suggest that voters are confident about their decision and view more positively the party and candidate of their choice.

7. Recommendations for Further Research

According to the researchers, the objective “impact” of communication campaigns could vary from the actual “impact”, and this is realised by the contributors, a fact that means that future research could benefit from the broader application of a qualitative research tool (e.g., focus group), which is expected to provide a more precise and tangible dimension of the so-called “impact” of pre-election communication campaigns (Sophocleous and Masouras 2019).

Furthermore, further research is recommended to be performed on relevant issues, such as reason to vote, voters’ involvement, the voting decision-making process (Hillygus 2010; Fournier et al. 2004), and electoral ergonomics (Bruter 2019), and these are introduced in the Literature Review (Section 3). Ultimately, the distinctions made amongst certain major conclusions of this survey might indicate that future research should consider applying research methods that will manage to examine a particular notion more comprehensively and more accurately.

Finally, very important data can be gathered through social communities because voters tend to form societies on social networks like Facebook (Souravlas et al. 2021a), meaning that big data analytical processing techniques and algorithms (Souravlas and Anastasiadou 2021; Souravlas et al. 2021b, 2021c, 2022; Tantalaki et al. 2020) may be of great importance towards these efforts.

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Note

¹ “Politics of Cyprus”. Chriseleni Villas. Retrieved 20 November 2013.

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