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HOW TO COMPOSE A MEDIA MIX TO WIN AN ELECTORAL CAMPAIGN? PROPOSING A FRAMEWORK FOR POLITICAL MARKETING

¿CÓMO COMPONER UNA MEZCLA DE MERCADEO DE MEDIOS DE COMUNICACIÓN PARA GANAR UNA CAMPAÑA ELECTORAL? PROPUESTA DE UN MARCO PARA EL *MARKETING* POLÍTICO

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ABSTRACT

This article addresses the issue of composing different media to send an integrated message to the voters in electoral campaigns and presents a framework for managing media in political marketing. The authors conducted deep interviews with strategy developers of the past presidential elections as well as two parliamentary elections in Iran to extract the strategy development process for delivering the campaign message to the target audiences. thematic analysis used for analysis of data and interviews coded in three levels of open, axial and selective. The paper suggests a sequence of audience, message and media to launch a successful campaign within a framework that starts with campaign structure and strategy and accomplished with economic effectiveness measuring and success rate.

KEYWORDS

Election, Electoral campaigns, Political marketing, Media management, Political communication.

RESUMEN

Este artículo presenta un marco para la gestión de medios en campañas electorales. Se realizaron entrevistas a profundidad con desarrolladores de estrategias en las pasadas elecciones presidenciales, así como dos elecciones parlamentarias para extraer el proceso de desarrollo de la estrategia para transmitir el mensaje de la campaña a las audiencias objetivo. El documento sugiere una secuencia de audiencia, mensaje y medios de comunicación para lanzar una campaña exitosa.

PALABRAS CLAVE

Elecciones, campañas electorales, *marketing* político, gestión de medios, comunicación política.

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INTRODUCTION

Democracies in modern era are mainly based on elections, and politicians at different levels need to convince their target audiences to vote for them to reach the seats. Almost in every election in every part of the world, electoral campaign is the central place that the candidate, its party and the supporters share and coordinate their efforts. Considering the money and number of people involved in every election, campaigns are one of the most important marketing gatherings that in a specific and almost short period of time, communicate immensely with the big portions of public to convince a large number of people with their messages. Huge investments of parties and supporters make elections the arena for a huge marketing campaign and therefore, understanding how to be successful is a much-demanded knowledge that candidates and parties seek to find through the political marketing experts, campaign strategists, media managers, etc.

As an example, the controversial 2020 US election has been recognized as the costliest election in the history of the country, setting a new record for spending for political propaganda and large portion of this money was spent on social media. The total cost of this election is estimated at about \$14 billion. It has been said that Biden campaign spent \$1 billion and \$63 million on the campaign from April 1, 2019 to November 23, 2020, to defeat his inner-party rivals, such as Bernie Sanders and then-rival Donald Trump. Biden was able to win with about 81,271,000 votes. With that in mind, the campaign for the next president has cost more than \$13 per vote (www.baratnews.com). In another example, The UK's snap 2017 General Election cost a total of \$262 million according to Politico, which is just \$2 million less than the 2016 referendum cost. In fact, during referendums in the UK, there are fairly stringent spending rules, which put \$13 million limits on both the Vote Leave and Britain Stronger parties. The country's 2015 election that saw David Cameron win the majority for Conservatives was a little less costly. The total paid from the UK Government's Consolidated Fund for the costs of the 2015 UK Parliamentary general election was \$214 million. German political candidates are only allowed one TV ad, which means for the major parties, the CDU (Christian Democratic Union) and the SPD (Social Democratic Party), that's eight times on each channel over the course of the campaign. Angela Merkel secured a fourth term as a German chancellor in the country's September 2017 election, despite being the CDU's worst electoral performance since 1949. The election cost a total of \$148 million, which is miniscule in comparison to the US (Yahoo finance). Many scholars agree that campaigns and political communications influence individual voting behavior and election results (Ansolabehere & Iyengar, 1995; Bartels, 1996; Popkin & Kinsey, 1991; Zaller, 1992, 1996). Therefore, the study of the communication regime of election campaigns has been a serious issue in many studies (Semetko & Tworzecki, 2017).

Due to the importance of electoral campaign from financial, political and social aspects as well as its effect on the future of countries and societies, exploring the elements of a successful electoral campaign is very essential, and setting media

strategy to effectively convey the message to the audiences is the key point. This research addresses the media strategy in the electoral campaigns and to do this, Iranian presidential elections in the last twenty years as well as two last parliamentary elections were studied. In Iran, members of the parliament, as well as the president, are elected by direct popular vote. During the particular days, the candidates and their supporters are authorized to launch campaigns and spend huge amounts of money to attract the voters. Significant financial, human, physical, and energy costs have been spent on these campaigns over the years, both in terms of the economic prosperity they create for some jobs and the enthusiasm they create among the candidates' supporters (Best et al., 2008; Marcus & MacKuen, 1993).

At the same time, choosing the effective media mix under the communication regime of election campaigns is one of the serious challenges for the campaigners, so that, the diversity in the media coverage for elections around the world has become both a challenge and an opportunity (Elchahabi & Gallagher, 2015). Before the advent of social media, the mainstream of the electoral media was the formal media (Owen, 2018), but with the spread of mobile phones and the emergence of new media and communication methods (Delli Carpini & Williams, 2020), a wide variety of media was created that has shaped the individual media (Crosbie, 2018). Appropriate media has increased the way it conveys the message to the audience properly. Accordingly, election campaigns have to use a media mix in order to reach the diverse audience. This phenomenon is called multi-platform (Doyle, 2013) and it is so important that advertisers redesign their messages to fit the appropriate media mix for their audience.

The importance of choosing an effective media mix and using a multi-platform approach in these campaigns is so great and the success or defeat of the election depends on it. The campaigns of Barack Obama in 2008 and Donald Trump in 2016 were the examples of choosing the effective media mix that led to their success. Since previous studies have shown that a significant part of the election campaign in Iran is carried out regardless of the appropriate media mix and only with the previous experiences of the campaign agents, the efficiency of such efforts and the effectiveness of expenditures and resources are undermined as a result. Considering the above mentioned, this research seeks to identify a framework for appropriate media mix for electoral campaigns and to answer the question of 'How to effectively compose media mix to transfer the message of electoral campaigns?'

LITERATURE REVIEW

1) Political marketing

The combination of two fields of marketing and politics for increasing the capacity of political groups and their success in electoral competitions is the purpose of the political marketing theory. Political marketing as a discipline has gradually found its framework (Ediraras et al., 2013; Friedrichsen et al., 2017) and is a tool that facilitates the efforts of political parties to establish long-term relationships with voters and stakeholders (Henneberg & O'shaughnessy, 2007). Political marketing

implies the use of concepts, principles and methods of marketing in political issues by individuals, groups, organizations and nations. Political marketing includes the analysis, planning, evaluation, and control of political activities by individuals, groups, political parties, government, and lobbyists (O'Shaughnessy, 2009). Zareie et al., (2016) compared political marketing to commercial marketing, arguing that in commercial marketing, sellers offer goods, services and information to the market and receive money, information and customer loyalty in return, but in electoral campaigns, candidates present their political commitments and preferences in exchange for the votes, efforts, and support of voters.

Neffenger in his political marketing process model, emphasizes that political marketing involves the attempt to integrate internally the four traditional marketing factors of product, promotion, price, and place that are effective in controlling voter behavior. In the same regard, Warren (2011) identifies political campaigns as commercial ones, arguing that politics, like any other industry, has a product, a marketing strategy, and a buying opportunity that includes a politician, a campaign, and a vote and needs management and planning to achieve the desired goals. Political campaign is designed for campaign days to reach out to the audience, in other words, it means saying the best words at the best possible time. Choosing the right slogan to address the concerns of the general electorate, choosing the right symbol, using social reference groups correctly, choosing the right advertising content that includes both negative in the face of competition and positive content, accurate and timely use of various advertising tools, such as from face to face speeches, debates, virtual networks, etc., accurate segmentation and prioritization of the market over the capabilities of insiders and competitors, the right choice of the main audience of the party, maximum use of loyal supporters for networking and developing the voting community and even in some cases negative struggle and creating a bipolar atmosphere to increase the number of fans are the points that will increase the effectiveness of advertising in the voting market (Hajipour et al., 2016).

One of the notable models in the field of the effect of advertising on the political behavior of voters was proposed by Wring (1997), who developed the political marketing process by election campaigns around the marketing mix. Product is the image of the party or the image of the party leader or ideology; Promotion includes media advertising and public relations activities and field and postal advertising; Place is the arena for field activities, rallies and election tours; And Price includes the different costs of energy, psychological, economic, and time that voters consider. This process includes supporters, fluid voters, and competitors. In another model, (Newman & Sheth, 1985) consider emotional feeling, the image of the candidate, current events, personal events, social image, and political events as elements that influence the voter's decision.

Cwalina et al. (2015) stressed the importance of scientific research in political marketing. Kotler & Keller (2012) presented a six-step process of political campaign marketing activities for creation of a candidate's marketing plan including

environmental research, external and internal evaluation analysis, strategic marketing, goal setting and strategy making, communication planning, organizing distribution, and paying attention to the key markets. Based on a model presented by Falkowski and Cwalina (2012) aimed at influencing voters' behavior, effective cognitive elements of individuals cause an emotional feeling and as a result, they decide to vote, and election campaigns are a mediating variable in the decision to vote. In this model, the advertisement must be carried out to boost the image of the candidate and in the form of a party. Lilekis (2006) lists four characteristics for successful political propaganda: 1) they are based on the resources available to the candidate; 2) they present the topics in the form of appropriate narratives; 3) they are audience-oriented; 4) they present a simple and understandable message.

Newman's model of political marketing is one of the most comprehensive models ever presented in this field which describes the concept of marketing in political behavior. This model offers several methods for marketing actions in the political field. In his model, Newman identifies four political marketing mixes with political campaigns, including candidate, push marketing, pull marketing, and polling. In Newman's model, push marketing refers to the actions of low-level campaign members that are necessary to form a network of volunteers to perform a variety of activities. Pull marketing is the attempt to use mass media such as television, radio, newspapers, post, Internet, etc., which in this respect is similar to the promotion element in the business marketing mix. Polling means doing research and then analyzing the data to examine the serious ideas and determine how successful they are. Such a model is used by many candidates in Western countries.

2) Media mix

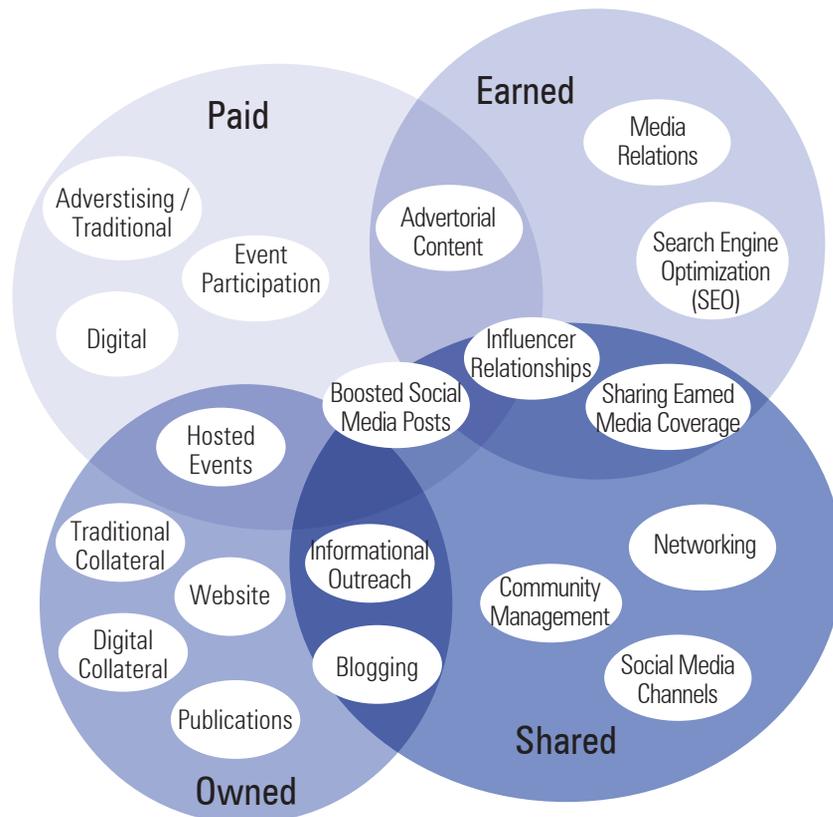
Digital revolution created a wide variety of media to reach the audience. While mass media and print media were the only types of media before the advent of the digital technology, the emergence of web and social media gave rise to a new type of media never experienced before. Given the prevalence of mobile phones worldwide, social media became ubiquitous and available on always-on mobile devices in every moment of time (Hossain, 2019) This new revolution, second screen media, made users available for marketing purposes; therefore, it is not surprising that electoral campaigns use this type of media for their goals too. Appearance of new type of media did not extinct previous media, but co-existed and sometime accelerated them. For example (Khajeheian, 2011; Su & Zarea, 2020) coined the word 'media remediation' for the evolution of old media toward a new media by the use of new technology to survive. For example, radio remediated toward podcasts to use internet for reaching the listeners.

Faced with such variety of media, choosing the right type is a challenge for marketers as well as campaign managers. To organize different types of media for research and practical uses, Capizzo and Regina (2019) proposed a typology of media types known as PESO model, including Paid media, Earned media, Shared

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media, and Owned media. This model focuses on the strategic planning process for campaign development. Figure 1 depicts this model by representing media located in each category and the ones which are common in two or more categories.

Figure 1: PESO Model(Capizzo & Regina, 2019, p. 62)



Many research addressed the proper mix of media. For instance, Aminian et al (2013) studied the proper mix of different media to increase awareness of lung cancer patients and to promote the health. Khajeheian et al. (2012) presented a matrix of media management to manage the proper media mix.

Luttrell and Capizzo (2019) also presented a different definition of strategy and tactic in managing the media mix. According to their model, strategy is about complimentary channel selection and how to support objectives through complementary channels to convey messages to different audiences (p.58). On the other hand, tactics focus on the effective transmission of messages to “create a memorable campaign-wide and audience-specific message” (p.58) and should reflect audiences, timeline, budget, messaging and team expertise (p.59). A wide range of strategies and tactics are applicable by the use of PESO. It also shows the

ways in which these approaches can be combined to support the achievement of organizational and communication goals and objectives. For this reason, the present study uses this model to combine a proper mix of media to convey the campaigns' messages to the target audiences.

METHODOLOGY

Luttrel and Capizzo (2019) proposed the ROSTIR model (Research/Diagnosis, Objectives, Strategies, Tactics, Implementation, and Reporting/Evaluation) for the public relations planning process. This model goes beyond the traditional models of public relations including R.A.C.E. (Research, Action, Communication, and Evaluation) and R.O.P.E. (Research, Objectives, Communication, Evaluation). It examines the two components of ROSTIR and PESO in order to examine in more depth the process of planning an integrated campaign to develop a strategy to achieve customer goals.

This research is an exploratory one that has sought to provide a framework of composing different media for electoral campaigns for presidential candidates to maximize the impact of the campaign's message on the target audience and voters. Term framework implies on identifying the boundaries, the constructing factors and the basics elements of a phenomenon (Khajeheian, 2019, p. 20). To this end, a qualitative approach was followed.

This study used content analysis as the method. The interviews were transcribed and then by the coding system, they were analyzed as open coding, axial coding and selective coding. MaxQDA2010 software was used for the analysis. In the first step, via open coding the key phrases of the interviews were extracted and then labeled by codes. In the next stage axial coding categorized the open coding labels into meaningful groups. Finally, selective coding created the map of meaning and built a ground to interpret the findings.

To collect the data, bibliometric analysis, interviews and content analysis were used as methods for conducting this research. In the first stage, previous materials related to the subject of electoral campaigns were collected and reviewed. These documents included official statements of parties and candidates made in the previous electoral campaigns, governmental instructions and policies for advertising in the periods of elections, etc. as well as the contents of advertisements, including social media campaigns and other available materials. In the next stage, in-depth interviews were conducted with a sample of practitioners who ran the previous campaigns to understand how the campaigns' strategies were set and conducted and what special concerns had already been experienced.

Semi-structured interviews were used as the main tool for data collection. In spite of Covid-19 outbreak, many of the interviewees requested for in-person meeting, amid concerns over possible leak of their political views in digital communications; for this reason, all interviews were conducted during in-person meetings. Each interview started with an open question on the process of setting campaign's

strategy based on the experience of interviewee and how audience, message and media were chosen. Open questions allowed the respondents to freely explain their experience and describe the subjects that may not be covered in pre-set questions. After answering the open questions, the interviewer asked the questions that were left unanswered. The data collection included Iranian presidential elections from 1997 to 2021 when this study was underway. It covered all activities within the electoral campaigns. The interviews took between 40 minutes to three hours and were conducted in person, in spite of Covid-19 outbreak to prevent or decrease the level of conservatism in responses amid respondents concerns over possible data leak in digital communication.

Population of this research comprised practitioners, strategists, campaign leaders, head of electoral campaign' headquarters and all those who participated in setting electoral campaign strategy in presidential campaigns in 1997, 2001, 2005, 2009, 2013, 2017 as well as parliamentary elections of 2015 and 2019. Due to the impossibility of collecting data from such a large population, sampling was inevitable. A purposive and available sampling method was used to select the sample that best conveyed the rich information and specialization. Table 1 presents the sample of this research with their code and the background. The sampling continued until it met saturation. At this point, new interviews provided no more new code. After the 12th interview the saturation was met and no new code was generated from the last 2 interviews.

Table-1 Research Sample

Code	Background	Political orientation
I 1	Senior advisor and campaign theorist of one of the presidential candidates in different elections (since 1984, personal branding and political campaign)	Autocratic
I 2	The head of the people's campaigns in the different election periods, and the head of the youth headquarters and campaign organizations.	Autocratic
I 3	One of the organizers of the election campaign of the reformist representatives and the deputy head of the youth headquarters	Reformist
I 4	Consultant and organizer of reformist candidates' election campaigns in different periods and planner of candidates' campaigns	Reformist
I 5	Adviser and campaign planner of reformist candidates in different periods	Reformist
I 6	Chief of Staff of one of the presidential candidates, in charge of the advertising and communication committee of election campaigns in different periods	Moderate autocratic
I 7	Member of various election campaigns in different election periods	Moderate autocratic
I 8	Member of the Reformists' Campaign Planning Council during the Election Period, and Chief of Staff of the Youth and Students of Tehran	Reformist

Code	Background	Political orientation
I 9	Planner and executive of reformist election campaigns in different election periods	Moderate autocratic
I 10	Reformist campaign planner	Moderate autocratic
I 11	Activist of reformist candidates' campaigns in different periods, member of the Central Headquarters of the Presidential Election in 2013 and head of the youth of the Presidential Headquarters, secretary and executive deputy of a member of parliament in 2015, member of the content production committee in the 2017 presidential campaign	Reformist
I 12	One of the first circle of reformist headquarters and one of the advisory councils of the 2013 election	Reformist

Data analysis method: Thematic analysis was used for analyzing the collected data. Every interview was first transcribed and then analyzed by coding the content of interview immediately after the interview was conducted. In this approach, the output of each interview was used as the input of the next interview to create more in-depth and enriched questions. Table 2 and 3 lists samples of open and axial codes.

Table-2 Sample of Open codes

Basic Themes	Propositions
Instagram	Instagram was also somewhat active, I remember that one of Mr. Rouhani's campaigns, I think, it was in Shiroudi Stadium, and was streamed on Instagram live, and in fact, they had a page for themselves that was being broadcast.
	Cyberspace was so strong, Telegram was so powerful, and Instagram was so powerful that people could find lists from there.
Professors and Academics	Social networks like Instagram played a very important role because, about 80% of the internet data in Iran were said to had been used for watching videos, it means that, 80% of people know that this video is being seen in Iran.
	My audience is a specific audience, which can consist of elites, academics, celebrities and actors.
	Now, it is true that there were different strata, including the industry, doctors, university professors, and sometimes members of the parliament.

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Table-3 Sample of axial codes

Main themes	Organizing themes
Social Media	Facebook
	Telegram
	Instagram
	Twitter
	WhatsApp
	Internal messengers
Scholars and special audiences	Viber
	Elites and intellectuals
	Professors and academics
	Actors and Celebrities
	Ex-representatives of Parliament

FINDINGS

Analysis of 12 deep interviews extracted 7 main themes, 24 organizing themes and 68 basic themes. Seven main themes included: 1) Campaign's Structure, 2) Advertising Performance Evaluation, 3) Advertising Tools, 4) Advertising Strategies, 5) Audience Analysis, 6) Message Design Method, and 7) Message Design Features.

Figure 2: Main themes



4.3.1. Campaign's Structure

Generally, the election campaign structure consists of four categories: staff agents, decision making methods, staff hierarchy, and committees' structure. These factors along with their relevant codes and elements were inserted in the below table.

Table-4 Campaign's Structure

Political Marketing & Advertising Experts	Campaign Agents	
Amateurs and non-professionals		
Consultative	Decision Making Method	
Individual		
Policy Council		
Committees	Campaign Hierarchy	Campaign's Structure
Provinces and Cities		
Cyber Space		
Acknowledgment		
Content Production	Committees' Structure	
Field Advertising		
Regions		

4.3.1.1. Campaign Agents

The interviewees highlighted the role of the campaigns' agents, which included propaganda and political marketing experts and also, amateurs and non-professionals.

- **I 9:** Certainly, the person who wants to work in the campaign, for example, for a prominent presidential candidate, definitely has the experience of election work and electoral campaign discussions. Either he/she knows the tools, or he/she has different relationships that help him/her in the way. So we cannot say that person surely must have studied advertising, political marketing, etc., but he/she certainly needs a realization from certain tools and relationships.
- **I 9:** When a team launches an advertising campaign, within that team, different groups of people are involved; from educated people to experienced ones and also people who have the tools and relationships.
- **I 1:** The specific knowledge of this kind of campaign in the world is political marketing, campaign management, and political brand discussion that these fields are not taught in Iran. So there is no specialist in these subjects here. Therefore, people who work on this matter are those who have learned it empirically.

4.3.1.2. Decision Making Method

Another theme that is considered in the current research as a significant factor in the structure of the election campaign is the decision making method. Decisions in the campaigns are made both collectively and individually.

- I 11: I remember in year 2015, 5-6 people gathered and talked about the style of advertising we wanted to use. Finally, we decided to use banners. Because we said that the people of Tehran do not know Mr. Jalali.
- I 11: Generally, in different campaigns, decision making and taking the choice is by the council or the individual.

4.3.1.3. Campaign Hierarchy

Importance of the staff hierarchy is another topic that the interviewees discussed. As mentioned earlier, decisions and policies are made in the campaigns' policy council and announced by the chief of the campaign.

- I 11: The structure of the advertising team is mainly outlined in the headquarter bureau of the election campaign. An advertising deputy is a person who is determined by the candidate or the policy-making council, for managing and directing related affairs.

4.3.1.4. Committees' Structure

The structure of the committees is another theme that the interviewees paid attention to. In order to determine and divide the activities and affairs, the election campaigns defined different committees to carry out the tasks more efficiently.

- I 11: There are a number of committees and working groups, such as content production, websites, cyberspace, field advertising, groups, and so on.
- I 11: In the advertising department, different positions like the head of content-production, head of publication, head of media, and head of field advertising could exist.

4.3.2. Advertising Performance Evaluation

Evaluating the performance of propaganda in campaigns indicates their effectiveness and efficiency that led to the victory in the election. In addition, it can help examine and identify the strengths and weaknesses, as well as opportunities and threats, and the feasibility of capacities, activities and actions. Evaluating and measuring advertising performance can provide a roadmap to the campaigns, as well as policymakers and agents, to diagnose the failures so that they can make better decisions in similar situations in the future.

Table-5 Advertising Performance Evaluation

Review Sessions		
Simultaneous Evaluation	Internal Advertising Performance Evaluation	Advertising Performance
Result-based Evaluation		Evaluation
Receiving Feedback from Security Entities & Polling Agency	External Advertising Performance Evaluation	

4.3.2.1. Internal Advertising Performance Evaluation

One of the themes of evaluation of campaign performance is the internal theme that deals with the evaluation made within the election campaign of each candidate.

- **I 11:** We have monitored our campaign activities & evaluated ourselves in the previous year of elections according to our field observations and face-to-face meetings. For example, we saw two banners in a place that were not before, so we evaluated our activities well and effectively. Moreover, we monitored our cyberspace activities on social media according to their likes, comments, and viewers.
- **I 9:** In the year 2017, Mr. Rouhani's central campaign had a monitoring committee which evaluated all plans & programs carried out across the country. But in fact, now we do not have any output. Because after the election everything was forgotten and never maintained and used these findings for future campaigns.
- **I 4:** In the year 2005, Mr. Moein personally decided to hold a series of meetings for analyzing the campaign's activities and the result of the election. However, it was not systematic. In all these years, I do not remember anything was written or collected.
- **I 6:** Usually, the result of the election is the most important issue. If we won, everyone would be happy, and if we lost, everyone would be upset. No one evaluates the factors that caused these results scientifically at all.
- **I 3:** This rarely happens. Usually, the day after the election all the campaign agents go home and no specific assessment takes place.
- **I 8:** If we were the winner of the election, we did not need any evaluation, and if we lost, there was not any tendency to it.

4.3.2.2. External Advertising Performance Evaluation

According to the statements of experts of this research, a part of the evaluation of the propaganda performance or generally, the evaluation of the performance of the candidate's campaign is done through other organizations and polling centers or think tanks in general, the process of participation in elections and examine the activities of the campaigns depends on the candidates. Finally, feedback is communicated to the candidate's headquarters or to the public.

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- **I 3:** Based on traffic, GPS, and traffic cameras, they estimated the population was 31,000 people at that event.
- **I 8:** Following the elections, some governmental organizations and the polling agencies like, the Iranian Students Polling Agency (ISPA), are reviewing the election results.

4.3.3. Advertising Tools

Numerous tools are used in campaigns to pave the way for a candidate to win in election campaign. Advertising tools which used in campaigns are divided into 4 categories; Audiovisual, field, network-oriented, and print.

Table-6 Advertising Tools

Radio		
Official & National & Internet TV	Audiovisual Advertising Tools	
News Agencies & Websites		
Posters		
Tracts	Field Advertising Tools	
Banners		
Electoral Applications		Advertising Tools
SMS	Network-based Advertising Tools	
Emails		
Social Networks		
Bulletins		
Serials	Print Advertising Tools	
Newspapers		

4.3.3.1. Audiovisual Advertising Tools

Based on the experts' perspective who participated in this study, media such as radio and television (nationally, online and even abroad), news agencies, news websites, and blogs are among the audio-visual tools.

- **I 5:** In the year 2009, for the first time we used internet television.
- **I 4:** For the first time, in the year 2005, candidate election films and interviews with them were used.

4.3.3.2. Field Advertising Tools

Campaigns use tracts, posters, banners, catalogs, and other similar items in field campaigns.

- **I 11:** At that time, our advertising tools and media were like posters and field advertising.

- **I 11:** In the last days of authorized advertising, we published a brochure to present the titles of our candidate's speech.
- **I 11:** field advertising usually be attractive for most of the people
- **I 12:** The field advertising was entirely done in the headquarter bureau of the campaign. This action was completely purposeful and planned. For example, squares of cities were divided into different parts and different bureaus would be present at the squares.

4.3.3.3. Network-based Advertising Tools

With the development of the Internet infrastructure and the adoption of cyberspace by society in the country, changes and its impact in different periods and types of elections are witnessed. These include social media, election apps, texting, email etc.

- **I 12:** Cyberspace acted so powerfully, Telegram and Instagram were so powerful that people could find lists of candidates from there.
- **I 3:** Nowadays Twitter has become one of the most important and influential media on social networks, where many of the country's decisions are shaped by the pressures that Twitter accounts now bring.
- **I 11:** The use of telegram networks was important. They had a team called the Cyberspace Campaign, one of its members was responsible for discussing & negotiating with admins of telegram super-groups & channels with more than one million viewers, such as "Khabar fori", "Eghtesd online" and etc.

4.3.3.4. Print Advertising Tools

The print media has always been influential in elections, opening up different sections of a closed society to their different political views.

- **I 12:** Until 2005, presence and use of newspaper & magazine were seen.
- **I 12:** So far, newspapers have kept working, but their presence is gradually weakening. For example, a chain newspaper at the time could sell more than one million copies a day.
- **I 7:** In the past, most of the advertising in election campaign activities was presented in newspapers, and their specials. Campaigns used the newspapers that had comprehensiveness in the country.

4.3.4. Advertising Strategies

Advertising strategies include the methods and strategies used in the campaign to introduce the candidate and gain maximum votes for him. Based on the received themes from the interviewees of this study, the strategies are divided into two categories: traditional and modern.

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Table-7 Advertising Strategies

Speeches	
Conferences & Meetings	
Provincial Travels	Traditional
Election Debates	
Election Films & Clips	
Celebrities	Advertising Strategies
Animation making	
Advertising in Cyberspace	Modern
Thought leaders	
Using the Colors	
Matching the message to the audience	

4.3.4.1. Traditional media

Common methods and strategies that have only been used in the previous years and periods of elections and are still underway, include speeches, conferences, provincial trips, debates, and campaign videos and clips. A remarkable point is the increase in debates and promotional videos and clips after a period of elections.

- **I 11:** It is partly related to authorized and introduced media such as the state TV IRIB. A specific amount of air time was allotted to the candidates to introduce themselves through various programs such as debates, promotional clips, and questions and answers.
- **I 10:** If we look at the election debates on IRIB, the former candidates during the presidential elections passed through non-serious challenges on each other. None of the candidates directly criticized or insulted each other, but after all, in the 2017 presidential election, the candidates were almost challenging each other.
- **I 8:** Mr. Khatami changed the game during his provincial trips in 1997. Basically, every campaign activity until that moment had an equal effect with Mr. Khatami's provincial trips.
- **I 8:** For instance, numerous conferences, publicity rallies. Those traditional provincial trips turned into various propaganda rallies throughout the city.
- **I 11:** We went to Yazd for 2013 election trips with Mr. Rouhani. We told Mr. Rouhani that when you go to the Hazira Mosque in Yazd city, you should mention Mr. Khatami's father, the martyr Sheikh Sadoughi, and Mr. Khatami himself. This was a little difficult for him, because the atmosphere was not so open in 2013; but we needed their votes, he named them and the crowd at the mosque encouraged Mr. Rouhani several times, and this was one of the positive feedbacks.

- **I 10:** There was an office for conferences and speeches in all the headquarters, a list of 50-60 speakers existed in that office. When provinces and cities wanted to hold conferences and such events, we were using that list.

4.3.4.2. Modern media

Over time, with the use and modeling of new methods of propaganda and political marketing, election campaigns developed new strategies. Under such circumstances, the importance and effectiveness of colors and elements, taking advantage of the presence and role of thought leaders, celebrities and influential figures, animations and noisy advertisements in cyberspace are increasing on a daily basis prompting election campaigners to pay attention and adapt the message to the audience. Therefore, through accurate audience analysis, the appropriate message is prepared, set and sent.

- **I 11:** In advertising committee, social media is used to display comic animations like as “Dirin Dirin”, to frame a number of rival candidates and mock their words..
- **I 11:** There were lots of parliament members like Mr. K. Jalali, Mr. B. Nemati, Mr. Pars, and Ms. F. Salahshouri who became Mr. Rouhani’s ambassadors in their own cities and as Mr. Rouhani`s campaign selected for doing propaganda.
- **I 11:** As an impressive example is the late Mr. D. Rashidi as a celebrity with a smile, at the crossroad with a box of sweeties, and a poster of Mr. Khatami. It was extremely effective for all classes and audiences’ society.
- **I 11:** The influence of certain religious figures such as Mr. Nategh Nouri, Mr. Khatami, Mr. Seyyed H. Khomeini, and Mr. Hashemi Rafsanjani was used whose every message could activate a voting base and may increase empathy to winning the competition.
- **I 5:** Finally, Mr. Khatami’s second phase statement was a kind of confirmation for the “second phase” idea. So this issue was presented in a way in the speeches, and repetition of that greatly helped the campaign.
- **I 5:** Whenever people were asking, who will they vote for? They told someone that Khatami suggested! They did not know that who is the candidate and which party he belonged to, but because of the good image of Khatami’s management, this choice was a memory of that times for them.

4-3-5- Audience Analysis

Paying attention to the audience and audience analysis leads to sending the right message, in the right period of time for the right audience and encourages a large number of audiences. Therefore, taking the needs, values, goals, background and limitations of the audiences into account can help the campaign to target the intended issues and determine the appropriate strategy.

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By examining the answers of the participants in this research, 6 themes were extracted for the audience community: ethnic and religious audience, audience of guilds and groups, political audience, special audience, young audience, and urban class audience. Each of these audiences includes other concepts.

Table-8 Audience Analysis

According to the Religious Tendencies	Ethnic & Religious Audience	Audience Analysis
According to the Ethnic Tendencies		
Teachers	Audience of Guilds & groups	
Workers		
Physicians		
Industries Owners	Political Audience	
Silent voters & Electoral swing/ swing voter		
Critics of the status quo	Specific Audience	
Celebrities		
Former Members of Parliament		
University & Professors Academics	Young Audience	
The first voters		
University Students	Urban class Audience	
High Urban		
Low Urban		
Middle Class		

4.3.5.1. Ethnic & Religious Audience

Experts participating in this study considered the different election campaigns audiences due to ethnic and religious differences. Regarding the religious minorities, local influential people or figures are used in the campaigns to gain public support. In addition, trusted individuals and figures from different ethnic groups traveled to their cities and villages as candidate ambassadors.

- **I 11:** Sometimes when the candidate was on a provincial trip the chief of staff or related positions would take part in conferences. Under these circumstances, the chiefs of that department carried out their duty, like Mr. Younesi who was from Sunni minority group and went and spoke perfectly in the Sunni majority areas in 2013.
- **I 7:** If the candidates were from the Sunni community, they would focus on attracting the Sunni votes.
- **I 11:** In the last 10 days or a week to the election, the ones who were trustees of the people of their own village and town selected as Mr. Rouhani's ambassadors.

Instead of Mr. Rouhani and the members of his campaign, they were making face-to-face connections with the people and did the propaganda. The communications were in their own dialects and languages; The Azeri speakers would speak Azeri, the Lors would speak Lori dialects...

- **I 11:** Provincial and city propaganda suits the indigenous atmosphere of that province or city, the tribal ethnic and the elders' debates. In Khuzestan province, tribes are very influential, so they were identified. Even now for next year's elections (2021), we can see that, for example, Mr. Dehghan as a probable candidate is preparing himself to go and talk to the tribes and hold meetings.
- **I 5:** The goal of our campaign was to express unity. So that we were all trying to pay attention to all ethnicities; in all the videos and photos we tried to show the ethnicities together, even if you see that video of Azadi Stadium, the video clip played during Mr. Rouhani's campaign featured dialects of different ethnic groups.
- **I 5:** Emphasis on national solidarity regardless of ethnic and ideological differences.
- **I 7:** Some candidates have ethnic votes, like the current city council members who have an ethnic vote, who are either Lor-speaking, Azeri speaking...They would analyze this issue and eventually take those votes. We have to accept that, especially in our country, where ethnicities are numerous and influential or even family ties are influential in this regard.

4.3.5.2. Audience of Guilds & Unions

Some of the target audiences include Guilds and unions, which are defined in the main conceptual categories related to the titles of teachers, workers, doctors, industry activists, etc.

- **I 11:** In May, two dates (Global Labor Day and National Teacher's Day) are in the calendar of country, and subsequently two events could be held. One of the candidates had reserved the Hijab Hall for the teachers' union, and the necessity of cooperation with the Labor Party was discussed.
- **I 4:** There are various committees in the headquarters; the labors committee, the teachers' committee, and so on. The decision to make content for the workers and the teachers is made in their related committee.
- **I 7:** In proportion to the union and the society, there were different working groups. For example, in many situations, there was a working group of doctors or teachers.
- **I 7:** In the working group of the unions and guilds, sometimes a group of doctors came and talked about their potentials. In such situations, holding a meeting was necessary.
- **I 6:** Presence in neighborhoods, meetings with specialized groups such as; the owners of specialized jobs, doctors, professors of universities, teachers, etc. had been used. This means that meeting both the specialized groups and the people in neighborhoods are always part of the election campaigns.

4.3.5.3. Political Audience

The political audiences of the election campaigns are the gray and silent voters and who do not want to vote or are undecided, as well as the critics of the government, who are reluctant to participate in political events. So election campaigns should attract them and prepare the conditions that can encourage them to vote.

- **I 11:** Our target audience was the people who boycotted the ballot box because of the events of 2009. These people were considered as the special groups of the society.
- **I 11:** If the silent voter comes to the polls, we will win.
- **I 12:** The reformists were people who did not favor the government and criticized it, and sought more social freedom. The most important effort of this group was to persuade them into the ballot box.
- **I 6:** Since the 2017 election, a problem occurred in the middle-class group of voters, there was evidence that they were completely against the policies of the government, and they were not interested in the campaigns. They could no longer be associated with politics.

4.3.5.4. Specific Audience

Specific audience is another topic raised by the participants in the current study. It includes professors and academics, ex members of the parliament, as well as the community of artists and athletes.

- **I 11:** In Mr. Khatami's era, the use of actors and celebrities, who went to the crossroads and handed out flowers and sweet among people, became common. Now in the following years, using the actors and celebrities in campaigns is still underway. At that time, color symbols were part of the campaign slogan that were not as strong as the speaker, but were effective.
- **I 11:** Now the audience of the community includes different characters like the elites, university professors, celebrities, and actors. However, the main audience in 2005 mostly included the actors, and were focused on famous people, to convey the candidate's goals to society. In fact, the objective was to use the influence of celebrities.
- **I 5:** There should be three or four political celebrities or artists in each square with a group of young people. However, they said the idea came from the West!
- **I 3:** It was decided to invite artists, athletes, and political celebrities to campaign gatherings in which music was played. Playing music is very important in campaigns as it triggers enthusiasm.
- **I 11:** Now the target audience is the specific part of society, elite, university professors, celebrities, and actors.
- **I 11:** Diverse strata were classified into different groups. They had been divided into the industry men, doctors, university professors, and even former MPs.
- **I 11:** There were lots of MPs like Mr. K. Jalali, Mr. B. Nemati, Mr. Pars, and

Ms. F. Salahshouri who became Mr. Rouhani's ambassadors to launch election campaigns in their own cities

4.3.5.5. Young Audience

Candidates' election campaigns target young people because of their great physical and mental strength. In addition, the influence of this segment of the society always an effective role in making the electoral atmosphere enthusiastic.

- **I 11:** In the 2009 election, young people played a very important role, they were known as the third generation. In fact, in the election of 2009, the main program of the central bureau of campaign for Mr. Mousavi was focused on the youth and even the first time voters.
- **I 5:** For example, in second term of election in 2001, Mr. Khatami's approach was focusing on young people, because of that; the campaign should have paid more attention to the youth.
- **I 4:** Younger groups in society have more tendency toward the reformists, because of that they comprise the largest segment of our target audience.
- **I 10:** Naturally, young people are our target audience because they are ahead of their time, and want to achieve more prosperity. The mindset of the youth is different from older people now, because of the generation gap.

4.3.5.6. Urban class Audience

Social and economic class to which the target audience belong is deemed as an import factor in organizing the campaigns, based on which the message and content of the campaigns are tailored and prepared.

- **I 7:** One part is ethnicity and the other part is relevance, if we divide Tehran into two parts, i.e. traditional and modern votes, it is clear that, traditional or religious voters live in the south of the city, and modernist voters that are more affluent live in the north of Tehran.
- **I 7:** Reformists targeted the citizens in the middle and north of Tehran, and on the contrary, the fundamentalists worked on the voters in the south and middle parts of Tehran.

4.3.6. Message Design Method

Message design is highlighted by the participants in this study. Message designing is done in both imitative and innovative ways in election campaigns.

Table-9 Message Design Method

Modeling Western Political Marketing Practices	Imitative	Message Design Method
Using Elites in the field of Advertising and Journalism	Innovative	

4.3.6.1. Imitative

Message designing is carried out via using political marketing patterns used in Western countries that have already resulted in electoral success.

- **I 11:** The political-electoral marketing that has emerged over the past 4-5 years has been subject of plethora of studies. Such works have studied elections in the western countries with the aim of localizing and using them in the country.
- **I 5:** For example, in 2005, the concept of launching campaigns at the squares was planning. Apparently, the idea came from the Mojahedin-e-Engelab organization, based on which three or four artists or political celebrities accompanied by a group of young people go to a square. However, the idea was believed to have come from the West!
- **I 11:** I think they mostly lacked specialized knowledge and relied on their experience. It can be said that our electoral atmosphere, the discussion of these slogans, symbols, and colors were taken from the previous elections. For example, in the recent US election, there was a clip that shows Mr. Biden`s dressing up, which was a 15-20 second video of his appearance, or Mr. Barack Obama`s personal phone calls to people in which he said “I am Barack Obama, do you remember me?”. I believe we are actually following their paths, and in the 2021 election, it is possible to follow the methods that Obama`s and Biden`s democratic teams tried. I think we can at least say that the reformist camp will use it.
- **I 3:** Some activists like A.G and H.R participated in various campaigns. For example, they took part in in the Obama campaign or other campaigns like that. Therefore, we saw the new types of political propaganda and branding. Because of the connections we had, there was an opportunity to work together on writing a lot of different articles and making video clips, and slogans. Until 2015, we concluded that there must be a think tank to define slogans, colors, etc.

4.3.6.2. Innovative

Message designing is usually done by a community of journalists and advertising activists who have political insight and knowledge and are familiar with media activities and atmosphere. These people are more specialized in the field, and are well aware of the developments and are deemed as the elite class of the society.

- **I 5:** For example, in Iran, a journalist is considered a propagandist. The journalists were very active, and almost in all of the campaigns, they were at the core of the advertising field.
- **I 5:** Every campaign had an advertising committee that consisted of more innovative people, journalists, and graphic designers for illustrating the images in their minds. They gathered together and finally decided.
- **I 5:** All journalists want to work in the Media and Advertising Committee, because it is more emotional and influential and the result is more tangible. Usually, the goal of the campaign is defined in this committee. I think the strongest people always work there.

- **I 7:** Usually we use the experience of people who work on communication and media. The role of media is very important in election.
- **I 10:** They may have had political experience from previous rounds of the elections or they may have run an advertising company, but they lacked scientific studies.

4.3.7. Message designing features

The messages reach the desired goal are those which strike a chord with the audience. Therefore, by analyzing the statements of the participants in this study, objective, mental and cognitive characteristics of the messages were extracted.

Table-10 Message designing features

Being problem-oriented	Objective features	Message designing features
Being operational		
Being local		
Ease of understanding	Mental and cognitive characteristics	
Being Emotional		

4.3.7.1. Objective features

Each message has characteristics such as problem-oriented, operational, and local. This literally means that the message designers sometimes decide to reflect the current concerns of the society and pay attention to these issues in order to provide more and better opportunities to influence the audience.

- **I 12:** Mr. Rouhani was the head of the Iranian negotiating team in Mr. Khatami's government. Based on this, sending a message to the society for solving foreign problems was acceptable. This was also due to the demand that existed in society.
- **I 8:** At one point, Mr. Rouhani raises the issue of the "Key" and says that I want to present the key to all the problems of the people ... that is, the crisis of inefficiency in the executive management of the country and outside the executive management has spread to the government level and people think their lives are locked. Mr. Rouhani said that I have a key and I want to come and unlock all your problems. This message was very effective. It meant that he felt the lock that people felt on their lives in this country. Someone says I have the key and I want to come and open it.
- **I 11:** We went to Yazd for 2013 election trips with Mr. Rouhani. We told Mr. Rouhani that when you go to the Hazira Mosque in Yazd city, you should mention Mr. Khatami's father, the martyr Sheikh Sadoughi, and Mr. Khatami himself. This was a little difficult for him, because the atmosphere was not so

open in 2013; but we needed their votes, he named them and the crowd at the mosque encouraged Mr. Rouhani several times, and this was one of the positive feedbacks.

4.3.7.2. Mental and cognitive characteristics

Message designers consider a set of mental and cognitive features in two forms of ease of understanding and being emotional. The messages are designed in a way that are more penetrable for the audience and at the same time can stimulate the audience's feelings.

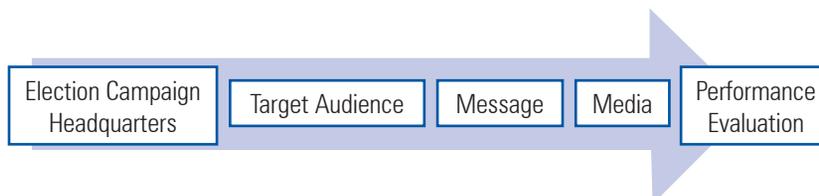
- **I 4:** I remember "I will rebuild my homeland" was Dr. Moeen's slogan. This slogan was made in a meeting attended by a group of 7 to 10 people. As I remember, Mr. Amouzadeh immediately called Ms. Behbahani (the poet of this poem) and received her acceptance to use the poem as an election slogan.
- **I 11:** The year 2013, which was the end of the eight years of Mr. Ahmadinejad's government, was the culmination of anti-Iran sanctions. Mr. Rouhani raised the issue of promoting the value of the Iranian passport.

Based on frequency of codes, 7 main themes were extracted which show 32.2 percent of extracted codes are related to Advertising Tools and 26.2 percent of them pertain to the Campaign Structure. 20.8 percent of codes were allocated to Advertising strategies and 15.8 percent were related to the Audience Analysis. 4.1 percent of frequency of the codes were allocated to Advertising Performance Evaluation. 0.8 percent of the extracted codes belonged to the Message Design Method.

CONCLUSION

This article aimed to address the question of 'How to set the effective media mix to deliver the campaign message to the voters in presidential election campaigns?'. The findings suggest the sequence of 1) selecting the target audience, 2) tailoring the message according to the selected target audiences, 3) composing a mix of media that effectively conveys the message to the target audiences.

Figure 3: Sequence of Audience, Message, Media



In this process, the target audience selection determines the main campaign strategy. At the first glance, this is not surprising because each campaign clearly invests in its target audience and its own voting base. But we understood that in practice, campaign strategist overlooked the characteristics of the audience in strategy-making; and this negatively affected their ability to select the right combination of media to send the election message. Interviews revealed that the electoral campaigns failed to properly select the audiences, messages, and media to persuade the voters into trusting their plan. However, the gap between the audience and the message was less than the gap between the media mix and message. The analysis of the codes also showed that the gap between the media mix and the message is a major weakness of the campaigns held in the previous rounds of elections in Iran.

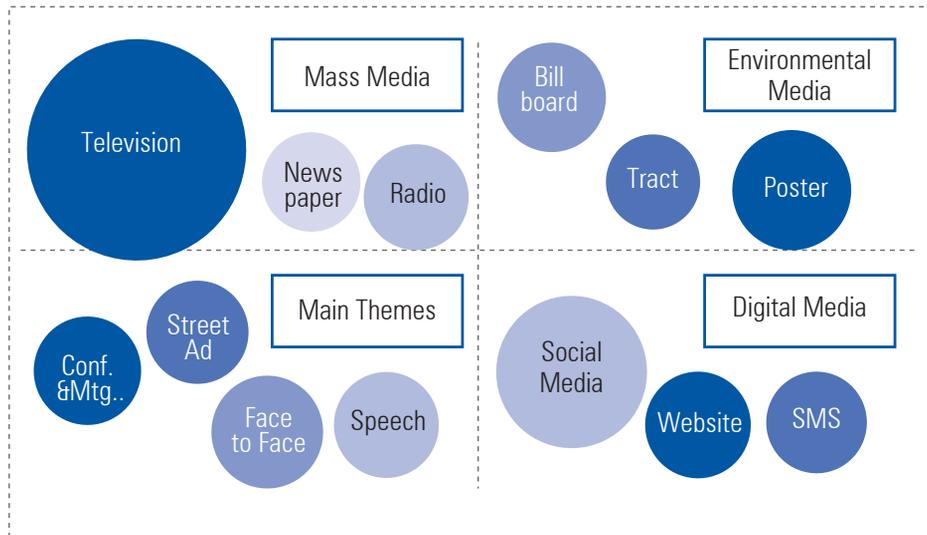
Table-12 Media, Audience, and Impacts in election campaigns

Media	Format	Impact	Remember	Target audience
Television	Teaser, Special programs, News coverage, News	Average	High	General
Radio	Teaser, Special programs, News coverage, News	Average	Medium, Top in the case of repetition	low listeners, Because of Being hot media, it is memorable
Website	Data, Statements, Policies, Outlines of programs, Historical information, column	Low	Low	Curious clients
Social media	Short news, sharable, Public Relations, Short Multimedia	Over average	Less due to Informational Conflict	Customary, High impact
Speech	Expressing positions, Expressing emotions, Creating emotional mobilization, Street advertising	Top	Less due to deterioration of Short-term memory	Neighborhood-oriented, Audience-oriented, Personal communication
Newspaper	Advertorial, Headlines, Party news	Average	Low	Preservation Current voters Function
Environmental advertising	Posters, Placards, Billboards	Average	Low	General, with the function of Remembering the face of the Individual

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Analysis of the codes showed that the use of media mix in Iranian electoral campaigns was as follows:

Figure 4: Use of media mix in the sample study (Iranian electoral campaigns)



Lack of candidates' confidence about being qualified for the final race by the Guardian Council can be blamed for the poor performance of campaigns in setting the required strategy.

The candidates do not start campaigning before they are qualified due to the high costs. When they are authorized to compete in the final race, they need to determine the key officials of their headquarters and then, they start setting the strategy under pressure, and they overlook some key processes due to time pressure. This is unlike the US presidential election process which takes about two years, and the campaign is designed and promoted by the head quarter with a view to presenting effective strategies and policies based on the one or few candidates. The strategists of the campaigns conduct audience analysis, message analysis, and media analysis to send the right message through the appropriate media according to its effectiveness to the intended audience. Finally, after achieving success and the desired goal, the effectiveness of the political marketing process is evaluated to identify strengths and weaknesses and use the results in the future elections.

Another explanation for the poor performance in outlining the campaign strategy lies in the decentralized structure of the campaigns that allow the branches to set their own strategy that might not be integrated with the main campaign strategy. Once the candidate qualifies and appears in final list, he or she initially appoints the head of the campaign or the policy council. The criteria are normally close relationship, trustworthiness and political awareness instead of expertise in political

marketing and campaign management. Then, the deputies and the committees of the campaign are defined and other active people are engaged in the activities. In many cases these persons are not experts in the electoral campaigns either, and are mostly selected simply, because of their pervious experiences not scientific knowledge. Finally and at the bottom of the pyramid, there are field forces who are usually attracted to campaigns due to their own political orientation and the dynamic atmosphere of the campaigns. They consist of the first-time voters and the youth who perform field advertising, outdoor banner installation and other activities. Journalists and advertising activists in election campaigns are usually present in the advertising and Information deputy and its subcommittees, including speeches, cyberspace, media, etc. They usually comprise the main group of the skilled and professional individuals. This decentralized structure prevents the implementation of an integrated campaign and can be a confirmation for the findings of the study.

The findings of this study stressed that the campaign is necessary but not sufficient for winning the election contest. The success of the campaign must be coupled with other factors, the most important ones including the candidate's personal charisma, strong backing from the influential and powerful supporters, the public environment, the time available for setting and implementing campaign strategy, the performance of an election campaign and efforts to reinforce the campaign performance. Therefore, what has been addressed in this study is a part of the performance of the election campaign, which itself is part of the totality of factors influencing election success.

Figure 5: Effective factors of success in an election (source: extracted from interviews)

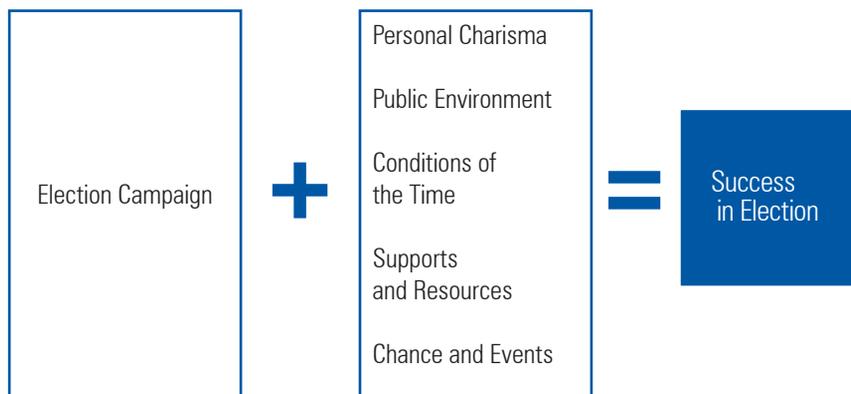
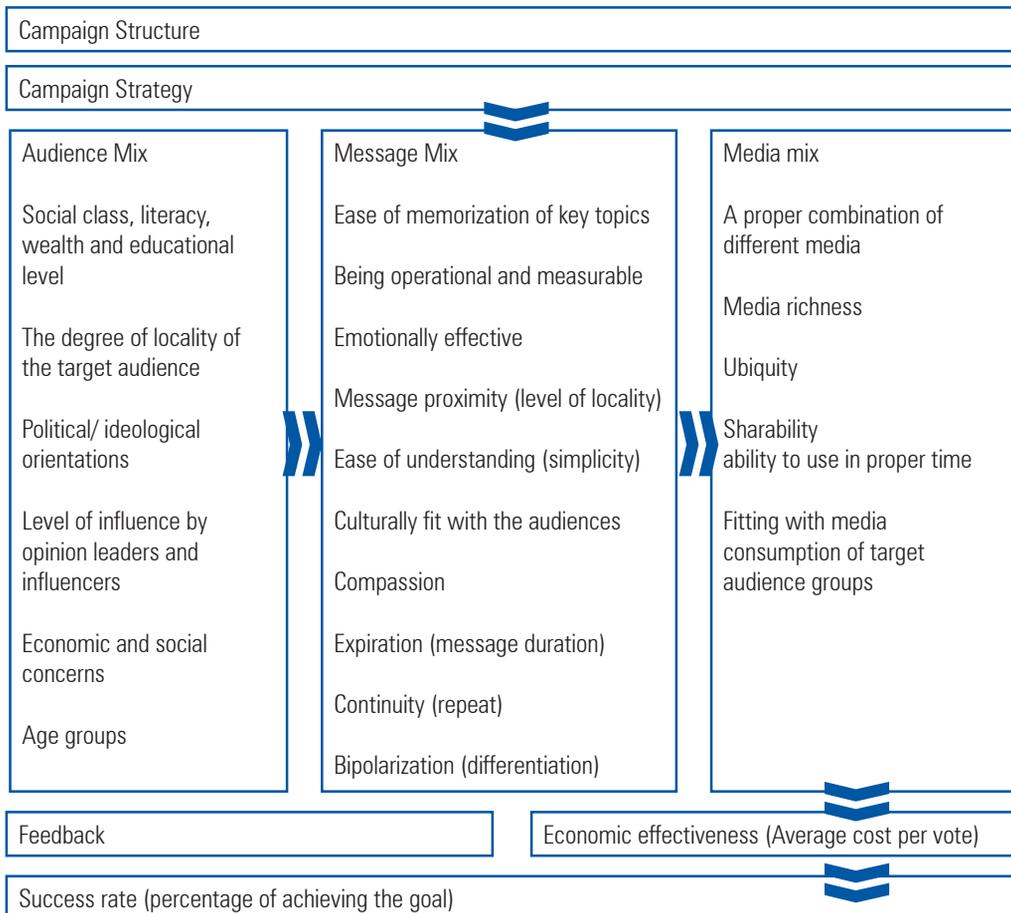


Figure 6 illustrates the final model of this research. It shows how campaign structure impacts the proper formation and implementation of the campaign strategy. Then three mixes are suggested: audience mix, message mix and media mix. 1) Audience mix includes the following factors: a) Social class, literacy, wealth

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and educational level, b) The degree of locality of the target audience, c) Political/ ideological orientations, d) level of influence by opinion leaders and influencers, e) Economic and social concerns, f) Age groups. 2) Message mix includes a) Ease of memorization of key topics, b) Being operational and measurable, c) Emotionally effective, d) Message proximity (level of locality), e) Ease of understanding (simplicity), f) Culturally fit with the audiences, g) Compassion, h) Expiration (message duration), i) Continuity (repeat), j) Bipolarization (differentiation). 3) Media mix includes a) Proper combination of different media, b) Media richness, c) Ubiquity, d) Shareability, e) Ability to be used in proper time, f) Fitting with media consumption of target audience groups. To measure the performance of this model, economic effectiveness (based on average cost per vote) can be calculated and finally success rate based on the achieving goals can be measured. It is expected that this model will be used as a basis in the future research to develop the strategy setting for electoral campaigns.

Figure 6: The proposed framework for electoral campaign management



RESEARCH LIMITATIONS

At the very early stage of this research, a participatory workshop was planned as the data collection tool. It was supposed that gathering the samples in one workshop and letting them discuss the strategy development based on their experiences will produce significant results. Due to covid-19 outbreak it became impossible to organize such a workshop. For this reason, deep interviews were used as an alternative data collection method and the data were analyzed via content analysis.

There were also obstacles in conducting this research that needs to be addressed in carrying out similar studies. The first was the selection of those involved in the election campaign. Given the large number of members of the election and media campaigns in the country, it was difficult to select a sample that was both examinable and sufficiently comprehensive in terms of generalizability. The choice of available purposive sampling solved this problem to some extent, but it was still difficult to reach people who provided the codes needed for a proper analysis of the research topic. Therefore, selecting sample members who are both well-informed and willing to be interviewed was one of the most serious challenges of this study. Also due to the political concerns, many practitioners of the previous electoral campaigns declined to participate in this research. Others who participated answered the questions conservatively. This may affect the richness of collected information. In the absence of above limitations, different results could have been obtained. Every effort was made by the researchers to reduce the effect of these limitations by using various tools.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Electoral campaigns can be construed as a core element in elections given the huge amount of money and human efforts spent on them, and their impact on the destiny of nations and societies. Therefore, better understanding of strategy setting to convey the core idea and messages to the target audiences and voters are worth a lot for parties, candidates and political faction, as well as marketers, strategists and media managers. To further develop the findings of this research the following are suggested for future studies:

1. Weighting and ranking different media in the media mix targeting different groups of audiences
2. Modeling media mix according to the generation gap theories to increase the effectiveness of messages on different generations of voters
3. Economic modeling of media mix to identify the most cost-effective ways to attract votes and reduce the average cost of attracting each vote
4. Identifying efficient media mix in different geographical areas according to the demographic characteristics and local concerns and extracting successful samples for comparison
5. Using data mining to identify the investigative behavior of voters during the election decision making period

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6. Analyzing big data to understand the highest popular search trends dynamically and analyzing their changes to understand the effectiveness of selective media mixes
7. Analysis of social networks via new tools to identify online communities and their encouraging and persuasive behaviors on social networks

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