

■ *Practitioner Paper*

Political marketing in Pakistan: exaggerated promises, delusive claims, marketable development projects and change advocacy

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The present study discusses the intricacies of the political landscape in Pakistan and its compatibility with the modern political marketing theory. The election campaigns of the three largest political parties Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz, Pakistan People's Party, and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf in the general elections 2013 were critically analyzed in the print media to comprehend the political marketing trends in Pakistan. It was found out that the three parties largely employed mutually exclusive strategies in order to garner the support of the electorate. The success ratio of the political parties in the general elections 2013 signifies the importance of certain advertising appeals, advertising themes, and aggressively attacking the opponents. The study also questioned the veracity of the exaggerated and delusive claims made in the advertisements. The findings have implications not only for future electioneering in Pakistan, but also other countries with similar demographics and socioeconomic setups. Copyright © 2015 John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.

INTRODUCTION

Marketing essentially facilitate consumers in making an informed decision. The cardinal purpose of political marketing is to facilitate the political parties and electorates in making the most appropriate and acceptable decisions (Kolovos & Harris, 2005). Political marketing in its essence is an exchange process, as conceptualized by O'cass (1996), which takes place when constituencies extend support to the political parties by casting votes in favor, who in return offer better government and policies. There are various stakeholders involved in a 'political market' carrying their own political relevance, that is, media, interest groups, financiers, and the consumer at the center of the political marketing

process, that is, the voter (Lock & Harris, 1996). A political party that emphasizes on building relationships and collaborations within a political market has more prospects in achieving electoral success and maintaining desirable terms with the variety of stakeholders (Bannon, 2005; Johansen, 2005).

The use of marketing theories and models has been well reckoned to explain certain political phenomena and activities that are not sufficiently within the scope of conventional political sciences discipline. For example, the use of the '4 P's' of marketing to analyze election campaigns, preparation of the core product, promotion of this product, and placing and distributing it through communication channels has been well-acknowledged in the political marketing domain (e.g., Publications. Newman, 1994; Wring, 2001). Moreover, integrated marketing communication mix and public relations are considered indispensable for an efficient and effective political marketing management (Cornelissen, 2003). The use of marketing theory to explain political

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phenomenon seems justified as political science has little to enunciate on topics like brand management, segmentation, positioning, and related concepts. Therefore, a political marketing theory is essential in coming to terms with the most recent developments of electorates as it accommodates the political actors to apply marketing management techniques effectively and efficiently (Henneberg, 2008; Henneberg, 2002).

The 2013 general elections in Pakistan were considered critically significant in the electoral politics of Pakistan for two reasons. First, the myth of essentially being the two-party system in Pakistan was challenged when traditional opponents Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PMLN) and Pakistan People's Party (PPP) were confronted by an emerging political force, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI; literally means Movement for Justice in Pakistan). These three political parties were the core focus of present study. Secondly, the youth was considered to play a pivotal role in the elections as 34% of voters aged less than 31 years (ECP, 2013), for the first time in Pakistan, was politicized and was aware of their independent political rights. This study also aims to provide empirical evidence of the marketing applications from the political arena, which modern political marketing literature sufficiently lacks (Henneberg, 2008). As a consequence, we aim to calibrate and refine the political marketing theory by critically assessing the empirical aspects and marketing orientation of the political marketing theory in Pakistan in milieu of the May 2013 general elections. A content analysis approach will be carried out, following the marketing campaigns of the three largest political parties in Pakistan in the print media.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Electoral history in Pakistan

Electoral history in Pakistan is not well-constituted, marked with military-civil bureaucratic oligarchic form of government for most of the years (Ghazali, 1999), with the military rulers legitimizing themselves through constitutional amendments. Often, the deterioration of law and order situation, the precarious condition of the national institutions, crumbling economy, and inordinate corruption has been cited as justifications by the military rulers for the takeover. The first general election in Pakistan was held in 1970, 23 years after the country gained independence in 1947. The democratic system in Pakistan did not always sailed smoothly even in the

absence of direct intervention from the military for example. After the end of general Zia's regime in 1988, Pakistan saw four general elections in a period of not more than 10 years, till 1997. Prior to 2013, there were a total of seven general elections held in Pakistan, and only twice an elected government succeeded in completing its tenure of 5 years, that is, the government formed under General Musharaf's regime in 2003 and PPP government in 2008.

Another pertinent characteristic of Pakistani elections is that, no election in Pakistan has been devoid of post-election rigging allegations and controversies regarding the results. The accusations of falsification or misrepresentation of the election outcome by the losing candidate/party of the winning candidate/party are a common trend in the political process of Pakistan, which in extreme cases can lead to civil unrest movement, engendering government sacking and military takeover, for example, the events succeeding 1977 elections. But unfortunately, no concrete counter-rigging mechanism or electoral reforms have been introduced in the electoral system.

Voter segments in Pakistan

Generally, the vote bank in Pakistan can be segmented into six groups. First, the traditional religious vote bank, endorsed by the religious parties, like Jamat-e-Islami and Jamiat-e-Ulma-e-Islam, among many, representing certain religious factions. Although it is considered illegal by the election commission of Pakistan to demand votes in the name of religion, but because of the lack of scrutiny, this practice is seldom entailed. These religious parties have ardent followers, and in the case of adjustment between a political party and a certain religious faction, one can expect that the followers will vote for that political party. Usually a religious faction is spread throughout the country instead of concentrating on a particular area, so this strategic alliance helps the political parties to gain a majority, and religious political parties in return acquire political favors. The leaders of these religious political parties assume to represent a whole religious faction. Second, the ideological vote bank, originally backed by Pakistan Muslim League, headed by the founder of Pakistan, Muhammad Ali Jinnah, at the time of independence of Pakistan in 1947. The founding political party had enormous sentimental value attached to it, which is now divided into various factions (PMLN and Pakistan Muslim League Quaid-e-Azam (PMLQ), the salient ones). Third, the victim vote bank, which has been predominantly exploited by PPP over the years after the founding leader Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was

executed for political reasons by the ruling elite of that time, that is, 1978, under General Zia's regime. More recently, the assassination of chairperson Benazir Bhutto at a political rally on 27 December 2007 earned PPP nationwide sympathies, which consequently won the general elections of 2008. Fourth, the vote bank backed by social solidarity groups like ethnic groups, castes and tribes, maintained by the political parties, that position themselves as advocators of rightful political representation of these social groups. These parties are more confined to specific regions, and seats won by them, which are often in smaller number, play a crucial role in government formation and coalitions. Politics in Pakistan has long been conventionally fixated at the ideological considerations of these social solidarity groups. The political choices individuals make are often subject to the influence of these large groups. Fifth, the Feudal vote maintained by the powerful local family of landlords in interiors and rural areas of Pakistan. There are approximately 64% voters residing in rural areas of Pakistan making the local landlords very influential, who are especially sought after by the political parties to gain electoral success. The hereditary minister or descendants of Sufi tombs, who often leads the traditional Sufi rituals, also enjoys significant influence and respect among the followers, and thus are highly electable and in a great demand as electoral candidates by the political parties. Traditionally, Pakistani electoral market is composed of these five segments, but the growing popularity of a new political party, PTI (literally meaning justice movement of Pakistan), engendered a new segment of voters; the anti status quo segment. PTI is headed by Imran Khan, a legendary cricketer and a philanthropist, who captained Pakistan to their cricket world cup success in 1992. PTI coined the slogan of change and position itself as an anti status quo party aspiring to bring betterment in the country without resorting to conventional political malpractices. The anti status quo segment largely comprised of youth and it also contained the people from the other five aforementioned segments, who had tried and tested candidates, but their allegiance to their respective party did not bring forth any fruitful outcomes for themselves and to the society as a whole.

The total number of registered voters for the 2013 general election was 86 194 802 (ECP, 2013), with approximately 57% of the voters belonging to the province of Punjab, and 22% of the voters from the Sindh province. Gaining a majority in these two provinces has always been considered tactically crucial to acquire two-third majority required for the formulation of the government. The gender voting bifurcation was mismatched, with 43.6% female voters and 56.4% male voters.

Political marketing environment in Pakistan

Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz and PPP have conventionally centered on recruiting 'electables', which more often implies cultivating alliances with the influential families. As a result, the political systems prevailed by dynasties is engendered, which never incentivize intra-party structure or democracy within these political parties (Cheema, Javid & Naseer, 2013). Apart from military rule, civilian rule in Pakistan has been recurrently shifted among the governments formed by two families in Pakistan, that is, Bhutto family (PPP) and Sharif family (PMLN).

Electability of the candidate and the popularity of the political party and its leader play a major role in determining the success in the Pakistani electoral process. In the case of PTI, there was believed to be a large gap between the electability of the candidates and popularity of PTI as a political party. The reason being 80% of the candidates nominated by PTI to contest elections did not have any prior experience of contending an election. So if they had to win, they could do so only on the basis of the popularity of their political party and Imran Khan, the chairman of PTI. In the case of the other two political parties PMLN and PPP, the gap between the two parameters was very narrow, as the majority of the candidates of these two political parties comprised of feudal and industrialists of influential families, who had been contesting elections for over two decades.

Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf did not have any history in terms of governance, but other parties like PMLN and PPP does have a history, so PTI was more aggressive in their campaigns highlighting the blunders and ineffective governance of other governments. Imran Khan was the former captain of Pakistani cricket team. In his captaincy, Pakistan won its first and only one day international cricket world cup in 1992. He was hailed as a national hero. He raised funds to build the first cancer hospital in the history of Pakistan. He also built a Hi-tech university in a relatively underdeveloped area of Mianwali. Unlike the other two political powers, Imran Khan's political party had never been in power. He used his charitable works and success garnered as captain of the national cricket team as an example to illustrate his management skills and honesty.

There was a positive change in the electoral atmosphere as more people had a tendency and an inclination to vote. There was always a great majority of people who did not like to take part in electoral process because of the mistrust placed on the political parties who did nothing great in ameliorating the condition of the country in spite of getting repeated

opportunities. But in the 2013 elections, there was a positive vibe in the country and there was hope that things will get better; the political analysts gave this credit to Imran Khan, who mobilized the youth, cultivated optimism, and made them realize their potential in changing the destiny of the country. Previously, this mindset prevailed in the youth, that politics is for elders and middle-aged people, and not much interest was shown in the electoral participation, which also explains the conventionally low turnout ratios in elections, but in the 2013 elections, there was an excitement because of an entrance of a new political force, Imran Khan. Pakistani youth who used to feel remotely connected with the politics suddenly started considering itself as a relevant stakeholder and a fundamental part of the electoral process.

Pakistan is a very interesting case of political marketing, where strong emotional appeals can be used to attract voters and garner major electoral support. Pakistan People's Party successfully employed the emotional appeal in the 2008 election campaigns, after the assassination of former prime minister of Pakistan and chairman of now ruling PPP, Benazir Bhutto on 27 December 2007. Political parties account for one of the most prominent sources of outdoor advertisements in Pakistan. Often, the outdoor advertising clutter is composed of banners of political parties and their supporters and conspicuous display of posters, flags, and stickers of political figures and their slogans. Wall chalking is also common and used as a source to intimate people about an upcoming congregation of the political party. Using tax payers' money to construct public utility infrastructures and naming them on the political party chairpersons is a common practice in Pakistan. Because they serve as tangible products to the people, and every time people visit that place, it serves as a reminder of the work done by the government. It is also a common norm in Pakistan that political parties formulate small teams to visit different communities and residential areas in order to persuade them to vote for their party. Traditionally, few local elderly people are made part of the team, who are well-acquainted with the people in that specific area, in order to convince them. They are like 'opinion leaders' who are in great demand by the political parties.

The commercialization of TV channels and newspapers has led to the slanted media reporting. The government pays huge revenues in the form of advertisements to those newspapers and TV channels that root for government policies and those who do not are at an immense disadvantage (Riaz, 2007). Social networking has come forth as a significant communication tool in politics during the emergency period of 2007 in Pakistan, when news channels were

banned by then president Pervez Musharaf. This motivated people, mostly youth, to look for newer avenues, that is, social networking sites like Facebook and twitter, online discussion blogs, and mobile phone networks to construct messages and communicate to others (Mufti, 2007). Social networking websites can serve as a useful medium among youth, in order to create awareness about their political rights (Shaheen, 2008).

Considering the fact that the turnout ratio has never been great and consistently remained below 50% in six general elections held between 1988 and 2008, to be as low as 35.17%, in 1997 elections (International institute of democracy and electorate assistance, 2013), the election commission of Pakistan designed various marketing campaigns to encourage a segment of society that has not actively taken part in the election processes, like women. In order to increase the turnout ratio, various advertisements were designed throughout 1990s and 2000s to motivate women for voting.

In light of the preceding discussion, we aim to undertake a comparative approach in comprehending the political advertising of the three largest political parties of Pakistan in the print media. A comparative approach offers a meaningful direction in discerning the political communications (Gurevitch & Blumler, 1975).

Research question 1: What kind of advertising appeals were employed by political parties in Pakistan's general elections 2013? Was there any significant difference in their use among the parties?

Research question 2: Does a significant difference exist among the three largest political parties in Pakistan (PPP, PMLN, and PTI) in negatively advertising their opponents?

Research question 3: What were the popular advertising themes used for electioneering in Pakistan's general elections 2013? Was there any significant difference in their use among the political parties?

METHODOLOGY

Two step methodologies were applied: in the first step, qualitative content analysis of political advertisements was conducted. While in the second step, interpretative analysis was done. Four leading national newspapers, published across Pakistan, were selected, that is, Jang, Nawa-I-Waqt, Dunya, and Express. All the newspapers were published in Urdu, the national language of Pakistan. Jang is the most widely read newspaper in Pakistan with an estimated daily circulation of 850 000, followed by

Nawa-I-Waqt, which is the oldest newspaper in Pakistan with the daily circulation of 500 000 (Hijab, 2010). Express is the only newspaper being published from 11 cities in Pakistan and Dunya is a growing newspaper published from 4 different cities across Pakistan. The advertisements placed by the three largest political parties of Pakistan, that is, PMLN, PPP, and PTI, were analyzed, 1 month prior to election date, that is, 10th April to 10th May. PMLN and PPP both formed a central government twice before the May 2013 elections and remained as the two largest political parties in Pakistan throughout the 1990s and 2000s. The advertisements were examined on three parameters, that is, advertising appeal, advertisement theme, and opponent attack.

ANALYSIS

A total of 225 newspaper advertisements put forth by the three largest political parties of Pakistan were examined. PPP and PMLN dominated the newspapers with 106 (47.1%) and 93 (41.3%) advertisement placements, respectively, while only 26 (11.6%) advertisements of PTI were located. The advertisement spread was fairly equal in all the four newspapers [Nawa-I-waqt (26.7%), Express news (23.1%), Dunya news (23.6%), and Jang (26.7%)]. In order to ensure that the message is reached to the intended audience, political parties ensure that the same advertisement was placed in all the four newspapers on the same day.

Research question 1: A total of six advertising appeals were identified for the May 2013 elections in Pakistan. *Rational appeal* employs logical information and arguments in order to gain the support of the people (Woochang & Franke, 1999). *Fear appeal* works by provoking concerns, anxieties, and apprehensions among people, if the particular event takes place, and then indicating them how to abridge their fears by doing what is being recommended by the marketer (Witte & Allen, 2000). Fear can be an effective motivator in the political marketing landscape. *Hope appeals* are designed to evoke feel-good responses (Nabi, 2002). Hope appeals are especially relevant in the electoral scenario when there is a little perceived likelihood of a positive outcome for the society, as the political system in Pakistan is unable to deliver the much coveted rewards of democracy. Hope pertains to the desire for a better situation than what currently exists, especially when discontentment with the present situation prevails. *Victim appeal* is a popular tactic in the Pakistani electoral market, pursued by political parties to gain the

sympathies of the voter for the 'sacrifices' made by them for political causes. *Appeals based on the past* focus on reminding voters about the achievements of the political party in the past and taking credit for their past accomplishments. It is assumed that good work in the past would be carried forward and voters would patronize the political party. Lastly, the *appeals based on personality* center around the charismatic leadership of the political party's head. The personal attributes that make him/her a desirable leader and the most appropriate candidate to represent the country.

Statistically significant differences were found ($\chi^2=247.416$, $df=10$, $p<0.001$) in the advertising appeals of the three political parties. PPP concentrated on the appeals based on the past (48.1%), as exhibited in Table 1. The reason being it remained in power from 2008 to 2013 and constantly reminded people by presenting them with the synopsis of their 5-years performance in a skillfully crafted advertising campaign. PMLN primarily relied on the fear appeal (72%) by inculcating the apprehensions in the minds of the voters; continuance of 'dark' PPP era (2008–2013) is awaiting them, if the vote is not cast in their favor. PTI principally advocated the idea of 'change', and regarding the other political forces as 'status quo' and chief beneficiaries of the current system who have been ruling the country over two decades but no real improvement is evident in the overall situation of the country. PTI mainly employed hope appeal (69.2%) and cultivated optimism in the general public regarding the future of Pakistan. PTI also cashed in strong, charismatic appeal of party head Imran Khan by engaging in personality-based appeals (19.2%).

Research question 2: Statistically significant difference existed ($\chi^2=37.774$, $df=2$, $p<0.001$) among the three political parties in targeting their opponents in the advertisements. It is evident in Table 2 that PMLN ran a very aggressive electoral campaign, as 73.1% of its total ads attacked its two opponents. Comparatively, 38.7% ads by PPP and only 15.4% ads by PTI targeted the competing parties. This emphasis on the negative aspects of the opposing candidates is deemed a characteristic of American presidential ads (Lee, Kaid & Tak, 1998), and political advertising in Pakistan seems to be highly inspired by it.

Research question 3: An advertising theme is different from an advertising appeal as it comprises of a recurring central idea to engender a cumulative effect greater than the combine effect of an individual ad. A total of seven advertising themes were identified, upon which political campaign of the three political parties was executed. *The economy, trade & energy sector theme* covered the initiatives taken or

Table 1 Political party * advertising appeals cross tabulation

			Appeals						
			Rational appeal	Fear appeal	Hope appeal	Victim appeal	Appeals based on past	Personality based appeals	Total
Party	PPP	Count	12	13	0	17	51	13	106
		(%)	11.3	12.3	0.0	16.0%	48.1	12.3	100.0
	PMLN	Count	0	67	0	0	20	6	93
(%)		0.0	72.0	0.0	0.0	21.5	6.5	100.0	
PTI	Count	0	3	18	0	0	5	26	
	(%)	0.0	11.5	69.2	0.0	0.0	19.2	100.0	
Total	Count	12	83	18	17	71	24	225	
	(%)	5.3	36.9	8.0	7.6	31.6	10.7	100.0	

PPP, Pakistan People's Party; PMLN, Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz; PTI, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf.

Chi square = 247.416, df = 10, $p = 0.000$; five cells have an expected count of less than five.

*indicates the relationship between independent variable (political party) and dependent variable (advertising appeals) in chi-square tabulation.

Table 2 Political party * opponent attack cross tabulation

			Opponent attacks		
			Yes	No	Total
Party	PPP	Count	41	65	106
		(%)	38.7	61.3	100.0
	PMLN	Count	68	25	93
(%)		73.1	26.9	100.0	
PTI	Count	4	22	26	
	(%)	15.4	84.6	100.0	
Total	Count	113	112	225	
	(%)	50.2	49.8	100.0	

PPP, Pakistan People's Party; PMLN, Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz; PTI, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf.

Chi square = 37.774, df = 2, $p = 0.000$; 0 cells have an expected count of less than five.

*indicates the relationship between independent variable (political party) and dependent variable (advertising appeals) in chi-square tabulation.

planned, to ameliorate the energy crisis in Pakistan and the betterment of the macroeconomic situation in the country and various economic indicators, for example, GDP, inflation, trade deficit, and foreign reserves among others. *Good governance theme* addresses the political party's stances on the management of the public affairs and the public resources, transparency of the public institutions and the rule of law. *The developmental project's theme* extrapolated the economic prosperity and social welfare with the construction of the roads, bridges, and transportation projects. This theme might sound weird to the western audiences, but it has remained popular in Pakistan because of the 'marketability' of the projects as a political achievement. *The agricultural reforms theme* concentrated on the farmer friendly policies and provision of the agricultural

inputs at the affordable prices. *The social reforms theme* focused on the welfare of the marginal social groups, for example, working class, laborers, and daily wage workers. *The revolution & change theme* challenged the existing power hubs from powerful elites and focused on shifting the nexus of power to the public. Lastly, *the people's choice, accountability theme*, which is primarily derived from the fear appeal, held people directly responsible for undesirable consequences if they choose candidates other than endorsed by the political party in question.

Statistically significant differences were found ($\chi^2 = 355.338$, $df = 12$, $p = 0.000$) in the advertising themes of the three political parties. As presented in Table 3, majority of the PPP's endorsements focused on the economy, trade, and energy sector (31.1%), followed by good governance (27.4%), agricultural reforms (22.6%), and social reforms (18.9%). The emphasis was made on the 'accomplishments' of the PPP as they held the office for the 2008–2013 term. PMLN largely riveted on the people's choice, accountability theme (62.4%), followed by developmental projects (26.9%). PTI predominately focused on the change & revolution theme (73.1%), remotely accompanied by social reforms theme (26.9%).

INTERPRETIVE ANALYSIS

Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf

Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf targeted specifically the new voter, that is, the youth. As compared with the 2008 election, more than 13 million new voters were registered in 2013 elections (The Tribune, 3rd April, 2013). PTI builds its electoral campaigns on the slogan of 'new Pakistan'. PTI also initiated 'Tabdeeli

Table 3 Political party * advertising theme cross tabulation

Party	Theme											Total
	Economy, trade and energy	Social reforms	Good governance	Developmental projects	Revolution & Change	Agricultural reforms	People's choice, accountability					
PPP	Count 33	Count 20	Count 29	Count 0	Count 0	Count 24	Count 0	Count 0	Count 24	Count 0	Count 106	
	% within Party 31.1	% within Party 18.9	% within Party 27.4	% within Party 0.0	% within Party 0.0	% within Party 22.6	% within Party 0.0	% within Party 0.0	% within Party 22.6	% within Party 0.0	% within Party 100.0%	
PMLN	Count 4	Count 0	Count 6	Count 25	Count 0	Count 0	Count 58	Count 62.4	Count 0	Count 93		
	% within Party 4.3	% within Party 0.0	% within Party 6.5	% within Party 26.9	% within Party 0.0	% within Party 0.0	% within Party 62.4	% within Party 62.4	% within Party 0.0	% within Party 100.0%		
PTI	Count 0	Count 7	Count 0	Count 0	Count 19	Count 0	Count 0	Count 0	Count 0	Count 26		
	% within Party 0.0	% within Party 26.9	% within Party 0.0	% within Party 0.0	% within Party 73.1	% within Party 0.0	% within Party 0.0	% within Party 0.0	% within Party 0.0	% within Party 100.0%		
Total	Count 37	Count 27	Count 35	Count 25	Count 19	Count 24	Count 58	Count 225	Count 24	Count 225		
	% within Party 16.4	% within Party 12.0	% within Party 15.6	% within Party 11.1	% within Party 8.4	% within Party 10.7	% within Party 25.8	% within Party 100.0%	% within Party 10.7	% within Party 100.0%		

PPP, Pakistan People's Party; PMLN, Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz; PTI, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf. Chi square = 355.338, df = 12, p = 0.000; six cells have an expected count of less than five.

*indicates the relationship between independent variable (political party) and dependent variable (advertising appeals) in chi-square tabulation.

razakar' (Change volunteer) program, which aimed to ignite the passion of the youth to propel the creation of new Pakistan. The youth was invited in the 'product creation' process, that if they desire new Pakistan, then they should help in creating one by getting engaged and motivating, mobilizing the general public of Pakistan to vote for PTI. 'New Pakistan fund' intended to raise money for the political campaign of PTI where people were expected to help their own cause in bringing change.

Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf demonstrated their slogan of 'change' by appointing new candidates, and powerful electoral campaign was run to enforce the old age adage that Pakistani public should not re-elect the already tested candidates. For instance, one of the newspaper advertisements reads 'approximately 80% of all PTI candidates were appearing for the first time, and the average age of their candidates was 41' (Figure 1). On PTI's official website www.insaf.pk, the discussion thread of each constituency was created, in order to give updates of the current mood of the voters and latest developments in that constituency. The domain where PTI surpassed other political parties was the use of celebrity endorsement in propagating its message. Prominent celebrities from television, movies, sports, music, and theater industry endorsed PTI's message of change and new Pakistan. Imran Khan was hailed as the only leader proponent of change in Pakistan. The communication was channelized at the individual level as direct contact was made with the people through text messages and recorded phone calls of Imran Khan to propagate the message of PTI. PTI garnered tremendous publicity when its members started withdrawing from dual nationalities in order to contest in the election. All these initiatives were new to the Pakistani political system, which for decades had been held hostage to the traditional political scheme of same seasoned politicians getting re-elected on the basis of feudal, tribal, ideological, and religious vote bank.

Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf ad campaigns revolve around change and revolution theme and social reforms theme, which politely requested people to not try out the already tested people, as if they cannot confer prosperity in the country in the previous tenures then they will definitely not solve the issues of the country, provided another chance is given. Moreover, carefully crafted ads pertinently focus on how PTI is going to deal with various issues, once they hold the office. Each ad focused on one issue separately, for example, education and health. (Figure 2). They focused on strengthening the institutions instead of indulging in the politics of developmental projects. Only 26 advertisements by PTI



Figure 1 PTI ad focusing on nurturing the young leadership for creation of 'new Pakistan'



Figure 2 Ad depicting the priority of education in PTI's manifesto

appeared in the four leading newspapers, in the month leading up to the elections, which is significantly lower than the number of advertisements placed by PMLN and PPP. The plausible explanation to this is that PTI used more integrated

approach using different communication avenues to reach prospective voters, for example, social networking sites, text messages and recorded phone calls, and door to door campaign using 'Tabdeeli razakaars' to disseminate the message of PTI.

Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf could not penetrate deeper into the feudal mentality fortified by baradri system. The bulk of the electoral target market is not visionary enough to understand the implications of 'New Pakistan'; they see the 'bribes' of yellow cabs, bus service, laptops, sasti roti (cheap bread), and so on as a symbol of prosperity. So, either PTI needs to educate the target market or alter their strategy.

Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz

Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz's entire political campaign centered on fear appeal, as 72% of the total newspaper ads tactfully conveyed message to the voters that 'Remember, any vote that is not cast to PMLN will be considered as casting in the favor of PPP, whom you people desperately want to get rid of' (Figure 3). This fear appeal was in fact very effective as it made people reevaluate their choices. Neutral supporters, who wanted to vote for PTI, knew that they cannot get complete majority as the party was still in the 'development stage'. So casting their vote for this relatively new party would be a 'wasted effort'. This advertisement was presented in the form of a headline and it continually appeared in the newspapers till the Election Day. PMLN ads tried to create a perception that PTI worked on behalf of the PPP and tried to create a perception that PTI is just launched to break the vote bank of PMLN.

Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz essentially followed me-too strategy by imitating the initiatives taken by PTI. For instance, the youth-centered campaign of PTI lead PMLN to focus on youth too, and different schemes, for example, distributing laptops to college and university students, were introduced to patronize the youth of the country in order to assume their electoral support. They also used the slogan of 'change' of PTI and incorporated it in their slogan by focusing its campaigns on the notion that 'We changed Punjab, we will now change Pakistan too' (Figure 4). PMLN governed the largest province of Pakistan, that is, Punjab, from 2008 to 2013. This political claim was made on the basis of developmental projects in central Punjab and arguably lacked integrity and exhibited the shallowness of the PMLN's vision. The development projects initiated by Punjab government included distributing Laptops to students who scored 70% or more score in public universities, Sasti Roti (cheap bread) scheme hotels, Yellow Cab Scheme for unemployed people, Ashiana Housing Scheme for homeless people, Danish school for underprivileged children, and Metro Bus Service in the provincial capital Lahore. The reason behind discussing these projects is that there was an element of 'promotional intention' behind them. These projects were used as a tangible evidence to show people about the development being undertaken by the government. PMLN focused on 'marketable' projects that could be later used as a promotional tool in the election



Figure 3 Fear appeal used by PMLN

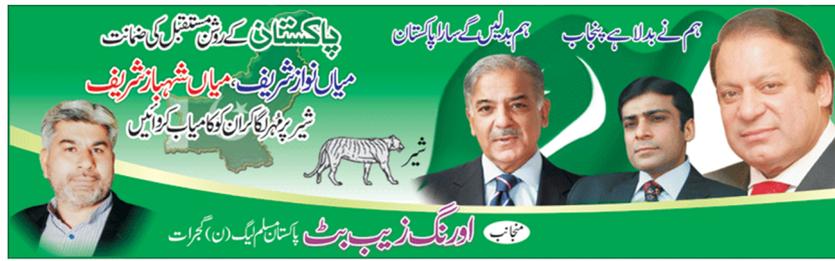


Figure 4 PMLN's version of 'change advocacy'

campaign. A better policy would have been strengthening the institutions depoliticizing the law-enforcement agencies, local bodies' elections, but in that case, nexus of power would have fragmented from the powerful elites to the local people. Although the most genuinely commendable work of Punjab government was overcoming dengue virus in a short span of time, surprisingly, it was not highlighted by PMLN in their promotional campaigns.

Pakistan People's Party

Pakistan People's Party's electoral campaign centered on the appeals based on the past performance, and presenting itself as a victim to the people in order to garner their sympathies. The question here that arises is why PPP still relied on using the

pictures of the Bhutto family to garner sympathies and (consequently) support of the voters? The fact that PPP still tried to win its voter by selling the same old victim adage speaks volume of their inability to generate a saleable proposition in the 2013 elections in spite of the 5 years government from 2008 to 2013.

Pakistan People's Party's advertisements could be questioned for the veracity of their claims. An advertisement of PPP depicted the improvement of various economic indicators (e.g., GDP, inflation, trade deficit, and foreign reserves) over their term of 5 years from 2008 to 2013. The advertisement asked the question 'Those speaking their hearts out against the PPP ever mention these facts?' (Figure 5). Pakistan positioned itself as one of the four fastest growing economies in Asia during the period 2000–2007, achieving an average annual growth rate of 7% (IMF, 2008). But if we review



Figure 5 PPP ad depicting the improvement of economic indicators during their 5 years tenure

the memorandum of understanding that the PPP government signed with the IMF on 20 November 2008, it revealed that the government inherited an economy in a good condition with foreign exchange reserves at \$13.3 billion, exchange rate at RS 62.76 and Karachi Stock Exchange index at 15 125. The government admitted the same during the signing of the memorandum with the IMF that 'In the last decade, Pakistan's economy witnessed a major economic transformation. The country's real GDP increased from \$60 billion in 2000/2001 to \$170 billion in 2007/2008... The macroeconomic situation, however, deteriorated significantly in 2007/2008 and the first four months of 2008/2009 owing to adverse security developments, large exogenous price shocks (oil and food), global financial turmoil, and policy inaction during the political transition to the new government' (Memorandum of understanding, IMF, 2008). But this advertisement discriminately selects the bits of facts and presented it in the form that favors PPP. A string of ads targeting improvement in economic conditions of Pakistan continued from PPP, for example, exports rose to \$ 23.5 billion in 2013 from \$19 billion in 2007–2008 (Figure 6), but the ad did not mention that the trade deficit reached all-time high in the history of Pakistan record – 216 831 PKR million in March of 2013 (Trading economics, Pakistan balance of trade, n.d.), and Pakistan encountered one of the worst economic crisis in 2013 because of the widening trade deficit gap, increasing short term borrowing and domestic loans, which made very limited sources, close to none, available for social development.

Another series of ads depicted how farmer-friendly the tenure of PPP government had been, explicitly targeting the large segment of voters related to the agriculture sector. The notion put forth was that in PPP tenure, annual income generated from agriculture sector increased by Rs 622 billion. A question was raised in the ad that 'Had there been an occasion before in the history of Pakistan of such farmer friendly government?' (Figure 7). The ad failed to mention explicitly the steps taken by PPP government for the growth of agriculture sector. According to economic survey of Pakistan 2011–2012, the average growth rate in agriculture sector remained 2.8% during the PPP government tenure (2008–2013), but from 2000 to 2007, the average growth rate stagnated at 4.6%.

Pakistan People's Party's advertisements attempted to present PMLN leadership as pro-Taliban, and the terrorist elements that have jeopardized Pakistan are supported by PMLN, which is not good for the integrity of the state and its people. Anti-Taliban sentiment in Pakistan has considerably risen in recent years.



Figure 6 PPP ad emphasizing the increase in 'exports' during the course of 5 years of their governance

In one ad related to the steps taken by PPP government to pursue the electricity generation, some unbelievably tall claims were made that 24 578 MW of electricity production projects are underway and no further 'conspiracy' can restrict Pakistani nation from getting rid of the power shortage crisis (Figure 8). Hence, playing the victim card by stating that similar projects were started in 1997, last tenure of PPP, that came to halt as parliament was officially dissolved, and the government that came to power after the 1997 election (rival PMLN) discontinued their projects. PPP continued playing the victim card and depicted it in its advertising campaigns. As electricity crisis was given, due importance in the manifestos of the political parties and promises were made to solve this issue on a priority basis. The question that arises here is why were these projects not completed on a priority basis, when the PPP government was in power from 2008 to 2013? In fact, Pakistan faced the worst energy crisis of its history during the same period.



Figure 7 PPP ad depicting the increase in agricultural income during the years PPP held the office

The British Petroleum (BP) statistical review (2012) indicated that Pakistan was the only country in the region where power generation declined from 2007 to 2011. The report stated that Pakistan generated only 89.1 terawatt hours of electricity in 2011 against 98.2 terawatt hours in 2007. The government claims that it has added 3000 MW of electricity from 2007 to 2008 to 2012 stood no ground as generation has actually declined, which was evident from long spells of load shedding (The news, 2012). Although PPP's political advertising was well-integrated through the use of various themes and appeals, the only weak link was their bad performance of 5 years at the office, which was even exaggerated, and delusive claims made in their advertisements could not be rescued.

Implications

Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz took the majority in the 2013 general elections. The tactics employed by PMLN in their canvassing was the predominant use of fear appeal, aggressively attacking the political opponents and the use of an innovative theme in their campaign, that is, holding the public accountable for their choices and repeatedly reminding them that they themselves would be responsible for the undesirable consequences if they choose any political force other than PMLN. Moreover, the use of developmental projects and effectively presenting them as a harbinger of social welfare

worked as well. But the downside of these strategies is that they are subject to the electorates' lack of vision and unimaginativeness.

The focus of politics in Pakistan is too limited and short-term oriented. Over promising might bring forth temporary gains, but in the long term, it will compromise the credibility of the candidates and political parties. The lower turnout ratio in elections is the consequence of mistrust placed on the political parties when they are not able to meet the expectations of people, the bar which they themselves raised by making exaggerated populist sweeping claims, for example, 'All money from Swiss banks will be brought back immediately once we come to power, power outages will be solved within first six months of our governance, no qualified person will be unemployed'. The general public soon gets pessimistic once they realize the merest fabrication of these claims with no real improvement in their lives, and in most cases, further deterioration, and the breach of mistrust widens. The populist approach to politics in Pakistan has resulted in overall cynicism toward politics (Henneberg, 2006). The disenchantment of the electorate in Pakistan toward the current political system is evident in the declining turnout ratios in the elections over the years. There is a need to inculcate modesty and truthfulness in the political advertisements.

Usually, in Pakistan, the members of the national and provincial assemblies are given 'development quota', a fund that they could utilize in initiating projects in their respective constituencies and

پیپلز پارٹی حکومت کے 24000 میگاواٹ کے پراجیکٹس
1997 کے تاریک دور میں روک دیئے گئے

اب دوبارہ

24,578 میگاواٹ سستی بجلی کے پراجیکٹس

اب کوئی سازش عوام سے روشنیاں نہیں چھپیں سکتی!

2008 سے 2012 کے دوران 3289 میگاواٹ بجلی کا اضافہ

■ ماکنڈا-81 میگاواٹ	■ انکب جرنیشن پلانٹ-163 میگاواٹ	■ اٹس پاور پراجیکٹ-219 میگاواٹ
■ اینگرو پاور پراجیکٹ-216 میگاواٹ	■ سیف پاور پراجیکٹ-225 میگاواٹ	■ اورینٹ پاور پراجیکٹ-225 میگاواٹ
■ ٹنڈو پور پلانٹ-200 میگاواٹ	■ ٹنڈو (چینیاں پراجیکٹ) 200 میگاواٹ	■ سیٹا ٹرانزیکٹرک پاور-225 میگاواٹ
■ لہرنی پاور-200 میگاواٹ	■ ہالہ پاور پراجیکٹ-225 میگاواٹ	■ چشمہ ٹیکٹرک پاور پراجیکٹ-300 میگاواٹ
■ قذافی پاور پراجیکٹ ذمہ کی-202 میگاواٹ	■ حسب پاور ہال-225 میگاواٹ	■ خان خواڑ-1 (PPP) 72 میگاواٹ
■ جناح ہائیڈرو پاور پراجیکٹ-96 میگاواٹ	■ الائی خواڑ ہائیڈرو پاور پراجیکٹ-121 میگاواٹ	■ اار سب ہائیڈرو پاور پراجیکٹ-94 میگاواٹ

2013 کے دوران مزید 2289 میگاواٹ بجلی کا اضافہ

■ گول نام-17 میگاواٹ	■ دیر خواڑ-130 میگاواٹ	■ ست پاور-17 میگاواٹ
■ تھوہل پاور پراجیکٹس	■ ننٹی پور-425 میگاواٹ	■ گندو-750 میگاواٹ
■ UAE گلف پاور پراجیکٹ فیصل آباد-320 میگاواٹ	■ چنچکی ملماں-525 میگاواٹ	■ تھنکو پاور کے 3 پٹری کی جمالی-105 میگاواٹ

19000 میگاواٹ سے زائد سستی پن بجلی کے پراجیکٹس کا آغاز

■ بھاشا ڈیم-4500 میگاواٹ	■ داسو-4320 میگاواٹ	■ بچی-7100 میگاواٹ
■ نیئر جلم-969 میگاواٹ	■ منڈا ڈیم-740 میگاواٹ	■ اخوڑی-600 میگاواٹ
■ گولن کول-106 میگاواٹ	■ پاس ویلی-665 میگاواٹ	■ تربیلا (4th) ایکسٹینشن-1410 میگاواٹ

سستی بجلی کی پیداوار کیلئے نئے پراجیکٹس کا از سر نو آغاز
بلاشبہ ایک کٹھن اور وقت طلب مرحلہ تھا، جو کامیابی سے طے ہو گیا

اگر یہ جیسی ہمارا قصور ہے
تو ہمیں اس پر فخر ہے

جیت-کان نشان
تیر-کان نشان

پاکستان پیپلز پارٹی پارلیمنٹیریٹ

Figure 8 PPP ad giving the details of the power generation projects initiated by their government, when they held the office

allegedly earn 'commission' on it too. These projects are named after the political leaders to constantly remind people of the tangible evidence of the 'betterment' in their lives, which are then used as a marketing tool in the next elections. Politics on the basis of development projects lead to the superfluous flow of funds to conspicuous projects irrespective of their public utility and social welfare. The politics of PMLN and PPP has for decades functioned liked this and sadly this approach has worked in Pakistan in the past, but with the emergence of a new

political power like PTI, which is challenging the status quo mind set and educating people on the importance of institutional integrity, things are bound to change in the coming years. The institutions should be made strong instead of constructing these overhead bridges, roads, income support schemes, and so on. The infrastructure is important, but it is not the duty of the elected members of the national and provincial assembly, who should rather stick to policy making and legislation, and development projects should be devolved to the

elected district governments through local body elections. In this way, lower fabrics of society will reap the benefits and newer generations of leaders would be ready to lead.

Apart from PTI, no other political party made exclusive appeals for funds donation in their campaign advertisements. Billions of rupees are spent on the election campaigns, but obscuring the funding sources is more likely to cast doubts over the transparency of the political process. Usually, the local candidate in each constituency is responsible for bearing the expenses of the election campaigns, which makes politics in Pakistan a very costly business that only handful of individuals can afford. Once these political candidates come into power, they reward personal favors in disguise of political decisions to conciliate the incurred costs or even earn more than they spent.

The electoral politics in Pakistan has largely remained a family enterprise. More than half of the seats in the provincial and the national legislatures are held by 102 powerful elite families of Pakistan (Hussain, 2012). Not only this, only in Punjab, about half of the top three contestants in the elections were dynastic (Cheema, Javid & Naseer, 2013). The dynastic families have successfully introduced their progeny into the politics. For instance, the mantle of leadership passed from PPP's founder Zulfikar Ali Bhutto to his daughter Benazir Bhutto, whose assassination heralded her husband and her son as 'joint chairman' of the party, illustrates the dynastic succession in Pakistan. Similarly, when PMLN formed the government after a comprehensive victory in the elections of 2013, members of the Sharif family held several key government positions, including chief minister of Pakistan's largest Province, Punjab, chairman sports board Punjab, finance minister, and water and power minister among others. The dynastic leadership is incompatible with the democratic values and may impede the development of institutional democracy.

The status difference between a political candidate and voters of his/her constituency is so much that the people rarely get a chance to see the elected candidate, who is normally escorted by a convoy of protocol vehicles, further widening the psychological and physical distance. Superfluous flow of funds cannot attain them the confidence and trust of the voters, but by building and retaining long-term relationships and connecting with them at a more personal level can restore the fading confidence of Pakistani voters. The Pakistani political marketing environment is very myopic in nature. Instead of heavy spending to win the elections, political parties and candidates should concentrate on building and retaining relationships with the voters, extending over a long time

period. This will also cut down the costs incurred to run a political campaign in consecutive elections.

The brand legacy of being 'Martyred for democracy' was frequently used by PPP in the 2008 general elections in Pakistan. The brand legacy is an attempt to associate the current and future dimensions of a brand based on its history. In legacy branding, connections are cultivated and perceptions are deduced, which are somehow grounded in the history. Political figures are immortalized by naming important locations of the country after their names. The district of Nawab Shah in the Province of Sindh was named as Shaheed Benazir Bhutto, the airport of the capital city of Pakistan, Islamabad international airport was changed to the Shaheed Benazir Bhutto international airport, and naming numerous educational institutions, parks, playgrounds, roads, streets, and other places all over the Pakistan was a strategy used by the PPP government to immortalize the late chairman of PPP.

Elections 2013 became one of the most controversial elections in the electoral history of Pakistan with all political parties alleging of the systematic rigging, but only PTI resorted to street protests, when they were not rendered justice through the courts and election tribunals in Pakistan. Tens of thousands of protestors gathered in the federal capital Islamabad on 14th August 2014, in a demonstration lead by PTI chief Imran Khan, in wake of the fundamental reformation in the country's institutional framework against the alleged rigging in the May 2013 elections and demanded fair investigation of the matter via thumb print verification of the voters lists, and called for the stepping down of prime minister (PM) until he is exonerated of the systematic election rigging by independent judicial commission (Huffington post, 2014). The sit-in in the federal capital has continued for more than 70 days and it is still being upheld, as these lines are being written. There should be electoral reforms in order to counter rigging mechanism. Otherwise, unfair democratic procedures, misgovernance, manipulations, exploitations, and corruption of elected 'aristocrats' would place further mistrust of people on the electoral system and democratic procedures. Only institutional and structural reforms along with fair and free electoral process can be a catalyst for the true democratization in Pakistan.

CONCLUSIONS

The marketing campaigns of the three largest political parties in Pakistan in the print media were

critically analyzed on three dimensions, that is, advertising appeal, advertising theme, and the degree of opponent attack in their canvassing in the 2013 general elections. The results engendered, tell a great deal about the political marketing landscape in Pakistan. PPP fundamentally concentrated on the advertising appeals based on the past as they remained in power from 2008 to 2013. Though PPP's endorsements focused on the economy, trade and energy sector, good governance, agricultural reforms and social reforms, most of the claims made in those advertisements lacked integrity, and facts and figures were manipulated in ways that presented their 5 year performance as highly inspirational. PMLN primarily relied on the fear appeal by infusing fearful anticipations in the minds of the voter and holding them answerable for the choices, if they happen to choose any party other than PMLN. PMLN ran a very aggressive electoral campaign by vigorously attacking its two opponents. PTI primarily propounded the idea of 'change' and termed the other two political parties as proponents of 'status quo' forces remotely connected to the public. PTI engaged the electorates by presenting them with the narrative that both PPP and PMLN had their opportunities to serve the nation by holding office twice before, but they preferred to further their personal interests by expanding their business empires and amassing personal wealth, instead bringing any meaningful change to the lives of Pakistani citizens. Though the 'change & revolution' theme employed by PTI was an attractive and unconventional narrative presented to the Pakistani electorate, its limited success exhibits their uncaredful considerations of who are more fascinated by tangible marketable projects, whether they possess social welfare significance or not. PTI cultivated optimism in the general public regarding the future of Pakistan by employing hope appeal. An element of exclusivity was also observed in the use of various advertising themes. For instance, the themes of developmental projects and people's choice accountability were solely employed by PMLN, application of change & revolution theme was exclusive to PTI, and agricultural reforms theme was limited to PPP only.

Results of general elections 2013 surprised many people in Pakistan. PMLN won easily by taking the majority of the seats and conveniently formed its own government in the center without any help of alliances. They also form government in Pakistan's biggest province, Punjab and in Baluchistan too. PPP emerged as the biggest party in the province of Sindh and PTI was most

successful in the province of Khyber Pakhtoonkha. So, all the three political parties gained success in one way or another, which is indicative of their advertising campaigns hitting the right cord and carrying sentimental values for the respective constituencies.

The findings of the present study are qualified by certain limitations. First, the exclusive focus on the print news medium may limit the extrapolation of the findings to other news mediums, for example, mass media and the social media. Secondly, the categorization of advertising themes and appeals and their interpretative analysis is up to subjective interpretation of the researcher, which is susceptible to personal biases. For future research, it is recommended to study social media as a political communication tool in Pakistan. There are more than 12 million Pakistanis active on social networking sites like Facebook and twitter (Pakistan social media report, February, 2014), and majority of them being youth are politically cognizant of their rights. Media cells of political parties are often actively engaged in propagating publicity stories on the social media. The political marketing in the social networking sites and their effectiveness as a communication tool in a dynamic electorate environment like Pakistan, would be a worth studying topic. Thirdly, it is observed that media reporting on television channels and newspapers is often slanted in favor of a particular political party. The framing analysis of the media, reporting regarding different political parties, would reveal a great deal about the political advantages acquired through cultivating favorable ties with media houses. Lastly, it is suggested to compare the application of political marketing in Pakistan to that of other countries, which would render us a reasonable understanding of the relative developmental stage of political marketing theory in Pakistan.

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