

Political Marketing Power To Change The Choices Of The Electors: A Study On 1 November 2015 General Parliamentary Elections

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to evaluate the effects of political marketing done by political parties on the preferences and choices of the electors. In accordance with this aim, the concepts of political marketing, political marketing procedure and political marketing system are explained. Population of the research is consists of the electors from different cities and urban areas who voted in 1 November general parliamentary elections. The survey form is applied to 400 people which is above the limit value of $n=384$. The data collected through survey and questionnaire were evaluated using frequency-percentage analysis; “t-test” and “Variance (ANOVA) analysis” were used for unrelated measurements on the comparison of the opinions of the participants and demographic features of them. According to the results, the electors were affected more little by the near political marketing works to the date of the elections, while they were affected more by beforehand activities and marketing studies of the parties.

Keywords: Political Marketing, Political Marketing System, Voting Behaviors

1.Introduction

1.1. Political Marketing Concept

Today, marketing is not only related to commercial goods or services. Marketing is getting more important in many sectors. Political activities are also promoted by marketing studies, and especially in election periods, various marketing activities are conducted by candidates and political parties.

Political parties are showing up in all the developed and developing countries as important and serious political organizations. Besides having a strong place in political platforms, being in close relation with the public is also dependent on the power of the organization. Physical structure of the party organization, cultural and educational features of the workers in the party, mission of the party, policies and plans of it, party studies, behavior against the opponent parties, achievements on solving problems are affecting that power synergistically (Karakaya, 2000). One of the new and special methods to increase that power is political marketing.

Political marketing is marketing of characteristics, ideas, principles and policies related with public, political or special parties and candidates. Political marketing is formed generally in a special way in order to influence the choices of the voters in elections (Butler and Collins, 1994). Political marketing helps the voters to have information. There is no difference between the condition of consumers in a society without advertisements and the condition of electors in a society without political marketing (Gegez, 1990).

In Turkey, political marketing is also taking an important place; especially political parties are working with professional agencies to conduct introduction and marketing activities. This study is researching the effects of political marketing on the preferences and choices of the electors in November 2015 elections.

Many phrases such as “political management”, “packaged politics”, “promotional politics”, or “modern political communications”, have been used to describe what is most commonly called “political marketing” (Scammell, 1999). Political marketing can be seen as something “democratic parties and candidates actually do to get elected and that it is different from earlier forms of political salesmanship” (Scammell, 1999). However, according to O’Shaughnessy (2001) there is a risk of using the term political marketing “too loosely, to refer to anything from rhetoric to spin doctoring, or simply to every kind of political communication that has its genesis in public opinion research”.

The genre “political marketing” may be seen to function at several levels, since it is both descriptive and prescriptive. Descriptive, since it “provides us with a structure of business derived labels to explain, map, nuance and condense the exchange dynamics of an election campaign”. Prescriptive, since many academics claim that “this is something parties and candidates ought to do if they are to fulfill their mission of winning elections”. “Political marketing may now be a recognized sub-discipline, but it is also a recommendation” (O’Shaughnessy, 2001).

The American Marketing Association “adopted” the concept of political marketing by incorporating the crucial word “ideas” in its redefinition of marketing in 1985. Thus, the American Marketing Association definition of marketing read: “Marketing is the process of planning and executing the conception, pricing, promotion and distribution of ideas, goods and services to create exchanges that satisfy individual and organizational objectives” (Wring, 1997).

Marshment (2009) stated that political marketing is result of a marriage between "political" and "marketing". Harris (2001) defines political marketing as a general desire that is equated with techniques to entice voters in a campaign to promote both politicians and policies. Application of political marketing mix in politics is something that can not be abandoned. Political parties must be able to recognize constituents, sympathizers and continuously observe what competitors do. Political marketing mix makes political parties and candidates will be able to formulate the desired target market and focus on desired target. In addition, concept of political marketing mix strategy will support the political communication creation process between political parties or candidates with character of people who become target (Suwignyo, et al 2014).

Niffenegger (1989) made a model of political process to shows how political marketing mix directed to specific segments and refers to classic marketing concept of

4P's (product, price, place, promotion). Marketing mix has the capacity to include a broad set of variables to adapt to various situations within business. Although some say the 4P's not enough to respond to development of 21st century, but the search for a new paradigm that is dominant for decisions applicable in a variety of new environments including the political environment is still being debated. It needs long way to find a new and widely accepted as a standard that can replace the 4P's. Niffenegger (1989) stated the political products are party platforms, past records and personal characteristics. Political price includes the economics cost, psychological cost and image. Political distribution includes marketing programs and volunteer programs and political campaign includes advertising, publications and vote getter (Suwignyo, et al 2014).

1.2. Differences Between Political Marketing and Mainstream Marketing Practices:

1. Unlike every other purchasing decision, all voters make their choice on the same day. Moreover, although there are similarities between opinion polls and brand shares' tracking methods, the latter are based on actual purchasing decisions while the former are based on hypothetical questions.
2. Voting choice, unlike any other purchasing decision, has no direct or indirect individual costs attached to it.
3. Voters have to live with the collective choice even though it may not have been their preference.
4. In elections winner takes all, especially in countries such as the UK where the elections system is "first past the post".
5. Political parties and candidates are complex intangible products which the voters cannot unbundle and thus they have to decide on the totality of the package.
6. In many countries it is very difficult to form a new and successful party with the help of marketing alone.
7. In most mainstream marketing situations, brand leaders tend to stay in front.
8. Political arena, unlike the commercial world, is highly charged with ideas, emotions, conflict and partisanship.
9. The use of negative advertising does not apply to mainstream marketing (Menon 2008).

Traditional marketing is different from political marketing from many aspects. And this situation can lead to some different manners of approach between marketing management.

Marketing management is the science of choosing target markets and getting, keeping, and growing customers through creating, delivering and communicating superior customer value (Kotler, 2003). On the other hand, political marketing is the marketing of ideas and opinions which relate to public or political issues or to specific candidates (Butler and Collins, 1994).

The party or candidates use of opinion research and environmental analysis to produce and promote a competitive offering which will help realize organizational aims and satisfy group of electors in exchange for their votes (Wring, 1997).

In political marketing we need to make adjustment of mainstream marketing system to a political marketing system in which the industry consist of a collections of politicians whereby they communicated ideas to a collection of voters with hope in return they will get voters' vote and in achieving this they will need information about voters needs and wants through the process of marketing intelligence. This political marketing system is depicted in Figure 1.

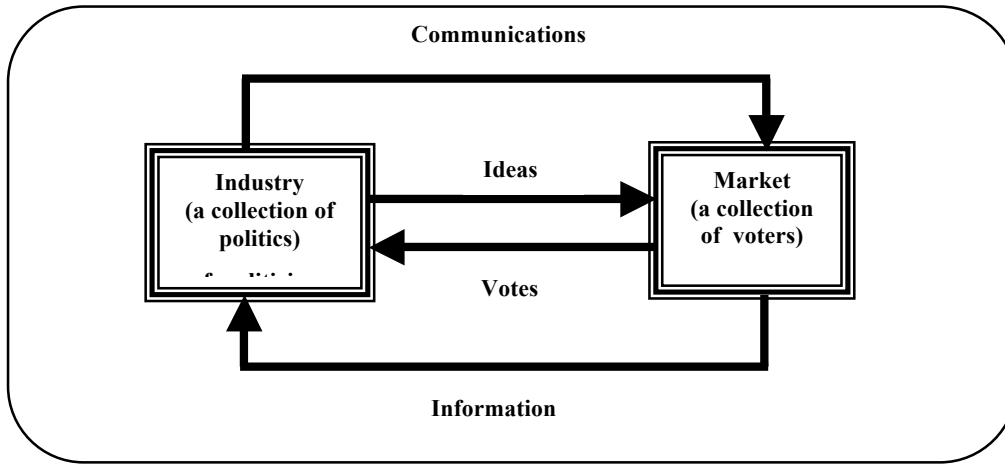


Figure 1: Political Marketing System, Source: (Nor, et al. 2006)

1.3. The Differences Between Political Marketing and Election Marketing

Political marketing is separated to two main parts in its chronology. There is a marketing which helps the election campaigns and is called “election marketing”. On the other hand, “political marketing” which is especially conducted out of election campaigns and election period is done especially in peaceful periods and makes it lighter the load of works and studies which will be too late when leaved to the election periods. In fact, the politicians cannot convince the electors for not looking after their own benefits by the election campaigns and activities near to the election date. The term in which they can persuade people is when they do not want anything from the people and when they are not candidates. The sentence “The time does not forgive the doings without considering it” is precisely valid for this area. A continuing marketing chain of studies in all the areas of political life both helps and makes preparations for the marketing studies in election term (Bongrand, 1992). First periods of Clinton government attracts the attention as an ideological change. Clinton gave to the people the things that they want to hear by using true and effective language, words and sentences from their mind. This is not only doings special to election times. In Reagan’s period, a new political concept came through, called permanent campaign. The meaning is: using the same methods to come into the management in order to maintain it. Besides explaining the aim of political marketing, this concept turned the political marketing into integrity of principles, and differed from being some games and tricks to have the government (O’Shaughnessy, 2001).

1.4.The Political Marketing Process.

The political marketing process as outlined in Figure 2 consists of four parts, namely the party (or candidate) organization, the environment which conditions its development, the strategic mix it deploys, and ultimately the market it must operate in adopting the maxim of Schumpeter (1943) that democracy is primarily concerned with parties' "competitive struggle for (the) people's vote", Gamble contends that:

"The main components of the modern political market are three; the existence of a mass electorate; competition between two or more parties for the votes of this electorate; and a set of rules governing this competition" (Gamble 1974).

Within the political market the key relationship is based around a concept central to marketing theory, namely that of exchange between buyer and seller. Thus citizens give their votes to politicians who, when elected, purport to govern in the public interest (Scott, 1970 and Lane, 1993). In a modern democracy the right to vote, commonly associated with the age of majority, allows for a mass electorate which can typically number well into the millions.

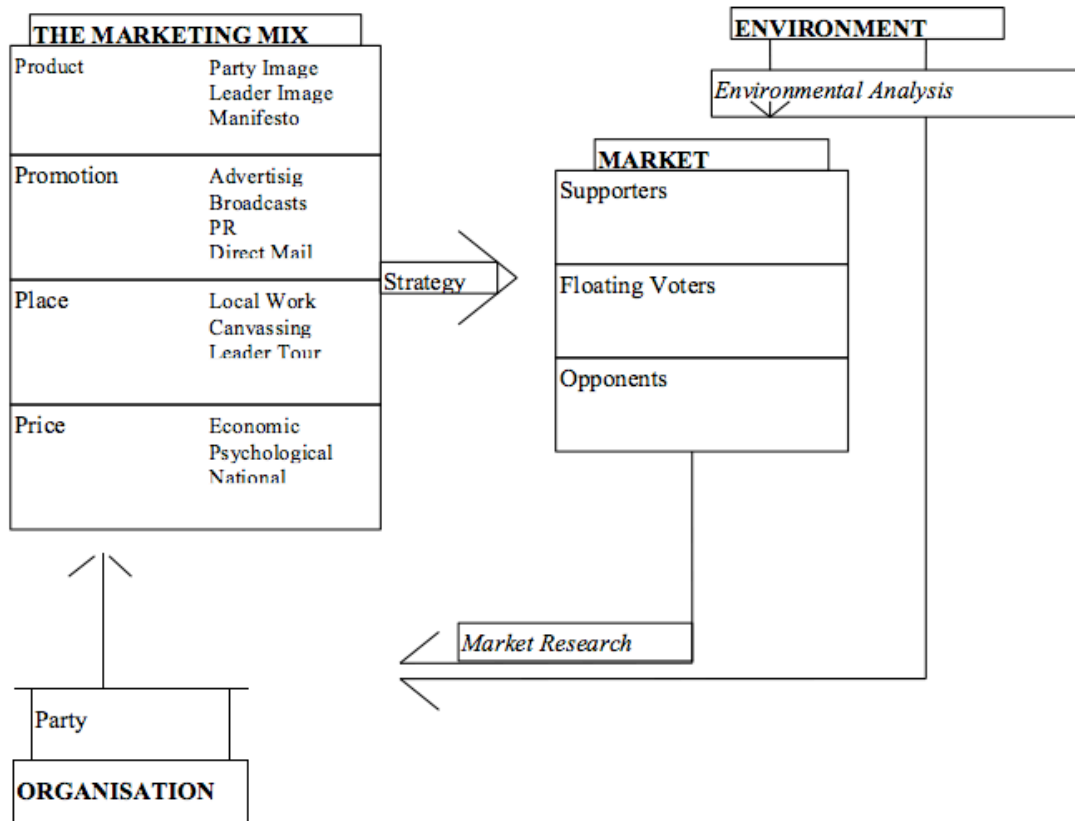


Figure 2. Political Marketing Process, Source: Wring, 1997

2. Hypotheses of the Study

Political marketing is separated into two, and especially the one which is conducted within election terms is called "election marketing". On the other hand, "political marketing" which is especially conducted out of election campaigns and election period, is done especially in peaceful periods and its effects are seen in elections and election periods (Bongrand, 1992).

In this regard, the hypotheses of the study involve election term and non-election term. The first hypothesis shows the effects of the political parties on the electors within the election period which is near to the elections.

H1: Elections marketing affects preferred political party of electors.

The second hypothesis is related with the non-election term image and activities of a political party. It investigates the effects of the party leader, party program, image of party, behaviors of party workers and the messages of party on public in non-election term.

H2: Political marketing affects preferred political party of electors.

3. Research Method

3.1. Collection of Data

The study which tries to investigate effects of political marketing on elections behavior, regarding the methods used, it is a positivist research because it applies deduction method, uses quantitative data, evaluates objectively and tests the hypothesis. Besides that, the research is an explanatory type since it explains the effects of political marketing on elections behavior. In terms of data acquisition, it is a survey research, since survey method is used (Altunışık, et al. 2010).

As data acquisition method in the study, the quantitative survey method was used. A five-level Likert scale was used in the research. The answer categories of the levels were: 1: Strongly disagree; 2: Disagree; 3: Indecisive; 4: Agree; 5: Strongly agree.

The scale used in the study was developed by the author drawing upon various researches previously published. In the development of the scale, firstly the variable that would be measured was determined and a deductive understanding was developed. In the creation of the pool of the items relating to the scale, a context and environment were determined which are suitable to the conceptual structure, and the questions were prepared by empathizing with answerers. Questions twice as many as the number of planned items were prepared, and the final shape of the scale was given by consulting specialists and eliminating similar items. The questionnaire was primarily applied to 50 people as a pilot application. The results obtained were assessed by Cronbach's alpha to determine reliability.

The survey consists of three parts. The first part is investigating the effect of elections marketing on the voters. The questions in the first section of the scale were prepared by developing the scales applied by Çakır and Biçer (2015) and Bayraktar, (2009). The questions in this part aim to measure the effect of political marketing methods of the political parties in elections period. It was formed regarding the first hypothesis (H1: Elections marketing affects preferred political party of electors).

The second part consists of the ideas of Butler and Collins (1994), Lock and Harris (1996) as a political product related with political parties and candidates. The aim of the part is to investigate the effects of, as a political product, the image of political parties, leaders and programs; and to measure the accuracy of the second hypothesis (H2: Political marketing affects preferred political party of electors).

In the last part of the survey, there are demographic features of the participants to the survey.

3.2. Population and Sample

The number of voters in 1 November 2015 elections is 56.965.000. This number is the total universe of the survey. Since it is impossible to reach to the whole universe, sampling method was used. Convenience sampling method was used, specifically. As the sampling size was being determined, sampling formula which is used for quantitative variables and is regarded unlimited or unknown-sized universes was utilized (Özdamar, 1999).

The questionnaire was filled out by the participants from different towns and cities of Turkey, between the dates 12-26 October. The survey form is applied to 450 people which is above the limit value of $n=384$. 50 questionnaires were disregarded because of missing or deficient answers, and 400 survey forms were analyzed.

3.3. Data Analysis

The gathered data through the survey was described by calculating frequency and percentage distribution, arithmetic mean and standard deviation. Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) and Bartlett Test to determine sample size, Cronbach Alpha Coefficient for reliability analysis, “t-test” and “Variance (ANOVA) Analysis” for unrelated measurements to compare demographic features and ideas of the participants; were utilized. The analyses were done by the help of SPSS 18.0 program.

4. Research Findings

4.1. Validity and Reliability Analysis

Cronbach Alpha Coefficient which is calculated using internal consistency method was regarded for reliability analysis. The alpha coefficient is defined as weighted average standard change and is calculated by taking the ratio of the summation of variances of expression, k in the scale to the general variance.

According to results of the reliability analysis, with $\alpha=0.898$, the questionnaire is a reliable survey.

Table 1. Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
,898	20

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test is a method to measure the reliability of the sample size. Bartlett test is one of the tests which are used to check the consistency of the variables (Pett, Lackey ve Sullivan, 2003, s. 77). Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin value shows the sufficiency of the sample size ($KMO=0.896$), and Bartlett test shows the feasibility of the factor analysis for globalizing ($\chi^2=4135.055$ ve $p<0.001$).

Table 2. Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin and Bartlett Tests

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (Sufficiency of the Sample Size)		.896
Barlett Test	Ki square value	4135,055
	Significance Level	.000*

According to Table 3, 56.8% of the participants are male and 43.4% are female. 50% of them are between the ages 15-30. 40% of the participants are bachelor and 60% of them have monthly income between 0-1000 Turkish Liras.

Table 3. Demographic Specifications of the Participants

Variable	N	Percentage	Variable	N	Percentage
Gender			Marital Status		
Male	227	56,8	Married	208	52,0
Female	173	43,3	Single	192	48,0
Total	400	100	Total	400	100,0
Age			Education		
0-15	11	2,8	Primary Sc.	69	17,3
15-30	202	50,5	Secondary Sc.	72	18,0
30-45	111	27,8	Highschool	87	21,8
45-60	58	14,5	University	163	40,8
60 and higher	18	4,5	M.S and PHD	9	2,3
Total	400	100	Total	400	100
Job			Monthly Income (TL)		
Officer	57	14,3	0-1000	243	60,8
Laborer	54	13,5	1000-2000	90	22,5
Retiree	24	6,0	20000-3000	38	9,5
Teacher	15	3,8	3000-4000	9	2,3
Student	78	19,5	4000-5000	20	5,0
Freelancer	100	25,0	5000 - upper	400	100,0
Housewife	41	10,3	Total	243	60,8
Tradesman	30	7,5			
Unemployed	1	,3			
Total	400	100,0			

4.2. Perceptions of the Participants About Elections Marketing

The percentage frequency distribution, arithmetic average and standard deviation values of the perceptions of the participants are shown in this section (From Table 1: 1: Strongly Disagree; 2: Disagree; 3: Indecisive; 4: Agree; 5: Strongly Agree). According to Table 4, “Face to face interviews of the candidates of the parliament affect my choice” has the highest arithmetic average ($x=2.79$). About 30% of them answered agree or strongly agree to this question. “Home visits by the political parties affect my choice” ($x=2.48$) is the second most effective idea for the participants. The participants are affected the least by the brochures and leaflets of the parties ($x=2.02$). Also public meetings by the political parties are less effective. About 13% of the participants think that the public meetings have influence on their ideas.

According to Table 4, the marketing methods which make face to face communication, make contact and build close relationships are more effective; whereas leaflets, brochures, promotions and advertisements on different places are almost non-effective.

Table 4. Perceptions of the Participants about Elections Marketing

“... affect my political choice”	1		2		3		4		5		x	s.s.
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%		
Public meetings	154	38,5	137	34,3	55	13,8	40	10,0	14	3,5	2,06	1,112
Brochures and leaflets	148	37,0	145	36,3	67	16,8	31	7,8	9	2,3	2,02	1,026
Political posters	131	32,8	139	34,8	69	17,3	46	11,5	15	3,8	2,19	1,125
TV advertisements	118	29,5	154	38,5	61	15,3	54	13,5	13	3,3	2,22	1,110
Radio advertisements	127	31,8	140	35,0	73	18,3	51	12,8	9	2,3	2,19	1,086
Newspaper advertisements	130	32,5	141	35,3	59	14,8	58	14,5	12	3,0	2,20	1,133
The Internet advertisements	140	35,0	144	36,0	75	18,8	35	8,8	6	1,5	2,06	1,011
Home visits by political parties	97	24,3	112	28,0	109	27,3	66	16,5	16	4,0	2,48	1,144
Musics and messages of the party vehicles	132	33,0	107	26,8	87	21,8	60	15,0	14	3,5	2,29	1,175
Promotions distributed by the political parties	132	33,0	147	36,8	72	18,0	42	10,5	7	1,8	2,11	1,038
Face to face interviews done by the candidates	72	18,0	100	25,0	108	27,0	81	20,3	39	9,8	2,79	1,233
Organizations of the parties, i.e concert, tour, ceremony, dinner invitation	117	29,3	141	35,3	56	14,0	61	15,3	25	6,3	2,34	1,222

The arithmetic values of the participants’ perception about elections marketing are generally low (Table 4). By that condition, the hypothesis of “H1: Elections marketing affects preferred political party of electors” is denied.

4.3. Perceptions of the Participants About Political Marketing

The percentage frequency distribution, arithmetic average and standard deviation values of the perceptions of the participants about political marketing are shown in this section (From Table 1: 1: Strongly Disagree; 2: Disagree; 3: Indecisive; 4: Agree; 5: Strongly Agree).

According to Table 5, the most effective factor for the choices of the electors is behavior of political parties to them. About 64% of the participants agree or strongly agree to the idea: “Behaviors of the representatives of political parties affect my choice”. According to this result, most of the electors do not think through ideological manner and they may change their political choices regarding to the behaviors of the parties. 57% of the electors think the leader of a political party is important for their political choices; whereas 59% of them think it is important that for a party to show up in every part of the country and not to be a local and regional party. The program of a party is the political factor which has the least effect on their choices ($x=3.01$).

Table 5. Perceptions of the Participants about Political Marketing

“... affect my political choice”	1		2		3		4		5		\bar{x}	ss.
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%		
Party leader	53	13,3	61	15,3	65	16,3	146	36,5	75	18,8	3,32	1,303
Messages of the party	51	12,8	63	15,8	62	15,5	160	40,0	64	16,0	3,31	1,272
Program of the party	61	15,3	85	21,3	95	23,8	106	26,5	53	13,3	3,01	1,273
Image of the party among the public	58	14,5	54	13,5	66	16,5	151	37,8	71	17,8	3,31	1,309
Being active nation-wide of the party	55	13,8	58	14,5	53	13,3	145	36,3	89	22,3	3,39	1,342
Candidates of the party	52	13,0	62	15,5	68	17,0	143	35,8	75	18,8	3,32	1,298
Behaviors of representatives of the party to people	58	14,5	43	10,8	43	10,8	149	37,3	107	26,8	3,51	1,369

Arithmetic averages values of the perceptions of the participants about political marketing are generally high (Table 5). By this, the hypothesis “H2: Political marketing affects preferred political party of electors” is accepted.

4.4. Comparison of the Ideas of the Participants about Political Marketing

The results of t-test which had been done to determine whether the ideas of the participants about political marketing change according to their gender or not, are shown in Table 6.

Table 6. T-Test Results for the Comparison of Ideas of the Participants about Political Marketing Regarding Their Gender

Gender		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	p
Political Marketing	Male	227	3,4235	,93946	5.894	0.016
	Female	173	3,1594	1,03680		

According to Table 6, there is a statistical difference between male and female approach to political marketing on $p=0.05$ significance level ($p=.016 < p=.05$). Males think political marketing influences more their political choices.

The results of variance analysis which compares perceptions of the participants about election marketing according to their income are shown in Table 7.

Table 7. The Results of Variance Analysis Comparing Perceptions of the Participants about Election Marketing According to Their Income

Income	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	F	p
1000-2000	243	2,1440	,79542	4.589	0.001
2000-3000	90	2,3157	,75177		
3000-4000	38	2,6535	,78042		
4000-5000	9	2,0093	,74704		
5000 and upper	20	2,5000	,63981		
Total	400	2,2458	,79038		

According to Table 7, there is a statistical difference among the levels of income for the approaches of the participants to elections marketing on $p=0.05$ significance level ($p=.001 < p=.05$). As the incomes of the electors increase, the levels of being affected by elections marketing also generally increase. Especially the people who have monthly incomes of 3000-4000 and 5000-upper are influenced more than the others by elections marketing.

The results of variance analysis which compares perceptions of the participants about election marketing according to their education level are shown in Table 8.

Table 8. The Results of Variance Analysis Comparing Perceptions of the Participants about Election Marketing According to Their Education Level

Education Level	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	F	p
Primary	69	2,1159	,81690	3.542	0.004
Secondary	72	2,0822	,67490		
Highschool	87	2,2749	,78494		
Associate Degree	89	2,1816	,79669		
Bachelor	74	2,5135	,80924		
M.S/PhD	9	2,7037	,72182		
Total	400	2,2458	,79038		

According to Table 8, there is a statistical difference among the levels of education for the approaches of the participants to elections marketing on $p=0.05$ significance level ($p=.004 < p=.05$).

By investigating Table 8, it is seen that the people who have master's degree or PhD are more affected by elections marketing.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

Political marketing is the name for all the marketing activities of political parties both in and out of election periods. Political marketing has the marketing mix elements just as commercial marketing. The products of political marketing are leader, program, ideology of a party, etc. The price is not money, instead, exchange of messages of the party and votes of the electors. Promotion is all the effort of advertisement, public

relations and introduction done by political parties or candidates. Distribution involves conducting activities country-wide, delivering the given messages and promises in time etc. By this aspect, political marketing should have done professionally and in a systematic and programmed way, just like commercial marketing.

Political parties are doing various activities in elections periods to influence electors. They use different tools to reach electors during their activities. Researching effect levels of these tools which can be called as political propaganda tools on electors, researching which tools have more influence and in what circumstances are very important for the future of political propaganda activities.

This study investigates how the marketing studies affect the electors in 1 November 2015 elections in Turkey. According to the results from the study, the marketing studies which are done in the elections period do not have much effect on the electors (Table 4). In other words, the activities which are done when the elections are near do not change the choice of the voters (“H1: Elections marketing affects preferred political party of electors” hypothesis is denied). From this aspect, we can say that the marketing funds spent by parties in elections terms are in vain mostly and they do not the choices of electors. However, the electors find face-to-face and individual interviews and visits more sincere than other marketing activities. It is seen that one-to-one marketing in which candidates or parties visit the voters one by one and listen to them, make special marketing for them is effective for the voters. So, marketing activities in election times are not effective, but among them one to one marketing is the most effective one.

It is seen that marketing activities which are done in non-elections times are pretty much effective on the electors (Table 5). Especially behaviors of candidates and parties to the voters, conducting activities country-wide and the charismatic personality of the leader are effective factors for choices of the electors (The hypothesis “H2: Political marketing affects preferred political party of electors” is accepted). Long term and continuous marketing activities are important in political marketing, just like in commercial marketing. From this aspect, the approaches such as Customer Relationship Management (CRM), Relational marketing, Customer loyalty are valid also in political marketing. While short term and in-elections period marketing activities do not affect the voters, long and non-elections term marketing activities are effective on the electors.

Political marketing factors interest males more than females (Table 6). In addition, as income and education levels increase, the effect of political marketing also increases (Tables 7 and 8). The reason of this condition may be being more interested of high-income and high-culture level people to parties and their approaches. The people who are in low level income and education determine their choices according to their daily economic and social life; so they do not give importance on the propaganda methods.

The candidates who have to make political marketing and the parties which want to introduce them in better ways to the electors should utilize all aspects of modern marketing and should have more long term relations with the electors. Only the short term relations within the election times will not be effective enough on choices of the voters. A warm one-to-one relationship with the electors and a long term professional marketing strategy will increase the effect of political marketing on the voters; and will be a key for achievement of parties.

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