

## **Awareness on political marketing via facebook and political participation**

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### **Abstract:**

Designed with descriptive-correlational method of research, this paper aimed at determining the relationship between the level of awareness on political marketing via Facebook and the level of political participation of thirty (30) selected students who were purposively sampled from those who had their summer classes at the University of Perpetual Help System Laguna for the AY 2015-2016, a week after the May 2016 national elections of the Philippines. Inclusion criteria covered the age of the respondents who were registered voters of the Philippines and had participated in the recently concluded 2016 national elections.

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that the respondents had high level of awareness on the political marketing via Facebook and had high level of political participation. However, their level of political participation did not depend on their level of awareness on political marketing via Facebook.

Future researches are encouraged to conduct another inquiry on political marketing and political issues through increasing not only Facebook usage but also the utilization of other social media platforms such as twitter, Youtube, among others.

### **Keywords:**

Awareness, political marketing, facebook, political participation, political marketing via facebook

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### Introduction

Facebook is one of the modern communication means which were adopted by politicians to disseminate their ideas, influence the individuals' opinions, induce them to adopt their ideas, and vote for them in elections. Facebook provides the workers in political marketing field with the access to the target audience by the advertising messages; it also provides Facebook users with various means for receiving the political promotion messages, interacting with each other, and exchanging the information. This is why workers in the political marketing field focus on Facebook in advertising information about political events, personal information about the politicians and candidates, with the aim of building a positive image about them and urging the users to promote them and their ideas and contribute to the process of political change (Yousif & ALsamydai, 2012).

Political marketing or political promotion is considered as one of the concepts that raise controversy in its uses and how to take advantage of it in the service of politicians (organizations, political parties, members and candidates for the elections). Researchers and specialists in the field of marketing argue that political marketing is one of the important and contemporary topics with applications that can serve politicians, while politicians note that they engage in marketing activities, in a way that does not go beyond some of the means and methods of political and electoral propaganda and some of the techniques related to the communication activities or the political promotion, but without much depth in it (ALsamydai, 1997 as cited by Yousif & ALsamydai, 2012).

Mona and Ming (2009) suggest that political marketing may be characterized as the application of marketing concepts to the study of a strategic process involving voters and politicians and their parties. Political marketing is a new sub - discipline, it has sought legitimacy for its theoretical basis by borrowing from conventional marketing concepts such as marketing orientation.

Meanwhile, Stephan and Shaughnessy (2009) state that political marketing is essentially an interdisciplinary subject of marketing and political science. They also see "political marketing as essentially an interdisciplinary subject of marketing and political science."

According to Lees (2001), political marketing management entails the use of marketing strategies, concepts and tools in the political exchange. This implies that understanding the character and the mutuality of the political exchange processes, as stated by Kotler and Kotler (1999), is central for a marketing orientation of political actors (Stephan & Shaughnessy, 2009).

ALsamydai (2000) said that workers in the field of political marketing plan marketing activities, organize their work and implement it in order to gain the public's support and improve their attitudes toward the party or candidate.

Political participation is any activity that shapes, affects, or involves the political sphere. Political participation ranges from voting to attending a rally to committing an act of terrorism to sending a letter to a representative. Broadly speaking, there are three types of participation. Conventional participation refers to activities that we expect of good citizens. For most people, participation occurs every few years at election time. People strongly committed to politics are more likely to participate on a regular basis. Meanwhile, unconventional participation covers activities that are legal but often considered

inappropriate. Young people, students, and those with grave concerns about a regime's policies are most likely to engage in unconventional participation. Lastly, illegal participation pertains to activities that break the law. Most of the time, people resort to illegal participation only when legal means have failed to create significant political change (Political Culture and Public Opinion, 2016).

According to Mondal (2015) political participation provides citizens a sense of dignity and value, alerts both the rulers and the ruled to their duties and responsibilities and facilitates broader political understanding. He argues that by involving people in the affairs of the state, participation promotes stability and order in the system. It not only stimulates political learning but also makes citizens responsible. It deepens the political awareness and increases the sense of political effectiveness. He adds that there are nine factors which affect people's political participation. These are psychological or cognitive traits, social environment, political environment, level of modernization and urbanization, political socialization, modes of participation, voting, campaign activities and cooperative activity.

### **Methodology**

This study used descriptive-correlational method of research to determine the relationship between the respondents' level of awareness on political marketing used via Facebook and their level of political participation. Descriptive-correlational is a quantitative method of research in which the researcher has two or more quantitative variables from the same group of subjects, and tries to determine if there is a relationship or covariation between the two variables (Waters, 2015).

### **Respondents of the Study**

The respondents were thirty (30) selected students purposively sampled from those who had their summer classes at the University of Perpetual Help System Laguna for the AY 2015-2016, a week after the May 2016 national elections of the Philippines.

Inclusion criteria covered the age of the respondents who were registered voters of the Philippines and had participated in the recently concluded 2016 national elections.

### **Instrumentation**

The survey questionnaire was considered as the most appropriate data gathering instrument for this descriptive-correlational research study about the respondents' level of awareness on political marketing via Facebook and their level of political participation. A self-made questionnaire with two parts was utilized in the study. Part 1 covered the respondents' level of awareness on political marketing via Facebook while Part 2 dwelt on their level of political participation. To test the validity of the questionnaire, the researcher presented it to the panel of experts in the fields of political science, research and statistics.

### **Data Gathering Procedure**

In preparation for data gathering, the researcher presented a letter addressed to the Dean of College of Arts and Sciences of University of Perpetual Help System Laguna to obtain permission to conduct the study. Before personally conducting the survey to the selected respondents, the researcher mentioned the instructions and explained the importance of the study to the respondents. After which, the answered questionnaires were retrieved, tallied, tabulated, and subjected to statistical treatment for analysis and interpretation.

**Data Treatment and Analysis**

The researcher used following statistical tools: Weighted Mean was used to determine the respondents’ (a) level of awareness on political marketing via Facebook, and (b) level of political participation; Pearson r was utilized to determine the significant relationship between the respondents’ level of awareness on political marketing via Facebook and their level of political participation.

**Ethical Consideration**

Stages of communication were strictly considered in this paper by sending letter of request to the deans of the colleges to which the respondents belong. Confidentiality of the respondents’ identity and responses was strictly maintained as they were informed that the pieces of information that they provided were used for research purposes only.

**Results and Discussion**

This descriptive-correlational study answered the following problems: 1) What is the respondents’ level of awareness on political marketing via Facebook?; 2) How can the respondents’ level of political participation be described?; and, 3) How significant is the relationship between the respondents’ level of awareness on political marketing via Facebook and their level of political participation?

**1. Respondents’ Level of Awareness on Political Marketing Via Facebook**

**Table 1**

**Respondents’ Level of Awareness on Political Marketing Via Facebook**

Through Facebook, I am aware that political marketing...	Weighted Mean	Interpretation	Rank
1.has contents which feature the achievements of a politician.	3.40	High	1
2.contains information stating the platforms of a politician.	3.20	High	5
3. may favor or attack politicians.	3.10	High	7
4. uses contents which may discredit the image of one’s political opponents.	3.23	High	4
5.may contain defamatory material against one’s political opponent.	3.03	High	8
6.uses “memes” or comedic materials which represent social truth.	2.93	High	10
7. may be exaggerated and “below the belt”.	3.00	High	9
8.can mislead others due to unreliable information presented.	3.13	High	6
9. easily reaches a multitude of individuals who are online users.	3.30	High	3
10. may be an effective machinery to convince or dissuade the voting public.	3.37	High	2
Average Weighted Mean	3.17	High	

Table 1 shows the respondents’ high level of awareness of political marketing via Facebook indicating that they are aware it has contents which feature the achievements of a politician (X=3.40) , may be an effective machinery to convince or dissuade the voting public (X=3.37), and easily reaches a multitude of individuals who are online users (X=3.30). It is also worth noting that the respondents are highly aware that political marketing via Facebook may contain defamatory material against one’s political opponent (X=3.03), may be exaggerated and “below the belt” (X=3.00) and uses “memes” or comedic materials which represent social truth (X=2.93).

## Awareness on political marketing via facebook ....

To sum up, an average weighted mean of 3.17 revealed that the respondents have high level of awareness on the political marketing used via Facebook.

According to Yousif and ALsamydai (2012), Facebook is one of the modern communication means which were adopted by politicians to disseminate their ideas, influence the individuals' opinions, induce them to adopt their ideas, and vote for them in elections. Facebook provides the workers in political marketing field with the access to the target audience by the advertising messages; it also provides Facebook users with various means for receiving the political promotion messages, interacting with each other, and exchanging the information. This is why workers in the political marketing field focus on Facebook in advertising information about political events, personal information about the politicians and candidates, with the aim of building a positive image about them and urging the users to promote them and their ideas and contribute to the process of political change.

### 2. Respondents' Level of Political Participation

**Table 2**  
**Respondents' Level of Political Participation**

As a registered voter, I...	Weighted Mean	Interpretation	Rank
1. exercise my right to choose and vote who I want in the government.	3.83	Very High	1
2. engage in political discussions with my friends and schoolmates.	3.50	High	4
3. post my ideas about politics on social media sites.	2.87	High	9
4. read news and articles about political matters in the country.	3.60	Very High	3
5. participate in campaigns of my chosen political party.	2.57	High	10
6. listen to radio programs featuring political contents.	3.33	High	6
7. react to political issues and controversies.	3.20	High	8
8. watch political debates and discussions.	3.80	Very High	2
9. search for political contents on the Internet.	3.23	High	7
10. enjoy talking to others who have political interest like me.	3.40	High	5
Average Weighted Mean	3.35	High	

As shown in Table 2, three indicators showed the respondents' very high level of political participation in terms of exercising their right to choose and vote who they want in the government ( $X=3.83$ ), watching political debates and discussions ( $X=3.80$ ), and reading news and articles about political matters in the country ( $X=3.60$ ). Meanwhile, seven indicators showed a high level of political participation among them which shows that, among others, they engage in political discussions with their friends and schoolmates ( $X=3.50$ ), enjoy talking to others who have political interest ( $X=3.40$ ) and listen to radio programs featuring political contents ( $X=3.33$ ).

To sum up, an average weighted mean of 3.35 indicated a high level of political participation among the respondents.

According to Mondal (2015) political participation provides citizens a sense of dignity and value, alerts both the rulers and the ruled to their duties and responsibilities and facilitates broader political understanding. He argues that by involving people in the affairs of the

state, participation promotes stability and order in the system. It not only stimulates political learning but also makes citizens responsible. It deepens the political awareness and increases the sense of political effectiveness. He adds that there are nine factors which affect people’s political participation. These are psychological or cognitive traits, social environment, political environment, level of modernization and urbanization, political socialization, modes of participation, voting, campaign activities and cooperative activity.

**3. Relationship Between the Respondents’ Level of Awareness on Political Marketing Via Facebook and their Level of Political Participation**

**Table 3**  
**Relationship Between the Respondents’ Level of Awareness on Political Marketing Via Facebook and their Level of Political Participation**

Variables	Pearson r	P value	Interpretation
Respondents’ Level of Awareness on Political Marketing Via Facebook and their Level of Political Participation	0.265	0.156	Not Significant

level of significance@ 0.05

As shown in Table 3, a p-value of 0.156 was obtained which was higher than the test of significance at 0.05 which shows that the respondents’ level of political awareness on political marketing via Facebook and their level of political participation are not significantly correlated. This implies that the respondents’ level of political participation does not depend on their level of awareness on political marketing via Facebook. This shows that there can be other factors like education, occupation, income, age, sex, among others which may influence the respondents’ level of political participation.

According to Mondal (2015) political participation provides citizens a sense of dignity and value, alerts both the rulers and the ruled to their duties and responsibilities and facilitates broader political under-standing. He argues that by involving people in the affairs of the state, participation promotes stability and order in the system. It not only stimulates political learning but also makes citizens responsible. It deepens the political awareness and increases the sense of political effectiveness. He adds that there are nine factors which affect people’s political participation. These are psychological or cognitive traits, social environment, political environment, level of modernization and urbanization, political socialization, modes of participation, voting , campaign activities and cooperative activity.

**Conclusion**

Based on the findings of the study, it can be concluded that the respondents had high level of awareness on the political marketing via Facebook and had high level of political participation. However, their level of political participation did not depend on their level of awareness on political marketing via Facebook.

**Future Directions**

Professors of social sciences like political science may include lesson on political marketing which uses social media sites as an effective platform to disseminate political information to the online public. Specifically, Facebook could be one of the effective strategies to use in raising awareness on social matters like politics and its contribution to society. Future researches may conduct another inquiry on political marketing and

political issues through increasing not only Facebook usage but also the utilization of other social media platforms such as twitter, Youtube, among others.

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