Multidimensional Political Marketing Mix Model for Developing Countries: An Empirical Investigation

TAMGID AHMED CHOWDHURY AND SHAHNEELA NAHEED

School of Business and Economics, Department of Marketing & International Business, North South University, Dhaka, Bangladesh

This article offers a 38-item nine dimensional statistically valid structural model of political mix for a developing country. The methodological approach of the study is based on 2357 primary data collected from rural and urban voters in Bangladesh. Results of the paper revealed significant differences in priorities between the two voter groups on political mix items. In one hand, rural voters were found to prefer candidates promoted by celebrities and national leaders, were swayed by public opinion, and even influenced by the sight of large sculptures of party symbols or effigies of the candidates in the campaign trail. On the other hand, urban voters were found to take into account the candidates' modesty, their powers of articulation, as well as the economic and psychological cost of the candidates' victory while making the electoral decision. The study recommends uti- lizing voter information systems to identify and nominate can- didates as well as use party chairperson and national icons for word of mouth promotion and concludes by suggesting areas for further research in this field.

KEYWORDS Bangladesh, political marketing, election campaign, political parties, polling, promotion

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Address correspondence to Tamgid Chowdhury, School of Business and Economics, Department of Marketing & International Business, North South University, Plot-15, Block-B, Bashundhara R/A, Dhaka-1229, Bangladesh. E-mail: tamgid.chowdhury76@gmail.com

INTRODUCTION AND RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

This article argues that voters' expectations from political parties and candidates vary greatly in developed and developing countries. Very rigid marketing framework for politics as proposed in the political marketing models of western countries is not feasible in developing countries. This article sets out to offer a multidimensional political marketing mix model for a developing country based on the opinion of its voters.

It is now well acknowledged in the literature that political parties and candidates have used marketing tools, especially the 4 Ps, and strategies to win elected offices (Niffenegger 1988; Kotler and Kotler 1999; Lees-Marshmant 2015). Political activities are also found to be comparable to mainstream marketing conditions (Kotler and Kotler 1999; Kaskeala 2010) and therefore, in political marketing terminology, parties are synonymous to businesses whereas candidates are similar to other commercial goods (Niffenegger 1988; Kotler and Keller 2006; Kaskeala 2010).

Recently political marketing has been expanding its area from simple campaigning through communication and advertising (as suggested by Reid, 1988) to building long lasting relationship by involving voters in elec- tion, use of public relation, word of mouth, and by better understanding the needs of the electoral body (Harris 2001b; Lees-Marshment 2001a; O′Shaughnessy and Henneberg 2009). In this era of free-media, citizens have more opportunities than ever before to be involved in political affairs. Because a political product is a complex product where voters cannot just pick the few attributes they like of a candidate, rather, they have to con- sider the whole package when making the decision to vote (Durmaz and Direkci 2015). This understanding encourages voters to take into account many factors such as opportunity costs of voting for a candidate, alterna- tive offerings, potential economic and psychological costs, policy, as well as party affiliation and its ideology before making their voting decision. According to rational choice theory, voters make decisions based upon a set of individual preferences to maximize gains. Therefore, political parties need to identify the diverse demands of various voters (Wring 1997; Lees- Marshment 2001b). This means, responsiveness to the demand of the vot- ers can not only enhance the chance of the party to win the election, but also can promote democracy (Butler and Collins 1994; Kaskeala 2010). Even though many earlier studies stressed the need for conducting quanti- tative market research to explore voters' requirements − this aspect of polit- ical marketing has largely been ignored till date. This has been a significant void in the literature.

Existing studies on political marketing can be grouped under three broad categories. First, most studies that offered political mix variables are qualitative in nature and authors suggested those indicators based on

examples of past presidential elections of few developed nations (see, for instance, Shama, 1976; Kotler 1982; Foley 1993; Wring 1997; Osuagwu 2008; Soberman 2010). These suggestions lack statistical rigor. Second, a significant number of qualitative studies suggested political marketing process, but not the political mix indicators (such as, Lees-Marshment 2001a, 2001b; Baines, Harris, and Lewis 2002; Ormrod 2009; Savigny 2010). Third, available quantitative studies covered only few political mix variables and did not offer any comprehensive valid model for the parties or candidates. For instance, Gordon and Hartmann (2011a,b) explored the effects of advertisements and advertising allocation in elections; Gerber et al. (2011) tried to find the effect of advertising (on TV and radio) on voter turn-out rate; Shachar (2009) identified the impact of grassroots campaigning; Stokes (2005) explored the effect of threat or compensation to the voters; Freedman, Franz, and Goldstein (2004) explained the impacts of negative advertising in politics; Lovett and Shachar (2011) have shown allocation of positive and negative message in election; Gerber and Green (2000) explained the impacts of canvasing, telephone calls, and direct mail on turnout rate; and Hoegg and Lewis (2011) explained the impact of candi- date appearance and advertising on election results. By considering the available quantitative studies, it can be seen that most studies tried to sig- nify the impact of advertising and communication in politics, even though voters' choice decision depends on many other factors. This is why Gordon and Hartmann (2011b) argued that there are relatively few empir- ical studies in political marketing that examines comprehensive decision making of voters using structural models. Lees-Marshment (2015) also criticized that market research in politics is still dependent on focus group discussion which needs to be revised where researchers and practitioners 'need to develop prescriptive and predictive political marketing models to inform and influence political action'. This study will aim to address   this gap.

Another significant gap in the existing literature is the lack of political marketing studies on developing countries (exceptions are Babeiya 2011 on Tanzania; Menon 2008 on Pakistan; Gbadeyan 2011 and Osuagwu 2008 on Nigeria; Agomor and Adams 2014 on Ghana) whereas, there have been numerous researches on developed countries (Ovidiu 2013). Although few studies on emerging nations are available, they have a common pitfall of applying the models and marketing mix offered for the developed and purely democratic nations without considering the democratic status of their own. In many developing countries such as Bangladesh, most TV channels, radio stations, and newspapers are owned by political elites who frequently use the media outlets against their oppositions. Again, in several developing nations (such as Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Nigeria), military personnel are involved in politics (Menon 2008; Gbadeyan 2011) and

political parties use money and muscle power to influence election results (Babeiya 2011, Vaishnav 2011; Asia Foundation 2012). Finally, there are disparities between developed and emerging countries in many socio-economic variables, such as culture, poverty, literacy rate, per capita income, rate of unemployment, and level of infrastructure, all of which have an impact on political decision making. Therefore, we believe that this study will address the issue of customizing voter requirements accord- ing to local priorities.

Based on the literature review and the identified gaps, this study is designed to address the following research questions:

1. What are the vital political marketing mix variables in Bangladesh?
2. Are there differences in priorities between the voters of rural and urban areas with respect to the political mix indicators of Bangladesh?

WHY BANGLADESH?

There are several reasons to choose Bangladesh as the sample country for this study. First, most of the existing studies on developing countries are from Africa with a lack of research from South Asia. Second, voter turnout rate (currently 85.26%) has always been the highest in Bangladesh compared to other South Asian countries (IDEA 2016). Third, after the independence in 1971, the country experienced different types of political structures such as one-party socialism, military rule, prolonged caretaker government, presi-dential parliament, and democratic parliament. There are only few develop-ing countries that have experienced such diverse political structures within such a short span of time. Finally, Bangladesh has shown commendable pro-gress in reducing poverty and increasing the rate of literacy, empowerment, and participation in the democratic process. All these positive outcomes sup-port that citizens of Bangladesh are becoming more conscious about politics.

Literature review on the indicators of political mix

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

In their definition of political marketing, the American Marketing Association (AMA, 2006) argued that connections between political parties and the voters are important to understand for effective use of marketing in politics to ensure better delivery of values. In doing so, it was proposed that McCarthy's (1960) four P's model could be applied in politics with necessary adjustment (Kotler and Lee 2007). However, later on with the extension of four P's to seven P's, several studies argued that as the polit-ical product is a complex and intangible good, and researchers should

identify the varied marketing mix considering the requirements of the elec-torates (Maryani, 2015; Girma, 2016). Therefore, as a base, this study applied the extended as well as generic marketing mix model proposed by Booms and Bitner (1981). It is important at this stage to note that, we applied an inductive approach through grounded theory in this study. As a result, first, through a detailed literature survey we prepared a long list of political mix variables irrespective of the country of study. Sorted variables were then customized according to the opinions (quantitative data) of Bangladeshi voters and a new political marketing mix model is proposed.

QUALITATIVE STUDIES

Shama (1976) in his seminal paper compared candidates with the conven-tional products and suggested that the most salient variables to promote   are campaigns, rallies, polling, use of media in creating promotional appeal, television advertisement, use of printed materials, canvasing, speech-making, visual image of the candidate, use of volunteers, and one- on-one promotion. Even though the paper suggested several marketing mix items for political parties, there were no statistical significance of the results. Niffenegger (1988) used examples of Presidential elections in the US and suggested that election slogans, debate participation, party plat- form, past record of the candidate, personal characteristics of the candi- date, image of the party, psychological costs associated with the candidate, religious and ethnic background of the candidate, use of gates and signs, registering voters, and negative advertising are vital factors in voters' deci- sion. Variables suggested in the paper are based on personal observation and qualitative interviews with the general voters in course of time which are supposed to evolve. Aguirre and Hyman (2015) stressed the importance of election campaign and discussed about the items such as language, elec- tion slogan, election song, and TV advertising. The discussion was based on few pre-determined items without testing the significance of those items. McDonnell and Taylor (2014) worked on political value creation and said that societal, economic, and altruistic components should be ensured while campaigning. However, the study didn't mention any specific meth- odology to explore the indicators of the stated dimensions of political value creation. Marland and Giasson (2013) worked on opinion research, political communication, and campaign strategies of few selected parties   and suggested that more data-based works should be conducted in the field of politics. The methodological side of the study is not representative or generalizable. Kevin (2004) suggested public relations, stage events, dir- ect mail to voters, negative campaigning against opposition, lobbying with elites and connection to party headquarter as important criteria. However, the study didn't mention the criteria to choose the stated variables. Henneberg (2004) on her study on the UK proposed items such as network

building, use of technology, use of celebrity, and relationship maintenance with the workers. The suggested items were not statistically validated. Schafferer (2004) argued that promises made by the candidate, voters' information, use of money, party system and ideology, and campaigning are influential indicators. Scammel and Langer (2006) discussed about pol- itical advertising and proposed few indicators such as, policy proposals, use of appeals, emotional advertisements, source credibility, logical ad making, and creation of negative appeals in ads. The study covered only the promotional side and didn't offer any comprehensive marketing mix model. Osuagwu (2008) suggested that advertising, propaganda, cyber presence, direct marketing, polling, and lobbying are vital indicators of political mix. Savigny (2010) argued that candidate's image as a leader, depth of campaign, persuasion, party of the candidate, policy contents, and participation of grass-root level are vital variables. Even though this study offered several important variables, it didn't offer any valid or reliable method of selecting and purifying the items.

Gibson and Rommele (2009) studied about political campaign and proposed to use telemarketing, direct mail, internet communications, con- tinuous campaigning through establishing more outside offices, outside public relation firms, opinion polling, and opposition research. The focus of this study was too narrow and authors collected qualitative comments from a small sample on the earlier stated pre-determined variables. Soberman (2010) mentioned about the importance of political advertising, content choice, and personal characteristics of candidate. However, the study didn't suggest any influential characteristic of the candidate. Dezelan and Maksuti (2012) worked on use of election poster and suggested to put emphasis on color, size, message, language, font matters, and using photos and pictures. Downer (2013) stressed the need for political branding and suggested several indicators such as establishing core brand values, and branding the party. Stromback and Kiousis (2013) stressed the need for public relation and the use of volunteers in election campaigns. Ustaahmetoglu (2014) suggested the use of mass media, door to door cam- paigning, use of national icons, and use of posters as important variables. Last three mentioned studies mostly dealt with promotional and public relations aspects and ignored other associated important dimensions such as price, candidate's characteristics, and campaign process.

QUANTITATIVE WORKS

Girma (2016) proposed that party ideology, finding voter needs, using mar- keting intelligence, candidate positioning, using party leaders in campaigns, and analyzing competitor's move are vital in political marketing. The study is based on descriptive study only and didn't validate the findings. Che, Iyer, and Shanmugan (2007) mentioned about negative advertising and buying

the voters through threats or compensation. Shachar (2009) and Gerber et al., (2011) suggested that candidates can advertise on television, radio, billboards, direct mail, and over the phone to reach to the voters. However, the studies didn′t compare the degree of effectiveness of each of those media. Cwalina and Falkowski (2013) in their study on Poland highlighted the desirable qualities of a candidate which include professionalism, hon- esty, mannerism, tolerance, good looks, conservativeness, simplicity, intro- vert/extrovert, eloquence, envious, bossy, compassionate, and assertive nature. However, the study didn′t explore the degree of importance of each one of those suggested items. Argan and Argan (2012) through their study on Turkey, suggested several qualities of an ideal candidate including per- sonality, honesty, societal bonding, daily family experience of the candidate, occupation, power of the candidate′s home party, political background, con- tribution to the society, available news about candidate, ethnic background, and gender. Even though the study has validated their findings, it is based on a small sample.

As stated earlier, a large number of studies have been carried out on the effects of advertising and campaign on election. Gordon and Hartmann (2011b) in their ground-breaking work on the US argued that political advertising in different media particularly television, influences the election results. They also suggested to considering message sensitiv- ity, content of the message, and emotional appeal. Lovett and Shachar (2011) talked about advertising budget and expenditure, giving positive message, and careful campaign tone in elections. The study was based on few pre-determined items without confirming the importance of the indi- cators by the local voters. Ustaahmetoglu (2014) in a study on Turkey tried to establish the relation between agenda-setting and political partici- pation of voters.

Maryani (2015) found that image and reputation of the political party have influence on party′s reputation among the voters. The study focused only on two prespecified items related to party reputation and ignores other important dimensions and variables of the political mix. Dabula   (2016) investigated the influence of social media in building trust and loy- alty and their relation to voting intention. Even though the study is based on a large sample, it didn′t propose the political mix items that influence discussion on social media. Guido (2006) in an Italian study measured vot- ers′ consumption behavior with respect to their personality and values. The study revealed that voting intention is influenced by personality traits such as openness, emotional stability, and consciousness along with values such as power, hedonism, success, religious beliefs, and self-direction. However, the study did not provide any suggestion about the political mix variables that influence voters′ decision. Hoegg and Lewis (2011) added few more traits such as intelligence, daring, charming, reliable,   good

judgment, successful, and cheerful. Yousif and ALsamydai (2012) studied the effects of Facebook on political promotion.

Agomor and Adams′s (2014) quantitative study on Ghana proposed influential factors such as personality, educational background, regional background, political experience, standard of living, and human relation of the candidate; campaign message; as well as employment creation ability, education policy, and health policy of the party. On the other hand, in a qualitative study on Ghana, Kobby (2007) proposed that the brand image of the candidate; the party and its ideology; leadership quality; reputation and modesty of the candidate; easy access to media; capacity to deliver political message; use of common and local language in the campaign; voters′ feelings about national, psychological, and economic cost; progressive slogans; heavy advertising; and use of national icons are influential variables. Gbadeyan′s (2011) quantitative study on Nigeria suggested items such as party policy towards utility services, use of money in election, and qualities of the candidates are relevant variables. Nazar and Latif (2015) in their study (qualitative) suggested that public relation, fund management, parallel campaigning, and psychological cost consideration are vital in Pakistan. Babeiya′s (2011) study on Tanzania explored the relation between corruption and use of money with election outcome. Ndavula and Mueni (2014) in their study (quantitative) on Kenya described the effects of new media in political advertisement campaign and suggested using internet media especially Facebook and Twitter, catchy messages, political branding, colors in advertising, and careful use of speech tone. A quick look at the above-mentioned studies reveal that there is lack of rigor- ous empirical studies on developing countries in offering influential polit- ical mix variables. Our study intends to close that gap.

CONCEPTUALIZING POLITICAL MARKETING

Despite the availability of different definitions, by considering the research questions of the study and focus of the paper towards understanding the requirements of voters, political marketing is defined as: *"the party or candidate's use of opinion research and environmental analysis to produce and promote a competitive offering which will help realize organizational aims and satisfy groups of electors in exchange for their vote"* (Wring 1997).

METHODOLOGY

Measure

By considering the political marketing indicators mentioned in the earlier section and reviewing additional cross-cultural literature on the issue, at the initial stage, 69 political mix variables (criteria) were arranged. A five-people expert panel, consisting of academics who have experience in teaching introductory and strategic marketing courses was utilized to refine (as suggested by Shimp and Sharma 1987) the initial 69 items. This panel suggested dropping one item, rephrasing five items, and adding two items. For example, the panel argued that "any negative issue of the candidate" is already covered by image-relevant questions (such as, image as community person, candidate's honesty as known in the society, and stand against social problems). The panel suggested adding items namely "candidate's thoughts on religious issues" and "candidate's stand against corruption" by considering socio-economic-cultural conditions of the developing countries. The experts agreed to use a 5-point Likert scale to capture the opinions of respondents. After incorporating the suggestions, we had 70 items in the list.

In the second stage, we discussed the refined 70 items with a political scientist who recommended rephrasing two items to make them more customized to the field of political marketing, and then advised adding three more items to the list. The political scientist suggested adding the item "visit by the candidate in the grass-root level" as this creates empowerment among remote voters and activists. The political scientist also recommended adding the variable "candidate's connection with the local elites" as evidence shows that local elites in developing countries have a strong contribution in spreading word of mouth during an election. After the necessary refinements, a comprehensive questionnaire comprising of 73 items was formulated. The initial questionnaire was primarily developed in English by incorporating the 73 items, along with the cover page and then translated in to *Bengali* (local language). It was ensured through a translator that the two sets contained identical information.

Finally, we conducted a pilot study among 30 urban voters to pretest the text and items of the questionnaire. Few of the respondents suggested re-phrasing two items, because of better understanding of the content of those questions and suggested adding "retired" as an option in the question regarding occupation.

Questionnaire

The first section of the questionnaire included the final 73 political mix-relevant questions and the second section asked about demographic

TABLE 1 Respondent Profile of the Study

Demographic Feature	Urban Areas		Rural Areas	
	Total Number	Percentage	Total Number	Percentage
Gender				
Female	460	40.35	431	35.4
Male	680	59.65	786	64.6
Educational qualification				
Less than primary	51	4.5	141	11.6
Primary passed	85	7.5	172	14.1
SSC passed	104	9.1	307	25.2
HSC passed	277	24.3	233	19.1
Honor's passed	401	35.2	204	16.8
Master's passed	187	16.4	106	8.7
Above master's degree	35	3.1	54	4.4
Occupation				
Students	429	37.63	219	18
Government services	150	13.15	113	9.3
Private job	185	16.2	167	13.7
Businesses	122	10.7	231	19
Self-employed	79	6.9	175	14.4
Housewife	175	15.35	312	25.6

questions (gender, educational qualifications, age, occupation, and loca- tion). We asked demographics at the end due to social desirability and to reduce potential biases. A 5-point Likert-like scale was used to capture the opinions of the general voters regarding the extent to which the political   mix item was important for a candidate to win the election, where 1 ¼ *not at all important,* and 5 ¼ *most important*.

Respondents

To develop the multidimensional model based on the perceptions of the general voters (anyone above 18 years of age), the first set of data was col- lected from the voters of urban areas covering six divisional headquarters (Dhaka, Chittagong, Khulna, Barisal, Rangpur, and Sylhet) in Bangladesh. A total of 1140 usable data points (40.35% and 59.65% from female and male voters respectively) were collected. To confirm the findings from first set of data, a second data set was collected (as suggested by Malhotra and Dash 2016) from 1217 rural voters of eight districts. The sample profile of the study is summarized in Table 1.

Statistical Method

Structural equation modeling (SEM) technique has been used in this study due to its philosophical similarity to the analysis of multidimensional

TABLE 2 Summary of Different Stages of Marketing Mix Model Development With Decision Criteria

Stages of Index Development	Proposed Methods and Decision Criteria
Step-1: Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) to reduce the long list of items to more relevant ones	- Factor analysis through principal component analysis with Varimax rotation, KMO and TVE values will be investigated - Items that are not cross loaded, significant, and have loading greater than 0.50 would be retained (as applied by Shimp and Sharma 1987; MacCallum and Austin 2000) - In addition, qualitative comments from the field would be utilized
Step-2: Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to test the significance of the dimensions and further refinements of retained items	- A second set of data will be utilized to confirm the findings of EFA - Loading of each item should be greater than 0.40, goodness of fit (GOF) index values of the dimension should be acceptable
Step-3: Finalizing the index and naming the dimensions	- Construction of measurement index - Each attribute should have loading greater than 0.40, and must be statistically significant - For the whole index, GOF values such as GFI, CFI, NFI, RMSEA, ECVI, and Hoelter's will be investigated; modification index will be checked too for further refinement of the index
Step-4: Reliability and Validity testing of the index	- Total and construct reliabilities will be checked - Convergent and discriminant validities will be investigated - Cronbach's Alpha and Coefficient-H value will be investigated

modeling and because of its greater statistical strength in comparison with other multivariate techniques like regression. Furthermore, SEM is preferable when the measuring factor (or dimension) is not directly measurable through a single item, but through a group of indirect measurement varia- bles (indicators or items) in order to measure the dimension adequately. A summary of political marketing mix model development and validation through SEM is presented in Table 2.

RESULTS: POLITICAL MARKETING MIX MODEL DEVELOPMENT

In this section, we have elaborated the construction of multidimensional political marketing mix model for Bangladesh. Later on, a comparison between rural and urban voters has been made with respect to their expectations (from the candidates and the parties) on the items of the model.

Stage 1: Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA)

The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) value which shows the data adequacy was 0.90, and thus extremely satisfactory for the data to be factor analyzed. The results of first stage EFA revealed that the 73 items were grouped under 15 dimensions (or factor) with a total variance explained around 56.19%. Considering our decision criteria for item retention (as mentioned in Table 2 such as, loadings <0.50, cross loaded, having low critical ratio (CR < 1.96), and extraction values <0.50), 20 items were dropped out of which 16 items had loading <0.50 (e.g., promises made by the candidate during campaign, candidate's stand against corruption, professional background of the candidate, ease of access to candidate, press conference of the candidate) and four items were cross-loaded (e.g., distribution of badges by the workers, public relationships maintained by the candidate, use of financial means before election, and candidate's connection with the party headquarter).

Many of our respondents argued that political leaders usually do not keep their promises (consistent with Asia Foundation, 2012), as a result this item seems less relevant to them. Our result also revealed that candi- date's professional background is less important to voters. However, this finding is contradictory to the survey of The Daily Star (October 24, 2008) which suggested that voters prefer to see more members of parliament (MPs) who are lawyers and teachers. We dropped 20 insignificant items from the study.

We re-ran EFA (second stage) with the remaining 53 items and found them grouped under 12 dimensions accounting for 59.32% of the total vari- ance. This time, four items (e.g., candidate's level of education, ethnic background of the candidate, image of the activists, and diminishing national image if the candidate is elected) had loadings <0.50. During sur- vey, many of our respondents argued that candidate's political background and image as a leader are more important in politics than their educational background. Our respondents also said that there are examples where an accused war criminal got nomination and won the election due to his/her party affiliation. This means, in developing countries like Bangladesh, the image of the party and its symbol (brand identity) are more critical as many voters usually vote along party lines irrespective of the actual nomi- nated candidate (consistent with Khan 2011). Our item refinement process continued until we got all remaining variables satisfying the decision rules stated earlier. Finally, after conducting one more stage of EFA, and by dropping two more items (religious belief of the candidate and influential icons in the party) a total of 47 items were retained, which were grouped under 12 dimensions.

At this stage, two dimensions were found to have only two items each whereas another dimension had only one item. As confirmatory factor analysis (CFA, next stage of refinement) requires that there should be at

least three items under each dimension (Byrne 2010; Hair et al. 2016), we thus, dropped these three dimensions and their corresponding five items. The remaining 42 items and nine factors were retained for CFA.

Stage 2: Confirmatory Factor Analysis

To run CFA, 1217 new data points (as suggested by Malhotra and Dash 2016) were collected from the voters of rural areas covering eight new dis- tricts (35.4%female). For CFA, items were retained if they were statistically significant and had loadings >0.40 (as stated in Table 2). Fit values were considered acceptable with Root Mean Square Residual (RMR) <0.04, Goodness of Fit Index (GFI) >0.90, Confirmatory Fit Index (CFI) >0.90, Normed Fit Index (NFI) >0.85, Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) <0.05, Pclose >0.05, Hoelter′s Critical *N* (CN) >200, and low Modification Indices (MI), as suggested by Hair et al. (2016).

   After running CFA for the retained nine dimensions and their corre- sponding 42 items, we found all items and dimensions statistically signifi- cant. However, two items (candidate′s position in the party and democratic insight of the party) out of eight items under the 2nd dimension had a loading <0.40. For instance, initially, the values for RMR, GFI, CFI, NFI, RMSEA, Pclose, and Hoelter′s CN were 0.09, 0.78, 0.72, 0.70, 0.23, 0.00 and 72/89, respectively for the second dimension and its eight items, which was a moderate fit only. After dropping the stated two insignificant items from that pair of items, the RMR, GFI, CFI, NFI, RMSEA, Pclose and Hoelter′s CN for first dimension with its four items were 0.02, 0.96, 0.92, 0.94, 0.03, 0.88, and 231/309, respectively, which is satisfactory. According to a report, 63% of total MPs in 2008 national election in Bangladesh were business people who had no political background and positions in the party, however, they received the nomination as they provided significant financial donations to the party. This finding is consistent with our finding that ′candidate′s position in the party′ is less important in the political mar- ket of Bangladesh. Again, there are evidence to support that in developed countries, parties make decisions based on democratic procedures. However, in most developing nations, those strategic decisions are usually taken by party chairperson and few party elites (Asia Foundation 2012; Vaishnav 2011).The stated two items were dropped from the further study.

   We followed the same procedure to check the significance of the remaining dimensions and their corresponding items. The CFA results showed that the remaining nine dimensions and their underlying 40 items had satisfactory fit values when considered independently. Next, we tested the extent to which all dimensions and their items fitted together in a single model.
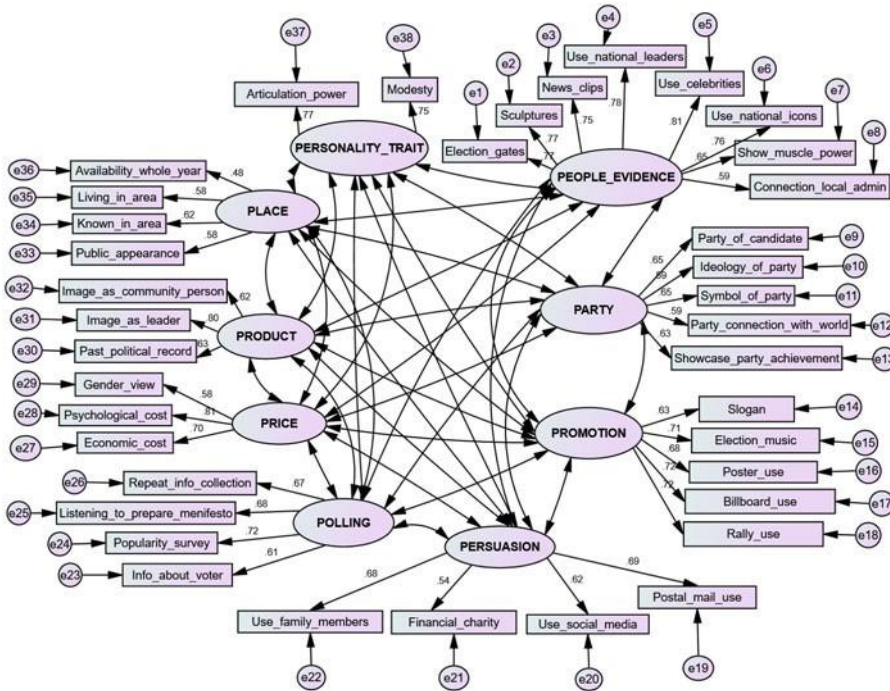
FIGURE 1 Political marketing mix model for Bangladesh.

Stage 3: Constructing the Political Marketing Mix Model for Bangladesh

The remaining 40 items (nine dimensions) were tested in a structural model (refer to Figure 1). We found that two items (age of the party candi- date belongs to and candidate's participation in the debates with other can- didates) were incompatible to the combined model (loadings <0.40). Our respondents argued that the age of the party is not an important issue in Bangladesh. On one hand, there are examples where an old party (such as, Olama Party, and Jaker Party) never won a seat of the parliament, on the other hand, there are new parties (such as, Krishok Sramik Janata League) formed by a popular leader won the seat. Again, in Bangladesh, candidates do not participate in the debate which might increase the likeli- hood of winning the seat for popular and deserving candidates. We removed these two items and re-ran the model. After running the refined model, all items had loadings >0.40, with RMR, GFI, CFI, NFI, RMSEA, Pclose and Hoelter's CN values of 0.061, 0.91, 0.92, 0.90, 0.04, 0.78, and 392/407, respectively. We then combined the two data sets (n 2357) and re-ran the model and found that all items fulfilling the acceptance criteria with RMR, GFI, CFI, NFI, RMSEA, Pclose and Hoelter's CN values of 0.06, 0.92, 0.93, 0.89, 0.04, 0.81, and 431/448, respectively.

Electorates look for indicators such as past political records, image of the candidate as a leader, and reputation of the candidate in the community; this dimension is named as the "Product". Economic and psychological cost and gender views are the price voters would pay if a candidate wins. As a result, this dimension is defined as "Price". A third dimension of the model involves items such as election gates, use of sculptures, use of news clippings in favor of the candidate, use of national leaders, celebrity and national icons, showing of muscle power, and connection with local administration. All these items justify the use of people and physical evi- dences in the campaigns and thus we named it the "People and Physical Evidence" dimension. Moreover, indicators such as party of the candidate, ideology and symbol of the party, party's connection with outer world, and showing achievements of the party represent the party as a whole. We named this dimension as "Party". Slogans, election music, billboards, post- ers, and rallies are used to promote the candidate; these indicators are grouped in the dimension named "Promotion". Using the same procedure, we namedthe other dimensions as "Persuasion", "Polling", "Place", and "Personality traits" (refer to Figure 1). The final 38-item, nine-dimensional "Political Marketing Mix Model" − addressing the first research question - for Bangladesh, as perceived by general voters, is shown in Figure 1 and reported in Table 3.

Validity Testing of the Model

Our results indicate that Chi-square value is 1757.51 (p 0.00) with degrees of freedom (df) of 613. Chi-square/df 2.86, which is lower than the threshold of 3.00. Cronbach's Alpha which measures the reliability and internal consistency of the model was found to be 0.92 (with F 378.33   ¼and sig. 0.00). This is an indication of higher reliability of the devel-   oped model.

      We performed several other tests to assess the validity of the pro- posed model. We assessed the convergent validity and internal consistency too with the help of construct reliabilities (CR) and Cronbach's alpha. Average variance explained (AVE) values were calculated to assess the explanatory power of each dimension of the index. The CR and AVE val- ues (in Table 4) and Cronbach's alpha values (Table 4) for the dimensions are all >0.5 approving the validity of the dimensions and the index as a whole. As CR values are all higher than the threshold of 0.70, our proposed dimensions are reliable and valid from the perspective of internal consist- ency (Cho 2016). Finally, the factor loading for each item of the index is higher than 0.50 and significant ($p <$ 0.00) too.

TABLE 3 Indicators of Political Marketing Mix in Bangladesh with Loadings

No.	Political Marketing Indicator	Dimension	Loading
I_1	Election gates of the candidate	People and	0.77
I_2	Large sculptures with election symbol	evidences	0.77
I_3	News clippings in favor of the candidate		0.75
I_4	Use of national leaders (like party Chairman) in the campaigns		0.77
I_5	Use of celebrities in the campaigns		0.81
I_6	Use of national icons in the meetings		0.76
I_7	Showing off muscle power by the candidate		0.65
I_8	Candidate's connection with the local administration		0.59
I_9	Political party of the candidate	Party	0.65
I_{10}	Ideology of the party candidate belongs to		0.59
I_{11}	Symbol (*Marka*) of the party candidate supports		0.65
I_{12}	Connection of the party with the outer world		0.59
I_{13}	Showcasing remarkable achievements of the party		0.63
I_{14}	Election slogan of the candidate	Promotion	0.63
I_{15}	Election music of the candidate		0.71
I_{16}	Use of posters of the candidate		0.68
I_{17}	Billboards of the candidate		0.72
I_{18}	Rallies by the candidate		0.72
I_{19}	Direct postal mail by the candidate	Persuasion	0.69
I_{20}	Use of social media by the candidate		0.62
I_{21}	Financial charity made by the candidate		0.54
I_{22}	Use of family members in the campaigns		0.68
I_{23}	Collecting information about the voters of the area	Polling	0.61
I_{24}	Popularity survey before applying for the candidacy		0.72
I_{25}	Listening from the voters before preparing the election manifesto		0.68
I_{26}	Collecting information repeatedly to detect the change of popularity		0.67
I_{27}	Economic cost if the candidate is elected (tax or extortion may rise,)	Price	0.70
I_{28}	Psychological cost if the candidate is elected (insecurity, harassment)		0.81
I_{29}	Gender view point of the candidate		0.58
I_{30}	Past political records of the candidate	Product	0.63
I_{31}	Image of the candidate as a leader		0.80
I_{32}	Image of the candidate as community person		0.62
I_{33}	Frequent public appearance	Place	0.58
I_{34}	Candidate is known in the area		0.62
I_{35}	Candidate living in the area		0.58
I_{36}	Availability of the candidate in the area throughout the year		0.48
I_{37}	Candidate's articulation power	Personality trait	0.77
I_{38}	Candidate's modesty		0.75

TABLE 4 Test of Convergent and Discriminant Validities of the Model

Dimension	AVE	CR	Alpha	Inter-correlation of the dimensions								
				People & Evidence	Party	Promotion	Persuasion	Polling	Price	Product	Place	Personality
People & Evidence	0.58	0.90	0.88	0.76								
Party	0.52	0.76	0.86	0.27	0.72							
Promotion	0.50	0.82	0.89	0.22	0.33	0.71						
Persuasion	0.49	0.72	0.86	0.19	0.34	0.33	0.70					
Polling	0.53	0.81	0.88	0.31	0.30	0.31	0.22	0.73				
Price	0.54	0.77	0.86	0.20	0.28	0.12	0.34	0.33	0.74			
Product	0.53	0.78	0.83	0.29	0.21	0.28	0.26	0.31	0.22	0.73		
Place	0.48	0.79	0.81	0.16	0.20	0.29	0.18	0.21	0.19	0.23	0.70	
Personality	0.53	0.73	0.84	0.18	0.26	0.34	0.17	0.24	0.17	0.28	0.25	0.76

TABLE 5 Ranking of Political Marketing Indicators Between Rural and Urban Voters

No.	Political Marketing Indicator	Loading for Rural	Rank	Loading for Urban	Rank
I_1	Election gates of the candidate	0.78	6	0.62	20
I_2	Large sculptures with election symbol	0.81	2	0.54	30
I_3	News clippings in favor of the candidate	0.76	8	0.67	13
I_4	Use of national leaders (e. g., Chairman) in the campaigns	0.80	3	0.76	4
I_5	Use of celebrities in the campaigns	0.82	1	0.74	8
I_6	Use of national icons in the meetings	0.76	9	0.75	6
I_7	Showing off muscle power by the candidate	0.59	30	0.53	32
I_8	Candidate's connection with the local administration	0.66	19	0.38	38
I_9	Political party of the candidate	0.61	27	0.59	23
I_{10}	Ideology of the party candidate belongs to	0.52	33	0.64	18
I_{11}	Symbol (*Marka*) of the party candidate supports	0.67	18	0.49	33
I_{12}	Connection of the party with the outer world	0.68	15	0.53	31
I_{13}	Showcasing remarkable achievements of the party	0.62	25	0.61	21
I_{14}	Election slogan of the candidate	0.57	31	0.63	19
I_{15}	Election music of the candidate	0.66	20	0.58	27
I_{16}	Use of posters of the candidate	0.63	24	0.69	12
I_{17}	Billboards of the candidate	0.67	17	0.61	22
I_{18}	Rallies by the candidate	0.70	14	0.70	11
I_{19}	Direct postal mail by the candidate	0.63	23	0.64	17
I_{20}	Use of social media by the candidate	0.64	21	0.59	24
I_{21}	Financial charity made by the candidate	0.46	36	0.48	35
I_{22}	Use of family members in the campaigns	0.64	22	0.59	26
I_{23}	Collecting information about the voters of the area	0.78	7	0.46	36
I_{24}	Popularity survey before applying for the candidacy	0.70	13	0.64	16
I_{25}	Listening the voters before preparing the election manifesto	0.60	28	0.74	9
I_{26}	Collecting information repeatedly to detect the change	0.75	10	0.71	10
I_{27}	Economic cost if the candidate is elected	0.43	38	0.76	3
I_{28}	Psychological cost if the candidate is elected	0.62	26	0.92	1
I_{29}	Gender view point of the candidate	0.71	12	0.41	37
I_{30}	Past political records of the candidate	0.67	16	0.58	28
I_{31}	Image of the candidate as a leader	0.79	5	0.82	2
I_{32}	Image of the candidate as community person	0.60	29	0.66	14
I_{33}	Frequent public appearance	0.56	32	0.57	29
I_{34}	Candidate is known in the area	0.50	35	0.65	15
I_{35}	Candidate living in the area	0.50	34	0.59	25
I_{36}	Availability of the candidate in the area around the year	0.46	37	0.48	34
I_{37}	Candidate's articulation power	0.80	4	0.76	5
I_{38}	Candidate's modesty	0.72	11	0.75	7

AVE values that evaluate convergent validity of the dimensions (Hair et al. 2016) are all > 0.50. Dimension correlation (the square root of AVE) as shown in Table 4 (refer to the right diagonal values) proves that each dimension is highly correlated to the items of its own than to the items of other constructs. This finding signifies convergent validity of the model. We also checked the cross-loading values which confirmed that item load-ings within the dimension are greater than loading of the items in another dimension — approval of discriminant validity. Finally, to check the multi-collinearity of the index, we calculated variance inflation factor (VIF) values. All VIF values (ranging from 2.16 to 3.11) were lower than the threshold of 5.00, and therefore it can be concluded that our index is free from multi-collinearity problem.

DISCUSSIONS ON FINDINGS

We found 38 important political mix variables as preferred by the voters of rural and urban Bangladesh. Hotelling's *T*-square value which justifies differences in preferences in case of independent samples (in our case rural and urban voters) is found to be T^2 3641.34; F 96.81 with p 0.00 (< 0.05) which confirms that rural and urban voters have variations in prior-ities with respect to the 38 indicators offered in this study — addressing the second research question. Niffenegger (1988) argued that Kotler (1975) could guess few major issues of voters' needs and interests but were not likely to know their relative importance in the minds of various groups of voters. Shachar (2009) criticized that most works in political science treated responses of voters as homogenous whereas they are usually heteroge- neous. The study thus suggested finding ways to use the data to identify heterogeneity of voters' opinion. Our results (Table 5) on differences in priority listings of rural and urban voters concerning political mix variables can adequately address the said issues.

Our results (Table 5) revealed that 'psychological cost in voting' is the top priority (loading is 0.92) followed by 'image of the candidate as a leader' (0.82) among urban voters in Bangladesh. Many of our respondents said that they were harassed and felt psychologically insecure after their opposition candidates won the election (similar to the report of Democracy Watch, 2009). In Bangladesh, post-election violence (especially against minorities) has become a common phenomenon which voters consider as the main psychological cost of election. Interestingly, this indicator was found to be less important (ranked 26th) among rural respondents. Image of the candi- date as a leader is important among both rural (loading is 0.79 and ranked 5th) and urban voters. Renowned leaders such as Sheikh Hasina (former President of the student union at Eden College), Motia Chowdhury (former

student leader), and Aman Ullah Aman (former Vice President of Dhaka University Student Union) have won due to their popularity as leaders even when their parties lost the election. However, in recent years it was observed that parties nominated businessmen who had no political back- ground. For instance, 63% of total MPs in 2008 national election were busi- nessmen without any political background. They received the nomination because of their close relationship with the party elites.

Apart from psychological cost, urban voters also prioritized 'economic cost' (0.76). Surprisingly, this indicator is of least importance in rural Bangladesh. Many of our respondents argued that rise in city corporation tax and money collection through extortion is more rampant in urban Bangladesh and thus urban voters care more about economic impacts of election.

"Using celebrities in election campaign" is the most desired (0.82) polit- ical marketing indicator among rural voters in Bangladesh. This indicator is important to urban people too (0.74 and ranked 8th). Use of celebrities in political campaigns is a common practice in Western countries. However, in Bangladesh, celebrities do not like to label themselves as political supporters of a particular party and thus this concept is rarely used. From that perspec- tive, our result is a new finding for Bangladeshi political market which polit- ical parties can use effectively. Use of physical evidences such as 'large sculpture of election symbol' (0.81 and ranked 2nd) and 'election gates' (0.78 and ranked 6th) are found to be effective in election campaigns in rural areas. Many of our rural respondents said that these physical evidences work as reminders before the election. However, urban voters put less importance (ranked 30th and 20th, respectively) on the stated indicators as those structures (especially election gates) create huge traffic congestions.

Use of national leaders (especially chairperson) in the campaign is in high demand in both rural (ranked 3rd) and urban (ranked 4th) areas – an important message to political parties. Our respondents argued that when the party chairperson promotes the candidate, it works both as a motivating and a confidence factor among the voters. There is ample evidence to substantiate occurrences where a less known candidate won the election only because the party chair personally visited the constituency and promoted the candidate. Not only national leaders, our results revealed that Bangladeshi voters (both rural and urban) like to see 'national icons' (loadings are 0.76 and 0.75 for rural and urban areas respectively) in election campaigns – another potentially useful strategy (buzz marketing) for the parties. Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) several times used Dr. Muhammad Yunus – Nobel winner – in their campaigns to stand against oppositions (bdnews24.com September 29, 2015). We recommend that parties can also use influential members of civil society groups in their press conferences and rallies.

It was found that 'candidate's articulation power' is an important char- acteristic (ranked 4th and 5th by rural and urban voters respectively) in

choosing the candidate. Our results also revealed that another preferred personal characteristic is ʻcandidateʼs modestyʼ. Most of our urban respondents (ranked this item 7th) opined that they wish to see respect and honor for them in the eyes of the candidate as opposed to seeing an arrogant and over-confident candidate in the election. In Bangladesh, candidates do not participate in the debate which might increase the likelihood of winning the seat for popular and deserving candidates. These types of participation in front of voters can also showcase the articulation power and modesty of the candidate. Thus, we strongly recommend the candidates to arrange and participate in debates before the election.

Urban voters stressed the need to ʻlisten to the voters before preparing election manifestoʼ (ranked 9th with loading 0.74). On the other hand, this item is comparatively less important to rural voters (ranked 28th). However, both types of voters prioritized ʻcollecting information repeatedly to detect the change in popularityʼ (ranked 10th by both the groups) and ʻconducting popularity survey before selecting the candidate by the partyʼ. As voters in developing countries like Bangladesh are becoming more liter- ate and conscious about their political rights, there is a real possibility that the parties will start following market orientation ─ designing party behav- ior to respond to and satisfy votersʼ demands in a way that meets their needs and wants (Lees-Marshment 2008, 2010a). For this purpose, the party needs to build sophisticated information collection system to conduct mar- ket research in order to identify the qualities of the candidates that are most significant to the voters. We strongly suggest that parties should listen to the electorates before preparing their election manifesto. In addition, a popularity survey by the party on the candidate pool can be both inform- ative and beneficial to the party. The party needs to develop a mechanism to repeatedly collect information about the candidate to evaluate service delivery and ensure consistency of the same. This can help the party to decide about the nomination in the next election.

On the promotional side, rural and urban voters have completely dif- ferent priorities. For instance, other than ʻrallies by the candidateʼ, urban voters prioritized ʻuse of postersʼ (ranked 12th) and ʻelection sloganʼ (19th), whereas rural respondents put more emphasis on ʻuse of billboardsʼ (17th) and ʻelection music of the candidateʼ (20th). Our respondents mentioned that as voters are the decision makers, candidatesʼ personal appearances are the most effective way to reach out to the voters and thus rallies and attending social/cultural functions in the constituency can be helpful. ʻUse of posterʼ is effective in urban areas but less desired (ranked 24th) in rural Bangladesh. This is because, many of our rural respondents argued that if a candidate is known in the area, they do not need to put up posters to build awareness. Rural voters on the other hand, prefer to see ʻlarge bill- boardsʼ where candidates can showcase their achievements (such as stand

against corruption, a record of donation). In rural areas, there are eviden- ces that ‛election songs’ using local languages and highlighting the creden- tials of the candidate were used to engage and humor voters. According to our results, this promotional strategy is effective.

On the ‛party’ dimension, there are significant differences in opinion between rural and urban voters. For instance, ‛ideology of the party’ (such as rightist or leftist) is more important to urban voters (loading is 0.64 and ranked 18th), as opposed to rural voters (ranked 33rd). Again, ‛party sym- bol’ is more significant (ranked 18th) to the rural electoral, but is less vital (33rd) among urban counterparts. Our result contradicts the common argu- ment that voters have less chance to meet with the candidates or may know less about the candidate and thus election symbol/brand (*marka*) plays the most significant role in politics (not highly ranked). We believe, the stated findings are due to differences in literacy rate between rural and urban population. As urban voters in Bangladesh are more educated, they do not choose candidates only based on party-relevant issues, rather they evaluate the applicant through other qualities such as, political career, modesty, image as leader, and popularity in the community. Interestingly, our results revealed that ‛political party’ of the candidate is a moderately preferred indicator (ranked 23rd and 27th) to both rural and urban voters which is contradictory to the common myth that party of the candidate is the only dominating factor in political markets. There are ample examples in Bangladesh, where a candidate with better political and social qualities won the election. For example, due to a positive image as a leader, Major Hafiz Uddin Ahmed (Retd.) won consecutively six times out of which twice he contested as a neutral candidate without any party affiliation. Again, there are many old parties (such as Communist Party and Jaker Party) that never won a single seat in national election. Our findings are important messages to the parties that only party affiliation will not be enough for a candidate to win the election, rather, party should nominate applicants by considering individual image-relevant factors.

Our study further revealed two contradictory yet pertinent results. First, ‛financial charity by the candidate’ which many reports (Asia Foundation 2012; Jahan 2005) suggested as influential is found to be less preferred by our respondents (ranked 36th and 35th in rural and urban area respectively). Second, ‛showing muscle power’ is another less pre- ferred indicator as suggested by both rural and urban voters even though there is a common understanding that muscle power is a determining fac- tor in politics in developing countries (Democracy Watch 2009; Vaishnav 2011; TIB 2014). These results are mainly because of higher literacy rate, lower rate of poverty, institutionalization of democracy in the country, strong presence of media and social watch groups, and due to higher rate of political consciousness among the voters. However, voter’s opinion

about 'candidate's connection with local administration' as an influential indicator (ranked 19th by rural voters) in Bangladesh is alarming.

'Candidate is known and living in the area' is a preferred indicator of urban respondents (ranked 15th and 25th) who said that candidate living   in the area creates 'he is one of our own' effect among the voters. Respondents also argued that 'frequent public appearance' of the applicant is very effective to position him/herself in the mind of the voters. Again, 'availability of the candidate around the year' is a priority and many of our respondents argued that voters do not like to vote for 'seasonal and stran- ger' candidates. This complaint came up because in Bangladesh many business people get party nominations (due to huge donation and relation with party elites) that have less connection with grass-root activists and hardly visit the constituencies. As a collectivist nation, visibility and avail- ability of the leader adds reassurance in the minds of the voters.

Dimension wise comparisons revealed (based on the ranking of items) that rural voters prefer political indicators that are relevant to factors namely 'Product', 'People and Physical evidence', 'Polling', and 'Personality Trait'. On the other hand, urban electoral are inclined towards political mix variables that influence 'Price', 'People and physical evidence', and 'Personality Trait' dimensions of the model. It can be argued that even though promotional activities are important in political marketing, heavy reliance on promotion might not be very effective in Bangladesh. Rather, using national leaders (such as party chair), celebrities and icons, and being polite to the voters can be more useful in both rural and urban areas.   In addition to these, urban candidates should focus more towards eco- nomic and psychological costs of the voters, whereas, rural   candidates   must develop a sophisticated information system to collect information about the preferences of voters over time.

CONCLUSION

To fill the gaps in the existing literature, this article offered a 38-item, nine-dimensional political marketing mix model as perceived by rural and urban voters of Bangladesh. The proposed model has confirmed convergent and discriminant validities and satisfactory reliability with internal consistency. The results of the study revealed significant variations between rural and urban electorates with respect to their preferences towards political mix items. For instance, on the one hand, rural voters prioritized indicators such as "use of celebrities in the campaign", "using large   election sculptures", "using national leaders in campaign", "candidate's articulation power", "collecting information about voters before election", and "image of the candidate as leader"; on the other hand, urban voter preferred items

like "psychological and economic cost if the candidate wins", "candidate's modesty and articulation power", "use of celebrities in the campaigns", "listening to the voters before preparing manifesto", "use of national icons", "use of rallies", and "ideology of the party". The study also found that rural voters valued the "Personality traits" dimension of the model highly; whereas, urban electorates had a preference for the "Price" dimension. Results also revealed that both the groups prioritized indicators relevant to "People and Physical Evidence" dimension. Quite surprisingly, it was observed that Bangladeshi voters have shown less preference towards 'Party' which according to many is the single most influential dimension in political marketing.

By considering the findings, this study recommends collecting and utilizing a "voter information system" while nominating candidates. To create buzz before the election, the study firmly recommends using party chair, national icons, and celebrities for word of mouth promotion among voters. As voters of developing countries are becoming more educated and con- scious about their political rights, parties should not show off muscle power and must not use financial means as persuasive tools.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY AND FUTURE PERSPECTIVES

This study is limited to developing a political marketing mix model for Bangladesh. As the proposed methodology is highly significant and valid, the applicability of the proposed instrument can be tested in other developing countries with similar characteristics. Also, a similar approach can be applied to develop political mix model for developed nations with some fine tuning. A comparative study on the perceptions of the voters in developing and developed countries regarding the indi- cators of political mix could be of high interest to the readers. Finally, a comparative study between the preferences of male and female voters and educated and less literate electoral on political mix items can be helpful for the parties while choosing candidates and preparing election campaigns.

FUNDING

AUTHOR NOTE

Tamgid Ahmed Chowdhury has received his PhD in Economics from Macquarie University, Sydney-Australia and specialized in using Structural Equation Modeling. He is currently serving as an Associate Professor in the School of Business and Economics at North South University, Bangladesh. Dr. Tamgid has several publications in reputed international journals such as International Journal of Physical Distribution & Logistics Management, Journal of Contemporary Asia, Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management, Australian Journal of Career Development, Journal of Non-profit and Public Sector Marketing, Journal of Asia Pacific Business, European Journal of Development Research, Journal of Global Marketing, Journal of Asia Business Studies, Oxford Development Studies, and Journal of Socio-economics. Dr. Chowdhury has presented papers in several inter-national conferences held in USA, UK, Australia, Turkey, South Korea, Malaysia, and Thailand.

Ms. Shahneela Naheed is a Lecturer at the Department of Marketing and International Business of North South University, Bangladesh. She completed MBA from Cal Poly Pomona, USA. Ms. Naheed presented a research paper at the EMAC 2018 Conference at Glasgow, UK. Her research interests are value chain framework, word of mouth promotion and con- sumer behavior.

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