Political Marketing & Advertising with the Use of Traditional and New Audio-Visual Media Services

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Abstract
The current research focuses on the use of audiovisual media services in the political scene and tries to explore the political marketing and advertising concepts on which these media/services are based. As a holistic approach, this research explores the citizen-voter as well as the politician concerning political advertising and audiovisual media/services. It separates the audiovisual media into traditional and new ones. So, primarily, this research empirically investigates the politicians’ profiles (high-ranked politicians, parliament, and regional ones) to determine the type and use of audiovisual media in terms of political information, statements, communication, and advertising. Moreover, it establishes the citizen/voter’s profile in terms of political information, political advertising, and communication received from politicians and political parties. Finally, it is a study with the same conceptual dimensions between the politician and the citizen/voter to establish the basis for creating a conceptual framework-tool of their typology that will contribute to a holistic view of political marketing and political advertising through the use of traditional and new audiovisual media. Findings about politicians show relationships between audiovisual media reliability and political statement actions. The success of political advertising has multiple positive effects, as well as political communication via audiovisual services also plays an important role. Furthermore, models were created concerning the use of audiovisual media services for political statements and the impact of audiovisual media services on the intention to vote. In addition, the results from the politicians indicate several differences regarding the characteristics of the politicians and their profile as a user of audiovisual media services in political advertising. Findings about voters show that the reliability of audiovisual media services is a very important factor for political information.

Keywords: new media, traditional media, political marketing, political advertising, political audience typology

Резюме
Настоящото изследване се фокусира върху използването на аудиовизуални медийни услуги на политическата сцена и се опитва да изследва концепциите за политически маркетинг и реклама, на които се основават тези медийни услуги. Като холистичен подход това изследване изследва гражданина-гласоподавател, както и политиката във връзка с политическата реклама и аудиовизуалните медийни услуги. Той разделя аудиовизуалните медии на традиционни и нови. Това изследване изследва емпирично профилите на политиците (високопоставени политици, парламентарни и регионални), за
да определи вида и употребата на аудиовизуалните медии по отношение на политическа информация, изявления, комуникация и реклама. Освен това той установява профила на гражданина/избирателя по отношение на политическа информация, политическа реклама и комуникация, получена от политици и политически партии. И накрая, това е изследване със същите концептуални измерения между политик и гражданин/избирател, за да установи основата за създаване на концептуална рамка-инструмент на тяхната типология, която ще допринесе за холистичен поглед върху политическия маркетинг и политическата реклама чрез използването на традиционни и нови аудиовизуални медии. Констатациите за политиците показват връзки между надеждността на аудиовизуалните медии и политическите изявления. Успешът на политическата реклама има множество положителни ефекти, както и политическата комуникация чрез аудиовизуални услуги също играе важна роля. Освен това бяха създадени модели относно използването на аудиовизуални медийни услуги за политически изявления и въздействието на аудиовизуалните медийни услуги върху намерението за гласуване. В допълнение, резултатите от политиците показват няколко разлики по отношение на характеристиките на политиците и техния профили като потребители на аудиовизуални медийни услуги за политическа реклама. Констатациите относно избирателите показват, че надеждността на аудиовизуалните медийни услуги е много важен фактор за политическата информация.

Ключови думи: нови медии, традиционни медии, политически маркетинг, политическа реклама, типология на политическата аудитория

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Introduction

Citizens/voters and elected politicians (parliament and regional ones) within Greek political parties are the means to understand the issue of audiovisual services and political marketing. The use of audiovisual services in political marketing and advertising as well as the current evolution of social media is a phenomenon that was born, attempted, developed, and researched firstly in the USA and later on in other areas of the world, such as Europe. Thus, it is interesting to research how all these developments have affected European countries like Greece, which have not yet been studied, taking into account their particular political history.

Greece is a country that only after the political changeover\(^1\) that began in 1974, with the fall of the dictatorship (Junta), freely allowed the use of political advertisements by all political parties. It is also a country that has faced a devastating economic crisis since 2008, which has led to political upheaval and a major shift in the political dipole that has been the norm for the past 35 years. Such peculiar political characteristics were the criterion for Greece to be selected for this study concerning political marketing and advertising through the use of audiovisual services (traditional and new ones) by the two interrelated players, the citizen/voter, and the politician.

The study begins with the analysis of useful terms and theoretical context as auxiliary conceptual tools in the subject matter. Then, it continues by analyzing the political scene in Greece. More specifically, it discusses the political parties that constitute the parliament\(^2\) and the course of political communication and marketing with the citizen/voter. To achieve this, the analysis is based on the official web pages of the political parties. In this way, there is an understanding of each political party’s political marketing strategies and all the combinations of audiovisual media used (traditional and new) on the part of each political party. The citizen-voter is then examined, as well as the politician and the empirical results of this research, as far as political marketing and political advertising are concerned, with the use of audiovisual media.

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\(^1\)The transition from the military dictatorship or Regime of the Colonels to a multi-participatory democracy (Kassimeris, 2005).

\(^2\)Up to July 2019
Literature Review

What is audio-visual media/services?

Audiovisual media produce images and sound. It is «media formats that contain sound and/or images (still and/or moving) that require an internet third-party device to be able to play/display their content … there are seven recognized forms of mass media: these are print, audio-recordings, cinema, radio, television, the internet and, now mobile phones (Henderson, 2010 p. 112).

Audiovisual media are therefore means of mass communication that transfer messages from the transmitter to the receiver. The difference between traditional and new audiovisual media is the combination of the senses appears to affect the receiver of the information. In the past, there were visual media (e.g. posters, printed newspapers) and later on audio media (e.g. radio), which were perceived by a single sense such as the ear (radio-audio media), or the eye (newspaper-visual media). Television and even more the internet have brought about changes in the transmission of information, since there is now a simultaneous combination of both senses (hearing and sight), being thus referred to as audio-visual media.

Political campaigns with the use of the internet

The association of the political campaign with the Internet started in America. Barack Obama and his team were the initiators of the integration of social media into political marketing and communication, and they became renowned in political history for their innovative and effective election campaign methods (Bimber, 2014; Harfoush, 2009; Kiss, 2008; Miller, 2008; Raoof et al., 2013; Writer, 2016).

Although Obama has gone down in history for his online strategy, since 1996, the candidates of the American elections have started to develop more technologically sophisticated websites and to organize administration groups in charge of internet information (for example with the use of e-mail lists, newsgroups, interest groups, blogs, online fund-raising, net organized house parties and the social platforms that existed in those years, such as YouTube, MyParty) for their campaigns (Gueorguieva, 2008; Rice, 2004). In this way, they could, as with television broadcasts, reach out and inform a new audience that was connected to the platforms and acquired political information from there. The first innovative steps of the digital campaign were made by Howard Dean's team, who had thoroughly analyzed Jessie Ventura's campaign

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3For an extensive and excellent presentation of the chronological evolution of audio-visual services, from the 19th century to the 21st, please see the analysis of Henderson (2010)
in Minnesota in 1998 (Davy, 2010). In his successful campaign\(^4\), Jessie Ventura (gaining the vote of 50% of the citizens/voters under 30) did not have offices or physical organizational structures, but a list of e-mail receivers that grew rapidly and through which he could present his political positions (Rice, 2004).

From this platform, Howard Dean presented his positions after the instigation of his campaign manager, Joe Trippi. A simple incorporation of the meetup.com link on the official Dean's Campaign website brought great results managing to increase the initial 432 Dean's Campaign meet-up members to the impressive number of 200,000 (Nelson, 2011). Also, through this page, he was able to acquire e-mail addresses to expand the list of his citizens/voters and sponsors.

**Election campaign with the use of social media**

The link between politics and the use of social media as a tool for election campaigns was strengthened in the elections of 2008 in America, by Barack Obama who was then a candidate (Raoof et al., 2013). He put political communication on a strong orbit beyond the use of the traditional tools of audio-visual services (television, radio, newspapers) and specifically within the framework of social media (Baumgartner & Morris, 2010; Raoof et al., 2013).

Howard Dean (The Web’s candidate for President\(^5\)) might have been one of the pioneering politicians who used a social media platform but Obama (The First Internet President\(^6\)) used multiple internet applications as a political tool (Gibson, 2015). His team created web pages (barrackobama.com), used social media (MyParty, Facebook, and Twitter), and uploaded online videos (YouTube) in combination with the use of standardized phone text messages and e-mails. Obama himself considered the Internet to be the key to his success, stating «change comes from the bottom up» and «There is no more powerful tool for grass-roots organizing than the internet» (Stelter, 2008). Surely, without that, Barack Obama would hardly have achieved his goal.

**Research method**

A quantitative research method was used for the current study, to measure the specific variables through appropriate questions and collect the necessary information to answer the research questions. The quantitative data collection tool was a questionnaire related to the research topic. The selection of quantitative research methods was based on the nature of the research topic and the need to explore, discuss, and generalize the findings for the population

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\(^4\) won 50% of citizen-voters under the age of 30  
\(^5\) Dodson & Hammersley, 2003  
\(^6\) Greengard, 2009
(in our case, voters and politicians) (Δαυτόπουλος, 2004; Τηλικίδου, 2004; Φράγκος, 2004). Additionally, the specific characteristics of the quantitative research methods such as the ability to collect a great amount of data at the limited possible time were those who support the selection of the specific method (Rahman, 2017). This research attempt will analyze the opinions of both politicians and voters to follow a more holistic approach, make the necessary comparisons, and end up with specific suggestions that can be a guide for the use of traditional and new media for political purposes.

Quantitative research based on a questionnaire, investigates a topic using codified numerical data while obtaining information not easily observed. Then the use of statistical analysis proceeds for description, research question testing, and findings discussion (Remenyi et al, 2002). The questionnaire is the main data collection tool in quantitative research, and it allows the researchers to quantify information in a precise manner. Moreover, quantitative research allows the faster collection of data compared to other methods (Rahman, 2017).

The current research empirically investigates the citizen/voter’s opinions on the use of traditional and new media for political purposes, the politician and the political party. It establishes the citizen/voter’s profile using traditional (such as newspapers, radio, and television) and new (such as web and social platforms) audiovisual media, in terms of the political information, advertising, and communication received from politicians and political parties.

Research Models Development

Models Based on Politicians - Correlations - Politicians

This section investigates the relationships between the variables concerning politicians and their use of audiovisual media services, to reveal correlations between them. Specifically, the relationship between the factors was studied within each of the three groups of variables (Figure 1, Group 1: variables that refer to the profile of the political statement of the politician. Group 2: variables that refer to the greater impact of the political advertising on the political party and the politician, the impact of the slogan on the voters, the perceived success of the political advertising, and the impact on voting intention,7 and Group 3 with variables referring to the political party communication (dialogue) with voters through the use of media, the informative adequacy of media for communication purposes, and the effect of media on the

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7 meaning the political leaning of the voter
recognition\(^8\) of the politician). The current model was based on the following research questions:

Research question 1: Is there a statistically significant relationship between the choice of media use for political statement and their reliability? This research question examines the association between media reliability and the utilization of specific media forms by politicians;

Research question 2: Is there a statistically significant relationship between the success of political advertising, the impact on voting intention, the impact of slogans on voters, and the impact of media on the political advertising of the political party and the politician?

The second research question investigates the connection between the perceived success of political advertising, the impact of media on the actions of the voters, and the impact of the slogan on the voters as the greater impact of media on political advertising both for the political party and the politician.

Research question 3: Is there a statistically significant relationship between the politician’s recognition via media, political communication between the political party and the voter, and the adequate use of media by political parties for communication?

The third research question checks the correlation between political communication of the political party with the voters, the impact of exposure to media on the politicians’ recognition and how effective is the use of those media for communication by the political parties.

Moreover, regarding Group 1 of variables the next research question was examined.

Research question 4: Is there a statistically significant relationship between the use of media for political statements, in the case that politicians follow the political campaigns of others?

The question is based on the comparison of media usage with how the other politicians use the aforementioned media.

\(^8\)In terms of the recognizability of the politician to the general public
Regression models - Politicians

Two regression models (Models 1 and 2) were created for politicians. The models were an attempt to statistically predict the use of media for political statements (politicians). Specifically, the following regression model has ten (10) independent variables which are tested in terms of their impact on the dependent variable. Those independent variables were divided into sub-groups according to their content. The first group of variables refers to the profile of the political statement of the politician and, more specifically, to the way the reliability of the media and how the media were used by others (political campaign of other politicians) affect their attitude towards the use of media for a political statement. The next group of variables refers to the greater impact of political advertising on the political party and the politician, the impact of the slogan on the voters, and the perceived success of the political advertising. Finally, the third group refers to the communication–dialogue with the voters through the use of media, the informative adequacy of the use of media by political parties, and the effectiveness of media regarding the recognition of the politician.
Research question 5: Which factors can predict the use of audiovisual media services for political statements by politicians?

Furthermore, the second prediction model (Regression Model 2-politicians) also has ten (10) independent variables which are tested regarding their impact on the dependent variable (impact on voting intention) (Figure 2). This model tries to predict the impact of media on the political action of the voters (impact on voting intention) according to the politicians. This model was based on the sixth research question.

Research question 6: Which factors can predict the impact of audiovisual media services on the intention to vote?

This research question will show the determinants for the politicians regarding the factors that affect voting intention.

**Figure 2**

*Prediction of the impact on voting intention according to the politicians*

**Typology Politicians - Voters**

Finally, the existence of a media user classification of politicians and voters regarding their dynamic (or not) use of media was investigated. This attempt was based on the need for a new categorization in both groups which can be used for a strategic approach in political marketing as well as for market segmentation and the exposure of political actions via media. Particularly, this typology simultaneously checks all media (newspapers, radio, TV, the web,
and social media) about politicians and then to voters and how they perceived the aforementioned media's impact on political marketing and advertising.

**Data collection tools**

The questionnaire was selected as the data collection method. This selection was based on the positive aspects of the questionnaire against other methods of data collection such as semi-structured interviews and focus groups. More explicitly, the ability to collect a large amount of information and the quantification of the findings which can lead to specific propositions, were the main reasons for the selection of the questionnaire. Two questionnaires were used to collect data from two specific populations (voters-politicians).

**Research sample**

The research sample was part of the research population (Bryman & Bell, 2015) and it was selected differently for politicians and voters. The research population consists of all units that have the necessary characteristics to be selected for a research attempt.

Simple random sampling was used for the selection of politicians. Specifically, politicians were in top political positions such as representatives in the Greek Parliament, mayors or regional governors, and municipal and regional counselors. Their selection was made randomly from a name list. The questionnaire was distributed either by e-mail or in person. The response rate was 68.2%. This method of sample selection allows the researcher to make easier and more valid generalizations.

On the contrary, the sample of the voters was suitably selected from voters residing in the large Greek cities (Athens, Thessaloniki) of the country and from other peripheral cities as well. The inclusion criterion was the participation of the voters in the last election process. The final sample of voters was 457. The questionnaire was distributed hand by hand. This method of sample selection allows the researcher to select a great amount of data in a limited time and with limited cost and it is based on those voters who answer the research questions.

**Research process and data analysis**

A pilot study was conducted before the actual research. The research questionnaires were completed by politicians and voters to detect potential issues and make necessary changes. The outcome of the pilot study showed that some changes were necessary to be made, especially in the wording part of the questionnaire. After the data collection, the answers from all questionnaires were coded and the data were transferred in an Excel file. Potential outliers were checked and those questionnaires were excluded from the final sample. The analysis of the data...
selected through the research process was made with SPSS. The findings were depicted in tables and figures, while inferential statistics, scale reliability, Pearson correlation, regression analysis, and comparisons with t-test and One-way ANOVA were used to answer the research questions. In all cases, the level of significance was $\alpha = 0.05$ (5%).

**Findings**

The first research question explores the relationship between the choice of media for political statements by politicians and the reliability of those media. Specifically, the findings indicate that the higher the perceived reliability of audiovisual media services, the higher their use for political statements by the politician. As a result, it can be stated that politicians are intent on ensuring the credibility of audiovisual media services to use them and make a political statement.

The second research question investigates the relationship between the success of political advertising, the impact on voting intention, the impact of slogans on voters, and the impact of media on the political advertising of the political party and the politician, based on the opinion of the politicians. Specifically, the findings show that the success of political advertising presents medium and strong positive statistically significant relationships with "the impact on voting intention" ($r = .564, p < 0.01$), "the impact of the slogan on voters" ($r = .760, p < 0.01$) and “the impact of media on the political advertising of the political party” ($r = .541, p < 0.01$).

The third research question focuses on the relationship between the politician's recognition via media, political communication between the political party and the voter, and the adequate use of media by political parties for communication. The findings from the analysis show that a politician's recognition via media presents a weak positive statistically significant relationship with "the adequate use of media by political parties for communication" ($r = .222, p < 0.05$), while political communication between the political party and the voter also show a positive relationship with “the adequate use of media by political parties for communication” ($r = .372, p < 0.01$).

Findings from the fourth research question are related to the relationship between the use of media for political statements in the case that politicians follow the political campaigns of others. They indicate that the use of media for political statements presents a medium positive statistically significant relationship in the case that "politicians are following the political campaign of other candidates" ($r = .390, p < 0.01$). Specifically, the more politicians follow...
the political campaigns of others, the more they use media for political statements. Therefore, it can be stated that this action is associated with their attempts to stay competitive or it is a sign of "me too" behavior.

Regression analysis has been used to create a prediction model for the use of media for political statements by politicians. The model predicts 53.9% of the variance and the variables that participate in the regression model are "media reliability for the political statement" \(b = .426, p < 0.05\) and “the impact of media on the political advertising of the political party" \(b = -.268, p < 0.05\). Specifically, the use of media for political statements by politicians is maximized when the media are considered to be reliable and their impact on the political advertising of the political party is lower. This finding could be explained by the attempt of the politician to cover up for the absence of the political party's advertising on media or by the attempt of the politician to promote his ideas locally with minimum association with the party and its political advertising which is nationwide.

Research question six focuses on the prediction of the impact of audiovisual media services on the intention to vote. The findings suggest that the regression model predicts 56.1% of the variance and the variables included are “the political communication between the political party and the voter” \(b = .204, p < 0.05\) and “the impact on the political advertising of the politician” \(b = .254, p < 0.05\). Specifically, the impact of media on voting intention is maximized when the political communication between the political party and the voter is high, and their impact on the political advertising of the politician is also higher.

Conclusion

The current thesis is an empirical investigation of the topic with references to the current situation. The main goal of this study is to create a conceptual framework using traditional and new audiovisual media in political marketing and their impact on voters and politicians. The analysis reveals the practices of Greek politicians and their political parties in the use of audiovisual media by their official political parties, the politicians’ websites, and social media. Additionally, the perceptions of the voters, which are analyzed based on the same variables and findings, reveal their point of view as well as their behavior regarding the use of media. The thesis is an in-depth empirical study on the use of traditional and new media by voters and their attitudes towards these media as a source of political information.

The profiles of voters and politicians are analyzed based on the use of traditional and new audiovisual media as sources of political information, means of political advertising, and
tools for communication by politicians and political parties. The media profile characteristics of politicians are also described to illustrate the use of media for political purposes as well as their behavior choices during a political campaign. Those profiles are established based on data regarding the use of media for political purposes, including political advertising and communication, either on traditional or new media. The study ultimately reveals the connection between politicians and voters, the use and the differences between traditional and new media, and the typology created based on their responses, a fact that leads to the creation of a conceptual framework for political marketing that illustrates the connection between the different variables in the use of traditional and new audiovisual media.

Generally, the findings for politicians indicate that the higher the perceived reliability of the audiovisual media services, the higher their use for political statements by the politician. As a result, it can be stated that politicians attach great value to the credibility of audiovisual media services to use them and make a political statement. Moreover, the findings suggest that the higher the success of political advertising, the higher the impact on voting intention, the impact of slogans on voters, and the impact of audiovisual media services on the political advertising of the political party and the politician. Additionally, the higher the impact of slogans on voters and the impact of audiovisual media services on the political advertising of the political party, the higher their intention to vote.

Data analysis shows that the more politicians follow the political campaigns of others, the more they use media for political statements. Therefore, it can be stated that this action is associated with their attempts to remain competitive or that it is a sign of "me too" behavior, which means, as mentioned above, that the politician tends to emulate other politicians' activity. In the attempt to predict the use of audiovisual media in political marketing and advertising by politicians and the intention to vote based on politicians, two models were created concerning the use of audiovisual media services for political statements (Model 1-politicians) and the impact of audiovisual media services on the intention to vote (Model 2- politicians). The first model predicts 53.9% of the variance and the variables that participate in the model are "media reliability for the political statement" and "the impact of media on the political advertising of the political party".

Finally, the findings from the politicians indicate several differences regarding the demographic characteristics of the politicians and their profiles as users of audiovisual media services in political advertising, while at the same time, new media were found to have a
significantly higher impact on political advertising than traditional media. Explaining these findings, it can be stated that new media, as a new marketing tool, can affect the user in multiple different ways as well as that the user-politician has control of his political statement and political information in contrast with traditional media, whereas other groups (journalists and owners of the media) control the distribution of information.

**Research limitations**

Despite the important findings from the primary research, the current study has also encountered some limitations that should be taken into consideration. The first and most important limitation of the research process is related to the research sample. Specifically, the sample of politicians includes male respondents in the majority. This fact makes any comparison between male and female politicians-users of media difficult, despite their obvious differences in terms of media usage in previous studies. Therefore, a better representation of the research sample could bring more generalized findings. Similarly, the sample of the voters presents a concentration in terms of age and educational level, with most respondents belonging to the 18-35 age group, and holding a degree from Higher Education Institutions.

**Future research developments**

Regarding future research developments, the current study could be extended to countries with low usage of media for political purposes. This fact will show how different media adoption levels have an impact on the use of media for political purposes, as well as how other factors, such as the cultural background of the respondents, could affect their decisions. A similar approach could be adopted for the voters with the addition of other factors that affect their voting intention to clearly describe the whole decision-making process.

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