

Case Study of Marketing Strategies of a Mayoral Election Campaign in Taiwan

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Abstract

In an election campaign activity, the four Ps of marketing - product, place, price, and promotion - can be applied to examine a candidate's attack and defense. What can be learned from applying the four Ps of marketing to the results of previous Taichung mayoral elections? This section sets forth the research background and motivations, defines the study's scope, states the study's limitations, and outlines the study's value.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Research motivation and background

1.1.1 Research background

To increase the chance of their candidates being elected, election campaigns utilize a commercial marketing model that treats the candidate as the product and seeks consumer identification through communication. The four Ps of marketing - product, place, price, and promotion - are often applied to the analysis of candidates' campaign tactics: the product is the candidate at the core of the campaign, the place or places are constructed by the candidate's campaign team, promotion refers to publications and digital advertisements about the candidate, and the price is the final decision of the electorate. This final decision is also an overall appraisal of the candidate's marketing strategy.

1.1.2 Research motivation

In the 2022 mayoral election in Taichung City, the incumbent Kuomintang (KMT) candidate successfully defended her position, whereas the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) candidate did not enter the race until April of 2022, months before the December election. How did the DPP candidate and their team market the product? How did they plan and formalize their strategies? How did they convey their mission? How was the candidate packaged? From the campaign team's perspective, was there a discrepancy between their planned market and the election results? Considering the unique local qualities of Taichung City's mayoral election, what are the reasons for this discrepancy? A closer examination raises questions such as whether a product that the campaign believes to be strong and is well-marketed will be accepted by consumers and, if not, why? This study explored these questions.

1.2 Research objectives

This study examined, from the perspective of voters, the adoption of commercial marketing models by an election campaign to influence voters using active marketing strategies rather than passively waiting for voters to evaluate the candidate. This examination is complemented by observations from academic research. In other words, the commercial marketing models of candidates are no longer merely analyzed from the perspective of voters but involve two-way interactions between the candidate and voters. The subject of this study is the product marketing strategy of the 2022 Taichung mayoral election campaign; observations of the campaign are supplemented by interviews with the campaign team. The research objectives are as follows.

1. To analyze the product appeal put out by the campaign team.
2. To examine the campaign team's direction and management of the candidate's marketing places.
3. To elucidate the campaign team's promotional models, including those employing traditional print media and the Internet.
4. To clarify voters' buying behaviors toward the candidate.
5. To extrapolate the marketing strategies of the candidate and their campaign team.

1.3 Research scope and limitations

1.3.1 Research scope

The focus of this study was the DPP candidate during the 2022 Taichung mayoral election and their campaign team. The research scope includes geospatial data, labor force participation rates, and the candidate.

A. Geospatial range

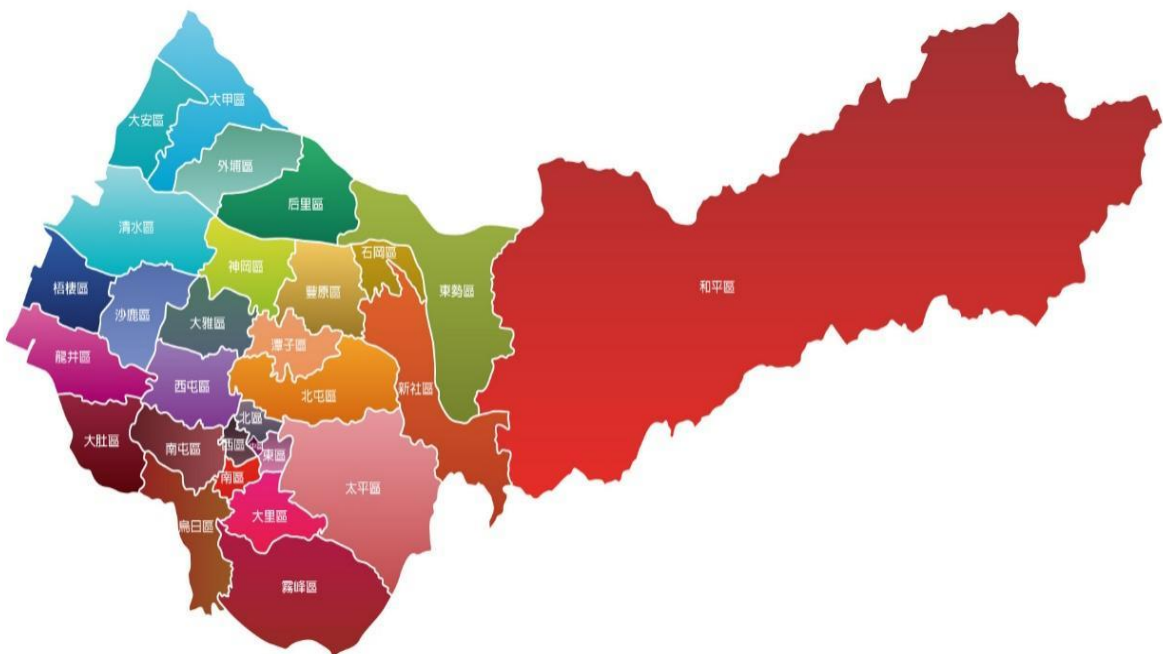


Figure 1: Geospatial map of Taichung City and its administrative districts

Data source: Shalu District Office, Taichung City.

<https://www.shalu.taichung.gov.tw/981075/1398918/981153/1033362/post>

B. Labor force participation rates

As of September of 2022, the population of Taichung City was 2,804,081, and the labor force participation rate was 60.1%. Labor input by sector was led by the tertiary sector, accounting for 59.62%, followed by the secondary sector at 37.77%; the primary sector accounted for only 2.97% of the labor force. As depicted in Figure 1, participation in the primary sector has been low but has remained steady over time; by contrast, participation in the secondary sector declined in the years leading up to this study, whereas participation in the tertiary sector slowly expanded. Since Taichung City was reincorporated as a special municipality in 2010, rapid construction and development has attracted large-scale immigration, indirectly altering the structure of the city's labor force.

C. The candidate

This study examined the distribution of the product (the candidate) and interactions with voters through campaign activities, encounters with their political rival and the rival's first-term performance, and how campaigns and rallies for other political offices at the time had ripple effects on the mayoral election.

1.3.2 Research limitations

At the time this study was conducted, the results of the 2022 Taichung City mayoral election had already been revealed, confirming the product price (the winners and losers in the election). The purpose of this study is to examine the experiences of the DPP candidate and their campaign team by interviewing core members of the DPP campaign team and contractors about their marketing strategies, particularly those regarding product positioning, distribution, promotion methods, and final sales. The research methodology and data collection focused on the experiences and observations of individuals who participated in the campaign. The choice of research methods and the focus of the study are its two major limitations.

1.4 Value of the present study

Although election marketing has been studied theoretically in academic circles, practical research in Taiwan is lacking. In the few empirical studies that have been conducted on the influence of online information dissemination, online word-of-mouth (WOM) can influence the public's perception of whether a politician is corrupt, even in the absence of contact with the candidate. Furthermore, Internet armies contributed to a chilling effect and echo chambers online before they were censored in 2022. However, in many places and across various age groups in Taiwan, mobile phones are only employed for communication purposes, and during elections, influence is exerted downward through the tiers of the Fengjian governance system. Consumers' (voters') perception of the product (the candidate or political views), the place or manner of distribution (political ads and online campaigns), and even the name recognition and qualifications of the product itself are factors influencing consumers' participation in the election market and voting

behaviors. All of these factors must be considered in effective campaign operations. In practice, the maturation of democracy in Taiwan has already led to the commodification of elections, which entails a distance between the candidate as a person and consumers' perception of the candidate based on the information that is disclosed.

2. Literature Review

How are the four Ps of marketing applied in elections? How should consumers be informed about the features of the product and how the product differs from others? How can consumers be convinced that only the specific desired product can meet their needs? How are persuasion and consumer motivations, which may be converted into consumer-centric WOM marketing among friends, families, and communities, triggered in this process? The following section elaborates on academic theories and the unique election behaviors of the Taiwanese electorate to answer these questions.

2.1 Voting behaviors and their underlying factors

2.1.1 Meaning of voting behavior

Voting participation behavior - involving independent decisions made by voters, voter turnout, and election results - is the manifestation of the collective will of the voters. According to Pitkin (1967), participation in voting reflects the best interests of the public. Whose interests are reflected or represented? Voting behavior also demonstrates whether voters are active advocates of their own interests or demands.

2.1.2 Voting behavior and election marketing

A. Marketing influences voters' acquisition of information

When receiving their ballot, marking their choice, and casting their vote, voters have essentially already made up their minds. This decision is based on information continually gathered throughout the election cycle. However, is that information complete or accurate? According to Lupia and McCubbins (1998), only a minority of voters have access to sufficient information, and the voting behaviors of the majority are based on limited information, which is influenced by whether voters are interested in the election and the availability of information sources, in addition to the effects of echo chambers. Information asymmetry is a common phenomenon during elections and is an outcome of marketing. Essentially, the information that voters possess and their voting choices correspond exactly (Lupia et al., 2000). Aware of this correspondence, what information should candidates and their teams divulge? What do they hope to achieve by divulging such information? These factors influence election marketing.

B. Marketing influences product ratings

Barnes (1977) demonstrated that no high positive correlation exists between the majority opinion and the behaviors of politicians. However, following positive media images, voters' ballot-casting intentions for the candidate become more positive, benefiting the candidate (Peterson, 2018). As an example of the influence of WOM in advertising, in online ratings, one negative review results in a 90% rating for a product; however, two negative reviews lower the product rating to 81%, and when the rating has dropped to 56%, over half of consumers are distrustful of the product. Atypical products can be differentiated.

In the voting decision-making process, perceptions of a candidate's traits are sometimes given greater consideration than their political party or their political views (Hellweg et al., 1989). With changes in the times and under the influence of postmodernism, individuals are less impressed with elites who are the product of traditional structural centers.

2.1.3 Strategic manipulation of voting behaviors

Voters are not solely manipulated by election marketing; rather, they vote strategically according to election circumstances and their personal preferences. Two major factors that influence voting behavior during an election are polarization and congruence (Gerber et al., 1998).

2.2 Porter's generic strategies

2.2.1 Definition

Competitive strategies are primarily applied in business and enhance an enterprise's competitiveness by focusing on its distinctive features. The roadmap of strategic thinking about market competition addresses the question of how, despite a constantly changing environment, an enterprise can create unique capabilities with limited resources and make strategic decisions to ensure long-term operations or expand their share of the market.

2.2.2 Formulation of competitive strategies

Strategies inherently involve risks be they massive gains or massive losses. Although a firm grasp of benefits is crucial, recognizing and assessing risks is even more so (Porter, 1980). Competitive strategies involve the assessment of risks and the development of a resource position different from that of competitors through resource allocation to gain a greater market share or increase profitability (Hofer and Schendel, 1978) (Table 1).

		Strategies to Achieve Competitive advantage	
		Uniqueness perceived by the customer	Low-cost position
Competitive scope	Industry-wide	Differentiation	Cost leadership
	Particular segment only	Differentiation focus	Cost leadership focus

Table 1: Porter's generic strategies. Data source: Porter (1980)

A. Cost leadership strategy

The competitive advantage of low costs can be achieved through the construction of efficient equipment, experience curves, rigorous cost control, the acquisition of high market shares and critical raw materials, the design of products that are easy to manufacture, and the provision of a wide range of associated product lines (Hsieh and Liu, 2005). Lowering costs is necessary to keep prices low and lower the consumer purchase threshold.

B. Differentiation strategy

The purpose of an enterprise is to create profits through legitimate operations (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983). Differentiation of products of the same type enables enterprises to distinguish themselves (Kotler, 1998); once distinguished, enterprises can launch their own products that gain consumers' favor, creating profits (Barney, 1991; Porter, 1991). Differentiation can also highlight the *raison d'être* and value of an enterprise (Kotler, 1998). Differentiation strategies can help an enterprise establish a clear position, which becomes the basis for increasing profits and reducing competition; this outcome can also be said to be a form of local monopoly (Baum and Singh, 1994; Porter, 1980, 1991).

C. Focus strategy

An enterprise typically begins by targeting a single market and consumers, operating with a clear goal and a singular appeal. Its strategies are completely focused on specific consumers, product lines, and regional markets. Unlike the aforementioned cost leadership strategies and differentiation strategies, which target industries as a whole, a focus strategy involves the focus of resources on specific consumers, markets, or products. After locking in on niche markets, enterprises must continue to satisfy the needs of their consumers. The challenge—and the key to business success—is continuing to provide unique services or products to avoid losing consumers to competitors (Porter, 1980). Competitive strategies must consider why consumers buy a product from the consumer's

perspective and recognize what resources are at hand and the likelihood of competitors emerging. A strategy is only competitive if it can convince consumers to buy what the enterprise is selling.

2.3 The 4Ps of marketing in election campaigns

2.3.1 Definition and implications of election marketing

A. Definition

Election marketing is the application of commercial marketing concepts and techniques to election campaigning (Mauser, 1983). Election campaigns, especially those that involve integrated marketing communication, entail the dissemination of the candidate and their political view; election marketing is also discussed in research on political communication theories. Schumpeter (1950) compared the operational nature of political markets to economic models: politicians are capitalists, political appeals are product promotions, and the relationships among political parties, candidates, and voters are akin to the relationship between producers and consumers. The competition between political parties and candidates - including their political views - is a product that has been packaged and is promoted to voters in the hopes of gaining not only voter recognition, but also public office; elections are therefore the institutional path to obtaining decision-making power (Schumpeter, 1950).

2.3.2 Creating marketing strategies

When applying commercial marketing to election campaigns, the candidate and the campaign team must not only establish a set of measurable marketing strategies for winning voter support, they must also win the support of political parties, potential donors, and interest groups. Consequently, voters, the political party, donors, and interest groups are all as crucial to the candidate as upstream and downstream suppliers and competitors are to an enterprise. Fighting for every vote and developing potential votes through connections are the purposes of an election campaign (Kotler, 1975). Regarding the question of what a political market is, elections provide the clearest demonstration. Election marketing operations must consider the following steps.

2.3.3 The four Ps of marketing

A. Product

1. The producer

The producer is the political party. For the candidate, the political party assists with fundraising, policymaking, and auxiliary elections. Additionally, according to data from the 2006 US general election, in a spatial model of voter preferences and party awareness, politicians with strong party representation were able to flip constituencies due to support from party members. In other words, party support helps candidates win votes. Moreover, from 1995 to 2013, analyses of candidates' party ambiguity and voters' party preferences revealed that politicians with

ambiguous party positions received fewer votes from voters with party preferences, and the higher the political awareness of voters, the more they disliked the blurring of party positions; these studies demonstrate that party ambiguity has a negative effect on election results (Martin, 2019). Voters' attachment to political parties induces party identification or party loyalty, which has long-term effects on voting behaviors; furthermore, these effects are not susceptible to interference from other sudden increases in political information (Dinas, 2014). Political party auxiliary elections substantively help party candidates win votes and represent the continuation of the party's beliefs and mission.

B. Promotion

1. Conventional models

In political campaigns, candidates use marketing techniques such as advertisements to maximize voters' "purchasing" behaviors (Kotler, 1975). Traditionally, promotional activities have included election announcements, political view presentations, billboard advertisements, flyering, and buying television advertisement times and accepting interviews. These activities target channels through which voters can easily access information in their daily lives.

2. New media

Internet armies lead public opinion in the online world by being the loudest voices in online spaces and insidiously affect the offline world. Do conventional electronic media and new online media demonstrate intermedia agenda-setting effects? One study demonstrated that conventional news media agendas can determine the agenda of Twitter discussions (Kim et al., 2016), whereas another study indicated that social media is impervious to the agenda of conventional news media (Chen et al., 2019). However, most research supports the mutual influence of the two types of media (Van den Heijkant et al., 2019; Valenzuela et al., 2017; Wang and Guo, 2020). This phenomenon has also been observed in Taiwan, where news reports are often linked to PPT discussions, and news videos are often edited and shared in personal media.

C. Places

1. From unity to diversity

The development of new communication technologies has led to a variety of rapid communication methods. As early as the 1960s, candidates have been able to contact and communicate directly with voters through channels other than party mobilization, such as electronic media, newspapers, and magazines (Yu, 1996).

2. From offline to online

The rise of online technologies, in particular social media, has placed both the tools and the responsibility of spreading information into the hands of voters directly. Voters are now able to influence others through the Internet. Every person owns a phone, which acts as a mini communications center that forwards information through Facebook, Instagram, Line, and other social media or chat apps. Consequently, both the academic and political domains have focused on how

candidates should engage with social media and present themselves to influence voters' perceptions of their unique qualities and transform voters into voluntary information distributors (McGregor al., 2016).

3. Summary

The rise of the Internet has led to election marketing in Taiwan “crossing boundaries” between offline and online domains, regardless of the election candidates’ product positioning, ideological appeals, or promotional channels. Unlike traditional one-way promotions, modern promotional places allow for dissenting voices that may detract from candidates’ original messages but can also spark discussions, enabling candidates to showcase other qualities.

4. Methods

This section describes the research methods, which include a literature review and in-depth interviews with campaign team members about their experiences in the 2022 Taichung City mayoral election, and discusses the marketing strategies and performance of the mayoral candidates. The two candidates were the incumbent KMT mayor seeking reelection and polling highly among voters and the challenger DPP candidate.

4.1 Research framework

The application of marketing strategies in election campaigns was the theoretical basis for exploring the 2022 Taichung City mayoral election. Furthermore, although this study focused on a local election, growing cross-strait tensions have necessitated the consideration of external environmental variables. Hence, this study also referenced Porter’s generic strategies and strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) theory. The research framework of this study, based on the segmentation, targeting and positioning (STP marketing) model and the four Ps of marketing, is depicted as follows (Table 2).

Taichung City Mayor		Election product position	Election product price
	4 Ps of marketing	Place strategies	
		Marketing and promotion	

Table 2: Research schema. Data source: Drawn by the researcher

4.2 Respondents

The inclusion criteria, invitation process, and respondent backgrounds are presented in the following sections.

4.2.1 Inclusion criteria

Respondents had to be members of 2022 DPP mayoral candidate Tsai Chi-Chang's campaign team.

4.2.2 Interview invitations

Invitations for interviews were extended through telephone calls or the Line chat app.

4.2.3 Respondents' personal backgrounds

Respondents included the candidate, the campaign manager, the director of publicity, campaign officers, and Taichung city councilors.

4.3 Respondent interviews

The research methods and research framework are described as follows.

4.3.1 Interview procedures

The study was conducted in three phases: preinterview, midinterview, and postinterview.

A. Preinterview phase

This study was inspired by the author's research interests and observations of the 2022 Taichung City mayoral election. The literature was collected after validating the research motivation and research objectives.

B. Midinterview phase

Interview questions had previously been distributed to the respondents, and the interviews were semistructured and open-ended. This freed the interviews from rigid constraints, allowing the interviews to proceed in a manner that made the respondents feel respected and heard. Timely questions from the researcher encouraged respondents to be candid about their experiences.

C. Postinterview phase

All interviews were recorded, and the audio files were transcribed as text files as soon as possible after the interviews and sent to the respondents for review and revisions.

4.3.2 Interview tools

A. Interview outline

This study attempted to clarify the marketing strategies adopted by candidates and their campaign teams during the 2022 Taichung City mayoral election based on election theories and the four Ps of marketing. Interview outline was drafted with reference to academic papers, theories, and the objectives of the present study. Semistructured interview was chosen as the interview style.

B. Researcher

This study arose from the researcher's observation of the 2022 Taichung City mayoral election. The researcher was also responsible for obtaining research data. The interview questions were formulated according to the research motivation and research objectives. For any matters not covered by the interview questions, respondents were encouraged to freely share their experiences. The researcher actively listened during the interviews and engaged with respondents to encourage them to relate their recollection of the election cycle.

4.4 Data processing

This subsection describes the coding and processing of the interview transcripts following verification by the respondents. First, the coded data were compared, analyzed, and summarized according to the four Ps model of marketing. Second, data with similar content attributes were grouped into core categories, and the dimensions and features of each category were validated. Third, interview transcripts were organized according to similarities and differences in core categories. Fourth, the research objectives and framework were adjusted according to the interview results. Finally, the interview contents were thoroughly clarified on the basis of the revised research objectives and research framework, and conclusions were formulated by answering the research questions using inductive reasoning.

5. Results

The present study focused on the campaign practices of the challenger to the incumbent mayor of the 2022 Taichung mayoral election. Election marketing analysis examined processes for product planning and positioning, distribution, and dissemination, in addition to the reasons a high-quality product may fail to win the favor of voters. A summary of the interviews, the literature, and their theoretical underpinnings is presented in the following sections.

5.1 Product planning

Candidates campaigning for office must differentiate themselves from their opponents as much as possible. This section presents the use of differentiated strategies when planning product positions from the perspective of a campaign team that is challenging the incumbent candidate.

5.1.1 Create expectations based on experiences

In marketing, a strategy is the anticipation, when about to enter a market, of resistance and attacks from those who hold monopolies in that market and the calculation of the likelihood of victory. For new entrants into a market, regardless of the quality of their product, strategies for market entry must consider consumers' perception of the product and how to create a lasting impression before discussing how to generate consumer identification and alter consumers' spending behaviors.

5.1.2 Differentiated product strategies

The following section summarizes the implementation of product positioning and differentiation strategies in the 2022 Taichung mayoral election.

A. Highlighting differences in product features

Differing from the feminine and motherly image projected by the incumbent mayor, the marketing strategy examined in this study rejected the myth that "city management" equals "household management;" the Taichung City that voters want is not a family, but a positive and progressive city. Problem-solving, efficiency, and a clear direction are necessary to guide the city toward a better future. Therefore, the election campaign team created a persona to differentiate the DPP candidate from their opponent's "motherly" image. The DPP strategy against the incumbent involved questioning the opposition's product position and whether the motherly mayor image was a ploy or even an excuse to avoid taking action or shun responsibility.

B. Highlighting specifics of future governance

Anyone who seeks to become the administrator of a city becomes responsible for guiding the city's future. How is a blueprint for a city created? Is there a blueprint for urban development? The campaign team's marketing strategy included the presentation of a blueprint for future governance.

C. Inadequacies in current governance

Incumbent candidates typically have a competitive edge in an election, but reelection can also be a millstone. Although politics involves the management of affairs for the entire constituency, at best, only the greatest common denominator can be satisfied. Consequently, for new competitive products eager to enter the market, the most feasible tactic is criticizing the current government to organize voters to call for change. The election marketing team used the tools of reason and science to support their position strategy.

5.2 Distribution channels and marketing

A. *Product positioning*

The opposition positioned herself as a “motherly mayor,” a warm and female character. As such, the strategy for differentiating product position focused on the vagueness of this position and emphasized the DPP product’s clearly defined brand, his expertise in government, and his executive skills. The marketing strategy also underscored how the DPP candidate met with voters face-to-face despite the vast geographical area of Taichung City and held over 1,000 townhall sessions during his 6-month campaign. These messages highlighted the DPP candidate’s passion and drive for city administration and bolstered his brand image.

B. *Distribution channels*

The campaign utilized as many channels of distribution as possible, from fixed-point channels such as billboards and posters to advertisements on moving vehicles. Campaigning with other party organizations and pan-green (the color of the DPP) councilors and legislators in Taichung City also enhanced voters’ awareness of the candidate, allowing the campaign to increase the candidate’s recognition in the shortest possible time.

Fundraising endeavors were impeded by hasty recruitment and the opposition’s high poll numbers. Given cost and allocation considerations, media use was scaled back from national television advertisements to local television advertisements. The distribution strategy also favored online media over television advertisements. Moreover, the 1,000 townhalls were also channels of distribution, allowing voters to experience the personal traits, charisma, government philosophies, and blueprints for the city’s future of the election product.

C. *Marketing*

When marketing the product, all channels and the product position were integrated to highlight the initiative of the product in contrast to the incumbent’s lack of focus and lack of action. Regarding the candidate’s political view, in response to polling numbers, campaigns attacking the opposition for their administrative missteps were targeted to voters who demonstrated low levels of support; the objective was to stoke identification among voters, such as mothers concerned about healthy lunches for schoolchildren, to combat the rival candidate’s false motherly mayor image and gain support from female voters. For all Taichung City residents concerned about soaring housing prices, the campaign attacked the opposition’s lack of action in building social housing. Regarding the media, in addition to the use of traditional media to engage with voters and craft the image of the campaign product, the campaign also sought to rally online support that would translate into offline popularity. Media strategies can no longer focus solely on television media.

5.3 Voters' price options

5.3.1 Spiral of silence regarding voters' dissatisfaction with the macro environment

Too busy to participate in public affairs

At the time of the election featured in this paper, the COVID-19 pandemic raged worldwide. The cost of social distancing to prevent the spread of disease on individual finances and industries was gradually becoming evident, resulting in public dissatisfaction with the status quo and anxiety about the pandemic. Furthermore, the dual stress of widespread disease transmission and the pandemic's effects on daily life following the COVID-19 outbreak in 2021 naturally increased the public's attention to politicians' participation in public affairs.

Dissatisfaction with the government caused by the pandemic

The party in power must manage the negative effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. In the political market, balance during elections is the result of push and pull between producers (politicians) and consumers (voters; Li, 1997). Irrespective of how marketing strategies or the candidates' images are shaped or how campaigns fight for exposure to use their distribution resources to the fullest, the results may not trigger consumers (voters) to experience desire (hope) and voice their demands; and the results may not encourage consumers to enter the economic market (political market) and engage in exchanges because the limitations of supply–demand systems directly determine production behaviors (campaign behaviors) and consumer behaviors (voting behaviors) (Kotler, 1975).

Indifference to challenger products due to marginalization

When they do not attentively follow public affairs, voters have no interest in understanding elections and political views. In the terms of election marketing, this is equivalent to engaging with consumers who do not actively discuss whether the products in the market should be replaced.

5.3.2 Time to shine

A. Insufficient time to develop the professionalism of the campaign team

First, from the perspective of election marketing, only a short amount of time is available for taking stock of resources, deliberating, and making choices to enable a decisive victory. Second, due to the urgency of short lifecycles and the necessary inclusion of the political party, candidate, political views, and special topics in political science, marketing practices during elections must be able to adapt. Election campaigns require not only human resources, but also mobilization; the staff, volunteers, and sponsors involved in a campaign are indispensable to the acquisition of necessary resources. Expanding on this concept, the representative views of a political party's interpretation of Taiwanese history, traditional and cultural norms, and national recognition are all relevant to the marketing of the campaign product. Regarding the respondents in this study, the candidate did not

formally enter the race until April 24, 2022, and consequently only had half a year to campaign before the vote at the end of December.

Forming a campaign team in such a short amount of time adversely affected the team's professional competence.

B. Insufficient time to steer discussions and promote the product

Second, during the campaign, the DPP side had insufficient time in which to steer discussions to focus on specific problems or for promotional outcomes to occur. With only past campaign expertise as their reference, the campaign team had to consider the product positions, places, and promotion simultaneously, despite communication and dialogue requiring time to develop irrespective of a campaign team's confidence. Furthermore, Taichung City is a "swing state" in Taiwan; as the population has increased through an influx of outsiders, voters have become divorced from local traditional networks, leading to fewer interactions and dialogue. Additionally, voters facing dysfunction in their own families have little energy to care about the development and future of Taichung City.

C. Inadequate expansion of existing supports

Electoral campaigns require mobilization and action from supporters. The COVID-19 pandemic consumed the public's attention and energy, which are finite resources; consequently, voters had little attention to allocate to the election. Regardless of identification or voting behavior, voter enthusiasm could not be kindled. Inability to move individuals affected the mobilization of voters. Furthermore, the inability to replicate previous successes in rallying voters reduced the campaign's confidence in expanding its voter base.

6. Conclusions and Recommendations

This study examined a 2022 local election in Taiwan through the lens of marketing theories, reviewing the literature and conducting interviews with the challenger and their campaign team regarding campaign strategies. The opposition had the advantage of administrative resources and name recognition throughout Taichung City as the incumbent mayor in creating their product position, place, and promotion strategies. Furthermore, the failure of the challenger's campaign strategies and their campaign team in winning voters' buy-in is not reflected in the price. The results presented in this section are this study's contribution to the field of election marketing; several directions for future research are also proposed.

6.1 Suggestions for academic research

Campaign marketing strategies are similar to commercial marketing strategies. However, campaigns must also consider nonrational factors and collective behaviors. Politically, party preferences, the quality of governance by those in power, and the overall social atmosphere influence consumer decisions; consumers do not decide whether to pay solely on the basis of marketing methods. From the

overall environment to a single case, the aforementioned factors cannot be controlled by marketing. This study offers a comprehensive discussion of the four Ps of marketing and election campaigns and provides a set of tactics for future election candidates to market themselves. Nevertheless, these observations are informed by considerations of whether campaign operations can only be conducted by professionals or whether candidates should cultivate their own Internet campaign personnel. Research on brand creation in election campaigns and candidate development can analyze the talent development strategies of various parties through case studies, in addition to examining how party attributes influence the candidates they cultivate.

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