



## Brand Equity and Brand Loyalty: New Perspective

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### ABSTRACT

Several studies have examined the antecedents of brand loyalty, whereas little research mentioned in political marketing context. This research empirically aims to investigate the relationship between multi dimensions of brand equity and loyalty to party brand among Jordanian voters in order to address the mixed results in earlier researches and to close this gap in literature of marketing. The research applies Partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) techniques to a sample of 208 voters to test hypothesized relationships. Interestingly, the findings show that there is a positive support for two of hypotheses, meanwhile the others rejected.

**Keywords:** Political Brand, Brand Loyalty, Brand Equity

**JEL Classification:** M 31

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The concept of brand management is critical for the success of the commercial organizations (Kornberger, 2010) to increase market share and customer loyalty (Steenkamp, 2014). As stated by Brown (2015) the Google brand value is twice than the value of IBM assets, interestingly both of them contribute dramatically in value of the firm: \$173,652 billion, and \$93,978 billion, respectively. Of late, Ahmed et al. (2015) claimed that applying the concept and strategies of brand management in politics is crucial for many reasons, according to them “the practical reasons are associated with economic as well as social cost linked with electoral choice, that the prosperity and development of an entire nation are associated with the elected government and its policies” (p. 4) and this claim goes in the line of research by Pich and Dean (2015). Supporting to this claim, political brands have employed a parallel role to commercial brand to increase the political market share (Winther, 2015; Parker, 2012; Winchester et al., 2014). For instance, in order to win elections, the spending of political brands in the U.S. elections will shift from \$7 billion in 2012 elections to \$11.4 billion in upcoming election in 2016 (Buttrill, 2016). Additionally, this is similar in many countries around the world (Guzmán and Sierra, 2009). Undoubtedly, political brands aim to improve the economic growth (Khatib, 2012; Winther and Vinaes, 2014).

With a deep review of role the strategies of brand in politics (Akhmad and Azhar, 2015; Lees-Marshment et al., 2014; French and Smith, 2010; Phipps et al., 2010), the researches in an arena of loyalty to “political party” brand remain rare (Schofield and Reeves, 2015), and need to be addressed (Parker, 2012). Lately, with spreading the phenomenon of declining the loyalty to political brands (Smith, 2014), especially in Jordan context (Al-Azzam, 2012; Nahar, 2012; C.F.S.S, 2015), a growing need appeared to understand the factors behind the voters behavior toward political party which drives them toward particular electoral choice, since “the strength of political parties is associated with the understanding electoral needs and preferences” (Ahmed et al., 2015. p. 4). Winchester et al. (2014) claimed that the concept of loyalty to political brand is a vital topic which deserves close focus. In the same time, Akhmad and Azhar (2015), Ahmed et al. (2015) and MacDonald et al. (2014) argued that applying dimensions of equity in the field of political brands is significant to maintain and attract more loyal voters. However, the link between the two concepts still opens and under research (Parker, 2012) particularly in Arab political context (Farrag and Shamma, 2014), where the political marketing studies are needed (Khatib, 2012).

Nam et al. (2011) distinguished between brand loyalty and brand equity. Nam et al. (2011) mentioned that brand loyalty is not one of

component of brand equity. In reality; it is one of the consequences of brand equity, because brand loyalty is behavioral construction connecting to intentions towards repeating purchase/vote whereas brand equity is perception. Therefore, this study aims to expand the brand equity theory (Aaker, 1991) in political brand context empirically and offers a different conception through the discovery of the relationship between the dimensions of brand equity (brand awareness, brand image, perceived quality and trust) with loyalty in developing countries, on the grounds that loyalty is the highest outcome of brand equity (Keller, 1993).

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

“Party” brand loyalty (PBL): Brand loyalty is an important strategy in commercial sector for practitioners (Ong et al., 2016; Ramaseshan et al., 2013) as well as debatable topic among marketers and researchers recently (Saeed et al., 2014; Huang and Cai, 2015). Similarly, this issue is quite important in political contexts (Winchester et al., 2014). Many of previous studies have been done in brand loyalty in commercial sector (Moolla and Bisschoff, 2012; Cheng and Rashid, 2013) whereas a few research conducted in the area of political brands (Hermanto et al., 2014). Schofield and Reeves (2015) noted that voting behavior is influenced by “political party” loyalty.

According to former scholars, brand loyalty consists of two dimensions that behavioral and attitudinal loyalty (Oliver, 1999; Keller, 1993; Jacoby and Kyner, 1973; Zeithaml et al., 1996; Day, 1969; Aaker, 1991). In line with those scholars, “political PBL” in this research involves two aspects of loyalty (behaviors and attitudes). In brief, the voters repeat vote (reelection) for the same party as well as the voters recommend others to vote for this political party (Mishra and Mishra, 2014; Needham, 2006; Smith and Spotswood, 2013). Hence, voter who is behaviorally loyal to political brand repeats buying behavior (reelection) toward this brand (Needham, 2006). Meanwhile, attitude loyalty toward a party includes a specific commitment to this party followed by a strong likelihood, considering this party as a main choice (Mishra and Mishra, 2014; Oliver, 1999). According to Gullupunar and Gulluoglu (2013), the psychological closeness of voters and party considerations influence voter decisions.

Smith and Spotswood (2013) and Winchester et al. (2014) noted that loyalty to political brand is an effective tool in political marketing which lowers the marketing efforts. Campbell et al. (1960) stated that inevitably brand loyalty leads to stability of voters’ intention toward the political party; it acts as a type of political capital. Therefore, political brands leaders should stress the importance of loyalty to reach their political aims and to sustain their position in the political marketplace as well. In brief, loyalty of voters is the main factor that contributes in the success of political organizations.

Currently, Farrag and Shamma (2014) mentioned that marketing strategies widely have effects on politics, especially, the growing interest in loyalty to political brands (e.g. candidates, parties). Therefore, this research aims to link empirically between multi dimensions of brand equity and brand loyalty, which have been

discussed widely in other settings (e.g., Romaniuk and Nenycz-Thiel, 2013; So et al., 2013; Buil et al., 2013), and neglected in political setting (Gullupunar and Gulluoglu, 2013; Schofield and Reeves, 2015; Parker, 2012), precisely in Arab politics (Khatib, 2012; Farrag and Shamma, 2014). Thus, this research will provide important contributions with respect to studies of brand loyalty in politics. It is important to note that the results of studies in new fields with new contexts may not be adequate.

In brief, many studies in previous literature have examined the antecedents of brand loyalty (Subhani and Osman, 2011; Chinomona and Dubihlela, 2014; Sabet et al., 2014; Hermanto et al., 2014; Choi et al., 2011; Hussein and Gholam, 2013; Farrag and Shamma, 2014; Omar et al., 2013; Moolla and Bisschoff, 2012; Chen and Tseng, 2010; Hosseini and Nahad, 2012; Liu et al., 2015) whereas, those aforementioned studies produced inconsistent findings.

“Party” brand equity: Brand equity is “the added value” with which a given brand endows a product” (Farquhar, 1989. p. 24). Aaker (1991) and Keller (1993) presented many classifications of brand equity from approach of cognitive psychology. Aaker (1991) presented a famous approach that consisted of brand awareness, image and quality. Keller (1993) focused on brand knowledge. Lassar et al. (1995) as well as Yoo and Donthu (2001) developed the brand equity research. Of late, it became an important subject in marketing area (Blair and Chiou, 2014).

Huang and Cai (2015) contended that brand equity is a vital concept to improve brand loyalty. Buil et al. (2013) noted that brand equity seems as a dynamic strategy for organizations. In politics, some scholars claimed to employ multi dimensions of brand equity in political marketing (Ahmed et al., 2015; Almohammad et al., 2013; Akhmad and Azhar, 2015). Scammell (2007) pointed that party equity is an effective gift that electors may bestow or obscure. Almohammad et al. (2011) focused on the importance of political brand equity to get more loyal voters, whereas Smith (2009) reported the role of equity in helping voters to make a decision. In brief, Mishra and Mishra (2014) defined brand equity as the value voters’ associate with a political brand.

The role of multi dimensions of equity on loyalty was presented in many contexts (Das, 2014; French and Smith, 2013; Yoo and Donthu, 2001) with some current attempts at political marketing in western countries (Smith and Spotswood, 2013; French and Smith, 2010; Ahmed et al., 2015; Phipps et al., 2010). For instance, Parker (2012) and Akhmad and Azhar (2015) recommended to expand and conduct more studies in this direction. Farrag and Shamma (2014) noticed the necessity of brand equity for Arab context.

“Party” brand awareness (PBA): Aaker (1991) pointed out that a strong brand depends on brand awareness as well as being a primary factor for building brand loyalty (Keller, 1993). As stated by Cho et al. (2015), brand awareness ultimately leads to loyalty. Das (2014) argued that in purchase decision making, brand awareness plays a central role. Parker (2012) specifically argued that the decision of voting is affected by political brand awareness.

Earlier scholars Aaker (1991) and Keller (1993) mentioned that brand awareness involves two dimensions that recognition and recall. In this research PBA is “The ability for voters recognize or recall that a political brand is a member of a certain parties’ category” (Aaker, 1991. p. 61) on the grounds that the voter is treated as a customer (Lees- Marshment, 2009; Winchester et al., 2014).

Reeves (2013) and Hobolt and Spoon (2012) observed that the main objective of political marketing is increasing voter awareness toward the party to redress electoral apathy. According to Akbiyik and Eroglu (2014) creating awareness in the voter is “one of the main objectives of the marketing concept” (p.6). O’Cass and Voola (2011) illustrated the role of awareness among voters as a good strategy to maintain a strong brand to differentiate the brand from competitors as well as the case in Jakeli and Tchumburidze’ (2012) study. Al-Sharah et al. (2014) and Althubet and Jarrar (2013) suggested that studies in political brands awareness are needed in Jordan context.

In a nutshell, previous studies produced mixed results between brand awareness and brand loyalty (Liu et al., 2015; Esch et al., 2006; Valavi, 2014; Ramaseshan et al., 2013). Therefore, the current study proposes the following hypothesis:

H<sub>1</sub>: There is a significant relationship between PBA and PBL.

“Party” brand image (PBI): Lassar et al. (1995), Aaker (1991) and Keller (1993) explored the importance of brand image in building brand equity and brand loyalty. In political marketing context, voters’ loyalty and voters’ decisions were influenced by party image (Smith, 2001; Guzmán and Sierra, 2009; Hermanto et al., 2014). Surprisingly, brand image has been a research topic in customer behavior (Chen and Phou, 2013), whereas still need more consideration in political brand area (Almohammad et al., 2013), especially in Jordan (Khatib, 2012).

Theoretically, brand image is a comprehensive concept, which can be applied in arena of service and products (Cian, 2011) as well as in field of politics and to nonprofit business (Laidler - Kylander, 2007). Prior definition for brand image in the literature comprises of two dimensions: Cognitive and affective (Bianchi et al., 2014). The first dimension is an assessment of the attributes of the brand; meanwhile the other dimension is emotions toward the brand (Lin et al., 2007). Therefore, PBI consists of two aspects (cognitive and affective) following Netemeyer et al. (2004) and Smith’s (2001) studies. Aaker (1991) and Keller (1993) pointed out that the image and awareness are the two wings of brand knowledge and they create a value for the brand.

Savigny (2005) and Reeves (2013) considered the image management as strategic national processes to target the voters. Smith (2001), Guzmán and Sierra (2009) informed that image of a political brand could ultimately make a difference on polling day. Mishra and Mishra (2014) implemented the importance of party image for Indian voters as well as in Egypt (Farrag and Shamma, 2014). Undoubtedly, after the Arab Spring, the importance of parties’ image is increased as a means of attracting

voters; the need for image research related to Jordan is clearly (Khatib, 2012).

To sum up, brand image is antecedent of loyalty (Hermanto et al., 2014), with some opposite results (Hosseini and Nahad, 2012). Interestingly, the relationship between them still left open (Parker, 2012). Thus, due to previous argument, the current study proposes the following hypothesis:

H<sub>2</sub>: There is a significant relationship between PBI and PBL.

“Party” brand quality (PBQ): Brand quality is a main construct in literature related to brand equity (Aaker, 1991; Yoo and Donthu, 2001). In a nutshell, Das (2014) argued that the brand equity plays a crucial role in enhancing brand loyalty. Many definitions of brand quality have presented in prior literature (Lassar et al., 1995; Keller, 2003; Zeithaml, 1988; Aaker, 1991). All of them focused on perceived quality from performance of brand. In the same line, PBQ is defined as the voters’ judgment about dimensions of party brand.

Previous evidence by Omar et al. (2013) showed the importance of quality in the success of brand loyalty. Al-Hawari (2011) illustrated the role of perceived quality in purchase preferences. Parker (2012) and French and Smith (2010) considered perceived quality and loyalty as being strong drivers of brand equity in context of American voters and in UK. A review of the literature has revealed dearth of research regarding PBQ and especially linking with PBL. Parker (2012) recommended that perceived quality is an vital reason to the intention of voters toward a political brand.

The direct relationships between quality and loyalty are negative in study of Kinuthia et al. (2012). This opposes the results by Chen and Tseng (2010) and Yee and Sidek (2008) whereas Boo et al. (2009) pointed out that there is no significant relationship between quality and loyalty. Following the argument above, the current study proposes the following hypothesis:

H<sub>3</sub>: There is a significant relationship between PBQ and PBL.

“Party” brand trust (PBT): Lassar et al. (1995) considered brand trust as one of the brand equity dimensions. Recent study by Moolla and Bisschoff (2012) emphasized the importance of brand trust on brand loyalty. Briefly, Singh and Sirdeshmukh (2000) argued that for a long term relationship, usually trust serves as glue. Hence, employing trust to Aaker approach may expand the knowledge base in this direction.

Ramaseshan et al. (2013) presented the brand trust as a social construct. Moorman et al. (1993) conceptualized brand trust “as a willingness to rely on an exchange partner in whom one has confidence” (p. 82). As stated by Morgan and Hunt (1994) brand trust takes place “when one part has confidence in an exchange partner’s reliability and integrity” (p. 23). Whereas, Johnson and Grayson (2005) presented brand trust in two dimensions (affective and cognitive). The definition of trust in this research goes in line with Morgan and Hunt’s (1994) study which is the confidence of voters in the political service providers (political brand).

Kimpakorn and Tocquer (2010) explored the role of trust in building long relationship. Kuikka and Laukkanen (2012) argued that trustworthy brand encourages repurchase intentions. Hence, it is critical importance to implement this factor in politics (Ahmed et al., 2011), especially with the phenomenon of distrust facing political brands around the world (Fiske and Durante, 2014; Ahmed et al., 2011; Hooghe et al., 2011; Gronlund and Setala, 2007). Yousif and ALsamydai (2012) pointed out that trust should be implement in politics because it plays a significant role in developing long-term relationships between political brands and voters since the effect of political brand trust is largely unexplored (Rachmat, 2014).

Several studies highlighted the decisive role of trust in the relationship with loyalty (Chinomona and Dubihlela, 2014; Sabet et al., 2014; Hermanto et al., 2014). Whereas, the findings of Hosseini and Nahad (2012) revealed that trust does not have a significant relationship with loyalty as well as the study of Hennig-Thurau et al. (2001). Thus, due to previous argument, the present study proposes the following hypothesis:

H<sub>4</sub>: There is a significant relationship between PBT and PBL.

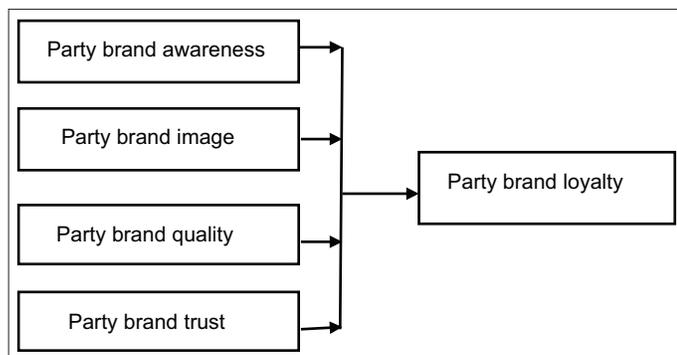
### 3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

According to Creswell (2013) the theoretical framework is a collection of interrelated concepts which guides the research. Based on the previous discussions and arguments, the theoretical framework has been adopted and modified on the basis of the work of Aaker (1991). Hence, this theoretical framework highlights the importance of political branding as being strategic, instead of treating political branding as being a marketing tactic or tool. Figure 1 shows the proposed model.

### 4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study applied a quantitative method to overcome the limitations of previous studies in political marketing context. Due to time constraint, this study focuses only on voters who are registered at the three constituencies in Jordan, namely: Mafraq, Zarqa, and Aqaba. There were (366,602) voters in the 2013 Jordanian election (J.I.E.C, 2014). Jordan presents the appropriate kind of context to investigate voting and a suitable place to engage in one of the first systematic analysis of loyalty to political brands

Figure 1: Proposed model



on Arab region as well as in new democracies. More accurately, Jordan can play the role model of the Arab countries; i.e., what is found in Jordan could be generalizable to the rest of the Arab region.

This study employed a multistage cluster sampling in the first stage to choose one constituency from each region in Jordan (north, middle, and south). After that, a mall intercept survey using systematic random sampling employed in second step in the biggest shopping malls in each constituency.

The self-administered questionnaire has distributed to 208 respondents who are more than 18 years old within 7 weeks between end of November 2015 and med of January 2016. The political brands chosen for this research are (Islamist, leftist, Arab nationalist and Jordanian nationalist). The sampling procedure is in accordance with prior studies that used the voters as respondents (O’Cass and Pecotich, 2005; Mishra and Mishra, 2014; Halim and Ishak, 2014).

The tool of questionnaire consists of 30 items, comprising seven items of PBA (Yoo and Donthu, 2001; Netemeyer et al., 2004), five items of PBI (Smith, 2001; Netemeyer et al., 2004), six items of PBQ (Kimpakorn and Tocquer, 2009; Boo et al., 2009), seven items of PBT (Ramaseshan et al., 2013; Kimpakorn and Tocquer, 2009), and five items of PBL (Cater and Cater, 2010; Zeithaml et al., 1996). Five-point Likert scale was used, ranging from “5” “strongly agree” to “1” “strongly disagree.” As stated by Ozolins (2009) back to back translation was used in addition to a pilot test and pre-test.

### 5. DATA ANALYSIS

Preliminary data analysis: SPSS version 22 has been employed in descriptive analysis, the socio - demographic characteristics. Among 208 respondents, the percentage of male voters was 58.7% and female 41.3%. This result is in line with some of previous studies (Guzmán and Sierra 2009). In terms of age, there was a considerable difference between the age group of 26-45 with 56.3% of the total respondents, followed by 18-26 with 31.3%, whereas, other two groups obtained 10.6% for the age group of 46-60 as well as 1.9% for the age group of 60 and more. As for the respondents’ academic qualification, the result revealed that 14.9% had high school and less, 8.7% had college degree qualification, whereas the majority of respondents’ were bachelor’s degree holders with 55.8% of the respondents and 20.7% had the master’s degree and above.

With respect to other relevant information; The result showed 39.4% of the respondents identify themselves with Jordanian nationalist brand, 46.6% Islamist, 9.1% Arab nationalist whereas 1.4% leftist and 3.4% with others political brands. Concerning the other question which is “how many times did you vote for this political party?” The result reported 34.6% of the respondents were voted at first time to this political brand, whilst 18.3% voted for a 2<sup>nd</sup> time. Only 20.7% respondent reported that this was their third vote and more, whereas 26.4% did not give any answer. Overall, in other similar research, these socio - demographic features of

the respondents and other relevant information were observed (e.g., Gullupunar and Gulluoglu, 2013; Parker, 2012; Guzmán and Sierra, 2009; O'cass, 2002; Winchester et al., 2014).

In addition, although this study has applied partial least squares (PLS) technique to evaluate quality of model, nevertheless, all preliminary tests were run to examine missing data; outliers; normality; multicollinearity; non-response bias and common method variance. The results for each test exceeded the recommended threshold value from previous scholars such as Hair et al., 2010; Hair et al., 2011; Kline, 2011; Coakes and Steed, 2003; Podsakoff et al., 2012 and Pallant, 2010.

Measurement Model: The Smart PLS version 2.0. M3 has been employed to examine the goodness of the measurements (Ringle et al., 2005). In this research to evaluate the reflective measurement items, Hair et al. (2014) is our guide. Confirmatory factor analysis approach has been used to evaluate convergent and discriminate validity.

Undoubtedly, as stated by Hair et al. (2014), to achieve convergent validity, factor loading should be 0.70 and above. Average variance extracted (AVE) should be 0.50 and above, Composite reliability (CR) and Cronbach's Alpha 0.70 and above. Also, to assess the discriminant validity, Fornell and Larcker's (1981) criterion used "this method states that the construct shares more variance with its indicators than with any other construct, to test this requirement, the AVE of each construct should be higher than the highest squared correlation with any other construct" (p.112). Table 1 shows convergent validity and Table 2 presents discriminate validity.

As shown in Tables 1 and 2, convergent and discriminate validity were achieved because they exceeded previous criteria.

Structural model: The findings of structural model analysis revealed that  $R^2$  for party brand loyalty is (0.639); this is a substantial measure based on Cohen (1988); likewise, cross-validated redundancy of the model ( $Q^2$ ) for PBL (0.416 > 0), as stated by Hair et al. (2014) " $Q^2$  value larger than zero for a particular endogenous construct indicates the path model's predictive relevance for this particular construct" (p. 113-114). Table 3 displays the bootstrapping and the path coefficient findings of hypothesized relationships.

As shown in Table 3, the findings surprisingly reveals that the hypotheses H1 and H2, are not supported with ( $\beta = 0.101$ ,  $t = 1.487$ ;  $\beta = 0.120$ ,  $t = 1.503$  respectively), meanwhile, H3 and H4 are supported with statistically positive significant ( $\beta = 0.350$ ;  $P < 0.00$  and  $\beta = 0.331$ ;  $P < 0.00$ ). In short, two of the hypotheses were supported and the others were rejected.

## 6. DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

Contrary to our predictions, this study revealed there is no significant relationship between PBA and image with PBL. With this sample, these results are in line with those of earlier revisions (e.g., Ramaseshan et al., 2013; Esch et al., 2006; Liu et al., 2015;

**Table 1: Convergent validity**

| Construct             | Items | Loading | AVE   | Alpha | CR    |
|-----------------------|-------|---------|-------|-------|-------|
| Party brand awareness | PBA1  | 0.770   | 0.582 | 0.880 | 0.907 |
|                       | PBA2  | 0.762   |       |       |       |
|                       | PBA3  | 0.798   |       |       |       |
|                       | PBA4  | 0.831   |       |       |       |
|                       | PBA5  | 0.727   |       |       |       |
|                       | PBA6  | 0.720   |       |       |       |
|                       | PBA7  | 0.727   |       |       |       |
| Party brand image     | PBI1  | 0.724   | 0.684 | 0.883 | 0.915 |
|                       | PBI2  | 0.800   |       |       |       |
|                       | PBI3  | 0.876   |       |       |       |
|                       | PBI4  | 0.880   |       |       |       |
|                       | PBI5  | 0.846   |       |       |       |
| Party brand quality   | PBQ1  | 0.745   | 0.606 | 0.870 | 0.902 |
|                       | PBQ2  | 0.749   |       |       |       |
|                       | PBQ3  | 0.808   |       |       |       |
|                       | PBQ4  | 0.808   |       |       |       |
|                       | PBQ5  | 0.808   |       |       |       |
|                       | PBQ6  | 0.749   |       |       |       |
| Party brand trust     | PBT1  | 0.734   | 0.574 | 0.876 | 0.904 |
|                       | PBT2  | 0.709   |       |       |       |
|                       | PBT3  | 0.725   |       |       |       |
|                       | PBT4  | 0.765   |       |       |       |
|                       | PBT5  | 0.827   |       |       |       |
|                       | PBT6  | 0.818   |       |       |       |
|                       | PBT7  | 0.714   |       |       |       |
| Party brand loyalty   | PBL1  | 0.794   | 0.669 | 0.876 | 0.910 |
|                       | PBL2  | 0.811   |       |       |       |
|                       | PBL3  | 0.752   |       |       |       |
|                       | PBL4  | 0.852   |       |       |       |
|                       | PBL5  | 0.876   |       |       |       |

AVE: Variance accounted for, CR: Composite reliability, PBA: "Party" brand awareness, AVE: Average variance extracted, PBI: "Party" brand image, PBQ: "Party" brand quality, PBT: "Party" brand trust, PBL: "Party" brand loyalty

**Table 2: Discriminant validity**

|     | PBA    | PBI    | PBL    | PBQ    | PBT    |
|-----|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| PBA | 0.7631 |        |        |        |        |
| PBI | 0.7163 | 0.8272 |        |        |        |
| PBL | 0.6296 | 0.6788 | 0.8181 |        |        |
| PBQ | 0.6951 | 0.7461 | 0.7368 | 0.7785 |        |
| PBT | 0.6024 | 0.6810 | 0.7136 | 0.6861 | 0.7574 |

PBA: "Party" brand awareness, PBI: "Party" brand image, PBQ: "Party" brand quality, PBT: "Party" brand trust, PBL: "Party" brand loyalty

**Table 3: Path coefficient of hypotheses**

| H              | Relationship | Standard beta | Standard error | t     | Decision      | P     |
|----------------|--------------|---------------|----------------|-------|---------------|-------|
| H <sub>1</sub> | PBA→PBL      | 0.101         | 0.068          | 1.487 | Not supported | 0.070 |
| H <sub>2</sub> | PBI→PBL      | 0.120         | 0.080          | 1.503 | Not supported | 0.068 |
| H <sub>3</sub> | PBQ→PBL      | 0.350         | 0.083          | 4.230 | Supported***  | 0.000 |
| H <sub>5</sub> | PBT→PBL      | 0.331         | 0.076          | 4.328 | Supported***  | 0.000 |

$t > 1.65$  ( $P < 0.10$ );  $t > 2.58$  \*\*\* ( $P < 0.01$ ), PBA: "Party" brand awareness, PBI: "Party" brand image, PBQ: "Party" brand quality, PBT: "Party" brand trust, PBL: "Party" brand loyalty

Hyun and Kim, 2011; Subhani and Osman, 2011; Hosseini and Nahad, 2012); whereas in contrast to others (Valavi, 2014; Kim et al., 2008; Gil et al., 2007; Hermanto et al., 2014; Farrag and Shamma, 2014; Alves and Raposo, 2010). Additionally, the PBQ

and trust have significant relationships to political brand loyalty. These results are in line with those of earlier revisions (e.g., Yee and Sidek, 2008; Erdogmus and Budeyri-Turan, 2012; Chen and Tseng, 2010; Hussein and Gholam, 2013; Hermanto et al., 2014; Chen and Phou, 2013; Chang, 2013; Delgado-Ballester and Munuera-Alemán, 2005; Garbarino and Johnson, 1999). These findings support part of brand equity theory that posits the perceptions will lead to behavior (in this case PBL).

One of plausible explanation regarding the present finding is lack of influence of parties in public life of citizens which offer no differentiation amongst the political brands. As for political parties' context, awareness and image do not play a significant role in making a repeated vote, due to random switching vote behavior and low involvement of voter in political brands. Our results show that it is not sufficient to focus only on factors such as awareness and image especially when brands are supposed to last forever. For long-term brand success, brand relationship variables such as trust and perceived quality play an important role in voting behavior. Improving political brand quality will make political brand more competitive with other political brands as well as with independent candidates. Additionally, trust significantly contributes to make more loyal voters which in return ensure the increase of the political market share. Ultimately, based on these results, parties should focus on other methods such as promotional activities, communication, and marketing mix in order to increase political brand awareness and image among potential voters.

## 7. IMPLICATIONS, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study brings unique theoretical, methodological and practical contributions concerning marketing and political marketing literature. From theoretical standpoint, this research supports and extends the theory of customer/voter - based brand equity in political brands context, especially in Arab and Jordanian political brands context. Based on the recommendation made by Parker (2012), external variables could improve the power of equity theory. The present study employs political brand trust in order to predict political brand loyalty. Regarding methodological implications, the current study illustrates and validates these measurements for voters' perceptions and their behaviors which are culturally different from the setting in which these measurements were initially established.

The present study provides insight into various practical implications in terms of branding management practices in the context of Jordanian voters and political parties. Political parties' leaders and marketers need to understand Jordanian voters' perception in order to increase overall loyalty to political brands. Thus, leaders and marketers should keep conducting regular surveys to understand Jordanian voters' needs and expectations of political brands services. The policy makers in political brands should focus on political brand knowledge (awareness and image) to attract new supporter in short term to build long term relationship (quality and trust) as a strong factors is more importance and need to be more focus in marketing campaigns.

Some limitations appeared in term of systematic sampling and mall intercept survey. Some respondents got afraid of expressing their political views due to this type of research which is relatively new in this context. Therefore, additional studies are needed in Jordanian context as well as other contexts. Furthermore, expanding this model by adding extra variables such as commitment, satisfaction, promotion, experience and influence of reference groups should be considered. The researcher suggests that remarkable focus should be also given to other political brands such as candidates' brand.

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