

## The Structural Model for the Application of Relationship Marketing in the Political Market

Mehdi Shahin

Department of Political Science, Lorestan University, Lorestan, Iran

**Abstract:** The marketing concept has spread rapidly and is competing with modern society and has proposed many ideas and has been proven as a dynamic study. Political marketing and relationship marketing are contemporary issues that are relatively new area in the field of marketing. Parties/political institutions as well as other business organizations use communication marketing and they are trying to bring this concept in political marketing. The aim of this study was to develop an Interpretive Structural Model using relationship marketing concepts in the political market. First, by using the Interpretive Structure Model, categorize the relationship marketing factors then in a diagram framework the influence power and dependency were provided. So that the model obtained the relationship and trust components that lead to commitment and they are the key factors in the political field to form relationship marketing.

**Key words:** Political marketing, relationship marketing, commitment, trust, loyalty, Interpretive Structural Model

### INTRODUCTION

The marketing concept is rapidly expanding (Newman and Sheth, 1985). Specially, the political marketing and relationship marketing are the contemporary issues that are relatively new area in the field of marketing. Now the relationship marketing is essential key components for customer retention and business development. Application marketing theory in politics focus on creating value and building lasting relationship with stakeholders. In this context, politicians or candidates offer services and customers are the voters. Many parties/political institutions are trying to implement a framework of relationship marketing in their companies. A number of academic researchers noted that political campaigns are specialized and political marketing of the new paradigms are in political campaigns. Finally, we consider the application of relationship marketing in the political market.

**The concept of relationship marketing:** Relationship marketing is one of the most extensive in all views of the marketing concepts that can be argued in the relationship. This concept was introduced officially in 1983 by Leonard Berry and is defined as attract, retain and enhance customer relationships (Sin *et al.*, 2002). The basis of this branch of marketing that has a close relationship with the consumer behavior comes out from the relationship between buyer and seller's research in relatively large and mid-sized businesses. Customers and trading parties in the past two decades have made remarkable progress

in the field of marketing. And relationship marketing approaches emerged due to the emergence of significant changes in marketing methods that are substantial. According to Leonard Berry and relevant scientific effort by Hakansen, the theory of the structure of relationships developed during the 1980s and several different areas that included in the relationship between buyer seller were not spared either.

Although, definitions vary in scope and importance but most of the definitions about relationship marketing in literature have similar meanings. Sheth and Parvatyar suggest that relationship marketing is understanding, explanation and management of a cooperative business between the producer and the consumer. Gomson introduces relationship marketing as a marketing scheme based on relationships, interactions and networks (Gronroos, 1990). Also from the perspective of Kotler, relationship marketing is to create, maintain and manage strong relationships with customers and other interest groups.

Kram defines relationship marketing as a stable application to update the knowledge of the individual customer, product and service design which creates interactive communication through the development of a long-term relationship that is mutually beneficial in more general cases. Gronroos (1990) defined it from the perspective of relationship-oriented marketing (relationship marketing) and offered a general definition so that the goal of marketing is to create, maintain and strengthen relationships with customers, so that the objectives of both parties involved in the transaction

realize by mutual exchanges and suppliers obligations. Gronroos determined that the customer relationship is the cornerstone of marketing, particularly where the objectives of the parties involved in the transaction fulfill by continuous exchanges and the development of relations.

By most of the definitions offered by experts, there is a general opinion that relationship marketing builds long-term relationships and interactions with individuals and organizations and stakeholders. And its basis is appropriate and effective in communication in order to preserve them and it is the most important among interest groups and relationship marketing looks customers as an asset that has never depreciate. Relationship marketing wants to make a relation with customers of target market so that they buy again in the future and encourage others to do. Also, the basic goal is that to maintain more customers and lose less ones.

**Morgan and Hunt, Relationship Marketing Model:**

Literature on relationship marketing and customer service, focusing on developing and maintaining long-term relationships with customers and other stakeholders. In the Morgan and Hunt Model, trust is known as a key variable that mediates between the relationship and the results (Gil *et al.*, 2005). Commitment-Trust Model was developed by Morgan and Hunt, the model suggests that the relationship of trust and commitment in relationship marketing are the central variables (Wang *et al.*, 2008).

Based on the findings of trust and commitment, they are at the heart of any successful relationship with customers. They believed that the commitment depends on four variables: the interests of communication, the cost of the termination of the relationship, shared values and trust and confidence in itself to 3 variables: common values, communications and opportunistic behavior (MacMillan *et al.*, 2005).

Trust in connection with the organizations is at the core. Generally, development of trust in relationship marketing is a key activity. In Morgan and Hunt Model, obligation is a major output for commitment and trust is commitment-stricken. MacMillan *et al.* (2005) try to explain the concept of confidence and trust through their reliability and confidence level assuming that there is confidence in the integrity and reliability of trade partner (Wring, 1996) (Fig. 1).

**Political marketing:** Political marketing in many respects is similar to marketing in the business world. In the marketing business, vendors, goods, services and

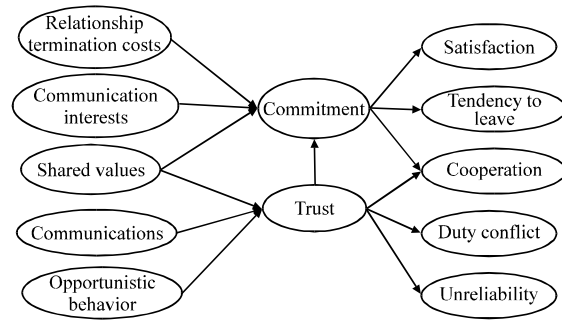


Fig. 1: Morgan and Hunt Marketing Model

communications (ads) are released in exchange for money (through the purchase of customers), information (through market research) and receiving customer loyalty. Candidate in political campaigns offer promises, protections, policies and their personal characteristics to the voters and in return receive their votes and voluntary contributions. Due to this alignment in the areas of marketing, some marketing concepts and marketing tools between goods and services are common. And some principles of business marketing are required to apply some policy adjustments (Herneberg, 2004).

In the political system, competition among actors to achieve power or influence policy decisions within the party largely depends on how they are marketing their political activities, public and social opinions over public opinions. It should be noted that in politics, especially in democratic systems, environmental uncertainty is the biggest problem that mostly influenced by the number and complexity of the political environment. Thus, the assessment of its position, the probability of success or failure in achieving objectives to select the best strategy is uncertain. Political marketing gives the political organizations and candidates the practical tools to overcome these problems and by using the integrated framework of marketing and adjusted the concepts of trade marketing in a way that is applicable for political parties and political contexts, help to promote political activities that previously is done through the traditional ideas and tactics of political science.

Although, political marketing is newer than commercial marketing but in recent years has shown significant growth. Development of counseling centers of political marketing, advertising parts, promotion of political and organizations parties, expertise the fields of marketing and a growing increase of written political marketing articles and books are all the signs of a bright future in the field of marketing subsidiary.

The point that must be considered is that political marketing is not limited only to the short period of

elections but is a constant work between the two elections. Politicians like Tony Blair and Bill Clinton who ruled for years in the political arena of the country and even the world, always in his speeches raised issues that were emphasized during his campaign. Johnson believes that more research should be done to understand the activities of political parties and how to apply the theory and techniques of marketing not only in the campaign but also in the work and activities in routine politics. Future research is useful in understanding the path that led to the integration of marketing and continued policy and the impact that this approach can have on political systems and societies.

For political marketing in general meaning, many definitions offered with the use of the effectiveness of commercial marketing in the political process over the last two decades. This set of definitions cannot be separated from commercial marketing evolution. Until two decades ago, the focus was on marketing, “the process of planning and executing pricing, promotion and promotion and distribution of ideas, goods and services to create exchanges that satisfy individual and organizational objectives”. But in recent years many changes have been defined.

In Table 1, the original definition of political marketing from the early 1990s and the changes were reviewed. Hughes and Dan with combination of these definitions provide a comprehensive definition that can be defined as the latest and most comprehensive political marketing one «political marketing is an organizational unit for political communication or is a set of processes and relations’ creation and gives value to voters that are beneficial for both organization and stakeholders».

There are some things in this definition. First, frees marketing from 4p traditional and focus on the necessity of a long-term relationship, generalize political marketing activities to the activities of political organizations. Implement of the 4P model in political organizations requires frequent adjustments in each of the four elements but generalizing the attitude of customer-centric businesses to voters of political organizations is possible with ease.

Second, this definition focuses on the values of political marketing for organization and stakeholders and improves the traditional beliefs of politics scholars on certainty of political activities in democratic systems and limits it to the election time.

#### **Identification of relationship marketing in the political market**

**Party politics:** A leader in the democratic space is required to follow the wishes and policies of the party that is their representative. These political goals can carry

the information that voters decide according to it at the election time decisions. According to Newman and Smith (1985), this factor includes four dimensions of economic policy, foreign policy and social policy and leadership characteristics.

**Easy access and identification of party or leader:** As democracy is still growing in most countries people can have cooperation in policies. Voters who have voice and have easy access to leadership and opportunity in participation, trust to the leader of the party politically (Nelsen *et al.*, 2011). Recognition and familiarity with the party or leader increase loyalty and helps to develop relationships.

**Religious beliefs:** Research shows that religious factors despite the secularization of politics in industrialized countries affect the political affairs (Pellikaan, 2010; Newport, 2011). In addition, since the religion including faith and feeling focus on psychological characteristics, develop confidence toward the leader/political party (Pellikaan, 2010).

**Emotional dependency:** Voters to a leader or representative does not act in rational ways. Research has shown that some voters vote based on feelings and many voters tend to act like their parents’ behavior and it can be considered a kind of emotional dependency. Demographic characteristics of representative, place of birth, past activities and family lineage can provoke emotional feelings and can make relationship with party/the representative (Newman and Sheth, 1985).

**Communication and update information:** Communication is the pulse of political propaganda and even after gaining the goal should be pursued (Koc and Ilgun, 2010). The aim of communication should be positioning the party, so it can be beneficial when it is designed based on the needs and demographic variables, values and attitudes of constituency (Koc and Ilgun, 2010).

**Influential groups:** Political representatives often offer services that need networks with different levels to get to voters. When faced with large market, they uses network for communication with customers. In addition to the media, the proper use of influential groups can also develop lasting relationships. Friends, family, co-workers, employers, civil society and other groups can affect the development of relationships (Smith, 2007).

**Trust:** The relationship between trust and the usage of them in relationship marketing is posed well (Ganesan, 1994). Thus, the political experts are looking for such a

framework in political field. In political context, trusted leader can influence the willingness of voters and this influential depends on the voters' characteristics. The findings of the researchers' show that trust is a key factor for achieving the supports of voters.

**Strengthen the relationship:** Political marketing generally is about service marketing and the natures of the services are based on relationships. Gondlach in their research indicated that trust is a major factor in developing long-term commitment. Customers/voters actually prefer those relationships that will be able to trust to their partners as a result trust leads to the credit and loyalty (Hunt *et al.*, 2006).

**Commitment:** According to Hunt and Morgan, commitment and loyalty have a positive relation with purchase behavior and repetition improves it. Although, the establishment of such relations in the political market cannot be stated with certainty but loyalty have described a deep commitment for repurchasing a total of service in the future (Oliver, 1999).

**The willingness of voters and loyalty to the party and the leader:** To attract voters and loyalty of them, political parties try to build brand loyalty (party) because loyal customers are the cornerstone of any business (Dalton, 2000). This loyalty can create a tendency for voters toward a party/representative.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

The selection of a method depends on the objectives and importance of research and its operational capabilities. So for determining the research method, the nature of the subject and specific goals should be clear. "Miller" believes that the direction of the research project can be divided in three areas which are basic, applied and evaluation. In this study, to collect the required information the library and survey methods were used. The data collected through a questionnaire to evaluate the relationship between the concept of relationship marketing and the respondents were experts and those who were acquaintance with both marketing and politics. Type of research is developmental. The research method used in this research is descriptive analysis. In this study, first, identify the factors then by using the ISM Model variables were categorized. ISM Method is an Interpretive Structural Method. This method first considered the relationship marketing in political level, then by using the aforementioned method focused on Interpretive Structural Method. The ISM Method shows the surveyed factors to

each other. ISM Method by analyzing the criteria into different levels, intends to analyze the relationship between components. ISM methodology has a few restrictions and identifying the relationships between variables usually depends on the information and the familiarity of decision maker to the subject. Design of interpretation (ISM) Method is to determine the effect of each variable on other variables. Interpretive Structural Method is able to determine the relationship between the indexes that can be linked to each individual or group. ISM by analyzing the criteria into different levels, tries to interpret the relationship between components. According to ISM, firstly the factors of relationship marketing in political level are extracted based on literature. Then, by creating a matrix of relationship concept and interactive matrix ranked these indicators. Finally, influence and dependency graph was presented.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

For conducting this study, first the factors of relationship marketing in the political field were derived by using literature and expert opinion. Firstly, to form matrix, the structural interaction of one matrix in ten includes formation factors and were administered to experts. They completed them based on following principle. Out of per  $\langle j, i \rangle$ , the relationship between these two variables was evaluated according to this framework.

Providing access matrix takes place through interactive structural matrix. According to the Table 2, when the equation was as V then  $(i, j) = 1$  and  $(j, i) = 0$  and if the equation was as A so  $(i, j) = 0$  and then  $(j, i) = 1$ , if a equation was as X  $(i, j) = (j, i) = 1$  and if the equation was as O  $(i, j) = (j, i) = 0$ . With these equations the access matrix is formed as in Table 3.

Since, the effects of violence on mathematical logic is if  $(i, j) = 1$  as well as  $(j, k) = 1$  the result  $(i, k) = 1$ . This means that indirect measures effect on other criteria and the relationship between two variables after applying this logic are connected together. Table 4 shows the number of infringement relationship matrix  $1^*$ .

As well, the obtained matrix in the following manner divided into different levels and accessible set and a prior set obtained for each criterion. Through, obtaining the access matrix for determination of criteria, both accessible and prior sets were defined and then their commonality can be achieved. It can be said that an accessible set is a kind of set that the rows and the criteria number were determined and prior set is a set that columns were determined as shown. By obtaining the commonality, the other column will be completed. In the last column, the

Table 1: Some definitions of political marketing

Definition of political marketing	Researchers
Create, maintain and develop long-term relationships with voters in a way that is beneficial to society and the political parties and at the same time, meet the goals of the political activists and organizations	Gronoos (1990)
Marketing the ideas about public and political issues or particular candidates. Generally, political marketing is designed to influence voters in the election	Klement
Analysis, planning, implementation and control of the political and electoral program to create, build and maintain good political relations between party and voters with the aim of achieving a political marketing purposes	Okas
Academic courses of political marketing: study of bilateral processes among political entities and their environment and between entities with a focus on the positions of the entities and their relationships	Lak and Hous
Political marketing in action: localization strategies and communications and methods used in this context refer to the search for information about mindset, awareness and the way of answering to the messages	Lak and Haris
Political marketing is closely to the business world. In the campaign, the candidates present their promises, thoughts, political preferences and characters to take the advantage from voters, volunteer efforts and help	Katler
Principles and practices of marketing in political campaigns by individuals and organizations of all sizes	Newman
Facilitate social processes in social interactions	Hnrig

Table 2: Interactional structural matrix (matrix, the comparison of criteria)

i\j	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Party politics	X	O	O	O	O	O	V	O	V	V
Easy access and identification of party or leader	-	X	O	O	O	O	V	O	V	V
Religious beliefs	-	-	X	V	O	O	V	O	V	V
Emotional dependency	-	-	-	X	O	O	O	V	V	V
Communication and update information	-	-	-	-	X	O	O	V	V	V
Influential groups	-	-	-	-	-	X	O	V	V	V
Trust	-	-	-	-	-	-	X	X	V	V
Strengthen relationship	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	X	V	V
Commitment	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	X	V
The willingness of voters and loyalty to the party and the leader	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	X

Table 3: Access matrix

i\j	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1
2	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1
3	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	1
4	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	1
5	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	1
6	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	1
7	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1
8	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1
9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1

Table 4: Modified access matrix (final access matrix)

i\j	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1*	1	1
2	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	1*	1	1
3	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	1*	1	1
4	0	0	0	1	0	0	1*	1	1	1
5	0	1	0	0	1	0	1*	1	1	1
6	0	0	0	1	0	1	1*	1	1	1
7	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1
8	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1
9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1

levels are determined so that the factor that has the fewest members is accessible and common set and it is considered as the first level.

After determination of level, the related criteria will be eliminated from Table 5 and the accessible and prior sets will be formed again and the next variable level can be achieved. Table 6 shows the willingness of voters and loyalty to the party and the leader (10) to form the first

level of prioritization criteria and then the next table is deleted. By continuing the following method after four levels, Table 7 is achieved.

By using the rating, a diagram is drawn entitled “A Developed Model of ISM for Relationship Marketing in the Political Field”. In a way that the tendency factor of voters and loyalty to the party and the leader (10) as known the first level is located in first level of diagram and other factors are identified in the diagram levels in this way (Fig. 2).

According to the studies and aforementioned tables and forms and by using prioritized criteria and levels and access matrix, the influence and dependency table is formed finally. Groups in Fig. 3 are defined as follows:

- The first group: the criteria that have weak influence and dependency. They are almost separated from the system, because of poor connections with the system. In the sample there is not a variable in this group
- The second group: the variables that have strong influence but weak dependency. The first to sixth factor which is the lowest level of the diagram are considered the key variables.
- The third group: the variables that have strong influence and dependency. Variables of trust and developmental relationships in this group are called splicer

Table 5: The first phase for determination of first level in ISM hirerachy

Level	Common	Prior set										Accessible set										Criteria
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	7	8	9	10	1
	2	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	7	8	9	10	2
	3	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	7	8	9	10	3	
	4	-	-	-	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	-	7	8	9	10	4	
	5	-	-	-	-	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	-	7	8	9	10	5
	6	-	-	-	-	-	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6	7	8	9	10	6
	8,7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7	8	9	10	7
	8,7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7	8	9	10	8
	9	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	9	10	9
I	10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	10	10

Table 6: The second phase for determination of second level in ISM hierarchy

Level	Common	Prior set										Accessible set										Criteria
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	7	8	9	10	1
	2	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	7	8	9	10	2
	3	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	7	8	9	10	3	
	4	-	-	-	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	-	7	8	9	10	4	
	5	-	-	-	-	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	-	7	8	9	10	5
	6	-	-	-	-	-	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6	7	8	9	10	6
	8,7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7	8	9	10	7
	8,7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7	8	9	10	8
II	9	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	9	10	9

Table 7: The levels of relationship marketing factors in political field

Levels	Common	Prior set										Accessible set										Criteria
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
IV	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	7	8	9	10	1
IV	2	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	7	8	9	10	2
IV	3	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	7	8	9	10	3	
IV	4	-	-	-	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	-	7	8	9	10	4	
IV	5	-	-	-	-	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	-	7	8	9	10	5
IV	6	-	-	-	-	-	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6	7	8	9	10	6
III	8,7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7	8	9	10	7
III	8,7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7	8	9	10	8
II	9	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	9	10	9
I	10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	10	10

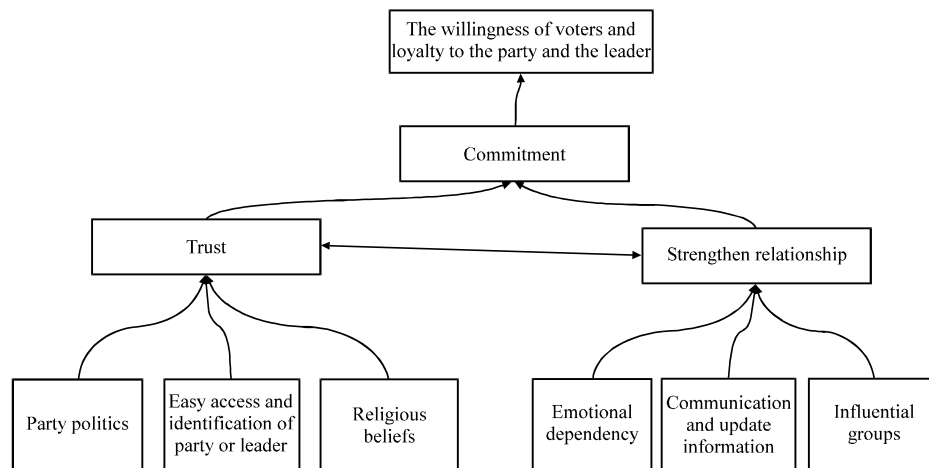


Fig. 2: A developed model of ISM for relationship marketing in the political field

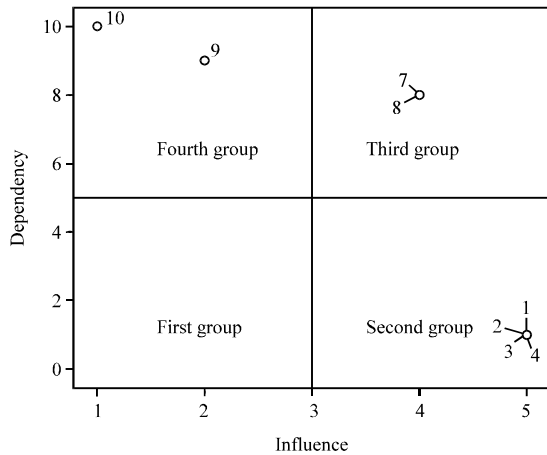


Fig. 3: Results of prioritization criteria and levels and matrix access, influence and dependence table

- The fourth group: the variables that have weak influence but strong dependency and loyalty, commitment and the willingness of voters to the party and the leader are in this group

### CONCLUSION

The relationship between political goods, representative and voters can be formed in various aspects. Although, there is not an overarching framework to guide these interactions. The framework of relationship marketing can be considered close to the political marketing. So, the relationship marketing of Hunt and Morgan including trust and commitment could be used for political developmental framework of relationship political marketing.

The study intended to rate the relationship marketing in political field through Interpretive Structural Model and then in the context of a diagram the power of influence and dependency was provided. As the model shows the components of relationship and trust that lead to commitment are the key factors of relationship marketing in political field.

Because few studies have been conducted in this area, this study intends to shed some light on factors of relationship marketing in the political field. Also the need for further research in this area is felt.

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