THE SUCCESSFUL ELECTORAL STRATEGY OF POLITICAL PARTIES

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Abstract

The country's prosperity is the result of the effective government development and management. The government will carry out the policies following the political party policies that have campaigned on the problems and needs of people in every group to achieve a better of life.   However, because of the past political actions of political parties, people have remained to lack of confidence in their policies and the politicians who are elective candidates. As a result, many political parties have not been successful. Moreover, the votes received from the elections did not meet the goals that the party wanted. . The objectives of this research were to 1) examine the level of variables; political innovation, candidate potential, supporting budget, target group policy, election planning, political communication strategy, and electoral success of political parties; 2) examine the influences of political innovation, candidate potential, supporting budget, target group policy, election planning, and political communication strategy towards the electoral success of political parties; and 3) develop and propose a model for the electoral success of political parties. This research uses mixed research between quantitative and qualitative research. The sample consisted of 480 members of the Executive Committee of political parties and members of the House of Representatives who held offices at all political parties in Thailand. Sampling size was defined based on the proportional sampling method with 20-time criteria of the observed variables. In view of the quantitative research, data collection was conducted through questionnaires that were later analyzed by the structural equation modeling. For the qualitative research, an in-depth interview was conducted through 25 primary informants of party leaders and political expertise. The findings revealed that 1) political innovation, candidate potential, supporting budget, target group policy, election planning, political communication strategy, and electoral success of political parties were all at a high level; 2) political innovation, candidate potential, supporting budget, target group policy, election planning, and political communication strategy influenced the electoral success of political parties with a statistical significance level of .05; and 3) the electoral success model as developed by the research was called "3PIB2S Model")P = Applicant Potential, P = Election Planning, I = Political Innovation, S = Political Communication Strategy, P = Target Group Policy, B = Supporting Budget, S = Success of Political Parties(. Furthermore, the qualitative findings showed that the electoral success of political parties depends on the effectiveness and flexibility of political actions at all dimensions by utilizing innovation and technology for accessibility and immediate response to people's requirements. The research findings can be applied as a guideline to determine political action policies to enhance the sustainable electoral success of political parties resulting from people's confidence.

INTRODUCTION

In the political activities of a democratic country, a political party is a group of people or organizations formed to seek power and form a government and apply the ideology or policy of the party that has been set up to meet the needs of the people. Such policies are aimed to solve social problems and lay down guidelines for the development of the country in which the operation of political parties must be in accordance with the law.

When passed through the registration of a political party, a group of people with the same political ideology will form the head of the political party, recruit political party members according to the laws of each country, plan for political activities, and find candidates who will represent political parties to run for elections in each area. Political policies of the party were formulated in accordance with the problems and needs of the people to cover all target groups of voters to create incentives to vote on candidates.

Political parties have set a budget in supporting the political activities of the candidates in the campaign in responsibility area by using political tactics to create awareness among the people and bringing political innovation to generate public participation for the success of political parties' elections)Engler et al., 2019; Claassen, 2020(.

The success of political parties in elections comes from the potential of politicians to use political innovations to gain a political competitive advantage, including the ability to plan politically, set policies according to the target audience of the voters, and manage politically competent party members and candidates. Furthermore, a budget to support the political activities of candidates and party members is set as well as political tactics, e.g.

The candidate's campaign, visiting the area to recognize problems, and local development as people want, are formulated. Moreover, political communication strategies can make people have confidence and trust in political parties' policies and make decisions in voting in political elections (Dassonneville & McAllister, 2018). Several scholars have described the success of political parties in elections as: caused by political planning in placement of candidates, policy making, budgeting and electoral strategies (Grigera, 2017; Hanley & Vachudova, 2018).

Building political cooperation for the people must has a field visit to meet people and create awareness among people about the party's political policies together with organizing political events to make engagement and create media to promote political parties and candidates. Political parties that want a political competitive advantage and create a positive image for political parties and politicians have recruited political potential candidates who have appropriate knowledge, ability, educational background, political experience and political networks that assist in election campaigns and political events. These make political party leaders believe in their abilities)Von Borzyskowski, 2019; Bullock & Rader, 2021(.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Political Innovation

Political innovation refers to new political methods and ideas that politicians and political parties use to create people's cooperation in political operations, comprising political information, political participation and survey research.

These influence the success of political parties in elections. Political innovation includes:

1) Political information refers to political details that candidates and political parties want the public to know, such as the political policies of the party, political party goals, candidate potential, or otherwise, to create awareness and motivate people in elections (Dallaire, 2016; Butler et al., 2017).

2) Political participation refers to the people's cooperation in political activities, such as elections, political commentary and other political-related. It makes political elections of political parties and candidates successful in the elections (Cirhan & Jakub, 2018).

3) Survey research refers to the study on political needs of political parties and candidates in order to analyze people's opinions in order to adjust electoral strategies to achieve political victory, as conceptualized by Burns (2019) and Cirhan (2021).

Applicant Potential

How successful the election is due to a number of variable components. An important part is the applicant or candidate's potential in terms of their political competent, educational background, political experience and networks to assist candidates in campaigning and helping them win elections. Many scholars have given the meanings and concepts of the applicant potential that the qualifications and background of a candidate are one of the things voters take into account before they can vote. If the candidate has a good educational background and experience in politics, as well as an effective political network, he/she will be considered by voters in particular (Pew Research Center, 2020). Political success is due to potential of candidates, political party policies and political strategies. The political competence of candidates to create a positive image in political competition in elections is an important electoral strategy (Loureiro & Saad-Filho, 2019).

Budget Support

The successful implementation of the political activities of political parties and politicians in accordance with the goals and requirements for the candidates to be elected as much as possible in forming the government is essentially based on budget support. Party candidates need budgets to run for elections, meet people, organize political activities and prepare public relations media for candidates and political parties. The sufficient budget support in political operations in political elections has helped the candidates win the election since they can visit the people and organize political activities. Even if there are conflicts and violence with rival parties, the candidates can bring success and victory to the party)Fjelde & Höglund, 2021; Roberts, 2018).

Target Policy

Target policy refers to the strategic plan and approach of a political party that reflects the interests of each group of people. It can create incentives for elections and voting for candidates to win over political competitors. Policies must be concrete, practical and in accordance with the requirements so that political parties are successful in elections.

Target policy includes:

1) Concrete refers to the policies of a political party that aims to benefit the target group who is each group of people according to their needs empirically. The policies are not fantasy so that people really touch their benefits (Lapegna, 2017; Lee, 2018).

2) Practicality refers to setting policies of political parties that can be used to create benefits for the people that actually affect the target people of the elections, causing the people to trust and accept political parties and candidates to the next election victory (Rodrik, 2018; Rauschenbach & Paula, 2019).

3) Meeting requirements refers to policies of political parties that meet the needs of the people in each target group, making people satisfied and cooperation in voting based on their confidence in political party and candidate policies (Humpage, 2017).

Election planning

The majority of successfully political parties and politicians have electoral planning that encompasses candidate placement, policy making, budgeting and election Strategy. Election planning is the first thing that political parties and politicians must take in order to devise an election strategy that can build cooperation and trust in people's voting for candidates and political parties. In addition, strategic incentives and other options may influence voter decision-making, affecting candidate and political parties (Shair - Rosenfield, 2019). Election planning is an election preparation of political parties and politicians who want to win elections by selecting suitable candidates in each area, setting a policy, budgeting for political activities for all candidates in the election campaign and determining electoral strategies for political party success goals (Strachan, 2017).

Communication Strategy for Politics

Communication strategy for politics refers to a method of political communication that is effective in building knowledge and understanding of political party policies, goals and practices that will enable the people to benefit from political parties as much as possible. It is an electoral incentive which consists of using social media, being easy to understand and accessing all target groups, making political parties successful in elections, as detailed as follows.

1) Using social media denotes that candidates and political parties communicate political matters to the people by using social media in a variety of ways that can reach people quickly and conveniently. It makes people more knowledgeable about the policies and political goals of political parties and affects the satisfaction of the people in making decision to vote in political elections (Lee, 2018; Roberts, 2020).

2) Being easy to understand means that the political communication of candidates and political parties that communicate to the people has content to create a clear understanding of political party policies. Practical and clear guidelines for creating benefits to the people make people understand easily and accept political parties and candidates more, affecting the decision to vote in political elections (Lee, 2018; Humpage, 2017)

3) Access to all target groups refers to political communication from candidates and political parties to people who have the right to vote in all target groups. The communicated policies and guidelines for helping people, local development and the goal of the party to benefit the people affect trust and good image of political parties and electoral politicians (Lee, 2018; Humpage, 2017).

Success of Political Parties in elections

The success of political parties in elections is the outcome of an election in which people choose and vote for a candidate to win an election over their political opponents. The achievement comes from planning to select candidates with political potential to become party members, having a budget for political activities and election campaign, using political innovation, implementing political communication strategies in elections and making practical and clear policies of political target groups. These result in being elected, political party leader's confidence, good image and people's trust, as detailed as follows.

1) Being elected is a victory for the candidates and political parties from the people's vote with the popularity and confidence in the policies of the political parties. It is caused by planning to recruit potential political candidates to the area, determining policies that are in line with the needs of all target groups, and budgeting to support candidates for political activities, election campaign and public political contributions (Humpage, 2017; Shair - Rosenfield, 2019).

2) Political party leader's confidence means the recognition of political party leaders to the potential and success of the candidates who have won political competitions. It is caused by the trust of the people in a democratic system which resulted in higher political positions and roles (Cirhan, 2021; Fjelde & Höglund, 2021).

3) Good image refers to the overall view of candidates and political parties in conducting political activities with transparency and fairness, including effective policies that benefit for the people and the public in all target groups. The good image of the people influences the decision to vote in the election for the candidate to win. It is considered the success of political parties in elections (Liu, 2019; Pew Research Center, 2020; Bullock & Rader, 2021).

4) People's trust refers to the people's positive attitude towards candidates and political parties which caused the people to be satisfied with the policies of political parties that can serve the needs of the people in all groups empirically and quickly. This will make the people trust the candidates and political parties. Political parties and candidates must plan to formulate political policies for all target groups and set a budget for political activities to be comprehensive and sufficient. Political parties must recruit candidates and party members with political potential and establish a political communication strategy. Furthermore, they must bring political innovations to political activities to make people have confidence in representing the people which leads to decisions in political suffrage (Loureiro & Saad-Filho, 2019; Uranga, 2021).

METHODOLOGY

The researchers have formulated a mixed methods research using quantitative research and qualitative research methods in order to obtain the strengths of each method to support the quality of research better (Johnson & Turner, 2003). The Population was 1124 political party executive committees and 448 members of the House of Representatives who are currently in office for all 79 political parties, totaling 1,612 people (Office of the Election Commission, 2021(. The sample size was determined by estimation from the observed variables in the ratio of 1 to 20. In this research, there were 24 observed variables. The researchers, therefore, determined the sample size of 480 people by choosing multi-stage sample.

The researchers chose an embedded research design (Cresswell, 2003) starting from quantitative research by reviewing the documents, literature and research related to variables affecting the success of political parties in elections, including being elected, political party leader's confidence, good image and people's trust.

The data was synthesized to summarize the research terminology definitions and determine the indicators of the variables according to the research conceptual framework. Then a 5-Point Likert Scale Questionnaire was created (Likert, 1932) with validity and reliability tests before it was used to collect data. Structural equation modeling (SEM) technique was used to statistically analyze qualitative data.

The researchers used in-depth interviews with 25 political party leaders and political experts by purposive sampling. The qualitative data was categorized, analyzed, interpreted and linked to draw conclusions to describe the results of the quantitative analysis with profound resolution and more reason. In this chapter, the researchers defined the presentation of research methods based on the following issues: 1) a quantitative research approach consisting of population and sample, sample size, sampling, research tool, tool quality, data collection and data analysis, and 2) a qualitative research approach comprising population and sample, sample selection, research tool, data collection, data validation and data analysis.

RESULTS

This study used the analysis of survey data to test the relationship between variables (Adamski et al., 2005). Data analysis was an important part of proving a research hypothesis because it was very important to eliminate data errors before analyzing the data. The preliminary data analysis was shown in Table 1, given the standard deviation, data normality and p-value.

Table 1: Statistical test of empirical variables (n=480)

Variables	$\overline{X}$	S.D.	%CV	Sk	Ku	χ^2	P-value
PLIFM	4.55	.67	14.73	-7.759	-.242	6.267	.000
PLPAR	4.57	.65	14.22	-8.016	.083	64.259	.000
SVRES	4.20	.81	19.29	-4.165	-3.682	3.907	.000
PLKNC	4.46	.75	16.82	-7.119	-1.408	52.657	.000
EDUBC	4.61	.77	16.70	-1.015	2.843	108.374	.000
EXPER	4.31	.84	19.49	-5.912	-3.109	44.619	.000
NETWK	4.51	.75	16.63	-7.949	-.167	63.212	.000
EVENT	4.45	.77	17.30	-7.230	-1.345	54.080	.000
MEETI	4.39	.77	17.54	-6.220	-2.076	42.995	.000
MEDIA	4.38	.83	18.95	-6.641	-2.207	48.970	.000
CONCR	4.15	1.04	25.06	-5.498	-4.242	48.229	.000
PRAC	4.32	.80	18.52	-5.574	-2.874	39.325	.000
REQUI	4.26	.82	19.25	-4.770	-3.346	33.949	.000
CANDI	4.53	.75	16.56	-8.290	.494	68.972	.000
POCMK	4.35	.88	20.23	-6.624	-2.372	49.500	.000
BUDGE	4.50	.75	16.67	-7.681	-.428	59.180	.000
ECSTR	4.53	.72	15.89	-7.920	-.039	62.725	.000
SOCIM	4.34	.88	20.28	-6.443	-2.430	47.422	.000
EASY	4.33	.87	20.09	-6.221	-2.519	45.046	.000
TARGE	4.27	.88	20.61	-5.521	-3.368	41.829	.000
BEELE	4.34	.84	19.35	-6.052	-2.743	44.157	.000
CONFI	4.55	.73	16.04	-8.463	.648	72.049	.000
IMAGE	4.45	.7	15.73	-7.296	-.972	54.172	.000
TRUPL	4.54	.73	16.08	-8.202	.299	67.357	.000

Note: Chi-square $)\chi^2($ with statistical significance $)$P-value $<.05)$ indicates a non-normal distribution.

The results of checking the normal curve distribution (Normal Score) of the empirical variables studied in the structural equation model using chi-square (χ^2) depicted statistical significance $(p > .05)$ for all variables. So, all empirical variables had non-normal distribution. In addition, a large sample $(n\geq400)$ could statistically consent that the data measured with the rating scale questionnaire had a normal curve distribution, according to The Central Limit Theorem as suggested by Kelloway (1998).

Such results may result in assessing whether the model was empirically fit. The chi-square (χ^2) was problematic, so the researchers solved the problem by estimating fit using the ratio of chi-square (χ^2) to degrees of freedom (df). If the value was less than 5.00, the model was fit to empirical data, although the chi-square (χ^2) test was statistically significant (p-value < .05) (Wanichbancha, 2013; Hair, et al., 2006).

Table 2: Factor Loadings. (n = 480)

Variables	Factor Loading (λ)	Error (θ)	t	R^2
Political Innovation (POINV)				
Political Information (PLIFM)	.79	.38	16.09	.62
Political Participation (PLPAR)	.66	.56	13.83	.44
Survey Research (SVRES)	.68	.53	14.21	.47
ρ_c= .76 ρ_v = .51				
Budget Support (BUDSP)				
Event Management (EVENT)	.87	.25	21.27	.75
Meeting People (MEETI)	.77	.41	18.34	.59
Public Relations Media (MEDIA)	.77	.40	18.45	.60
ρ_c= .85 ρ_v = .65				
Target Policy (TGPOL)				
Concrete (CONCR)	.63	.60	14.54	.40
Practicality (PRAC)	.89	.21	21.89	.79
Meeting Requirements (REQUI)	.87	.24	21.25	.76
ρ_c= .84 ρ_v = .65				
Election Planning (PLANN)				
Candidate Positioning (CANDI)	.81	.35	20.68	.65
Policy Making (POCMK)	.79	.37	20.1	.63
Budgeting (BUDGE)	.85	.27	22.43	.73
Election Strategizing (ECSTR)	.86	.25	22.89	.75
ρ_c= .90 ρ_v = .69				
Communication Strategy for Politics (COMPOL)				
Use of Social Media (SOCIM)	.94	.12	26.90	.88
Easy to understand (EASY)	.94	.12	26.95	.88
Accessing all target groups (TARGE)	.89	.21	24.63	.79
ρ_c= .94 ρ_v = .85				
Success of Political Parties in Elections (SUSEL)				
Being Elected (BEELE)	.80	.37	20.6	.63
Political Party Leader's Confidence (CONFI)	.90	.19	24.96	.81
Good image (IMAGE)	.90	.18	25.1	.82
People's Trust (TRUPL)	.87	.24	23.69	.76
ρ_c= .92 ρ_v = .75				
Applicant Potential (ALPTT)				
Political Knowledge and Capability (PLKNC)	.53	.22	10.49	.78
Educational Background (EDUBC)	.73	.47	14.68	.53
Experience (EXPER)	.53	.22	11.05	.78
Network (NETWK)	.88	.22	17.19	.78
ρ_c= .86 ρ_v = .62				

Table 3. Measurement Model (n=480)

Dependent Study	R^2	Effect	Independent Study					
			Election Planning (PLANN)	Communication Strategy of Politics (COMPOL)	Political Innovation (POINV)	Applicant Potential (ALPTT)	Budget Support (BUDSP)	Target Policy (TGPOL)
Election Planning (PLANN)	.7	DE			.52*(6.86)	.59*(3.43)	.56*(4.89)	.53*(4.92)
		IE			-	-	-	-
		TE			.52*(6.86)	.59*(3.43)	.56*(4.89)	.53*(4.92)
Communication Strategy for Politics (COMPOL)	.7	DE	.87*(20.20)					
		IE	-		.50*(5.86)	.51*(3.43)	.63*(6.89)	.49*(4.92)
		TE	.87*(20.20)		.50*(5.86)	.51*(3.43)	.63*(6.89)	.49*(4.92)
Success of Political Parties in Elections (SUSEL)	.7	DE	.80*(6.54)	.77*(7.91)	.59*(6.74)	.53*(6.29)	.37*(6.58)	.33*(6.78)
		IE	.16*(9.91)	-	.20*(6.86)	.31*(3.07)	.33*(4.87)	.38*(4.88)
		TE	.96*(9.12)	.77*(7.91)	.79*(6.30)	.84*(6.53)	.70*(5.70)	.71*(5.83)
χ^2= 418.97 df = 219 p-value = .00000 , χ^2 / df = 1.91, RMSEA = .044, RMR = .024, SRMR = .035, CFI = .99, GFI = .93, AGFI = .91, CN = 307.75								

*Statistically significant level of .05

Note: The t-test statistical values were shown in parentheses. If the values were not between -1.96 and 1.96, they have statistically significant level of .05.
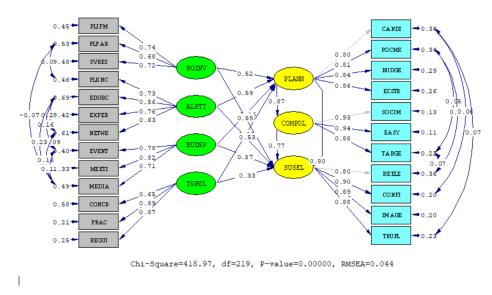

Figure 1: **Adjusted model (n=**480).

The results of the analysis of the adjusted structural equation model found that it was fit to the empirical data (χ^2= 418.97 df = 219 p-value = .00000, χ^2 / df   = 1.91, RMSEA = .044, RMR = .024, SRMR = .035, CFI = .99, GFI = .93, AGFI = .91, CN = 307.75). The researchers, therefore, relied on the estimation of parameters in the model and reported the equation that occurs in the model both in the part that reports the results of the equation and the measurement model part. It portrayed the factor loadings of the observed variables with their latent variables. In addition, the structural model reported the relationship among latent variables according to the research hypotheses.

Interpretation of equations in measurement models and structural model considered three important statistic tests: 1) R^2 was the rate of the ability to use latent variable to describe the variance of the observed variable, which factors of the latent variable, 2) the standardized factor loadings or standardized solution (λ) was an approximation of the parameter estimation of the factor/correlation between the observed variables and the latent variables, 3) standard error was the variation of the measurement error of the observed variable, and 4) the t-test was used to analyze the statistically significant reliability of the measurement by which the t-test greater than 1.96 indicated statistically significant level of .05, while the t-test between -1.96 – 1.96 was not statistically significant. The results of the measurement equation and the structural equation that described the structural equation model were reported sequentially.

CONCLUSION

Results have found that the levels of political innovation, applicant potential, budget support, target policy, election planning, communication strategy for politics and success of political parties in elections are at a high level.

The relationship path equation of the independent variables that have a direct effect on the dependent variables in the adjusted model has shown that political innovation, applicant potential, budget support and target policy have a direct effect on election planning with statistically significant level of .05, predicting 74 percent of the variance. In addition, election planning has a direct effect on communication strategy for politics with statistically significant level of .05, predicting 75 percent of the variance. Moreover, election planning, communication strategy for politics, political innovation, applicant potential, budget support and target policy have a direct effect on success of political parties with statistically significant level of .05, predicting 75 percent of the variance.

The relationship path equation of the exogenous latent variables that have a total effect on the endogenous latent variables (Reduced equations) in the adjusted model has revealed that the exogenous latent variables, comprising political innovation, applicant potential, budget support and target policy have a total effect on election planning, with statistically significant level of .05, predicting 74 percent of the variance. The exogenous latent variables, consisting of political innovation, applicant potential, budget support, and target policy, have a total effect on communication strategy for politics, with statistically significant level of .05, predicting 56 percent of the variance. Exogenous latent variables, comprising political innovation, applicant potential, budget support, and target policy, have a total effect on the success of political parties in elections, with statistically significant level of .05, predicting 53 percent of the variance.

After obtaining the findings according to the research objectives, the researchers therefore developed the 3PIB2S Model (P = Applicant Potential, P = Election Planning, I = Political Innovation, S = Communication Strategy for Politics, P = Target Policy, B =Budget Support, S = Success of Political Parties) as a model of success of political parties in the elections.

Policy Recommendation

For policy recommendations that are important in building a political party's success in the elections, the researchers recommend the following:

1) The government should formulate a policy of cooperation with relevant organizations in all sectors in improving the success of political parties in elections.

2) Relevant agencies should formulate integrated policies and plans to enhance the success of political parties in elections by developing political innovation, applicant potential, budget support, target policy, election planning and political communication strategy for political parties in Thailand to be successful in their political operations.

3) Relevant agencies can apply the findings to academically promote the success of political parties in elections.

4) The government by the Ministry of Interior and the organizations involved in building the success of political parties in elections should develop political parties to meet the needs and expectations of the people to promote a confidence and generate a good image for political parties and politicians.

5) Government and related agencies should have integrated action to develop political innovation, applicant potential, budget support, target policy, election planning and communication strategy for politics to promote the success of political parties in the elections in a sustainable way.

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