

The Effect of Personality Congruence in Internal Party Election in Malaysia: A Conceptual Framework for Political Marketing

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Abstract

This article aims to explore the efficacy of cognitive approach, to identify the ways of how marketers understand consumer purchase decision and to propose a conceptual framework for the development of voting behaviour from political marketing perspectives in Malaysia. Using self-image congruency theory as the initial narrowed theory, this proposition is in line with the theory from prominent researcher in political communication, political psychology as well as candidate image study, who identified that candidate image is a cognitive representation of a particular political candidate that is being held by a voter. In this present paper, it is presumed that voter's evaluation on candidate image in internal party election initially requires a substantial cognitive effort and affective ways of how voters process and respond to the political information that construe the candidate image. Moreover, the voting act is presumed as a voter's self expression, the expression of who they are. Using personal and religiosity values as the key variables, it is possible to propose that the similarity-attraction or self-image congruence between the voters and the candidates were proposed to enhance the voters' self expression and perception on candidate's image that subsequently influence the voter's intention or decision to vote. This paper is the first attempt in the literature of political marketing that integrates psychological characteristics, consumer behaviour theory and political decision in its proposition for conceptual framework of voting behaviour in internal party election. The framework looks at the perspective of information processing capacity and cognitive attributes towards decision to vote.

Keywords: political marketing, self-image congruence, voting behavior

Introduction

Marketing theory has been agreed to contribute to the development of other academic areas (Hunt & Lambe, 2000) particularly in the aspect of "broadening" as proposed by Kotler and Levy (1969). Politics then falls within this extended domain when a voter casts his/her vote for a particular candidate for the exchange of services that the candidate offers after the election of having a better government. Although the application of marketing tools and instruments in politics is nothing new (Baines & Egan, 2001), several numbers of marketing scholars agreed that without the adoption of marketing concept in any or all of the marketing functions, it is not considered as marketing. In addition, Mauser (1983), Newman and Sheth (1987), and Reid (1988) argued that when any political parties or candidates who want to apply marketing, they must be in a position to adapt and satisfy voters' needs with no means as it is necessary to implement all of the marketing functions (Trustum, 1989, p. 48). Therefore, politicians who rely on political marketing strategies have to persuade on voters' impressions and attitudes.

Historically, literature in political behavior indicates that voting behavior is conditioned by a range of attitudes, values, desires and beliefs. However, mostly relate with quantitative literature with many

theories and models developed indicate that voting behavior is conditioned by several factors such as ideological based, issues-based, party identification theory and rational choice theories. Political marketing literatures to date, generally agreed that candidates' image has a significant positive impact on the voters (Harrop, 1990; Newman, 1994; Bacha, 1995). Being part of the political 'product' (Butler & Collins, 1994; O'Shaughnessey & Henneberg, 2002; O'Shaughnessey, 2001; Harris, 2001; O'Cass, 1996), political marketing scholars cite that the image of the party leader has become the most important part of the political product. This is acceptable since the electorate will look more to the candidates rather than to the party by virtue of candidate, which is considered the front and center focus to them. This in turn, will lead the candidate to be more tangible to focus on as well as to provide a concise view of candidate's talents and credibility.

Moreover, there are signs on the growing of personalization in politics (Harris, 2001) as well as in the political campaign especially in western countries (Klingemann, 2007) since it replaces the ideological bond with a political party (Harris, 2001). The 'personalization' of politics has caused the party leader to become 'the center of its brand image' (Harris, 2001) and voters' choices increasingly depend on the individual relationship with the candidate (Harris, 2001). As a result, the overall candidate package which includes candidate's presentation, the platforms that the candidate stand and image promoted are considered to be very important in political marketing. Nevertheless, Campbell (1983) argued that political candidates need to convey the preferable image in order to appeal voters. The main reason for all this is that, a voter tends to make shortcut heuristic of judgment rather than cognitively coding the mass amount of complex information with regard to any particular parties or the candidate. This is to simplify his or her decision making (Harris, 1996, Caprara et al., 1997) and by no means voters will vote incorrectly (Lau & Redlawsk, 1999).

However, there is a key reason to doubt that candidate image will contribute a parallel impact on candidate evaluations and vote choice in the election when the partisan heuristic is the dominant factor. In many developing countries especially in Islamic countries where political orientation is not yet mature, the political struggle for power and control is intense and the role of religiosity comes into play, the representation of the idea of political marketing developed in the Western society failed to fully grasp the scenario in the said countries. For example, in Malaysia, mass electorates tend to vote for either political parties of their own ethnic groups or one of the few parties with no official ethnic affiliation (Liow, 2006), and the candidate is being ignored. Yet, partisanship very likely remains a stronger influence in the general election.

Against the background, this paper argues that the influence of candidate image is more prominent in internal party election. This is because in this election, voters who are the party members are considered highly and actively involved in politics. They are assumed to rely heavily or slightly on cognitive judgment and have at least been influenced by the party identification or party affiliation as the election constitutes an intra-party contests. As such, this kind of election completely erases the impact of political party identification. Instead, determinants of voting choices are based on the candidate image.

Therefore, it is presumed in this paper that voter's perception of candidate image as well as candidate evaluation in the internal party election requires a substantial cognitive effort. This is in line with Hacker (1995), a prominent researcher in candidate image studies, who has defined that candidate image is as a cognitive representation of a particular political candidate that is being held by a voter (Hacker, 1995). Given the dynamic importance and competitive nature in the internal party elections, it is more paramount to investigate the candidate's image influence in a country such as in Malaysia. This is because Malaysia is a progressive Muslim country where the Malay Muslims are the dominant ethnic group who live side by side with the other multicultural societies such as Chinese, Indian and other numerous indigenous people. In addition, since independence, the Malay Muslim society has been represented and separated principally by two unified political organizations, in which one of these two has been Malaysia's ruling political party and the other one has been the largest opposition party in Malaysia. Therefore, it is not

surprising when internal party election takes place, these two parties will catch the attention of almost the entire nation. Considering candidate image as the main factor that influences the voting decision, it is important to know how and why voters or delegates make the voting decision towards the candidate for future predictions of the election outcomes in the party elections.

Applying Consumer Behaviour to Understand Voters Behaviour

Consumer behaviour theorist has long recognised the influence of consumers' own characteristics and their interactions with specific environment as the important factors in consumer decision-making. Various approaches to study consumer behaviour have been developed, for example, cognitive approach, an approach that is rooted largely from cognitive psychology with the main assumption that human behaviour is the result of information processing. This approach has drawn attention to several important principles that can be summarized as follows; consumer's purchase decision is the result of intrapersonal process with conscious, the information is mediated from stimulus and response without ignoring the perception, learning, memory, thinking, emotion and motivation factors (Sternberg, 1996) as well as consumers' past experience that will not only process information but even what information is sought and received.

Similarly in politics, the above discussed scenario matches with Downs (1957) who believes "voter behaves rationally in that the patterns followed in searching out and evaluating alternatives are the most reasonable way for the decision maker to reach his goals". Furthermore, an emotional reaction towards an emotional cue such as the politicians as well as their ideas is also occurring (Newman, 1999; Marcus, 2002, 2003). According to Marcus (2003), this emotional reaction worked as a tool for efficient information processing. This provides a chance to adopt consumer behavior concept in voting behavior by virtue of consumer and the voters have the resemblance in response to certain political stimuli.

Moreover, there are some previous researches that have explored the voting-consuming analogies or studies built from the assumption that the voters act as the consumer, empirically and theoretically. For example, a study by Peng and Hackley (2009) of British voters argued that voters and consumers do seem to share some resemblance in their affective, cognitive and behavioural with regard to advertising in a qualitative exploration. Another study, Needham (2005) who used six attributes of successful brands in assessing Clinton and Blair, argued that these two politicians have succeeded as brands and concluded the advantages of applying branding techniques to politics. In addition, Peng and Hackle (2009) argue that all those findings are not so surprising since political parties and commercial entities do sometimes employ similar marketing techniques.

This adaptation means that one has to take all the consumers' behavior theory *carte blanche*, this is in compliance with the suggestion made by Sham (1976), a marketing scholar who has long argued that the most powerful test for applying marketing in politics (political marketing) is by examining the applicability of consumer-behavior concepts to the area of voters' behavior. As such, an analogy can be drawn from this in which voters in the internal party election are sufficiently well-informed before they cognitively construct the candidate image. This happens when candidate image as the political stimuli, is the only main factor for voters to respond with. Voters will then go through the information process whereby his or her past experience will influence not only the processing of such information but even what information is sought and received before the image of the candidate is cognitively represented.

This is in line with Sharma (1975) who suggested that voters should go through a series of stages before coming out with the voting decision, as well as Hacker's (1995) definition of candidate image which is a cognitive representation of a particular political candidate that is being held by a voter (Hacker, 1995). Dealing with this situation, the political candidates have to convey a preferable image in order to appeal to voters, as argued by Campbell (1983) and Nimmo (1970). In political marketing, the study of voters behaviour from consumer behaviour perspectives specifically in the internal party election builds from

the notion that candidate image is cognitive representation of voters' cognitive process of evaluation which has yet to be empirically supported. Therefore, the above discussion has raised several questions such as; how the candidate image is being formatted in the minds of the voters, how the voters collect political information as well as how it aids voters' decisions, and to what extent did voters' used rationality as the basis for voting decisions.

Candidate image and its formation

Building from this notion and applying it in political election, voters will refer to the candidate's image before making the voting decision. Moreover, this cognitive representation is resulted from cumulative information gathered from the interaction on the process of candidate messages received by voters (Davis, 1981). This message is usually transmitted and conveyed mainly through mass media, negotiations and discussion with friends and family (Newman, 1999) as well as candidate's physical presentation, media appearances and experiences, and the candidate's record as political leaders (Maarek, 1995; Newman, 1999). In the context of voting, from an analogy drawn from consumer cognitive behaviour model, this kind of image formation discussed above can be considered as the input stage whereby the degree of information received by voters, either from the candidates themselves as well as for example, the journalists, friends, medias, family, party members, are different in relation to voters. According to the above discussion, the following proposition can be put forward:

- P1: Candidate's image is a cognitive representation and subjectively constructed in voter's mind, configured from information processing of the message projected by the candidate as well as being perceived by the voters.

By adapting the cognitive consumer behaviour model, the next would be the information processing stage by which voters for example, will process all the information before interpreting it into meaningful and coherent picture of the candidate or in other words voters' political impression of candidate's ability, intelligence, credibility, honesty and credibility. The interpretation of candidate image as a part of the political impression, however, depends on voters' experience and recognition that is based on the schemata that has already been in their memory. In other words, voters' pre-existing political schemata is affected and influenced by interpersonal socialization (Hacker, 1995) and what anthropologists refer to as cultural schemata (Carson, 1983). Schemata act as the scripts or heuristic employed by individual which will be called up before any decision is being made. Information that does not fit into these schemata may not be comprehended, or may not be comprehended correctly.

This is in line with Lythcott and Duschl (1990) who suggest that the information impinging on cognitive systems is screened, translated, altered, perhaps rejected by the knowledge that already exists in that system; the resulting knowledge is idiosyncratic and is purposefully constructed. As a result, researchers would like to understand how this "stock of knowledge" (Gidden, 1993) is being formulated and how these stocks may affect the voting decision towards the political stimuli. Below is the proposed model of candidate image formation by Hacker (1995) that indicates the evaluation of candidate image is not a simple or heuristic judgment. Instead, candidate image is actually a cognitive representation of a particular political candidate that is held by the voters.

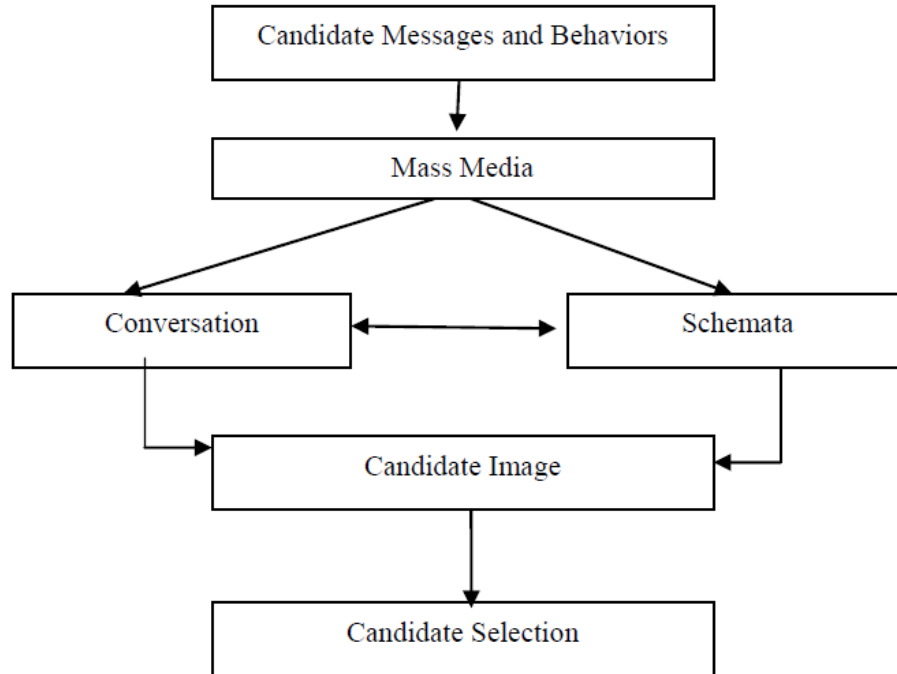


Figure 1: Basic Model of Candidate Image Formation (CIF) (Hacker, pg 69, 1995)

It is common to some people to have a misconception when the factor of image is considered; people tend to refer only to the physical appearance. In contrast, Newman and Sheth (1985) argued from different perspectives by noting that it “refers to the image of the candidate based on the salient personality traits that are thought to be the characteristics of the candidate.” This is in line with the classic work by Nimmo (1976) who has long argued that candidates’ image can be crafted by emphasizing certain personality traits. The study by Bartel (2002) on the presidential election and candidate campaign in the US provides strong evidence that personality traits critically influence voter decision-making and of link with election outcomes (Bartels, 2002). Therefore, it does make sense to propose the following propositions:

- P2: In the process of making up the vote, voter possesses an adequate cognitive effort in attempting to interpret the message transmitted by the candidate as well as perceived by voters.
- P3: Voters cognitively evaluate the political candidate by emphasizing candidates' personality traits as it is reflected from candidate image.

Candidate’s Image and Personality traits

The idea that the candidate who possesses a certain personality, by means as a set of stable behavioral dispositions (Bartels 2002), appears to be doubtful after considering the argument by Ross and Nisbett (1991) who stated that it is individuals who perceive others and categorize them with character traits. This

notion is supported by the experimental evidence from social psychology by Kunda (1999) that when dealing with other people, the impressions of traits of other people will be occupied as a fundamental place. As such, it would seem appropriate to consider what is being argued by Nimmo (1976) that candidates' image from voters' perceive personality can be crafted by emphasizing certain personality traits in which the image perception of political leaders in the electorate is often conceived in two dichotomous ways. First, the politically relevant and performance related attributes comprise of the traits such as a leader's competence, leadership qualities, knowledge, or political integrity. These traits subsume a leader's looks or his or her family life and can be applied across both national and temporal boundaries (Bean, 1993). Second, the non political relevance comprises of candidate looks, outer appearance or the family life. These candidates' personae, attractiveness and facial expression, even the voices of candidate speeches (Patterson et al., 1992) have in fact, substantial effect to voter's attitude towards the candidate as argued by Rosenberg (1991). However, along with this peripheral factor, Miller et al. (1986) argued that the performance relevant criteria instead, have much greater impact than the superficial and apparent candidate characteristics. Moreover, Graber (1984) stated that voters' perception towards candidate issue position will become the candidate's characteristics. Similarly, Shamir (1994) argued that to form inseparable and mutually reinforcing image impression, the candidate's image formation should comprise of the collections of issue-position and personae impressions. Thus, the following proposition is made:

- P4: Candidate personality traits are thought to be the central focus when the voter cognitively analyzes the candidate image. These personality traits are construed from three main components which are political relevant, non-political relevant and the issue-position.

Voters' behaviour and voters' personality traits linkages

Personality is one of the many factors that underlie people's cognitive, affective as well as behavioural responses towards an environment. This notion is supported by Wilkie, (1994) who argued, as an inner psychological characteristics, personality determines and reflects how a person responds to his/her environment. While preserving a sense of personal identity, personality involves systems of distinctive self-regulatory mechanisms and structures that guide individual cognitive, affective, and motivational processes toward achieving collective individual goals. (Bandura, 1997; Caprara, 1996; Caprara, Barbaranelli & Zimbardo, 1997; Mischel & Shoda, 1995). In respond to the environment, individual traits led individual to consistently differ and endure in showing the patterns of thoughts, feelings and actions (Buss & Poley, 1976; McCrae & Costa, 1994). The above definition provides a clear conceptualization of personality as well as the relationship between individual personality traits and individual behaviour in respond to the stimuli. This may explain why marketing scholar has addressed the role of personality in influencing consumer behaviour. According to Sheth et al. (1999), an individual consistent ways in responding to the environment has led to the development of consumer personality that may be product- or service oriented, or both. Consumers who are product-oriented tend to patronize a product, service based on the merchandise itself. In contrast, service-oriented consumers tend to "seek relationships" with the seller, producer of the service or manufacturer of the product (Sheth et al., 1999).

Similarly in politics, Books and Prysby (1988:211) and Eulau (1986) argued that voter's behaviour can be affected from voter's psychological attributes such as his or her personality as well as voter's social and cultural environment. This argument is supported by Schuman (2001, 2002) who argued that voters' attitudes towards any party attributes such as political candidates are shaped by voters' personality traits. According to Caprara et al. (2006), these political choices are more influenced by these traits rather than voters' socio demographic factors such as sex, income, and education. Therefore, it is important to the parties or the candidate to know the voters' personalities before designing any campaign strategies and messages to attract these personalities. The above discussion has led to the raise of questions about what kind of personality do the voters have, how this personality is being developed and how this personality

and its related constructs contribute and play in how people experience voting decision. To date, several personality theories and models developed are useful to identify voters' personality as well as the relationship between personality and political choice. For example, the Five Factor Model of personality (FFM), a model that combines and summarizes all major individual personality traits that have the power to distinguish the individual personality differences (Digman, 1990; John, 1990; Wiggins, 1996). Table 1 shows the definition of five major personality factors as well as the dimension of the personality that can be described as an idiosyncratic reflection of emotional, cognitive and behavioral elements.

Table 1 Definition of five factors and the dimension of Big 5 Model

Personality Factor	Score	
	High	Low
a) Energy refers to an individual's level of activity, vigor and assertiveness	upbeat, energetic, active, friendly, talkative, assertive	reserved, shy
b) Agreeableness refers to concern, sensitivity and kindness toward others	altruistic, trusting, generous soft-hearted, sympathetic	suspicious, hard-hearted demanding
c) Conscientiousness refers to self-regulation in its proactive and inhibitory aspect	thorough, organized, industrious ambitious, resourceful, enterprising	immature, impatient, lazy, careless, moody
d) Emotional Stability refers to the capacity for controlling one's affect and emotional reactions		emotional, depression, anger, discontent, irritation
e) Openness refers to the breadth of one's culture and interest in new ideas, people and experiences	curious, imaginative, original	tolerance mild, cautious, conservatives

Sources: Schoen and Schumann (2005)

Marcus et al. (2008) view the Big Five and its related frameworks provide a rich opportunity for any new research in politics; several number of specific individual traits, contained within the Big Five, have been found to be relevant to political choice as for example research on the Big 5 application in mass politics. Even though the study in this field is very rare, an empirical research by Marcus et al. (2008) found that the Big Five factors such as extroversion, emotional stability and openness to experience have its link with political tolerance. Even though the above description of the factor seems impolitically in content, empirically studies showed that personality trait has an effect towards partisan attitudes and voting behavior (Schuman, 2001; 2002). However, this effect is indirectly exhibited. Given of its widespread acceptance in personality research, the Big 5 personality model as a broad framework can purposely offer an excellent mean of exploration in relevance to personality of voters with regard to political market or the electorate. Based from the above discussion, the following proposition can be made:

- P5: Voters' personality differences contribute differently in the ways of how voters process political information in relation to the candidate image.

Similarity attraction versus self-image congruency

According to Schuman (2001, 2002), voters' attitudes towards any party attributes such as the candidate, are shaped by voters' personality trait. In accessing the politician, voters get involved in the evaluation process that may fit or may engage with the "attraction paradigm" as suggested by Byrne (1971), a psychologist who stated that "a person will have a good opinion about the other person who may be a stranger if she or he perceives the person to be similar to his/herself". According to Heider (1958) as cited in Caprara et al. (2004), this liking is important and consistent so as to maintain a balanced state among feelings and cognitions. Building from this argument, it can be argued that voters may vote for the politician or candidate whom they perceive to have similarity or congruence in terms of personality traits. Bailenson et al. (2006) argued that individuals or voters will choose the target or the candidate that they rate as being most similar to their own. Moreover, this similarity personality attraction is presumed to occur and is supported by the empirical research from Caprara and Zimbardo (2004) who found that voters' candidate preferences are based from the congruency between voters' traits, programs of favored political coalitions, and personalities of political leaders.

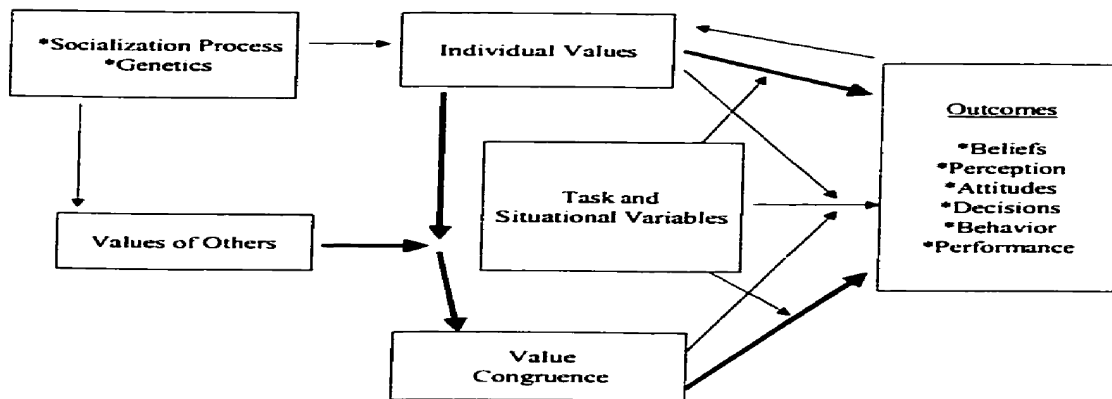
This is alike in marketing where scholars have long recognized and accounted the process of self-image congruence models, a theory originally rooted from social psychology (Ross, 1971) in which customers buy products or brands that are perceived to be similar to their own self-concept (Sirgy, 1982) consequently after consumers perceive brand as a complete human being with human character or personality. These personalities, the people personalities who have been associated with the brand, are being transferred directly to the brand (McCracken, 1989) as well as the product-related attributions, brand name, logo, advertising style and channel distribution (Batra, Lehman & Singh, 1993). More importantly, this congruence can lead to an outward of the expression of one self concept, personality traits, and core values (Dolich, 1969); however, this theory has not yet been tested in political marketing.

Building from this notion, despite that those voters may vote for candidate whom they perceive to have personalities congruence, voting is assumed to be as an expression of voters' own personalities, feelings and ideas. According to the previous discussion, the following propositions can be put forward:

- P6: Voters vote for the candidate whom they perceive to have similarity or congruence in terms of personality traits. The greater the personality congruence or similarities as perceived by a voter to the candidate image, the higher the level of candidate preference to vote for the particular candidate.
- P7: The higher the level of voter personality congruence or similarities between a voter and a candidate, the higher the expression of voters' own personalities, feeling and ideas.

Personal values

A long tradition of studies in social psychology had agreed that human behaviours are almost being influenced, directly or indirectly, by personal values (Feather, 1975). "A framework of Values Effect" developed by Meglino and Ravlin (1998) as shown in Figure 2 illustrates the variety of effect produced by personal values. This framework has in fact provides the validation to support the development of the conceptual framework for this paper with regard to the relation of personal values with all nearly forms of human behavior. This framework generally indicates the outcome such as the person's belief, attitude, perception, decision, behavior and performance as the function of the personal values that act as the determinant in the decision making, which in turn enables people to forecast the behavior of the others. Moreover, this value-inconsistent behavior will lead people to exhibit lower level of satisfaction (Meglino & Ravlin, 1998) and increase the role of ambiguity and conflict (Fisher & Gitelson, 1983).



**Figure 2.: A Framework of Values Effects
(Meglino and Ravlin, 1998 p.365)**

As important as it is in studying human behavior, it is important in this paper to define what is meant by the term of personal value. According to Rokeach (1973; 5), personal value is the prescriptive beliefs about the end states of existence and modes of conduct that transcend specific objects and situations and that are held to be personally and socially preferable to opposite end-states of existence. These values are hierarchically in structured relatively compared to the importance of them (Ravlin & Meglino, 1989), limited in possessing (Rokeach,1979) and held independently to one another (Kluckborn, 1961). In addition, these values are considered as cognitive representations of desirable, abstract, trans-situational goals that serve as guiding principles in people’s lives (Schwartz, 1992) as well as what people consider important and serve as standards for judging behaviour, events and people (Rokeach, 1973; Schwartz, 2005a).

In marketing, the effects of personal value to consumer behavior have long being studied especially in consumer research by virtue of its strong influence over several human behavior dimensions, including the consumption as argued by Kahle (1983). Kropp et al. (2005) has noted that there are several numbers of academic literatures which have pointed out and illustrated the importance of personal values in shaping the behaviour of the consumer. These studies include car ownership, mall shopping, brand choice, clothing and fashion, food consumption, gift giving, travel and tourism, and pet ownership.

In politics, numerous researchers are emphasizing the values as the central role in political judgement and choice; for example, Tedlock (2000, p.247) stated that “underlying all political belief systems are ultimate terminal values that specify the end states of public policy”. Feldman (2003, p. 491) states that values “allow people to organize their political evaluations in a relatively consistent manner”. In terms of voting behavior, Schwartz (1994) argues that basic values are the foundations of people’s specific political values and ideologies and may facilitate people to organize their political evaluations in a relatively consistent and coherent manner. Caprara (2006) discussed about the mechanism by which the voters own values promote the political choice. Moreover, Caprara et al. (2006) who focused on the personalization politics have found that people tend to vote for parties which platform or image suggests that electing them would promote attainment or preservation of people’s own cherished, personal values. As discussed above, there is ample evidence to support the study of individuals' or voter’s personal value in attempt to understand the voting behavior.

However, researches that mainly examined the personal values and political preference mostly used quantitative research approach. One of the most common scales used to measure personal values in relation to political preference was developed from Schwartz’s 10 basic personal values model (Schwartz, 1992). The model provides a useful framework for assessing the individual differences in personal value

and it appears to be valid across cultures as a frame of reference when the personal values are measured (Caprara et al., 2009). Moreover, this value theory is the most conceptually elaborated one and has extensively been tested empirically in more than 74 countries where 2000 samples had been involved in the study. The primary content aspect of value in this theory is the type of goal or the motivational concern that it expresses. Schwartz derives 10 motivationally distinct types of values namely; a) self-direction, b) universalism, c) benevolence, d) tradition, e) conformity, f) security, g) power, h) achievement, i) hedonism and g) stimulation (see Table 2, for the definition).

Table 2 Definitions of value types in term of the goals and single values that represent them

Value type	Goals	Single values
Self-direction	Independent thought and action-choosing, creating, exploring	Creativity, freedom, independent, choosing own goals, curious
Universalism	Understanding, appreciation, tolerance and protection for the welfare of all people and for nature	Equality, social justice, wisdom, broad-minded, protecting the environment, unity with nature, a world of beauty
Benevolence	Preservation and enhancement of the welfare of people with whom one is in frequent personal contact	Helpful, honest, forgiving, loyal, responsible
Tradition	Respect, commitment and acceptance of the customs and ideas that traditional culture or religion provide	Devout, respect for tradition, humble, moderate
Conformity	Restraint of actions, inclinations and impulses likely to upset or harm others and violate social expectations or norms	Self-discipline, politeness, honouring parents and elders, obedience
Security	Safety, harmony and stability of society, of relationships, and of self	Family security, national security, social order, clean, reciprocation of favours
Power	Social status and prestige, control or dominance over people and resources	Authority, social power, wealth, preserving my public image
Achievement	Personal success through demonstrating competence according to social standards	Ambitious, successful, capable, influential
Hedonism	Pleasure and sensuous gratification for oneself	Pleasure, enjoying life, self-indulgence
Stimulation	Excitement, novelty and challenge in life	Daring, a varied life, an exciting life

Note: Adapted from Schwartz and Boehnke (2004).

These 10 distinct but interrelated values are derived from universal requirements of the human condition as proposed by Schwartz (1992). These universal needs have included the requirements of individuals such as biological organisms, the requirements of society for coordinated social interaction, and group survival and welfare requirements. Moreover, the relationships among these 10 values can be summarized in terms of four higher-order value types on two bipolar dimensions: openness to change (combining stimulation and self-direction values) versus conservation (combining security, conformity and tradition), and self-enhancement (combining power and achievement) versus self-transcendence (combining universalism and benevolence). Hedonism shares some elements of both openness to change and self-enhancement. Unfortunately, the Schwartz (1994) values inventory with multiple items per value are not sufficient to capture the nuances of values, especially in terms of how these values cognitively states its

rational in linking the similarity-attraction or personality congruence by means of the similarity between the candidate and voters' personality when they evaluate the candidate image prior to the voting decision. Given the importance of personal values to understand voters' behavior, therefore, the following proposition is made:

- P8: When voters evaluate the candidate image before voting decision can be made, the factor of personal value is expected to emerge, in the sense of voters' values will account for a significant portion of consideration in linking the similarity-attraction or personality congruence between the candidate and voters' personality.

Religiosity value

Almost four decades, Rokeach (1969) has long argued that value and its systems or value system (the preferential value) are thought to be transmitted by different social institutions and one such of that social institution is the religion. Religion has been documented as an important factor that heavily influences the beliefs, attitudes and values of individuals, groups and organizations in society (Inglehart & Baker, 2000; Roccas et al., 2002, Arnould et al., 2004), and a strong determinant of values than any other predictor (Huffman, 1988).

While religion becomes a central part of that individual's self-identity, religiosity on the other hand, is considered as the degree to which the individual holds his or her specific religious beliefs and values (Schwartz & Huismans, 1995; Sood & Nasu, 1995). According to Johnson et al. (2001, p.25), religiosity is defined as "the extent to which an individual's committed to the religion he or she professes and its teachings, such as the individual's attitudes and behaviors reflect this commitment". Allport (1950) argued that this religiosity can be distinguished into two forms; a) the intrinsic form, in which people assign high importance to religion to organize their own lives, and b) the extrinsic form, by means that people use religion as a tool to increase their acceptance in particular social environments. Based from the above, undoubtedly religiosity has significantly become a valuable opportunity for mark especially in predicting individual differences in various aspects of personality and behavior (Hunsberger & Gorsuch, 1996). Several researches in marketing have long addressed the affect of religiosity to consumer activities empirically such as consumers' perceived risks (Delener, 1990, 1994), Sunday shopping behaviours (Siguaw & Simpson, 1997) and retail store patronage of consumers (McDaniel & Burnett, 1990). All the above research indicates that religiosity as the focus in consumer behaviour study is well accepted.

Similarly, the notion that states people are supposed to use values as a guideline in forming their political attitudes (Van Gyes & De Witte, 1999) made religion potentially be seen as one of the factors that can influence political attitudes because religious teachings stress the importance of some values and denigrate the importance of others, while shaping their members' value system (Schwartz & Huismans, 1995). In this regard, Evans (2000) has suggested that religious in voting refers to the tendency for voters in a particular denomination or level of religiosity to vote for a specific party or political candidate, rather than for an alternative option, in relation to voters of another denomination. Likewise, it is paramount to study how religiosity influences voters' evaluation of the candidate in a case when voters belong to only one religion but might have different political ideologies. Furthermore, the study becomes more relevant when religiosity value being studied is considered as a value that incorporates a set of beliefs and morals, a social doctrine, as well as a call to righteousness among all members to behave such as the focus on values in Islam as the religion (Asad, 2007).

Religiosity value in Islam religion

Islam as the religion of Allah, literally means the submission, surrender and obedience (Kharofa, 1992) to the will of Allah and to the Shariah that is the Islamic Law. According to Maududi as cited in Abasi et al. (2010), Islam does not only deliberate the relationship between The Creator and human beings, but also discusses the relation between man and man and also man and the entire of the universe. Moreover, Ismail (1990) argues that as a complete way of life, Islam consists of three basic elements, namely Tawheed (Unity of god), Shariah (Islamic Law) and Akhlaq (moral and values). Building from this, it is assumed that the Islamic value which is a set of beliefs and morals, a social doctrine, and a call to righteousness among all members of organization (Asad, 2007) lies within these three elements.

Shah Waliyullah al-Dehlavi, the eighteenth century prominent Islamic thinker in his book, *Hujjahtullah Al Balighah (1730s/2005)*, argued that people differ in performing this Akhlaq. Cited in al-Ghazali (2004), Shah Waliyullah argues, this morality constitutes an integral ingredient of human personality. This essential moral consists of: a) modesty and humility before Him and His Creature; b) cleanliness and purity of body, dress and environment; c) generosity and benevolence; d) justice and equity. In addition, Waliyullah further argues that this basic moral value is in fact a predisposition value as well as or the bases for any value that emerged afterward, it is shaped or it guides individual behavior. These four basic characters of Akhlaq, according to Shah Waliyullah, include the fitrah which is the formation of humanity or sometimes used interchangeably with fitrah. This Fitrah (فطرة) is the inherent disposition towards virtue in humanity and endows people with the ability to differentiate between right and wrong. Therefore, from an Islamic standpoint, a religious person is someone who behaves in accordance with human nature, or the "fitrah" in his or her daily life or activities.

Unfortunately, Muslim contributions in developing the standards to measure religiosity have only been a few. Most of the studies have employed a quantitative approach and are more towards translating the various measures developed by Western scholars. The most current scales for Muslims, for example, have been adapted from the scales that were originally designed for the Judeo-Christian population. For example, the Muslim Attitudes towards Religiosity Scale (MARS) has been used to explore the relationships between the degree of religiosity among Malay Muslims and their perceptions on various ethical and moral issues (Rusnah & Ghani, 2006). This scale contained scale items adapted from the Francis Attitudes toward Christianity scale (Francis 1978; Francis & Stubbs 1987) which mainly focuses on people's perception of the Christian religion as argued by Hill and Hood (1999). However, most of the scales developed have led the respondent to unwillingly disclose information particularly to unacceptable religious behavior. For example, they may not want to admit that they are not strong believers and do not perform the obligatory duty for Muslims such as the five daily prayers as well as fasting in the month of *Ramadhan* (Rusnah & Ghani, 2006).

In politics, the academic literature on voters' Islamic religiosity values has received relatively little attention, as compared to the effects of gender, age, education as well as the influence of certain attitudes. Moreover, very little attention has been given to the ways of how voters cognitively incorporate the Islamic religiosity values in the process of candidate evaluation as prior to voting decision. Therefore, it is more paramount to investigate the religiosity influence in a country such as Malaysia, a predominantly Muslim nation where the less modernized rural areas are considered as to be more religiously and culturally traditional as compared to urban areas (EASCAP, 2002). Moreover, Malaysia is a developed Muslim country where the Malay Muslims is the dominant ethnic group who live side by side with the other multicultural societies such as Chinese, Indian and other numerous indigenous people. In addition, since independence, the Malay Muslim society has been represented and separated principally by two unified political organizations; one of these two has been Malaysia's ruling political party and the other one has been the largest opposition party in Malaysia. Therefore, it is not surprising that the internal party election of these two parties catches the attention of almost the entire nation. By virtue, as a dominant

party in the ruling coalitions, the election outcome undoubtedly will affect the leadership of Malaysia country as well as the other party.

This creates a paramount important to investigate as it has led to raise questions about what the voters go through in the religiosity thought process when making a voting decision and how the voters' religiosity, by means of the degree in which the human nature or "fitrah", is being incorporated in voters' cognitive orientation before the voters made a specific electoral choice. This is because such a focus will ultimately reveal the role of religiosity as an impact on electoral choice in the internal party election. This leads to the following proposition:

- P9: The personality's congruence between the candidate and voters as perceived by voters is the function of voters' religiosity by means of the degree in which the human nature or "fitrah" is being incorporated in voters' cognitive orientation before voters make a specific electoral choice.

Conclusion

The literature in political marketing generally agreed that candidate's image has a significant positive impact on the voters' decision and plays a significant role in influencing the voters. Conversely, many of these studies have focused on how candidate image influences the voting intention in the general or national election where voters are believed to make a shortcut heuristic of judgment and the political party identification as the primary concern in voting decision. Whereas in party election, it constitutes an intra-party contest thus virtually erasing the impact of political party identification on candidate preference as candidate image can be the primary concern in voting decision. In fact, very little is known about what factors influence the choice of voters in party election. Furthermore, the candidate image studies pay no or little attention on the factor of congruency between the candidate's image and voter's image in influencing voting decision-self image congruency theory. By focusing on the cognitive processes involved in a vote decision, several key variables such voters' and candidate's personality, voters' personal and religiosity value have been identified and assumed to have an effect on candidate image evaluation. Although the propositions that have been put forward in this study only cover limited psychological aspects of voters' interactive part in the cognitive voting decision process, this proposition is in line with the theory from a psychology and candidate image studies, Hence, this paper is the first attempt in the literature that integrates politics and marketing in its proposition for political marketing model looking at the perspective of cognitive attributes towards decision to vote when voters' view candidate image as the main political stimuli. In addition, these propositions are built from existing knowledge and they provide the basis for some further theoretical development concerning the impact of the voters' perceived personalities as well as the role personality congruence, that is the similarities between voters and candidate and the degree of reliance on personal and religiosity values which are related to the stages of the voting decision process.

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