SOCIAL MEDIA IN MANAGING POLITICAL ADVERTISING: A STUDY OF INDIA

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Abstract: Social Media has become an important tool of opinion formation in this technology driven age and marketing managers have realised its significance. With political arena behaving like a customer driven market, uses of marketing technologies are increasingly being used for competitive advantage. Social Media has proved to a useful tool. Marketing political parties are evident in the recent election in India. The present paper explores the implication of twitter on political marketing by studying the relationship between tweet followers and vote share gained by political parties taking Delhi Assembly elections 2015 as a case in point. The findings suggest that there is a positive correlation between the volume of tweet and vote share.

Key words: social media, election campaign, Indian politics, Twitter, election prediction

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Introduction

The aim of this article is to measure the effect of volume of tweet followers on vote gained by political parties and thus predicting the popularity of political parties by studying Delhi Assembly election 2015. The study examines the effect of social media on public opinion, its significance as a measure of popular opinion and how it predicts popular opinion with the help of an evaluation of tweets and its relationship with electoral outcomes. The main goal was achieved through the research and its analysis in the field of following research area (Effing et al., 2011; Digrazia et al., 2013).

Social media is a form of "online application platform" and media which facilitates interaction, collaboration, and sharing of content (Palmer and Koening, 2009). According to Mangold and Faulds, (2009) Social media comprises wide range of online, word to mouth forum including blogs, company sponsored discussion boards and chat rooms, consumer-to-consumer e-mail, consumer product or service ratings websites and forums, Internet discussion boards and forums, moblogs (sites containing digital audio, images, movies, or photographs), and social networking websites.

The virtual social network is very important and useful for business. According to Eyrich et al., (2008) industry using social media for maintaining a public relationship. Even, the nonprofit organisation also adopting social media for maintaining their public relation (Curtis et al., 2010). Higher education faculties are

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using social media for teaching, Learning and sharing (Moran et al., 2011). And Social media is a hybrid element of promotion mix (Mangold and Faulds, 2009). Even Taylor and Kent (2010) suggested that social media tactics should consider in public relation strategy.

The use of social media is not limited to corporate houses to maintain their public relations, but component of social media evolved as an important tool for advertisement in the election and has become a potent platform for expressing opinion worldwide for example 2008 U.S Presidential elections (Smith, 2009), New Zealand general election 2011 (Cameron et al., 2014), 2010 Korean elections (Kim, 2011) and in 2010 Swedish election (Larsson and Moe, 2012). Even in an emerging economy like India, the extensive use of social has been noticed in 2014, General elections (Diwakar, 2014), and now its growing impact is discernible. Its rise in popularity has made political parties think of its use as a means of both gauging and creating public opinion and in this study, Delhi assembly election 2015 is a case in point.

Social media is emerging as a tool in political advertising. Even in the Indian general election 2014, it was used in a big way. In 2014, in the 16th parliamentary election, Social media was extensively used to communicate with voters (Diwakar, 2014; Ernst & Young (2014). But it was not a game changer in the general election (Kanungo, 2015). Although active on social media metrics (Facebook friends or Twitter followers) do not claim electoral success (Metaxas et al., 2011). But Sharing user's posts and subsequently linking is an important tool for raising engagement rate (Stefko et al., 2014). And politicians with higher social media engagement got relatively more votes within most political parties (Effing et al., 2011). However Digrazia et al (2013) claim political outcomes and voters behavior can be predicted on the basis of data extracted from social media. Social media is predictive in closely contested elections only (Cameron et al., 2014). But Kalampokis et al. (2013) suggests that there is a need for more advanced analysis method of data collection and filtering unprocessed social media data. Social media is classified into:

− Social Networking (Facebook and linkedIn),
− Bookmarking Sites (Delicious and StumbleUpon),
− Social News (Digg and Reddit),
− Media Sharing (Youtube and Flickr),
− Microblogging (Twitter).

Every new and prevalent communication technology, especially those involving the internet, Twitter is considered as the electronic word of mouth communications (Jansen et al., 2009). Twitter referred as the "micro-blogging" services with elements of a social networking site has attracted more attention of politician, pundits and academics researching mass communication and public opinion frequently. Twitter is primarily known for the trending topic related to celebrities, brand, and pop culture. Twitter is also very useful platform for political parties to share campaign content with target voters.

According to Kim (2011) the main use of twitter in the election are for Information Seeking, Entertainment and Social utility. Although in 2010 Korean elections, people use Twitter for a variety of reasons. The usage of twitter in 2008 U.S presidential campaign has been frequently described as the first electoral campaign in which decisive impact was observed (Smith, 2009). Jaidka and Ahmed (2015) claim successful political parties used Twitter, to update online and offline campaign activities to their followers. McCreery and Smith (2011) found homogenous ideological clustering within Twitter, such that Twitter users were frequently exposed to political beliefs that they already held. Political uses of Twitter have also come into the public notice (Skoric et al., 2012).

Many studies have examined the predictive power of twitter in the election for a different countries like Germany (Tumasjan et al., 2010), Portugal (Fonseca, 2011), United Kingdom (Tweetminister, 2011) and the United States presidential election (Nowak et al., 1990; Himelboim et al., 2011). Tumasjan et al. (2010 b) claim that it is possible to predict election outcome by examining the relative frequency mention in political parties tweet during Germany election campaign. But on contrary Jungherr et al. (2013) rule out Tumasjan et al. (2010 b) findings and claim tweets cannot predict election results. Voter's tweets sentiment only associated with voters' political preferences. Another piece of research finding claim political parties' name mention in tweets does not guarantee for election prediction (Sang and Bos, 2012). The Even high degree of interactivity on twitter has no relationship with high vote share (Suresh and Ramakrishnan, 2015).

Election System

Assembly elections in Delhi are held in every five years. In 2014 new political party *AAP*(Aam Adami Party) formed alliance government but fell in 49 days after the resignation of Chief Minister who called for the fresh poll in speculation to get a clear mandate. The next election was held in 2015 in the month of February 2015 for 70 assembly seats. To form government party must win minimum 35 seats or prove its majority i.e. minimum 35 seats with the help of alliances (ABP NEWS, 2015).

Social media played a major role in 2015, Delhi assembly elections. This platform facilitates candidates and political parties competing with each other in spreading their messages to voters through this medium in addition to the traditional media (Webfluenze, 2015). Nowadays election campaign is being handled by ads (Advertising) agencies. Ads agencies considered voters are as customer, Political parties as a company and their manifesto as products. Political parties offer customized promises through social media in every election like business houses do.

Hypothesis

In the light of the rise of importance of twitter, it was important to find how it is influencing voter behaviour as political parties and their workers were using twitter account frequently. The previous studies claim that Tweet on parties and on candidates showed a systematic relationship with subsequent votes on the day of the election (Jungherr, 2013; Tumasjan et al., 2010 b; Tumasjan et al., 2010a; 2010 b; Effing et al., 2011). The deviation between tweet share and vote share is not significant (Skoric et al., 2012). Twitter data predicted labour party gaining most seats in the hung parliamentary election which hold true (Burnap et al., 2015). In many cases, the predictive power of tweets was weak but still better than chance (Metaxas et al., 2011). In other words, mere tweet volumes can be an effective indicator of election results. Thus, we propose:

H1: Higher volume of politician tweet follower share would lead to higher vote share.

Research Methodology

For this research, a total of 842937 Political parties tweet followers were taken into consideration from 15th December 2014 to 22nd January 2015 for three Indian political parties namely *Indian National Congress* (INC), *Bharatiya Janta Party* (BJP) and *Aam Admi Party* (AAP), contested for 2015 Delhi Assembly election. We have considered political parties tweet followers instead of candidates contesting for election because political parties who designed all marketing activities for their candidate and facilitate with human resource and finance and even provided a marketing consultant to the candidate for campaigning. The ideology of political parties was more extensively advertised by ground level parties workers then the candidate's face. The data pertaining to tweet followers were collected from webfluenz. (A Research Company) The relevant statistical analytical technique that is Linear Regression analysis method was used to analyze the secondary data, with the help of SPSS 20th version as a software package.

Table 1. Party-wise tweets followers and vote share in Delhi Assembly Election 2015
(*Webfluenze.com[1]; eciresults.nic.in[2]*)

Name of political Parties	Total tweets Followers Party wise[1]	Vote gained in Delhi Assembly Election 2015[2]
Aam Admi Party	4,40,925	4 879 127
Bharti Janta Party	3,25,751	2 891 510
Indian National Congress	76,261	867 027

Analysis and Interpretation

The linear regression model table shows the summary and overall all fit statistics. The adjusted R^2 of our model is 0.918 with $R^2 = 0.959$ that means that the linear regression can explain 95.9% of the variance in the data.

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Table 2. Model Summary[b]

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.979[a]	0.959	0.918	575380.22864

a. Predictors: (Constant), Followers
b. Dependent Variable: Votes

The next table is for F-test, linear regression's F-test has the null hypothesis which states that there is no linear relationship between the variables. If significant values or P-value is less than 0.05 than hypothesis will be rejected.

Table 3. ANOVA Table[a]

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	7717637314484.525	1	7717637314484.525	23.312	0.030[b]
Residual	331062407508.141	1	331062407508.141		
Total	8048699721992.666	2			

a. Dependent Variable: Votes
b. Predictors: (Constant), Followers

In our study, the significant value is 0.030 which shows there is a significant impact of tweet followers on the vote gained by political parties. The F-test is highly significant, thus, we can assume that there is a linear relationship between the variables in our model.

Table 4. Coefficients Table

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	-81747.995	697456.425		-0.117	0.926
	Followers	10.538	2.183	0.979	4.828	0.030
a. Dependent Variable: Votes						

The coefficient of tweet followers is positive and significant for votes gain ($p<0.05$, $p<0.01$ respectively). This finding indicates that a party can achieve a higher number of votes in elections if it can win more tweet followers and the party has a well-developed and well equipped social media plan.

Conclusion

In the introduction to this paper, we posed a question about the relationship between political parties Tweet followers volume and vote share. Overall, our results suggest that there is a statistically significant relationship between the Volume of politicians' followers on twitter and vote share. However, the size of the effect is significant which means high volume tweet follower will lead to getting higher vote share. And even in 2015 Delhi assembly, AAP has emerged as the biggest party in the state, won 67 seats out of 70 with a clear mandate from

government while BJP won only 3 seats although Congress did not save even single seats. So our model proved with this result. Thus, candidates and political parties would be well advised to invest more heavily in social media specially Twitter when the election race is likely to be tight. Moreover, investments should be made early in the campaign, because changes in the size of Tweets follower would have a greater effect over longer time horizons. It is possible that these data could be combined with poll data in order to more improve in predictions.

The findings are important for both political parties and academicians. Political parties can use the results to identify and implement tweets capabilities with a reasonable expectation based on research evidence that these initiatives will be in alignment with their party's strategy. Academicians should be equally encouraged by these results for no greater reason than the demonstrated impact on tweets capability on total vote gained in the election. On the basis of the analysis of the study, we can conclude that tweets capabilities play an important role in gaining votes in elections.

The importance of this study can be observed by understanding the paradigm shift in election advertisement. The election advertisement has changed its orientation from traditional advertisement to modern technology supported, Individual to Party-centric and narrow reaches to broad reach with the help of technology and social media. Nowadays political parties across the democratic countries hiring a consultant, ads agencies creating media cell, IT cell for the advertising purpose and to increase vote share in the election. The social media is very much cost effective. This result may be useful for the political strategist and political parties IT cell to understand the important of Tweet followers in vote shares. Election campaign on social media like twitter, provide different means to express their opinion through text, picture, video, comments like and dislike. The expression of the user can be encouraged or discourage by users' followers which can be bearing a risk of affecting vote bank.

The managerial implication for this study could be understood in terms of cost. There is a very low cost to the individual Twitter user associated with following a given political candidate. It takes little effort or times to follow a candidate. The only cost may be social – where the users own followers might disagree with the user's choice of candidate. Given the low cost associated with making a connection with social media, the quality of that connection (or the number of such connections) as a signal of popular support is likely to be low because it essentially represents a very weak form of engagement between the candidate and each user. Furthermore, users may follow many candidates and not just their preferred candidate, including candidates in electorates that they are ineligible to vote in. Thus, the number of social media connections may not necessarily directly relate to voting behaviour, though it can be indicator.

Twitter claim low costs in adding a candidate to a user's social network, and if compare the cost of media to the user the cost of Twitter is lower than for Facebook (Cameron et al., 2014). This is because Facebook provides very

transparent network structure in which all of a user's friends can see which candidates they are friends with. But in the case of twitter, it is less true, which means that the social cost of following a candidate on twitter is less than the social cost of friending a candidate on Facebook. Given the high cost of conventional political advertising, the social media can be a very useful tool for political parties. Furthermore, it could be argued that twitter is not more entrenched in daily lives of Delhi voters, so users need to put more energy to hold followers. Accordingly, we would expect Twitter to denote a greater level of engagement, therefore, be more predictive of actual voting behaviour, which is what we observe in the data. Based on these results, candidates may gain an advantage by concentrating more effort on engaging constituents through Twitter, where engagement is a greater indicator of voter interest.

Finally, the change in the number of Tweet followers is more statistically significant, the longer the period over which the change is considered. This potentially demonstrates the impact of political campaigns on social media engagement and voting behaviour. It also shows that candidates would be best served to invest in social media early in their campaigns if they expect the election to be closely fought. The microblogging can be used as a part of their overall political marketing strategy.

Furthermore, there is, at least, some theoretical support for considering more explicitly the effect of the structure of social networks or more especially Twitter on election results in future research. For instance, Conitzer (2012) found that more connected voters (those with a denser set of social network connections) may be better indicators of group voting behaviour than the inferior quality of network size or change in network size variables used in this analysis.

This study has some limitations. The major limitation is the number of Political Parties and tweet followers was considered is rather small then compared to the total active social media users and span of social media platform. A large number of parties and their tweets and followers yield more accurate findings and so, further research could replicate this study, with the hope that more political party can implement social media strategy. Hence, the findings and conclusions drawn from this research are the representation of the tweets during elections and findings may not generalize to other geographic regions or culture. Further studies can also examine the proposed relationships in media. Further studies can carry out in comparing different social media follower, friending, like and dislike in a relationship with election outcomes.

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MEDIA SPOŁECZNOŚCIOWE W ZARZĄDZANIU REKLAMĄ POLITYCZNĄ: STUDIUM INDII

Streszczenie: Media społecznościowe w tej erze napędzanej technologią stały się ważnym narzędziem kształtowania opinii i menedżerowie marketingowi zdali sobie sprawę z jej znaczenia. Z areną polityczną zachowującą się jak rynek napędzany klientem, użytkownicy technologii marketingowych są coraz częściej wykorzystywani do przewagi konkurencyjnej. Media społecznościowe okazały się do tego użytecznym narzędziem. Marketingowe partie polityczne są widoczne w ostatnich wyborach w Indiach. Niniejszy

artykuł bada wpływ Twittera na marketing polityczny, badając relacje między osobami obserwującymi twittera i udziałem głosów uzyskanych przez partie polityczne, biorące udział w wyborach Zgromadzenia Delhi w 2015. Wnioski sugerują, że istnieje dodatnia korelacja pomiędzy ilością wysyłanych tweetów a udziałem głosów.
Słowa kluczowe: media społecznościowe, kampania wyborcza, indyjska polityka, Twitter, prognozowanie wyborów

駕馭政治廣告的社交媒體：印度的研究

摘要：社會化媒體已經成為在這個技術驅動的年齡和營銷經理已經意識到它的重要性的意見形成的一個重要工具。隨著政治舞台上表現得像一個以客戶為導向的市場，採用的營銷技術越來越多地用於競爭優勢。社會化媒體已經證明一個有用的工具。營銷政黨在最近的選舉中，印度是顯而易見的。本論文通過研究採取德里議會選舉2015年作為一個很好的例子鳴叫的追隨者和投票份額政黨獲得之間的關係探討了政治營銷微博的含義。研究結果表明，有一種鳴叫和選票份額體積之間呈正相關關係。
關鍵詞：社會化媒體，競選活動，印度政治，微博，選舉預測