

MEASURING THE PERSONAL BRAND OF CANDIDATES AT LOCAL ELECTIONS IN ROMANIA 2012: MAYOR'S CASE IN COUNTY CAPITAL CITY

Case studies

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Abstract

Abstract will be written in English. The present research, conducted in a positivist paradigm, enables the measurement of the personal brand of the candidates running for elections in certain electoral systems.

This paper analyses the value of personal brand of candidates at local elections in Romania 2012 for the Mayor chair in county residence. We provide an important instrument to evaluate the candidates for running Mayor. We have analyzed the brand value of candidates of the three most important parties. The present paper also finds the proportion of the personal brand of the candidates in the final score and makes comparisons between the brand values of the candidates for Mayor chair in 2012 and the results in the previsions local elections from 2008.

The article uses a formula to calculate personal brand of candidates developed in previous research of the author. The methodology used represents another paper of the author.

1. Introduction

For this paper we have already study the definition of brand and brand value in general and in political field. We have analyzed this in previsions articles. This article continues another in which we have explained the creation methodology of the formula for measuring the personal brand of the candidates in certain type of elections.

Brand

Brand definition in general: The brand is the perception of the target segment in particular and of the society in general about a trademark/idea/person/place at a time. Trademark perception is between goods and services in general and especially in the category of product-service where the mark is located. (Ghiuta, 2009, 2011).

Brand in politics

Brand definition in politics: The brand in politics is the image of a politician or a party perceived by the electorate at a time. (Ghiuță, 2011).

Context

Four local elections have taken place on the same day in Romania: for mayor, for chairman of the county council, for the city council and for the county council. Elections for councilors are on party lists or individual lists for independent candidates. In contrast, elections are uninominal for the mayor and for the chairman of the county council. Candidates generally benefit from the support of a party or of a group of parties. Elections for Mayor and those for chairman of the county council are won by the best result in the uninominal elections with a single round (exhaustive ballot). All the terms of these elections extend for a period of four years. On June 10th, 2012, each voter in Romania received four ballots. We are talking here about the same voters who went to voting booths and voted in all elections. Technically speaking, there was a single voters list for all elections, and the voter signed once for his presence and for receiving the four ballots. We have measured the value of a candidate's brand as individual value (the results of the elections already gave us the aggregate value of the elected "finished product/service"), from the consumer's standpoint and behavior. We opted for a behavioral approach due to the difficulties we have encountered in collecting attitude related data and especially in order to remove the bias from the respondent's statements, thus working with 100% objective data. Note that perception and attitude related data are very costly (in terms of human and financial resources). Moreover, an attitude and perception based approach would have certain weaknesses, such as response honesty, since the vote and the political attitudes and preferences are still a taboo subject for most citizens (Ghiuță, 2015).

2. Methodology

In prevision paper we can formulate the following equation (Ghiuță, 2015):

$$b_c = \frac{a_c}{\sum_{j=1}^q a_j} \left(1 - \frac{\sum_{m=1}^k i_m}{TVP}\right) \quad (1)$$

$$c \in \{1, 2, 3, \dots, q\}$$

where:

TVP – total votes for Mayor

a_c – number of votes obtained by the party (with the candidate *c* for Mayor's office) for local council

a_j – number of votes obtained by a party who had also candidate for Mayor's office

b_c – theoretical result of a candidate *c* running for Mayor when the brand value equals zero.

i_m – result obtained by an independent candidate *m* or by a candidate *m* whose party did not have a list for council, running for Mayor's office

c – are candidates from a party for the Mayor's office,

m – are independent candidates or candidates whose party did not have a list for council, running for Mayor's office.

For creating the formula we use the following working hypotheses (Ghiuță, 2015):

Working hypotheses (the candidate's brand is the difference between the party co-brand plus candidate and party brand):

Working hypothesis 1. *The measurement of the brand is based on the following hypothesis: a candidate that represents the party for uninominal elections will have the same score as the party (s)he represents in the case of a personal brads that equals zero.*

Working hypothesis 2. *The candidate for Mayor's office will attract the voters of the parties that have ran for municipal elections but did not have a candidate for Mayor's office, to the same extent as the result obtained by his/her party in relation to the other parties that did not have a running candidate for Mayor's office. (similarly for the candidate running for chairman of the county council).*

Working hypothesis 3. *A candidate running for Mayor's office and representing a political party, will not attract a share of the total valid votes cast but of the total valid votes cast for Mayor, minus the votes for independent candidates and other parties that have run only for Mayor's office. (similarly for the candidates running for chairman of the county council)*

After we have calculate the theoretical result of a candidate for Mayor's office using the working hypothesis we want to measure personal brand contribution of each candidate, namely the

brand value of the candidate's. We used two versions: the difference or the rapport between the real result and the theoretical result. The first we measure the contribution of the candidate in relation to his party in absolute value (electoral point, percentages of total valid votes) and the second the same contribution but in relative value.

The selection criteria for assessing a candidate's brand:

- Participant in the local elections in Romania in 2012;
- The candidate's party has earned more than 10% on a national level and we are here referring to USL [USL – the Liberal Social Union made up of PSD (Social Democrat Party), PNL (Liberal National Party)], PDL (as part of ARD or alone) [PDL (Liberal Democrat Party); ARD (Right Romania Alliance)] and PPDD (Dan Diaconescu People's Party). (Ghiuță, 2015)

For the analysis we have used the program SPSS.

3. Results and discussions

The descriptive statistics of the brand value for the candidates to the Mayor's office are presented in table 1.

The mean of brand value in absolute value for USL and PDL candidate's is positive and for PPDD is negative. In relative value, the mean of brand value is higher than one for all the parties.

The maximum win by a candidate for the Mayor's office with his personal brand was 19.15 electoral points (candidate from PDL) and the maximum lose was 16.11 electoral points (candidate from USL).

From the means (absolute or relative value) we observe that in mean all the candidates had obtained scores close the theoretical scores related at the party brand.

From the point of view of the average of the brands value calculated as a difference, PDL has the highest one, at 1.33 electoral points. From the point of view of the second method of calculation of the value of a personal brand (the ratio), we notice that USL has the greatest average at party level (0.99). Thus, even though they have positive averages of the differences, USL and PDL have ratios below one, meaning that the value of the brand was positive and high for the candidates from the county capital where the party has obtained a high score. We also observe a variance and a standard deviation which are a lot lower for the PPDD candidates as compared to those from USL and PDL. These values can be explained by the fact that these candidates had brands close to 0, although it is important that they were not negative.

It is true that the most edifying in this case is the second option of calculation of the ratio of the candidate, resulting that the PPDD candidates are more heterogeneous in relation to their party as

compared to the candidates of USL and PDL. We can see this graphically in the following diagram (View figure 1).

Here we can easily observe the homogeneity of the PPDD Mayor's office candidates, which has as a corollary the existence of some positive outliers in the towns of Slobozia (8 electoral points), Brăila, Iași, but also negative outliers in Bacău and Călărași (View figure 2).

In the relative version of the brand value remain as outliers only the PPDD candidates from Slobozia (which obtained an 87% higher score than the theoretical one based on the score of the party for a brand equal to zero) and Brăila (which obtained an 31% higher score than the theoretical one based on the score of the party for a brand equal to zero). An explanation for the PPDD outlier in Slobozia is surely the fact that the candidate supported by this party appeared on the ballot as an independent.

We also observe that the USL candidate from Sibiu is a negative outlier from the point of view of the relative value of the candidate's brand.

In the tables 2, 3 and 4 we will list the candidates (the first quartile) with the best values of the brand for each party.

We can observe that in the first quartile only PPDD has candidates with a negative/subunitary brand value, while the smallest values from the first quartile for USL and PDL have a value of at least 7 electoral points.

An important element is also represented by the top of Mayor's office candidates for the county capital cities in the local elections in 2012, a top in which there is no candidate from the PPDD party (table 5). In this top of the candidates that had a brand value with two digits, PDL candidates have the majority.

Due to the fact that it obtained, as a party, a very elevated electoral score, USL does not have (with the exception of Giurgiu), candidates in the top 10 brand values version 2. It is also extremely difficult to obtain a positive result in which the relative value in relation to the party is high (table 6).

The next important step was to see if there are candidates that won the first election tour even if they had a negative brand. Here it is observed that the brand of the party mattered more than the brand of a specific candidate. Thus, there are candidates that won the election even if they had a negative brand (USL, because it was an alliance with a very high score, and even one candidate from PDL) – table 7 –.

Comparatively, in 2008 there was a single candidate with a negative brand (brand value 1 - 3.05%, Ploiești, PDL) that won the mayoral elections. However, in 2008 another electoral procedure was implemented (the mayoral elections were organized in two tours if none on the

candidates obtained a simple majority from the number of valid votes).

4. Conclusions

In terms of brand value of the Mayor's office candidates, we were able to observe that PPDD had a more homogeneous group as compared to USL and PDL.

The greatest brand value in absolute size was achieved by a PDL candidate with 19.5 electoral points (city Târgu Mureş). Here we are talking about the electoral points accumulated in comparison with the theoretical results calculated based on the score that the party obtained. The candidate Dorin Florea (PDL) from Târgu Mureş also had a high brand value in the local elections of 2008 (13.33 electoral points). In 2008 the highest absolute value of the brand equity was 23.29 (Emil Boc, PDL). Emil Boc had a personal brand equity value at the local elections in 2012 of 7.93 electoral points. The weakest brand for the Mayor's office of a county capital city in absolute value (-16.11) was found at an USL candidate. In 2008, the most negative personal brand has been observed in the loss of 12.17 electoral points for a PDL candidate. (Ghiuta, 2011).

If we consider the relative value of the brand of a candidate for the hall of a county capital city we will observe the fact that the maximum value is reached by a PPDD candidate with 87% more electoral points as opposed to the theoretical results obtained by the party for a candidate brand equal to zero. It must be mentioned that an USL candidate that obtained a negative value of the personal brand of 185%. For the local elections of 2008, the greatest value of the personal brand (ratio) was 1.54 for a PNL candidate.

The minimum result in relative value belongs to an USL candidate that obtained only 0.34 from the theoretical score that they should have obtained according to the score of the party. For the 2008 elections, the minimum was 0.21.

We will also make a comparison between the descriptive statistics of the Mayor's office candidates brands values obtained in the local elections in 2008 and 2012. To make the comparisons of the existence of the personal brand and its value as explicit as possible, we will calculate the average of the modules of the absolute values of the personal brand of the candidates for each party/political alliance.

According to table 8, we can observe that in average a mayoral candidate had a personal contribution (positive or negative) of 6.45 electoral points for USL, respectively 5.22 points for PDL and PPDD. Here we can observe that the representatives of the PPDD party did not have

powerful personal brands (neither positive or negative).

The personal brand of the candidate does not have a great importance in elections, but to win the candidate has to be a member of a party that is able to obtain a good result. We calculated the proportion in which the brand of the candidate is present in the result of the elections. We can calculate an extremely important element through the proportion of the personal brand in the obtained results. Here we have attached a comparative table with the year 2008 (table 9).

The average has the weak spot of the extremely high negative extremes in absolute value. For the mayorship, the party remains the most important factor, but the candidate also has an important part. In the case of an excellent candidate, his brand stands for a maximum of 45.97% for USL a candidate and as high as 38.25% and 46.42% for a PDL candidate, respectively for a PPDD candidate. We observe that these maximum values of the contributions of a personal brand in the result for the mayoral elections are higher than in 2008. But in the case of a candidate with an extremely weak personal brand, the result can be disastrous; this brand can have apparently bizarre proportions higher than -100%¹.

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Tables

Table 1. Descriptive statistics value of candidate's (Mayor office) brand (absolute and relative value)

		Brand Mayor USL (difference)	Brand Mayor PDL (difference)	Brand Mayor PPDD (difference)	Brand Mayor USL (rapport)	Brand Mayor PDL (rapport)	Brand Mayor PPDD (rapport)
N	Valid	39	39	37	39	39	37
	Missing	2	2	4	2	2	4
Mean		.0852	1.3351	-.7685	.9904	.9447	.9056
Median		.5914	-.2039	-1.0694	1.0152	.9339	.8931
Std. Deviation		7.70024	6.84229	2.09149	.24270	.31824	.21874
Variance		59.294	46.817	4.374	.059	.101	.048
Minimum		-16.11	-6.94	-4.71	.34	.40	.60
Maximum		13.62	19.15	8.00	1.85	1.62	1.87
Percentiles	25	-5.9339	-4.2131	-1.7051	.8672	.6505	.7898
	50	.5914	-.2039	-1.0694	1.0152	.9339	.8931
	75	7.5136	7.1770	-.3519	1.1137	1.1989	.9715

source: author contribution using SPSS

Table 2. The first quartile of the brands of the USL Mayor's office candidates

Brand2_MayorUSL	County capital	County capital	Brand1_MayorUSL
1.85	Giurgiu	Giurgiu	13.62%
1.23	Alba-Iulia	Resita	10.54%
1.23	Bistrita	Bacau	10.31%
1.22	Bacau	Vaslui	9.37%
1.20	Resita	Alba-Iulia	9.20%
1.18	Braila	Bistrita	9.20%
1.14	Vaslui	Baia Mare	8.79%
1.14	Oradea	Oradea	7.95%
1.13	Deva	Braila	7.75%
1.11	Baia Mare	Alexandria	7.51%

source: author contribution

Table 3. The first quartile of the brands of the PDL Mayor's office candidates

Brand2_Mayor PDL	County capital	County capital	Brand1_Mayor PDL
1.62	Tg. Mures	Tg. Mures	19.15%
1.52	Buzau	Drobeta Turnu Severin	16.58%
1.36	Drobeta Turnu Severin	Tulcea	12.64%
1.31	Tulcea	Brasov	10.69%
1.31	Brasov	Buzau	10.43%
1.24	Cluj-Napoca	Targoviste	8.21%
1.23	Targoviste	Cluj-Napoca	7.93%
1.22	Botosani	Suceava	7.73%
1.20	Suceava	Ploiesti	7.24%
1.20	Ploiesti	Botosani	7.18%

source: author contribution

Table 4. The first quartile of the brands of the PPDD Mayor's office candidates

Brand2_Mayor PPDD	County capital	County capital	Brand1_Mayor PPDD
1.87	Slobozia	Slobozia	8.00%
1.31	Braila	Braila	4.02%
1.19	Iasi	Iasi	1.96%
1.06	Zalau	Zalau	0.70%
1.03	Deva	Deva	0.26%
1.03	Suceava	Suceava	0.17%
1.03	Miercurea Ciuc	Miercurea Ciuc	0.08%
1.00	Piatra Neamt	Piatra Neamt	-0.05%
0.97	Slatina	Slatina	-0.30%
0.97	Focsani	Focsani	-0.40%

source: author contribution

Table 5. Top brands (version 1) of Mayor's office candidates in 2012

City	Brand1 mayor	Party	Name
Tg. Mures	19.15%	PDL	Dorin Florea
Drobeta Turnu Severin	16.58%	PDL	Constantin Gheorghe
Giurgiu	13.62%	USL	Nicolae Robu
Tulcea	12.64%	PDL	Constantin Hogea
Brasov	10.69%	PDL	George Scripcaru
Buzau	10.43%	PDL	Paul Negoita
Bacau	10.31%	USL	Romeo Stavarache
Vaslui	9.37%	USL	Vasile Pavăl
Alba-Iulia	9.20%	USL	Daniel Dragomir
Bistrita	9.20%	USL	Ovidiu Crețu

source: author contribution

Table 6. Top brands (version 2) of Mayor's office candidates in 2012

City	Brand2 mayor	Party	Name
Slobozia	1.87	PPDD	Gabi Ionașcu ⁱⁱ
Giurgiu	1.85	USL	Nicolae Robu
Tg. Mures	1.62	PDL	Dorin Florea
Buzau	1.52	PDL	Paul Negoita
Drobeta Turnu Severin	1.36	PDL	Constantin Gheorghe
Tulcea	1.31	PDL	Constantin Hogea
Brasov	1.31	PDL	George Scripcaru
Braila	1.31	PPDD	Sorin Ovidiu Bălan
Cluj-Napoca	1.24	PDL	Emil Boc
Targoviste	1.23	PDL	Gabriel Boriga

source: author contribution

Table 7. Winning Mayor's office candidates with negative brands

City	Brand value 1	Party
Ramnicu Valcea	-8.17%	USL
Slobozia	-8.08%	USL
Buzau	-7.08%	USL
Craiova	-6.98%	USL
Alba-Iulia	-6.93%	PDL
Ploiesti	-4.36%	USL
Botosani	-3.66%	USL
Focsani	-1.51%	USL
Iasi	-0.97%	USL

source: author contribution

Table 8. The values of the Mayor's office candidates brands (comparison between 2008 and 2012)

	Brand Mayor's office candidates 2008			Brand Mayor's office candidates 2012		
	PSD	PDL	PNL	USL	PDL	PPDD
Average	-0.28	1.83	1.67	0.08	1.33	-0.76
Min	-6.87	-12.17	-7.50	-16.11	-6.94	-4.71
Max	17.54	23.29	18.12	13.62	19.15	8.00
The average of the absolute value in a module	4.92	6.09	4.69	6.45	5.22	1.58

source: author contribution

Table 9. The proportion of the personal brand in the results Mayor's office candidates

	The proportion of the personal brand of the candidate in his result 2008			The proportion of the personal brand of the candidate in his result 2012		
	PSD	PDL	PNL	USL	PDL	PPDD
Average	-22.81	-12.50	-25.52	-9.74	-20.63	-15.24
Min	-162.55	-186.39	-372.70	-192.97	-148.40	-67.13
Max	24.57	30.56	34.91	45.94	38.25	46.42

source: author contribution

Figures

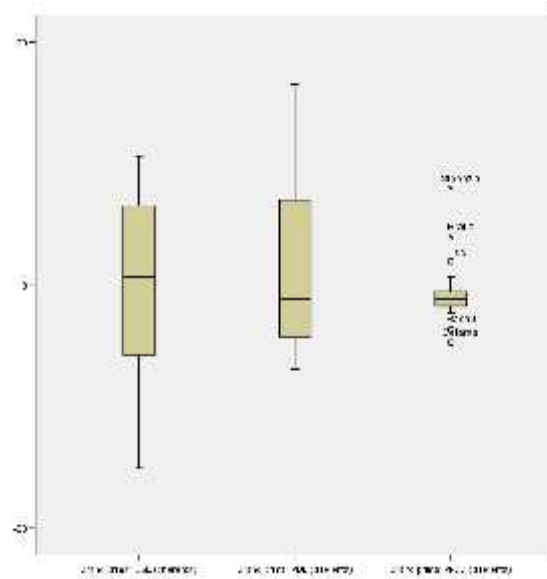


Figure 1. Box plot for the brand version1 (the difference) of the Mayor's office candidates source: author contribution using SPSS

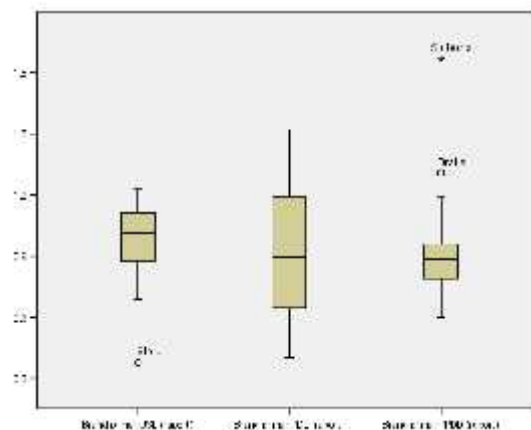


Figure 2: Box plot for the brand version2 (the ratios) of Mayor's office candidates source: author contribution using SPSS

$$i. b = r - e \text{ et } r, e \in (0,1) \rightarrow \frac{b}{r} = 1 - \frac{e}{r}$$

$$\text{si } \frac{b}{r} < -1 \rightarrow 1 - \frac{e}{r} < -1 \rightarrow \frac{e}{r} > 2 \rightarrow e > 2r$$

Explanation: in case the real score obtained by the candidate is twice smaller than the expected score, we find proportions of less than 100%:

Legend: b-the brand of the candidate r-the results obtained by the candidate, e-the expected results of the candidate

ii Independent candidate with the official support of PPDD