

THE MEDIATING ROLE OF POLITICAL INNOVATION CAPACITY IN THE INFLUENCE OF PROACTIVE MARKET ORIENTATION ON VOTER PARTICIPATION IN INDONESIA

O PAPEL MEDIADOR DA CAPACIDADE DE INOVAÇÃO POLÍTICA NA INFLUÊNCIA DA ORIENTAÇÃO PROATIVA PARA O MERCADO NA PARTICIPAÇÃO ELEITORAL NA INDONÉSIA

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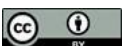
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Abstract

This study empirically examines the transformational mechanism linking proactive market orientation (PMO) to political participation (PP) through the mediating role of Political Innovation Capacity (PIC). Based on the Mediamorphosis Theory proposed by Fidler (1997) and a synthesis of contemporary political marketing literature, this study argues that the ability of parties and candidates to anticipate voters' latent needs does not automatically increase participation; rather, it must be transformed through innovative capabilities that can convert strategic insights into practical engagement tools. The research employs an explanatory quantitative approach using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). Primary data were collected from a survey of 412 respondents registered as permanent voters (DPT) in Central Java Province, a region representative of Indonesia's demographic, sociological, and electoral complexities. Analysis results indicate that PMO has a positive and significant effect on PIC. PMO also has a direct effect on PP, while PIC serves as a strong predictor of PP. The key finding lies in the full mediating effect of PIC in the relationship between PMO and PP, at the 95% confidence interval, indicating that the influence of PMO on political participation is fully mediated through innovative capabilities. This study contributes theoretically by validating the construct of PIC as a key mechanism in political marketing and by

Resumo

Este estudo examina empiricamente o mecanismo de transformação que vincula a orientação proativa para o mercado (PMO) à participação política (PP) por meio do papel mediador da Capacidade de Inovação Política (PIC). Com base na Teoria da Mediamorfose proposta por Fidler (1997) e em uma síntese da literatura contemporânea sobre marketing político, este estudo argumenta que a capacidade dos partidos e candidatos de antecipar as necessidades latentes dos eleitores não aumenta automaticamente a participação; ao contrário, ela deve ser transformada por meio de capacidades inovadoras que possam converter insights estratégicos em ferramentas práticas de engajamento. A pesquisa emprega uma abordagem quantitativa explicativa utilizando Modelagem de Equações Estruturais (SEM). Os dados primários foram coletados a partir de uma pesquisa com 412 entrevistados registrados como eleitores permanentes (DPT) na província de Java Central, uma região representativa das complexidades demográficas, sociológicas e eleitorais da Indonésia. Os resultados da análise indicam que a PMO tem um efeito positivo e significativo sobre a PIC. A PMO também tem um efeito direto sobre a PP, enquanto a PIC serve como um forte preditor da PP. A principal conclusão reside no efeito mediador total da PIC na relação entre PMO e PP, no intervalo de confiança de 95%, indicando que a influência da



expanding the application of Mediamorphosis Theory within the context of Indonesia's electoral democracy. Practically, these findings underscore the importance of developing innovative capabilities as a strategic prerequisite ahead of the 2029 Simultaneous Elections.

Keywords: Proactive Market Orientation. Political Participation. Political Innovation Capacity. Mediamorphosis Theory. Political Marketing. 2029 Elections. Central Java.

PMO na participação política é totalmente mediada por meio de capacidades inovadoras. Este estudo contribui teoricamente ao validar o constructo da PIC como um mecanismo-chave no marketing político e ao expandir a aplicação da Teoria da Mediamorfose no contexto da democracia eleitoral da Indonésia. Na prática, essas descobertas ressaltam a importância de desenvolver capacidades inovadoras como um pré-requisito estratégico antes das Eleições Simultâneas de 2029.

Palavras-chave: Orientação Proativa para o Mercado. Participação Política. Capacidade de Inovação Política. Teoria da Mediamorfose. Marketing Político. Eleições de 2029. Java Central.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The constellation of issues surrounding political participation in Indonesia

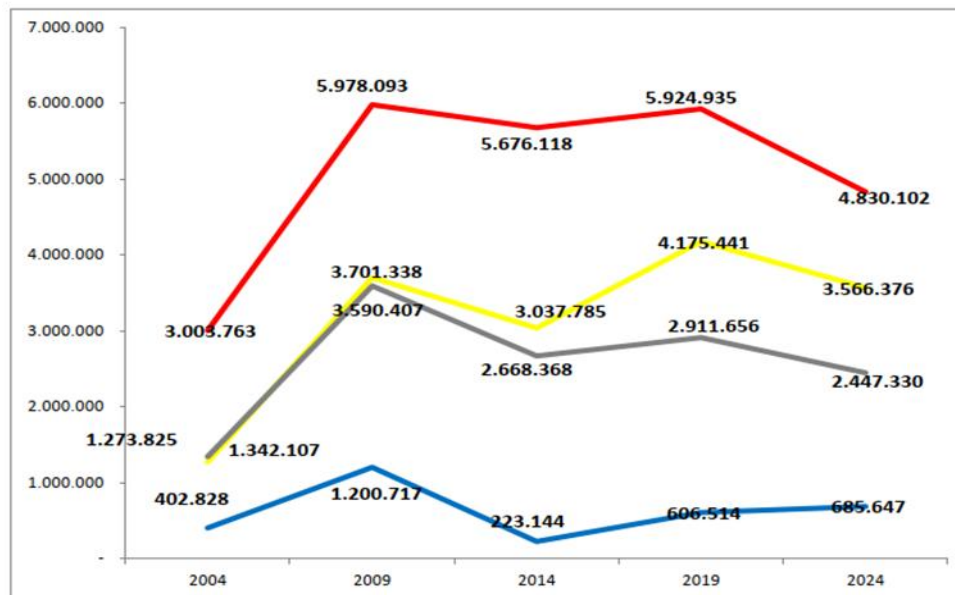
General elections and regional head elections in Indonesia are key elements of the constitutional democratic system. The third amendment to the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia affirms that the sovereignty of the people is realized through elections conducted directly, universally, freely, secretly, honestly, and fairly by a national, permanent, and independent general election commission. Based on this concept, the level of public political participation is often viewed as a key indicator reflecting both the quality of democracy and the legitimacy of the resulting government (Verba *et al.*, 1995). Political participation itself is not merely about exercising the right to vote in accordance with the procedures established by election organizers, but also encompasses data on citizens registered as voters, those present at polling stations, and those who exercise their right to vote, regardless of whether their votes are categorized as valid or invalid.

The phenomenon of invalid ballots in elections represents the pinnacle of anomalies in the assessment of political participation. This phenomenon may occur due to voters' confusion in identifying candidates or due to a conscious decision to forfeit their right to vote. In some cases, the number of invalid ballots even exceeds the vote

count for a specific candidate. This indicates that the public's political understanding of the impact of properly exercising their voting rights remains limited, which ultimately affects political participation rates and the likelihood of electing candidates who do not fully represent the public's aspirations. As noted by (Sirait, 2022), this indicates that some voters still face limitations in understanding how to exercise their voting rights, which also reflects the suboptimal nature of political communication strategies in fostering higher-quality participation.

Figure 1

Graph of Invalid Votes/Incorrect Markings/Unused Ballots in General Elections 2004–2024



PEMILU	DPR RI	DPD RI	PILPRES	DPRD PROV
2004	1.273.825	3.003.763	1.342.107	402.828
2009	3.701.338	5.978.093	3.590.407	1.200.717
2014	3.037.785	5.676.118	2.668.368	223.144
2019	4.175.441	5.924.935	2.911.656	606.514
2024	3.566.376	4.830.102	2.447.330	685.647

KETERANGAN

	DPRD PROVINSI
	DPD RI
	DPR RI
	PRESIDEN DAN WAKIL PRESIDEN

Figure 1 shows that the number of invalid ballots in the 2004-2024 elections increased in several types of elections. This is believed to be partly due to the shift in Indonesia's electoral system to an open proportional representation system. This policy

has influenced the format and layout of the ballots, which now feature party logos and candidate lists.

1.2 Political marketing as an analytical lens

Within the constellation of the issues outlined above, political marketing emerges as a promising analytical perspective. Firmanzah (2018) defines political marketing as the application of marketing approaches and methods to assist politicians and political parties in building efficient and effective two-way relationships between constituents and the public. From a political marketing perspective, a party is viewed as a company and a legislative candidate as a political product (Nursal, 2004), while political marketing is a combination of communication, techniques, strategies, publicity, and ideas to introduce the political product to the public as consumers (Firmanzah, 2018). Kotler *et al.* (2016) expand this definition by emphasizing the identification and fulfillment of voters' needs as the core of political marketing activities.

1.3 Empirical discrepancies and theoretical significance

This study stems from conflicting empirical findings regarding the relationship between proactive market orientation and political participation. In political marketing, proactive market orientation (PMO) is understood as a strategy employed by political actors to proactively identify voters' unmet needs and aspirations, and then design relevant political programs or messages (Choudhury *et al.*, 2019). Several studies suggest that PMO can increase political engagement (Butt *et al.*, 2021), yet other research finds that market orientation does not always have a direct effect on political participation (Cantaleano *et al.*, 2018; Harrison *et al.*, 2023). Furthermore, this relationship is also influenced by a country's social and political context (Wang *et al.*, 2022).

These differing findings indicate a gap in explaining how PMO drives political participation. This study argues that this relationship can be understood through political actors' ability to generate political innovation, defined as Political Innovation

Capacity(PIC), and posits it as a mediating variable that explains how a proactive market orientation can translate into more tangible political participation.

1.4 Originality and contribution of the research

First, this study offers several novel elements that distinguish it from previous studies. *First*, this study introduces the construct of *Political Innovation Capacity* as a mediating variable in the relationship between the PMO and political participation. This construct is synthesized from various concepts in the strategic management and political marketing literature, including organizational capability (Amui *et al.*, 2017), innovation capability (Lie Heng *et al.*, 2020), and political innovation (Meijer *et al.*, 2016).

Second, this study employs Fidler's Mediamorphosis Theory (1997) as its grand theoretical framework, an approach that has been relatively unexplored in political marketing studies in Indonesia. This theory provides a framework for understanding how the transformation of the media ecosystem demands adaptive capabilities from political actors in designing communication strategies and voter engagement.

1.5 Research questions and study objectives

Based on the above description, this study is designed to answer the following four research questions:

1. Is there a positive and significant influence of *proactive market orientation* on *Political Innovation Capacity*?
2. Is there a positive and significant effect of *proactive market orientation* on *political participation*?
3. Is there a positive and significant effect of *Political Innovation Capacity* on *political participation*?
4. Does *Political Innovation Capacity* mediate the effect of *proactive market orientation* on *political participation*?

Thus, the objective of this study is to empirically test a conceptual model that integrates these three constructs in the context of voters in Indonesia, with a focus on testing three direct hypotheses and one mediation hypothesis.

2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

2.1 Mediamorphosis theory as an epistemological foundation

The Mediamorphosis Theory developed by Roger Fidler explains how communication media undergo transformation in tandem with social, political, and technological changes. Fidler defines mediamorphosis as “the transformation of forms of communication media, typically triggered by perceived needs, competitive and political pressures, and social and technological innovations” (Fidler, 1997). This theory does not view new media as a replacement for old media, but rather as part of a media ecosystem that adapts and evolves together. Media change occurs gradually through a process of adaptation, while new media often inherits the functions of previous media in a more modern form. In the practice of political campaigns, this is evident in the transformation of traditional campaign content into more interactive and personalized digital formats.

Dzisah (2018) demonstrates that Mediamorphosis Theory explains how social media opened up more inclusive communication channels in Ghana’s elections, while Kreiss (2012) describes its application in Barack Obama’s 2008 campaign through the integration of traditional and digital media to build support among young voters. In this study, the theory serves as the theoretical foundation for the concept of Political Innovation Capacity. that is, the adaptive capacity of political actors to respond to changes in the media ecosystem and voter preferences, and to translate insights from a proactive market orientation into effective political communication strategies.

2.2 Proactive market orientation in a political context

The concept of proactive market orientation (PMO) is rooted in the strategic management and marketing literature, which views market orientation as an organizational approach to understanding market needs. Slater and Narver (1998)

introduced market orientation with three main components: customer orientation, competitor orientation, and cross-functional coordination, which was later developed by Narver *et al.* (2004) by distinguishing between responsive and proactive market orientations. PMO emphasizes the ability to anticipate latent customer needs and create value through innovation (Baker & Sinkula, 2005), supported by the prior process of collecting and utilizing market intelligence within the organization (Kohli & Jaworski, 1990). In a political context, this concept has been adapted to explain how political parties proactively identify voters' needs and design innovative political strategies (Omrod & Henneberg, 2010).

(Choudhury *et al.*, 2019) explain that proactive market orientation (PMO) in politics helps stakeholders understand the impact of market-oriented policies while promoting more accountable democratic governance. In practice, PMO is realized through political market research, data-driven voter segmentation, and the development of political programs and messages tailored to voters' needs. In this study, PMO indicators include: (1) systematic collection of market information, (2) program development based on voters' latent needs, (3) anticipatory actions toward political changes, (4) data-driven decision-making, (5) flexibility in responding to political dynamics, and (6) the ability to influence voters' perceptions of relevant political issues.

2.3 Political innovation capacity: a synthetic construct

Political Innovation Capacity is a new construct developed through the synthesis of various theoretical traditions, including organizational capabilities, political network capabilities, innovation strategy, innovation capabilities, political marketing, political marketing orientation, and political innovation. From the perspective of organizational capabilities, this concept refers to the ability of political actors to effectively manage and integrate resources to achieve strategic goals (Amui *et al.*, 2017), as well as the ability to adapt and reconfigure resources in response to environmental changes, as described in the theory of dynamic capabilities (Teece *et al.*, 1997).

Drawing from the literature on political network capabilities, PIC emphasizes the importance of the ability to build and leverage strategic relational networks. Wang *et al.* (2022) state that the capability of political networks enables political actors to access the

information, resources, and support necessary to achieve political goals and implement innovations.

From the perspective of innovation strategy and innovation capabilities, PIC relates to the ability to systematically plan, develop, and implement new ideas. Wang and Nie (2021) define innovation strategy as a structured approach to developing new ideas, while L Heng *et al.* (2020) as well as Calantone *et al.* (2002) emphasize that innovation capability encompasses the ability to consistently create, develop, and implement innovations.

In a political context, this concept is also influenced by the literature on political marketing and political innovation. Harris and Lock (2010) view political marketing as the application of marketing principles to influence voter behavior, while O'Shaughnessy *et al.* (2012) emphasize the importance of voter orientation. Furthermore, political innovation is understood as new changes in political systems, processes, or policies to make them more responsive and participatory (Meijer *et al.*, 2016).

Based on the conceptual synthesis above, this study defines *Political Innovation Capacity* as the capacity of political actors to actualize their potential and resources in creating, developing, and implementing innovations in political products, ideas, designs, processes, and policies that provide added value and political benefits to society.

The PIC indicators in this study encompass six dimensions: (1) the frequency of experimentation with new ideas in political practice; (2) the capacity to be *a first mover* in introducing new political concepts; (3) the intensity of seeking alternative methods in performing political functions; (4) the level of creativity in operational methods and campaign strategies; (5) the degree of innovation in the political decision-making process; and (6) the effectiveness of implementing the resulting policies.

2.4 Political participation in the contemporary landscape

Political participation is a key concept in democracy that refers to citizens' involvement in influencing political processes. Brady *et al.* (1995) define it as various citizen activities, such as voting in elections or engaging in political organizations, which form the basis of democratic legitimacy. Dahl (2008) adds that participation is the way citizens interact with the political system to influence public policy.

In contemporary developments, the concept of political participation has expanded alongside the penetration of digital technology. Boulianne (2015) demonstrates that social media has become a key platform facilitating political engagement, particularly among younger generations, while Theocharis *et al.* (2015) assert that political participation now encompasses everything from conventional forms to more expressive online political activities. In the Indonesian context, political participation exhibits distinctive characteristics. Aspinall and Sukmajati (2015) note that political participation in Indonesia is often mediated by patronage and clientelist networks, particularly in areas with low levels of education and economic development. Nevertheless, the rise of social media and digital platforms has opened new avenues for political participation, especially among young voters and the urban middle class. In this study, indicators of political participation include: (1) electoral participation through voting in elections; (2) engagement in political discussions; (3) participation in campaigns or support for candidates; and (4) the use of social media for political activities as a representation of participation in the digital age.

2.5 Formulation of research hypotheses

Based on the theoretical elaboration above, this study formulates four hypotheses to be tested empirically.

H1: Proactive market orientation has a positive effect on political innovation capabilities

This hypothesis stems from the assumption that proactive market orientation (PMO) encourages organizations to innovate in response to evolving market needs. Baker and Sinkula (2005) demonstrate that the integration of market orientation and innovation capability is key to competitive advantage, while Morgan *et al.* (2009) assert that organizations with a proactive market orientation tend to possess stronger innovative capabilities because they are constantly exposed to new market information. In a political context, parties or candidates that proactively understand voters' needs will be driven to develop innovative strategies, programs, and political communication, thereby positioning the PMO as a catalyst for the development of Political Innovation Capacity (PIC).

H2: A proactive market orientation has a positive effect on political participation.

This hypothesis is based on the argument that political actors who proactively understand and respond to voters' needs can increase political engagement. Butt *et al.* (2021) found that proactive market orientation (PMO) has a positive effect on political participation in the form of political consumerism, while Reimann *et al.* (2022) showed that exposure to proactive political marketing strategies correlates with higher levels of political engagement. In the Indonesian context, parties or candidates capable of capturing voters' aspirations and designing relevant programs tend to create alignment between political offerings and voters' needs, thereby encouraging increased participation in elections.

H3: Political innovation capabilities have a positive effect on political participation.

This hypothesis asserts that political innovations such as responsive policies, creative campaign methods, digital participation platforms, and citizen engagement mechanisms can increase political participation by making the political process more engaging and accessible. Mulgan *et al.* (2007) demonstrate that innovation in political practice can improve the effectiveness of public services and civic participation, while Bason (2010) emphasizes the importance of innovation capabilities in the public sector to drive change and service improvements. A recent study by Tawiah and Zakari (2024) also found that political innovation capabilities help political actors adopt new ideas and technologies that ultimately have a positive impact on public political participation.

H4: Political innovation capabilities mediate the influence of proactive market orientation on political participation.

This mediation hypothesis posits that the effect of PMO on political participation (PP) is not entirely direct but is mediated by Political Innovation Capacity (PIC), whereby PMO fosters the development of PIC, which in turn enhances political participation. Without innovative capabilities, insights derived from a proactive market orientation risk remaining merely untapped knowledge or being translated into programs that are less relevant to voters. Akinola and Adekunle (2021) demonstrate that PMO drives policy innovation that ultimately increases participation, while within the framework of Mediamorphosis Theory, PIC is viewed as an adaptive capacity to transform an

understanding of voter needs into effective political practices within an ever-evolving media ecosystem.

3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research design

This study employs an explanatory quantitative research design using a cross-sectional survey approach. This design was chosen based on the study's objective to test causal relationships among the variables under investigation and to examine the proposed mediating mechanisms within the conceptual model. A quantitative approach allows for the objective measurement of variables, the statistical testing of hypotheses with an adequate level of precision, and the generalization of findings to a broader population (Creswell & Creswell, 2017).

This study falls under the typology of causal research design, which aims to identify cause-and-effect relationships among variables. The focus of this study is to construct and test the structural relationship between *proactive market orientation* (PMO), *Political Innovation Capacity* (PIC), and *political participation* (PP), with PIC serving as the mediating variable.

3.2 Population and sampling method

The target population in this study consists of all Indonesian citizens registered as permanent voters (*Daftar Pemilih Tetap/DPT*) in Central Java Province, Indonesia, who participated in the 2024 Simultaneous Elections. With a total of 27,896,902 voters spread across 35 regencies/cities, 573 subdistricts, and 8,559 villages/urban villages, Central Java offers sufficient diversity to test the research model. The sampling technique used was *purposive sampling*. This technique was chosen because this study required respondents with experience and knowledge relevant to the research topic (Ferdinand, 2014). Respondent inclusion criteria include: (1) being registered as a voter in the 2024 General Election/Regional Election voter list; (2) being at least 17 years old at the time

of voting; (3) residing in Central Java Province; and (4) being willing to participate in the study by completing the questionnaire in full.

The determination of the sample size is based on the requirements of *Structural Equation Modeling* (SEM) analysis. Hair Jr *et al.* (2021) recommend a minimum ratio of 10 observations per estimated parameter, while for models of moderate complexity, a ratio of 15–20 observations per parameter is more advisable. Based on these guidelines and considering the number of indicators in the research model, the target sample size was set at 450 respondents. This number is considered sufficient to ensure the stability of parameter estimates, adequate statistical power, and sufficient generalizability.

3.3 Data collection procedure

Data collection was conducted from December 2024 to January 2025 using a structured questionnaire distributed online via *Google Forms* through social media and voter community mailing lists, as well as offline with the assistance of community leaders, youth organizations, and trained enumerators in various regencies and cities across Central Java. Enumerators underwent training on data collection procedures, research ethics, and the understanding of questionnaire item to ensure data consistency and quality. Of the 450 questionnaires distributed, 412 were deemed valid for analysis, yielding an effective response rate of 91.6%.

3.4 Research instruments

The research instrument was developed through a process of adapting scales that have been validated in the international literature, as well as developing new items for the construct of *Political Innovation Capacity* based on the conceptual synthesis that had been conducted. All variables were measured using a 5-point Likert scale, with response ranges from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree).

Table 1*Operational Definitions and Research Variable Indicators*

Variable	Conceptual Definition	Indicators	Code	Source of Adaptation
Proactive Market Orientation (PMO)	The ability of political actors to actively and proactively identify and respond to the needs, desires, and aspirations of voters that have not yet been explicitly expressed	Systematic collection of market information	PMO1	Baker & Sinkula (2005); Narver <i>et al.</i> (2004); Choudhury <i>et al.</i> (2019)
		Development of latent-need-based programs	PMO2	
		Proactive measures in response to change	PMO3	
		Market-information-based decision-making	PMO4	
		Flexibility in responding to opportunities and threats	PMO5	
Political Innovation Capacity (PIC)	The capacity of political actors to actualize potential and resources within to create, develop, and implement innovations in political products, ideas, designs, processes, and policies	Frequency of experimentation with new ideas	PIC1	Heng <i>et al.</i> (2020); Meijer <i>et al.</i> (2016); Sørensen & Torfing (2011)
		Capacity to be <i>a first mover</i>	PIC2	
		Intensity of searching for alternative methods	PIC3	
		Creativity of operational methods	PIC4	
		Innovation in decision-making	PIC5	
		Effectiveness of policy implementation	PIC6	
Political Participation (PP)	Activities undertaken by citizens to influence the	Participation in elections	PP1	Verba <i>et al.</i> (1995); Boulianne (2015);

Variable	Conceptual Definition	Indicators	Code	Source of Adaptation
	political process, both conventionally and digitally			Theocharis <i>et al.</i> (2015)
		Political discussion	PP2	
		Participation in campaigns	PP3	
		Use of social media for politics	PP4	

3.5 Data analysis techniques

Data analysis in this study was conducted in several stages using IBM SPSS Statistics 26 and IBM SPSS AMOS 24 software.

3.5.1 Descriptive statistical analysis

Descriptive statistic is used to provide a comprehensive overview of the respondents' demographic characteristics as well as the distribution of responses for each research variable, include frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation for each indicator and variable.

3.5.2 Testing the measurement model with confirmatory factor analysis (CFA)

CFA is used to evaluate the validity and reliability of the research construct before hypothesis testing is conducted. The evaluation criteria used include:

1. Convergent Validity: Assessed through the *factor loadings* of each indicator, which must be ≥ 0.70 and statistically significant ($p < 0.05$), as well as the *Average Variance Extracted* (AVE), which must be ≥ 0.50 .
2. Discriminant Validity: Assessed by comparing the square root of the AVE for each construct with the inter-construct correlation. Discriminant validity is met if

the square root of the AVE is greater than the correlation between that construct and other constructs.

3. Construct Reliability: Assessed through *Composite Reliability* (CR), which must be ≥ 0.70 , and *Cronbach's Alpha* (α), which must be ≥ 0.70 (Hair *et al.*, 2019).

3.5.3 Testing the structural model with SEM

After the measurement model was found to be valid and reliable, structural equation modeling was conducted to evaluate the causal relationships among the constructs. Model fit was assessed using various *goodness-of-fit* indices with the following *cut off values*:

1. Chi-square/df (CMIN/df): A value < 3.00 indicates a good *fit*
2. Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA): A value < 0.08 indicates a good *fit*
3. Comparative Fit Index (CFI): A value > 0.95 indicates a good *fit*
4. Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI): A value > 0.95 indicates a good *fit*
5. Parsimony Normed Fit Index (PNFI): A value > 0.50 indicates a good *fit*

3.5.4 Hypothesis testing

Hypothesis testing was conducted by analyzing the significance of the standardized path coefficients (β) and probability values (p) at a significance level of $\alpha = 0.05$. A hypothesis was considered supported if the path coefficient was consistent with the hypothesis (positive) and the p -value was < 0.05 .

3.5.5 Testing the mediation effect

To test the mediation hypothesis (H4), the *bootstrap* method was used with 5,000 *bootstrap* samples and a 95% *bias-corrected* confidence interval (Preacher & Hayes, 2008). The mediation effect is considered significant if the confidence interval for the indirect effect does not include zero. Mediation is categorized as *full* mediation if the

direct effect becomes insignificant after including the mediator, and as *partial* mediation if the direct effect remains significant but the indirect effect is also significant.

4 RESEARCH FINDINGS

4.1 Respondent characteristics

Of the 412 respondents who participated in this study, the demographic composition showed diversity representative of the Central Java population. The distribution of respondents by gender was relatively balanced, with 52.2% male (215 respondents) and 47.8% female (197 respondents). The age range of respondents varied from 17 to 68 years, with a mean age of 39.2 years ($SD = 12.8$ years). Age categorization showed the following composition: the 17–25 age group (first-time voters) accounted for 21.8% (90 respondents), the 26–35 age group at 27.9% (115 respondents), the 36–45 age group at 24.8% (102 respondents), the 46–55 age group at 15.8% (65 respondents), and those over 55 years old at 9.7% (40 respondents).

In terms of education, respondents had diverse backgrounds: 7.5% (31 respondents) had not completed elementary school or had completed elementary school, 14.8% (61 respondents) had completed junior high school or its equivalent, high school graduates or equivalent at 38.3% (158 respondents), diploma holders at 11.9% (49 respondents), bachelor's degree holders at 22.1% (91 respondents), and master's degree holders at 5.3% (22 respondents). The respondents' occupational composition includes Civil Servants/TNI/Polri 11.4% (47 respondents), private sector employees 27.9% (115 respondents), entrepreneurs 25.5% (105 respondents), farmers 10.2% (42 respondents), laborers 8.3% (34 respondents), students 11.7% (48 respondents), and others 5.1% (21 respondents).

Regarding political participation, 70.1% of respondents (289 people) stated that they always exercise their right to vote in every election, 21.4% (88 people) sometimes vote, and 8.5% (35 people) rarely or never vote. A total of 36.9% of respondents (152 people) have been involved as volunteers or supporters of political parties or candidates, and 16.5% (68 people) have experience as election organizers at the Polling Station (TPS) or subdistrict level.

4.2 Descriptive statistics of research variables

Descriptive statistical analysis provides an overview of respondents' perceptions regarding each research variable.

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics of Research Variables

Variable	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard Deviation	Category
Proactive Market Orientation (PMO)	412	1.80	5.00	3.72	0.71	High
Political Innovation Capacity (PIC)	412	1.67	5.00	3.61	0.74	High
Political Participation (PP)	412	2.00	5.00	3.88	0.66	High

Note: Categories are determined based on score intervals: 1.00–1.80 = Very Low; 1.81–2.60 = Low; 2.61–3.40 = Moderate; 3.41–4.20 = High; 4.21–5.00 = Very High

The results of the descriptive statistics show that, in general, respondents perceive the proactive market orientation of political actors in their region to be in the high category (mean = 3.72; SD = 0.71). This indicates that political parties and candidates are viewed as fairly proactive in identifying and responding to voters' needs. Political innovation capabilities also fall into the high category (mean = 3.61; SD = 0.74), indicating that the innovative capacity of political actors is perceived as quite good, although there is still room for improvement. Respondents' political participation falls into the high category (mean = 3.88; SD = 0.66), indicating a fairly high level of political engagement among respondents.

4.3 Evaluation of the measurement model

4.3.1 Convergent validity test

The CFA analysis results show that all indicators have *factor loadings* above the 0.70 threshold and are statistically significant at the $p < 0.001$ level. The *Average Variance Extracted (AVE)* values for each construct are also above the 0.50 threshold. These results confirm that all indicators adequately reflect the constructs being measured, thus fulfilling the criteria for convergent validity.

Table 3

Results of the Convergent Validity Test

Construct	Indicator	Factor Loading	t-value	AVE
Proactive Market Orientation (PMO)	PMO1	0.79	14.28	0.63
	PMO2	0.81	14.92	
	PMO3	0.77	13.85	
	PMO4	0.82	15.21	
	PMO5	0.75	13.42	
Political Innovation Capacity (PIC)	PIC1	0.81	15.03	0.65
	PIC2	0.83	15.67	
	PIC3	0.80	14.76	
	PIC4	0.78	14.21	
	PIC5	0.82	15.35	
	PIC6	0.76	13.68	
Political Participation (PP)	PP1	0.74	13.18	0.59
	PP2	0.79	14.42	

Construct	Indicator	Factor Loading	t-value	AVE
	PP3	0.81	14.95	
	PP4	0.76	13.71	

4.3.2 Discriminant validity test

Discriminant validity was evaluated using the Fornell and Larcker (1981) criterion, in which the square root of the AVE for each construct is compared with the correlations between constructs. The analysis results show that the square root of the AVE for each construct (diagonal values in the table) is greater than the correlation between that construct and other constructs (off-diagonal values). This confirms that each construct is empirically distinct from the others, thus fulfilling the criterion for discriminant validity.

Table 4

Results of the Discriminant Validity Test

Construct	PMO	PIC	PP
PMO	0.794		
PIC	0.59	0.806	
PP	0.52	0.71	0.768

4.3.3 Reliability test

The reliability test showed that all constructs had *Composite Reliability* (CR) and *Cronbach's Alpha* values above the 0.70 threshold. These results indicate that the research's instrument has good reliability, meaning it is consistent in measuring the same construct when administered under relatively similar conditions.

Table 5*Reliability Test Results*

Construct	Composite Reliability (CR)	Cronbach's Alpha
Proactive Market Orientation (PMO)	0.89	0.87
Political Innovation Capacity (PIC)	0.91	0.90
Political Participation (PP)	0.85	0.84

4.4 Structural model evaluation*4.4.1 Model fit test*

The proposed structural model was tested for its fit with the empirical data using various *goodness-of-fit* indices. The analysis results show that all fit indices are within the recommended range, indicating that the proposed theoretical model is consistent with the empirical data.

Table 6*Structural Model Fit Indices*

Index	Observed Value	Cut-off Value	Conclusion
Chi-square/df (CMIN/df)	2.18	< 3.00	Good
RMSEA	0.054	< 0.08	Good
CFI	0.95	> 0.95	Good
TLI	0.94	> 0.90	Good
PNFI	0.69	> 0.50	Good

4.4.2 Direct hypothesis testing (H1, H2, H3)

Direct hypothesis testing was conducted by analyzing the significance of the path coefficients in the structural model. The test results are summarized in Table 7 below.

Table 7*Results of Direct Hypothesis Testing*

Hypothesis	Path	Coefficient (β)	Standard Error	Critical Ratio	p-value	Decision
H1	PMO \rightarrow PIC	0.59	0.06	9.83	< 0.001	Supported
H2	PMO \rightarrow PP	0.32	0.05	6.40	< 0.01	Supported
H3	PIC \rightarrow PP	0.57	0.06	9.50	< 0.001	Supported

The results of the direct hypothesis testing show:

H1 accepted: Proactive market orientation has a positive and significant effect on Political Innovation Capacity ($\beta = 0.59$; $p < 0.001$). The higher respondents' perceptions of political actors' proactive market orientation, the higher their perceptions of Political Innovation Capacity.

H2 accepted: Proactive market orientation has a positive and significant effect on political participation ($\beta = 0.32$; $p < 0.01$). Although significant, the magnitude of this effect is relatively moderate.

H3 is accepted: Political Innovation Capacity has a positive and significant effect on political participation ($\beta = 0.57$; $p < 0.001$). The effect of PIC on PP is nearly twice that of the direct effect of PMO on PP, indicating that innovative capability is a stronger predictor of political participation.

4.4.3 Testing the mediation hypothesis (H4)

To test the mediation hypothesis (H4), an analysis was conducted using the *bootstrap* method with 5,000 *bootstrap* samples and a 95% *bias-corrected* confidence interval. The analysis results are presented in Table 8.

Table 8

Results of the Mediation Hypothesis Test

Path	Direct Effect (without mediator)	Direct Effect (with mediator)	Indirect Effect	95% CI (Lower-Upper)	Conclusion
PMO → PIC → PP	0.32**	0.11 (ns)	0.338***	[0.252 – 0.437]	Full Mediation

Note: **p < 0.01; ***p < 0.001; ns = not significant (p > 0.05)

The results of the mediation analysis show:

1. The indirect effect of PMO on PP via PIC is positive and significant ($\beta = 0.338$; $p < 0.001$), with a 95% confidence interval [0.252–0.437] that does not include zero.
2. After PIC was included as a mediator in the model, the previously significant direct effect of PMO on PP ($\beta = 0.32$; $p < 0.01$) became nonsignificant ($\beta = 0.11$; $p = 0.094$).
3. This pattern of results indicates the presence of full mediation, in which political innovation capabilities fully mediate the relationship between proactive market orientation and political participation.

Thus, H4 is accepted: proactive market orientation influences political participation through the mediation of political innovation capabilities.

5 DISCUSSION

5.1 Interpretation of research findings

5.1.1 Proactive market orientation as an antecedent of political innovation capacity (H1)

The research findings indicate that proactive market orientation (PMO) has a positive and significant effect on Political Innovation Capacity ($\beta = 0.59$; $p < 0.001$). These results align with the strategic management literature, which asserts that proactive market orientation can foster the development of innovation capabilities within organizations (Morgan *et al.*, 2009)

In a political context, these results indicate that political parties and candidates who actively monitor environmental dynamics and strive to understand voters' unmet needs tend to develop stronger innovative capabilities. This finding is also consistent with the dynamic capability perspective, which emphasizes the importance of an organization's ability to continuously adapt to environmental changes (Teece, Pisano, & Shuen, 1997).

Furthermore, this relationship can be understood through a process of learning-by-doing. Intensive activities in voter research and the analysis of electoral behavior enable political actors to accumulate knowledge about the public's preferences and aspirations. This knowledge then serves as the foundation for designing various political approaches or strategies that are more innovative and relevant to voters.

5.1.2 The direct effect of proactive market orientation on political participation (H2)

The finding that PMO has a direct positive effect on PP ($\beta = 0.32$; $p < 0.01$) confirms the research by Butt *et al.* (2021) as well as Reimann *et al.* (2022), who found a positive relationship between proactive market orientation and political engagement. However, the relatively moderate magnitude of the effect indicates that PMO alone is not sufficient to explain the variation in political participation.

This finding aligns with the argument put forth by Harrison *et al.* (2023), who state that the influence of proactive market behavior on political behavior is often insignificant without the presence of other factors. In this context, the PMO may only create *a necessary condition* but not *a sufficient condition* for political participation. A transformational mechanism is needed that can convert market insights into participatory action, and it is this mechanism that is hypothesized as Political Innovation Capacity.

5.1.3 Political innovation capacity as a predictor of political participation (H3)

This study found that Political Innovation Capacity (PIC) has a strong and significant influence on political participation ($\beta = 0.57$; $p < 0.001$). These results confirm that innovation capability in political practice plays a crucial role in fostering citizen engagement. This finding aligns with the views of Mulgan *et al.* (2007) and Bason (2010),

who state that innovation in the public sector can enhance service effectiveness and public participation, and is further supported by the study by Tawiah and Zakari (2024), which highlights the role of innovation in improving the quality of democracy.

Within the framework of Mediamorphosis Theory, political innovation is understood as the adaptive capacity to adjust communication and engagement strategies in response to developments in the media ecosystem. The use of digital platforms, multimedia content, and more accessible online participation mechanisms can make the political process feel more relevant and engaging, thereby encouraging the public to participate more actively.

5.1.4 *The mediating role of political innovation capabilities (H4)*

The most substantive finding in this study is that Political Innovation Capacity fully mediates the relationship between proactive market orientation and political participation (indirect effect = 0.338; $p < 0.001$; the direct effect becomes insignificant after including the mediator). This finding has profound theoretical implications.

First, these findings reveal the causal mechanisms that explain *how* a proactive market orientation translates into political participation. PMO enables political actors to identify voters' unexpressed needs, but these insights will only impact participation if actualized through innovative capabilities. Without PIC, market insights may remain merely as underutilized declarative knowledge or be translated into unappealing and irrelevant programs.

Second, these findings of full mediation explain the discrepancies in the prior literature regarding the relationship between PMO and political participation. Variations in previous research findings (Cantaleano *et al.*, 2018) may be attributed to differences in levels of innovative capabilities across different contexts. In contexts where political actors possess high innovative capabilities, PMO will have a significant impact on participation through mediation mechanisms. Conversely, in contexts where innovative capabilities are low, the influence of PMO may not manifest.

Third, within the framework of Mediamorphosis Theory, these findings confirm that innovative capabilities are a critical adaptive capacity required to respond to transformations in the media ecosystem. Fidler (1997) emphasizes that mediamorphosis

creates pressure for actors to innovate in their communication strategies. Political actors capable of developing innovative capabilities will be more successful in translating market insights into effective engagement strategies within an ever-evolving media landscape.

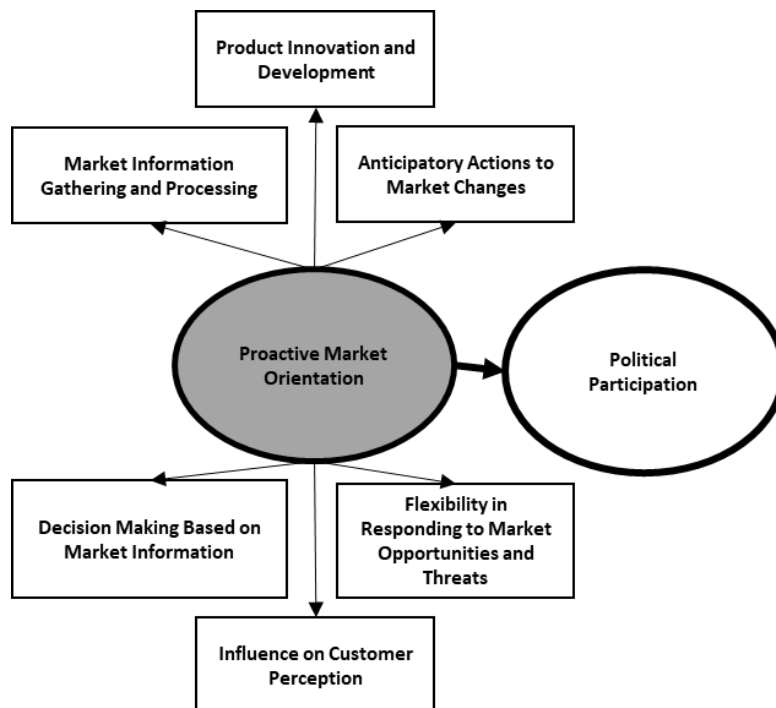
5.2 Theoretical implications

This study makes a significant contribution to the development of political marketing literature and democracy studies.

First, this study introduces Political Innovation Capacity (PIC) as a new construct in political marketing research. This concept was developed through a synthesis of various theoretical perspectives, such as organizational capabilities, innovation strategies, political marketing orientation, and political innovation, resulting in a definition and multidimensional indicators for PIC. The empirical validation in this study opens opportunities for further studies to examine the role of innovative capabilities in various political contexts.

Figure 2

Proactive market orientation Ideas



Second, this study expands the application of Mediamorphosis Theory to the field of electoral politics, which has previously been used more extensively in communication and media studies. The results indicate that political actors must possess adaptive capabilities to respond to changes in the media ecosystem and voter preferences. The finding that PIC mediates the relationship between PMO and PP confirms that adaptive capabilities serve as a crucial mechanism in the process of political mediamorphosis.

Third, this study contributes to a more nuanced understanding of the relationship between market orientation and political participation. By identifying PIC as a full mediator, this study explains why some studies find a significant direct relationship while others do not. This finding emphasizes the importance of considering mediating variables in understanding complex relationships in political marketing.

Fourth, this study integrates insights from strategic management, marketing, and political science into a coherent analytical framework. This interdisciplinary integration not only enriches our understanding of contemporary political dynamics but also opens up opportunities for more productive theoretical dialogue across disciplines.

5.3 Practical implications

The findings of this study have significant practical implications for various stakeholders in the context of the 2029 Simultaneous Elections.

5.3.1 For political parties and candidates

1. Developing a Proactive Market Orientation (PMO) through Voter Research

Political parties need to establish a political research system capable of identifying not only visible voter preferences but also the latent needs and aspirations of the public. Approaches such as mixed-methods (quantitative–qualitative), big data analysis, and voter behavior research can help political actors understand voter dynamics more deeply, thereby enabling them to design more relevant political programs and messages.

2. Systematically Building Political Innovation Capacity (PIC)

To translate insights into the political landscape into tangible political engagement, political parties need to develop structured innovation capabilities, including:

- a. Human resource development, through training cadres in digital literacy, data analytics, creative communication, and political innovation management.
- b. Investment in technological infrastructure, such as interactive digital platforms, voter relationship management systems, and political analytics tools.
- c. Fostering a culture of innovation by encouraging experimentation, creating space for new ideas, and establishing mechanisms to learn from both the successes and failures of political strategies.
- d. Collaboration within the innovation ecosystem, by involving universities, research institutions, technology communities, and civil society organizations to develop more innovative political solutions.

3. Integrating Political Communication Strategies to Increase Participation

By leveraging the PMO and strengthening the PIC, political parties need to develop cross-media communication strategies capable of fostering public political participation. Traditional media can be used to build legitimacy and broad reach, while digital media is utilized to create interactions that are more personal, participatory, and responsive to voters' needs. This approach allows insights from a proactive market orientation to be translated into political communication innovations capable of increasing political participation more effectively.

5.3.2 For election administrators and academics

1. Developing Voter Education Based on Proactive Market Orientation

Election administrators need to develop voter education that is not only informative but also based on a proactive understanding of voters' needs and characteristics. By leveraging voter behavior research, approaches such as gamification, creative video content, interactive social media campaigns, and digital learning platforms can be designed to be more relevant, thereby driving increased public political participation.

2. Fostering Political Innovation Capacity through Digital Participation Platforms

Election administrators can develop digital innovations that make it easier for the public to access election information and participate actively. Digital platforms such as integrated election information portals, voting simulations, and public feedback forums can serve as innovative tools to increase voter engagement while strengthening the relationship between election administrators and the public.

3. Creating Regulations That Support Healthy Political Innovation

Election organizers also need to formulate a regulatory framework capable of balancing the drive for political innovation with the protection of election integrity. Adaptive regulations will allow political actors to creatively develop innovations in political campaigns and communication, while still upholding the principles of fairness, transparency, and accountability, so that such innovations can contribute to increased political participation.

4. Ongoing Research on Political Innovation

Academics and researchers need to conduct ongoing research and evaluation on how innovations in communication strategies, political education, and participatory technologies can enhance public political engagement. Collaboration among academics, political parties, and election administrators can help identify effective innovative practices for boosting political participation.

5.4 Limitations and future research agenda

This study has several limitations that must be acknowledged and can serve as an agenda for future research.

First, the limitation of this study lies in the use of a cross-sectional design, which only demonstrates a correlational relationship and thus cannot definitively establish causality; therefore, longitudinal research tracking changes in PMO, PIC, and PP across several election cycles is needed to obtain stronger causal evidence and to understand the temporal dynamics among the variables.

Second, the research data is based solely on voters' perceptions of political actors' characteristics, rather than on objective data regarding their resources, strategies, and capabilities; therefore, future research is advised to incorporate direct data from parties or candidates, such as documentation of innovations, budget allocations, and campaign

performance, so that triangulation can yield a more comprehensive and valid understanding.

Third, the research context is limited to Central Java Province, so generalizing the findings must be done cautiously and requires comparative studies in other provinces with different characteristics.

Fourth, the research model only covers three main variables; therefore, future research should incorporate other factors such as political culture, political trust, political efficacy, demographic characteristics, and media exposure to gain a more comprehensive understanding of political participation.

Future research agendas that can be developed include:

1. Longitudinal studies: Tracking changes in PMO, PIC, and PP over several election cycles to understand temporal dynamics and causal relationships.
2. Cross-regional comparative study: Comparing models across various provinces in Indonesia or across different countries to test the generalizability of findings and identify contextual factors.
3. In-depth qualitative study: Deeply exploring the process of political innovation, including how new ideas are generated, developed, tested, and implemented within political organizations.
4. Instrument development and validation: Refining the PIC measurement through further validation studies across various contexts and populations.
5. Field experiments: Testing the effectiveness of various innovative interventions in increasing political participation through experimental designs with control groups.

6 CONCLUSION

This study has successfully empirically tested a conceptual model integrating proactive market orientation, political innovation capabilities, and political participation in the context of voters in Central Java. Based on data analysis from 412 respondents using *Structural Equation Modeling* (SEM) techniques, this study yielded the following key findings:

1. Proactive market orientation was found to have a positive and significant effect on political innovation capabilities. The more proactive political parties and candidates are in identifying and responding to voters' unexpressed needs, the higher the innovative capabilities they develop.
2. A proactive market orientation has a direct, positive, and significant effect on political participation, although the magnitude of this effect is relatively moderate. This suggests that PMO alone is insufficient to explain variations in political participation.
3. Political Innovation Capacity proved to be a strong predictor of political participation, with an effect nearly twice that of PMO's direct effect. This finding confirms the importance of innovation in fostering citizens' political engagement.
4. Political Innovation Capacity fully mediates the relationship between proactive market orientation and political participation. This most substantive finding reveals that the effect of PMO on PP is fully channeled through innovative capability. In other words, proactive market insights will only impact participation if actualized through political innovation.

Within the framework of Mediamorphosis Theory, these findings confirm that in a constantly transforming media and political ecosystem, political actors need to develop adaptive capabilities that enable them to respond effectively to shifts in voter preferences and media dynamics. Political Innovation Capacity emerges as a critical capability that enables political actors not only to identify voter needs (through PMO), but also to design and implement innovative responses that effectively drive participation.

This study makes theoretical contributions through: (1) the introduction and empirical validation of the construct of Political Innovation Capacity as a new concept in political marketing; (2) the extension of the application of Mediamorphosis Theory within the context of Indonesian electoral politics; (3) a more nuanced explanation of the relationship between proactive market orientation and political participation; and (4) the integration of insights from strategic management, marketing, and political science into a coherent analytical framework.

In practical terms, this study provides guidance for political parties, candidates, and election organizers in preparation for the 2029 Simultaneous Elections, highlighting that increasing political participation requires more than simply accumulating resources

or responding to voters' needs; it demands innovative capabilities to translate voter insights into effective participatory mechanisms through the strengthening of human resources, technology, a culture of innovation, and collaboration. Amid an ever-changing media ecosystem and increasingly complex and dynamic voter preferences, the ability to innovate is key to strengthening political participation and the foundations of democracy.

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