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Exploring and consolidating the brand personality elements of the political leader

Brand
personality
elements

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Aplicación de las dimensiones de la personalidad de marca al líder político

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Abstract

Purpose – This study aims to examine brand personality and its application to political branding. This study focuses on the brand personality of a political leader from the BJP Party brand (Bharatiya Janta Party). The development of a strong political brand personality is crucial for success at the polls. Little research has been dedicated to this phenomenon particularly beyond Western political and post-election contexts.

Design/methodology/approach – The scope and development of the study required a qualitative approach. The theoretical frameworks of the study acted as the deductive base of the study. The insights of the respondents were the inductive base of the study. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with

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external stakeholders [voters]. In addition, semi-structured interviews were also adopted to capture the branding activities used by internal stakeholders [BJP].

Findings – The brand personality dimensions such as sincerity; agreeableness, competence, energy, openness, conscientiousness and emotional stability were clearly associated with a political leader. Negative qualities such as dictatorial attitudes and arrogance affected the political leader's brand personality. Religious partisanship was another strong negative trait affecting the brand personality of the political leader.

Originality/value – The study has an actionable framework for political brand personality in the post-election context. It offers negative qualities to be avoided in the development of the political brand personality of the leader. It offers insights about the political brand personality of the leader in terms of young digitally savvy voters.

Keywords India, Political marketing, Bharatiya Janta Party (BJP), Narendra Modi, Political brand personality, Political leaders

Paper type Research paper

Resumen

Propósito – Este trabajo examina la aplicación de la personalidad de marca al ámbito del marketing político y de la marca personal política. Concretamente se centra en la personalidad de marca de un líder político del partido Bharatiya Janta Party (BJP). El desarrollo de una fuerte marca personal política es crucial para el éxito en las elecciones. Pocos trabajos se han centrado hasta el momento en este fenómeno más allá del contexto político occidental.

Diseño/metodología/enfoque – El alcance y desarrollo del estudio requirió la adopción de un enfoque cualitativo. El marco teórico sirvió de base deductiva al tiempo que las entrevistas realizadas sirvieron de base inductiva. Estas entrevistas fueron semi-estructuradas y dirigidas a grupos de interés externos del BJP (los votantes). Además, se realizaron entrevistas también semi-estructuradas para capturar las actividades de marca desarrolladas por los grupos de interés internos (candidatos, políticos, trabajadores y gerentes del partido).

Resultados – Las dimensiones de personalidad de marca sinceridad, competencia, energía, estabilidad emocional, franqueza y escrupulosidad están claramente asociadas con un líder político. Por el contrario, rasgos negativos como las actitudes arrogantes y dictatoriales dañan la personalidad de marca de dicho líder, pero sobretodo el partidismo religioso.

Originalidad/valor – El trabajo proporciona un marco de acción para la marca personal política en un contexto post-electoral. Proporciona indicaciones de los rasgos y cualidades negativas que deben de evitarse en el desarrollo de una marca personal para un líder político. Ofrece también evidencias sobre la personalidad de marca que tiene que desarrollar un líder de cara a los votantes más dinámicos y digitales.

Palabras clave – India, Marketing político, Bharatiya Janta Party (BJP), Narendra Modi, Personalidad de la marca política, Líderes políticos

Tipo de artículo – Artículo de investigación

1. Introduction

'Brand personality' represents an increasing emphasis on the non-tangible, brand-oriented dimensions of products. It involves assigning human elements to brands (Aaker, 1997). The scope of these values is such that they can transcend a purely utility and result-oriented approach (Patterson *et al.*, 2013). Brand personality has been applied to different areas such as corporate brand personality and market place (Keller and Richey, 2006), brand personality in British politics and party political personality. Existing studies have also focused on the application of brand personality to different political settings and contexts including the UK, Mexico and Turkey (Guzman and Sierra, 2009; Matzler *et al.*, 2016). However, all of them have been from a quantitative orientation, which demands thorough qualitative investigations.

Historically, the political leader of a party has been the primary point of evaluation of the political party (Needham and Smith, 2015; Pich and Dean, 2015). It expanded to the point where the image and projection of the political leader could supersede the image and projection of the political party. Before the 1990s, ideological issues and centering were more

important for political salience and engagement. This led to a greater focus on the political party and the leader (Pich and Dean, 2015). The political leader became the focal point for the political party. Specifically, the first element is that brand personality can define and modulate the individual's engagement and bonding with brands. This application extends to political brands as well. The role of brand personality can be solidified in the context of political branding in terms of the political leaders.

If the perception and reception of the political leader can be strengthened in terms of the voters, it must belong to the domain of political brand image (Jain *et al.*, 2017). Thus, the objectives of this study include the development of an integrated and comprehensive framework to assess political brand personality and its strength. This strength is especially so in the case of the political leader. The next section will deal with necessary dimensions and aspects for this study. To achieve this, each section will carefully consider the contributions that the concepts can offer the study (Das *et al.*, 2012).

2. Literature review

2.1 Political marketing

Political marketing and political branding have an important role to play in the modern democratic process (Ormrod and Henneberg, 2011). The word political marketing is widely used in the political domain. Thus, there are consolidated efforts to operationalize the same (Harris and Lock, 2010). This is very relevant because most political communication exercises are marketing and branding exercises. Their primary purpose is influencing voters. Going on, there is an emergence of an organic and sophisticated theoretical corpus dedicated to the specific demands of political marketing (Jain *et al.*, 2017). One of the main areas of concerns is to supplement the existing quantitative focus of the studies in the area of political marketing (Smith and French, 2009; Peng and Hackley, 2009; White and de Chernatony, 2002) with a qualitative focus. This is supported by experts who are emphasizing on the symbolic and interactional domain in political marketing (Needham and Smith, 2015; Pich and Dean, 2015; Scammell, 2015). Going on, political marketing can establish "a basis for long term loyalty in an environment where products are fluid" (Needham, 2006: 180), as the processes of political marketing are both functional and emotional.

The salience of this enhancement is maximized because a study focused on the national referendum campaign in Scotland (Black and Veloutsou, 2017). Our study has an analogous application in terms of the brand personality and interactive potential of the political leader in the case of young voters. Finally, most political marketing research has been effected in the western contexts. There is limited and rigorous research in the eastern contexts. To address this issue, there are some common patterns that influence political marketing. The first pattern is considering voters as consumers.

The next pattern is the dominant usage of social media in political marketing based on three points: political information, interest and attention. There is a key related study that has deeply engaged with the creation of brand value for consumers. It also deals with how this meaning can be extended to include existing and new customers in the context of art. The study also considers how consumer brand selection is often based on the evaluation of how closely those brands reflect their own personalities (Kim *et al.*, 2018). This study and Chibuwe (2017) represent attempts at understanding the consumers' processes of seeking value from brands. Further, the latter study contextualizes the role of brand value by studying the case of Robert Mugabe, the former Zimbabwean President. The study of Mugabe revealed findings about traits of political leaders and their impact on the minds of voters. Yet, these studies have come close to and not allowed a crucial link with political

brand personality. Subsequently, we will overview the concepts of brand personality and political brand personality.

2.2 Brand personality and political brand personality

Brand personality is a scheme, which posits that brands can possess human-based characteristics. This is because consumers seek these qualities in brands to deal with the abstract and material dimensions of the world (Ahmad and Thyagaraj, 2015). These possibilities span both the dimensions of human perception and personality. Thus, the study of brand personality could be developed to a stage where certain dimensions could be considered almost universal. Specific characters such as warm, friendly and agreeable, competent, effective and efficient possess the possibility of universality (Davies *et al.*, 2018). This exploration can be traced to the almost paradigmatic “set of human characteristics associated with a brand” provided by Aaker (1997, p. 347). These factors of sincerity, excitement, competence, sophistication and ruggedness evolved after effecting a rigorous factor analysis of relevant adjectives (Caprara *et al.*, 2001) integral to the alignment of personality attributes (Goldberg, 1990).

The applicability of Aaker’s (1997) brand personality scale and dimensions are seen in politics too. Studies have added to the basic five dimensions of brand personality. The first change was the addition of peacefulness to Aaker’s (1997) model. The dimension of peacefulness was exclusive for Japan; for Spain, passion was a predominant element; and ruggedness was the predominant element in the context of the United States of America (Aaker *et al.*, 2001). There have been longitudinal studies of the use of brand personality to the leaders of the National Democratic Congress and the New Patriotic Party in Ghana (Tweneboah-Koduah *et al.*, 2010), and the relevance of brand personality for international political politics has also been studied. In the case of the study in Ghana, it was realized that sincerity and ruggedness were the most important dimensions for a political brand personality (Tweneboah-Koduah and Adusei, 2016). A key study in this direction had seen that organizations have transitioned from mass communication to one-to-one communication. The study had also observed that consumers had transitioned from one-to-one communication to one-to-many communication (Veloutsou and Guzman, 2017; Hewett *et al.*, 2016).

This means is a highly apposite method for the analysis of a political candidate’s personality (Guzman and Sierra, 2009). However, adding more human characteristics to the construct of brand personality would widen its applicability (Harris and Fleming, 2005). Thus, our study used the 42 brand personality traits established by Aaker (1997). Here, we used 25 candidate traits from Caprara *et al.*’s (2002) Five Factor Model. A trait that became redundant was “feminine,” as it is irrelevant in describing a political candidate (Bharatiya Janta Party, BJP’s, candidate Narendra Modi) who has always positioned himself as a tough operator evidencing manliness in decision-making. He has also appealed to certain of the traditional connotations of manliness such as decisiveness and a non-compromising discourse, which are a part of the traditional Indian patriarchal system (Srivastava, 2015). Hence, a composite of 62 traits have been engaged with to develop the personality framework for this study. This section will thus focus on the key learning(s) about political brand personality and brand personality in the context of political leaders.

2.3 Political brand personality and political leaders

There are highly limited studies focusing on political leaders and brand personality from the perspective of being a heuristic device for voters. Here, key studies and models have been developed to test the textual variations in brand personality (Slapin and Proksch, 2008) in addition to studying the relevance and importance of personality dimensions in politics (Yesil and Sozibilir, 2013). The lacuna in both the studies is that they do not focus on the post-election

scenario and brand personality development. Here, pivotal studies have focused on the interaction of brand personality, politics and websites (Papagiannidis *et al.*, 2012). These studies, despite their contributions, still suffer from a shortcoming. This shortcoming is that they do not seriously focus on the extended use of social media platforms to strengthen the brand personality of a leader. Finally, most of the existing studies do not focus on the means of engaging young digitally savvy voters to develop a strong brand personality (Nielsen, 2017). To summarize, the key studies of political brand personality have found that brand personality helps categorize candidates as preferred candidates and non-preferred candidates (Menon *et al.*, 1999).

The former refers to those political leaders whose brand personality traits are well received by the voters. The latter refers to those candidates whose traits are in opposition to the traits expected by the voters in a leader. A key study in this area has focused on the close correspondence between the elements of trust and political brands. It also extended its scope to include the questions of brand loyalty and brand transgression. These questions specifically dealt with the issues of Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd and the question of stakeholders (voters) experiencing a reduction in loyalty. This reduction was evidenced after Rudd was not able to keep up his electoral politics. Here, the 'let down' caused by the political leader affected the entire political party thereon (Burgess *et al.*, 2017). Yet, most studies that have concentrated on the application of brand personality in politics have suffered because of a distinct gap.

This gap is between the individuals' perception of brand personality and the application of brand personality by practitioners. This is because studies have not yet commenced analyzing it at a level of integrated contexts (Haarhoff and Kleyn, 2012; Hoegg and Lewis, 2011). At the other end of the spectrum, there have been rigorous studies (Geuens *et al.*, 2009) that have followed a psychological approach that reduced the non-personality matrices from and increased the applicability of Aaker's (1997) model. Mattes and Milazzo (2014) have focused on instinctive instantaneous judgments on the long-term impressions of the candidates and the effect of qualities of leaders not related to policy and statecraft on voter perception. Therefore, the current study would primarily contribute to understanding the brand personality of the candidates; provide for a framework or a process to the political leaders that can help them to effectively connect with the voters, specifically with the digital, dynamic, new tech savvy individuals (Freling *et al.*, 2011).

2.4 Development of connection with voters

Political brands have the potential of establishing "a basis for long term loyalty in an environment where products are fairly fluid" (Needham, 2006: 180) based on the voters' connection to the political brand of the political leader and the party. If voters are engaged with as consumers, then the connection developed based on the political brand of the leader can lead to parties consolidating the affiliation and support of the voters (Pich and Dean, 2015; Scammell and Langer, 2006). Once such affiliation and support are set in place, the political leader can further cement the connection by positioning their communications to their affiliates and prospective in a manner which the former and latter feel relevant. Also, connections based on political brands have the potential of being shortcuts. These shortcuts can be used by the voters and prospective voters when they assay political leaders and parties. In summation, the political leader can be seen to be responsive and acting as a source of quality maintenance to the voters (Busby and Cronshaw, 2015). An influential study here had focused on how a campaign could synchronize with the responses and requirements of the user. This study also understood how platforms meant to measure social media platforms could help political parties and leaders deal with their competition. Here, the findings of our study could help develop an inclusive framework that could include key dimensions of our political brand personality framework and campaign management (Cornfield, 2017). The crux of this engagement is the

primacy and centrality of the political leader in terms of political brand personality. The subsequent section will deal with the same.

2.5 Primacy of the political leader

Political branding has gradually begun to reduce the use of ideology as its *modus operandi* (Kobak *et al.*, 2016; Needham, 2006). This reduction has increased the engagement with the voters and prospects based on the characteristics of the political leaders. Once such values are determined, parties can aim to choose candidates around these values. The chosen candidate then nurtures and enhances the party's image through his or her leadership and management style. Here, the engagement of the party and the leader can base on the most salient utilitarian and symbolic touch points in the context of the voters (Rayner, 2014; Ormrod and Henneberg, 2011). A related investigation was done by MacLinnis and Folkes (2017) who considered brand anthropomorphism as a phenomenon that encourages consumers to attribute human qualities to their brands. The process involves the creation of symbolic meaning. This form of anthropomorphism could be used in the process of creating a strong political brand for the leader. Thus, the concept of political branding could receive its applicatory expansion through the branding of the political leader. In fact, the brand of a political leader who is prominent and possesses a large space in terms of coverage would benefit from the development of a strong brand personality (Ahmed *et al.*, 2017; Rojas-Méndez *et al.*, 2013). Finally, a summation of some of the most important studies of political branding and their key engagements has been provided in Table I. We will now discuss the methodology required for the study.

3. Methodology

The process of conducting exploratory brand research should be qualitative (Scammell, 2007). This is equally true when political brands need to be explored with a focus on brand personality in the digital context. These insights help capture the nuances developed from the respondents' perspectives (Mohajan, 2018). Qualitative research can also ensure that the conjunction between deductive logic and inductive logic is perfectly maintained. This is made possible because the theoretical frameworks act as the deductive base (Roshan and Deeptee, 2009). The respondents' insights become the inductive expansion of the investigation.

This conjunction extends to the development of codes, categories and themes. This development will ensure that the conceptualization to be developed will have a coherent and well-structured formalization (Gustafsson, 2017). The next section will deal with the first stage of the methodology.

3.1 Stage 1: Engagement with external stakeholders

Our study commenced with in-depth interviews with the respondents and the usage of projective techniques with the stakeholders outside the political party, i.e. the electorate (O'Cass, 2001). External stakeholders are key, as they were integral to considering the political brand personality of a leader (Schneider, 2004). External stakeholders and the elicitation of their responses were most amenable to the process of in-depth semi-structured interviews (Kang *et al.*, 2016). They are open-ended and possess nondirect questions.

Semi-structured in-depth interviews also afford extended control to the respondents, as they can project their feelings and emotions related to the topic. We followed the steps of projective techniques with the focus of ensuring that brand personality is not restricted to a lexical dimension.

These techniques helped unearth "views and values that people have not thought about in a very conscious way and or do not normally admit to" (Scammell, 2007, p. 72). Thus, projective techniques were conducted in five stages: association, completion, construction,

Authors	Title and year	Key summary
Dianne Dean, Robin Croft and Christopher Pich	Toward a Conceptual Framework of Emotional Relationship Marketing: An Examination of Two UK Political Parties: 2014	The study focused on the nature of economic and utilitarian forms of political communication and marketing. Specific attention focused on the importance of political leaders in political marketing
Margaret Scammell	Politics and Image: The Conceptual Value of Branding: 2015	The study focused on the importance of image development and maintenance in the fields of political branding and marketing. Specific attention was directed to the necessity of qualitative research in developing closer bonds between the voters and political parties and leaders
Robert Busby and Sue Cronshaw	Political Branding: The Tea Party and Its Use of Participation Branding: 2015	The study focused on the nature of nonaffiliated political interests and groups aligning for a common cause. Specific attention was focused on the nature of political movements that could be mobilized without a single figurehead but multiple engagement points
Tiffany Winchester, John Hall and Wayne Binney	Conceptualizing Usage in Voting Behavior for Political Marketing: An Application of Consumer Behavior: 2016	The study focused on the importance of understanding the usage of key marketing concepts such as marketing and image management in the field of political marketing. Specific attention focused on operationalizing the nature of consumer choice in political marketing
Wojciech Cwalina and Andrzej Falkowski	Morality and Competence in Shaping the Images of Political Leaders: 2016	The study focused on the importance of understanding the nature of image management and political marketing. Specific attention was directed to the nature of image management in politics both in the national and local contexts
Richard Tempest	The Charismatic Body Politics of President Putin: 2016	The study focused on the development of Vladimir Putin's brand image based on his physical attributes. Specifically, the study focused on Putin's image management in a context of almost no political opposition and a context of more dynamic politics
Caroline Lego Muñoz and Terri L. Towner	The Image is the Message: Instagram Marketing and the 2016 Presidential Primary Season: 2017	The study focused on the importance of image predominance in the context of political campaigning and marketing. It also tried to understand the processes by which the images used for the political candidates synchronized with the ideal images. Specifically, the study focused on the American candidates who had stood for the primary elections and the texts used to back up the images
Joseph (Jun Hyun) Ryoo and Neil Bendle	Understanding the Social Media Strategies of US Primary Candidates: 2017	The study focused on the social media strategies of the candidates contesting for the primary elections in the USA. It also dealt with the different modes by which the candidates used supplementary platforms to emphasize their candidature. Specifically, the study focused on which concerns of the voters were emphasized on during the campaigns

Table I.
Key studies related to
political branding

expression and choice ordering (Hofstede *et al.*, 2007). Respondents were encouraged to annotate drawings and offer greater through echoic probing for both the pictorial and verbal insights (Sung *et al.*, 2015; Donoghue, 2000).

The framework required the selection of respondents who, as external stakeholders, were young people from urban areas through purposive sampling. Details of the samples are

illustrated in [Table II](#). This was further substantiated by the data released by the Election Commission of India. These data revealed that out of a total voting population of 0.8 billion, 0.23 billion voters were between the age of 18 and 19 years during the Lok Sabha Elections held in the year 2014 in India.

Around 0.12 billion people who were between the age group of 15 and 19 years during the 2011 elections became eligible to vote in 2014. Therefore, the study focused on a target population between 18 and 24 years from the three cities of Delhi, Mumbai and Ahmedabad. Delhi is the national capital of India. It is also the political capital of the nation. It has a population of 10 million. In addition, Delhi is the third largest user base of the internet in the country. Owing to its being the political center at the national and state level in tandem, the voting sample of Delhi is very politically vibrant. Mumbai is the hub of financial activity in India. It has had a very active and political history of over 60 years. Also, it has a population of 18 million people. Mumbai is one of the most culturally diverse cities in India. It has a wide linguistic base with Hindi, Marathi and English spoken quite widely. It has the highest internet base in India. This population makes Mumbai one of the most hard fought over political bases in India.

Owing to the wide internet penetration and its active political nature, the sample population offers unique insights about deeply political engaged voters who use the internet regularly to discuss and engage in political discussions. Ahmedabad has a population of 7 million. It has a literacy rate of 92 per cent for men and 83 per cent for women. It is the seventh largest urban area in India. Moreover, it is considered to be one of the strongholds of the BJP. Ahmedabad is the capital of the state of Gujarat. It is also believed to be the epicenter of a sea change in Indian politics with the victory of the BJP in 2004 ([Indiaonlinepages.com, 2016](#); [Indexmundi.com, 2016](#); [Indian web2, 2016](#)). The sampling technique was non-probability sampling, as it suited the qualitative and exploratory

Code	Previously voted	Location	Education level
P1D	Yes	New Delhi	Postgraduate
P2D	No	New Delhi	Postgraduate
P3D	Yes	New Delhi	Postgraduate
P4D	Yes	New Delhi	Graduate
P5D	Yes	New Delhi	Postgraduate
P6D	Yes	New Delhi	Postgraduate
P7D	Yes	New Delhi	Postgraduate
P8D	No	New Delhi	Postgraduate
P1M	Yes	Mumbai	Postgraduate
P2M	Yes	Mumbai	Postgraduate
P3M	Yes	Mumbai	Postgraduate
P4M	Yes	Mumbai	Postgraduate
P5M	Yes	Mumbai	Postgraduate
P6M	No	Mumbai	Postgraduate
P7M	Yes	Mumbai	Postgraduate
P8M	Yes	Mumbai	Postgraduate
P1G	No	Ahmedabad	Postgraduate
P2G	Yes	Ahmedabad	Postgraduate
P3G	Yes	Ahmedabad	Postgraduate
P4G	Yes	Ahmedabad	Postgraduate
P5G	Yes	Ahmedabad	Graduate
P6G	Yes	Ahmedabad	Postgraduate
P7G	Yes	Ahmedabad	Postgraduate
P8G	Yes	Ahmedabad	Postgraduate

Table II.
Details of external stakeholders

objective of this study. The research also aimed to investigate numerous variables related to the independent yet subjective perceptions of the political brand personality of Narendra Modi. This involved the researcher ceasing the exploration when the respondents have no further and new data to offer. The collection of data for Phase 1 was culminated when we realized that the respondents from each city provided us the requisite insights. The identity of the respondents was kept confidential as a precondition to recruiting the respondents.

Each interview was conducted for 45 min and audio recorded for transcription and thematic analysis by the researcher. Moreover, the expressions and illustrations generated from the projective techniques were also thematically analyzed with the aid of qualitative content analysis accompanied by the two-staged thematic approach (Soane *et al.*, 2012). The nomenclature of the data collected from the respondents can be seen in Table III. The participants had been mobilized to encompass the three types of influential stakeholders for political marketing: the voter, stakeholder and society (Ormrod *et al.*, 2007).

3.2 Stage 2: Engagement with internal stakeholders

The interviews were coherent and based on theoretical assumptions and information processes consistent with objectives of the study (Pich and Dean, 2015). Subsequently, projective techniques were used in conjunction with the semi-structured in-depth interviews with the internal stakeholders (refer Table IV) and nomenclature in Table V. These techniques provided for greater description, richer understanding and spontaneity. A concise presentation of the results of the projective techniques (picture association) featuring

Table III.

Nomenclature used for citing/paraphrasing the verbatim for external stakeholder

Code	External stakeholder
P1D	Participant one from Delhi
P1M	Participant one from Mumbai
P1A	Participant one from Ahmedabad

Table IV.

Details of internal stakeholders

Code	Internal stakeholder	Industry	Location
P1	Senior Feature Writer (Digital Media)	Electric Goods	Delhi
P2	Independent Online Blogger	Digital Platforms	Delhi
P3	BJP Spokesperson	Politics	Gujarat
P4	BJP Digital Marketing Spokesperson	Politics	Gujarat
P5	Former National Creative Director	Advertising Agency	Delhi
P6	Founder/Director	Advertising Agency	Gujarat
P7	Head Events	Advertising Agency	Gujarat
P8	Chairman and Managing Director	Advertising Agency	Gujarat

Table V.

Nomenclature example for citing/paraphrasing the verbatim for internal stakeholder

Code	Internal stakeholder
P1	Digital Media Journalist
P2	Independent Online Blogger
P3	BJP Spokesperson
P5	Creative Team
P8	PR Agency Head

in the first phase of the research is given in Table VI. An outline of the results of the projective techniques (expressive) has been provided in Table VII. These internal stakeholders included candidates, party managers, politicians, media representatives and party workers of the BJP (O’Cass, 2001). Very importantly, semi-structured interviews were ideal for context that require in-depth investigative conversations that might help elicit deep insights. These characteristics when melded with a deep theoretical underpinning helped probe the complexities of political branding personality. For the purpose of data collection and verification, we conducted eight in-depth interviews. These perceptions were centralized on the brand personality of Narendra Modi.

The interviews were conducted with digital media journalists, bloggers, BJP spokespeople, digital media and PR (Public Relations) agency leaders. The interviewees

Table VI.
Results – projective techniques – picture association

Personality traits	Respondents
Daring	P1A, P1M, P2D, P3D, P6D, P3A, P6A, P8A, P2M, P7M, P5D, P7D
Trendy	P5A, P7A, P3M, P1D, P8D
Cool	P2A, P3A, P5A, P8A, P1M, P4M, P7M, P8M, P2D
Young	P8A, P6M, P8D
Exciting	P4A, P5D, P1A, P2D, P3D, P7D
Spirited	P2A, P4D, P3A, P1D, P5M, P8M, P1A, P7A, P3M, P7M
Imaginative	P6D, P4M, P6A
Unique	P4A, P5A, P5M, P2A, P7A
Up-to-date	P2M, P6M, P5D, P4A, P8M, P4D, P6D
Independent	P1A, P3A, P1M, P2M, P3M, P4M, P5M, P3D, P4D, P7D, P8D
Contemporary	P6A, P6M, P1D

Table VII.
Results – projective techniques – expressive

Brands/products chosen	Respondents	Reasoning
Coke	P1A, P4D	Bring happiness, classic brand made for all yet young at heart
Lifebuoy with Glycerine	P1M	Has taken the charge to clean the system. Modern touch to a classic comfort
Malboro	P1D	Negative interjection of politicians smoking away the resources of India
Reliance	P8A, P7D, P8M	Compared the life journey of Modi with Dhirubhai Ambani; Gujarati Origins; tough rugged and a classic brand
Amul	P2A, P7A, P2D, P8D	Gujarati origins; diversifying to add a tint of modernity
Cleaning Brush	P5A	Has taken the charge to clean the nation; low maintenance; modern and innovative
Volkswagen	P2M	Tough rugged and stylish
Idea Internet	P3A	Quick ideation, attaching to the grassroots just like in the ads; thinking about everyone’s benefits; modern and innovative just like IIM
Teachers Dairy Milk	P3M P4D	Smooth as a classic whiskey brand; rugged and strong Sugar coated; smooth, loved by all; modern and innovative since coming up with variations like silk
Sedan	P4A	Travels through rough terrains, trustworthy; modern yet comfortable
Twitter	P5D	Pro social media, loves to tweet, talks a lot; small quirky witty lines
Crocin	P6A	Pain relieving, a fresh start to a painful end; classic comfort

were selected with a specific criterion. The criterion was that they needed to have been involved closely with the branding and communication exercises of the BJP. Importantly, they need to have been involved with these exercises for a minimum period of 10 years (Maignan *et al.*, 2005). Finally, the representational base of the internal stakeholders offered an invaluable means of ensuring that the insights of the external stakeholders can be synchronized to ensure that unnecessary stakeholder effects are reduced (Hughes and Dann, 2009). Now, we can engage with the analysis of the study. The analysis covered two important aspects. The first aspect of the analysis dealt with the analysis of the data, coding and other relevant patterns. The second aspect of the analysis dealt with the consolidation and elevation of the insights into the development of our framework.

4. Analysis

The interviews were transcribed and analyzed using two-step thematic process (Lin and Himmelboim, 2018). Initially, we conducted open coding where the data were broken down to individual units. Subsequently, axial coding was conducted for conceptualization at the micro level. These elements were coded in a manner by which they could be a part of a cyclic process. Then, we were able to reach the stage of stabilization, which was a reflection of the revalidation of the data. After conducting 24 interviews on the external stakeholders and validating the same with perspectives elicited from eight internal stakeholders and content analysis of the perspective provided by them, the framework was stabilized (Borgmann *et al.*, 2016). This finalization was also in accordance with the constructs provided by Aaker (1997) and the respondents' insights. Here, in the 'coarse grained' phase, the researchers familiarized themselves with the verbatim transcripts of the interviews (Pich and Dean, 2015). In the 'fine grained' phase, we used a more funneled approach of examining patterns and variations to develop themes leading to final mappings. Finally, the results developed needed to represent stabilization and saturation. This stabilization was achieved by triangulation. This synchronization allowed for the development of themes and categories.

Finally, the number of respondents for the study sufficed to develop the deep insights that developed into the findings of our study. The consolidation was further strengthened by using three progressive and inclusive phases: initial design, in-course extension and full frame development. The first stage, which is initial design, was developed by using the deductive and inductive forms of reasoning. These forms were used to understand the complexities of political brand personality. The deductive logic was extremely useful in understanding the theoretical and conceptual joints of the study. In-course extension was achieved by choosing, amalgamating and operationalizing the respondents' insights. The insights that might not add significant value to the study were also removed from the analysis. Finally, full frame development, i.e. a conceptual framework, was achieved by merging, integrating and separating the data gained from the respondents.

These processes were finally strengthened by aligning the data with the theoretical frameworks of the study. We also engaged with the most important dimensions' imperative for an actionable framework to understand the dynamics of the political brand personality of a political leader from a qualitative perspective. The dimensions thus developed supplemented each other and culminated in the framework of the study.

5. Findings

5.1 External and internal stakeholder

The conceptualization of brand personality in our context has specific points of applicability. For example, the brand personality dimensions such as sincerity and agreeableness and the second competence and energy were present. Finally, the three

elements of openness, conscientiousness and emotional stability were added from Caprara *et al.'s* (2001) model based on the respondents' insights. The key categories developed via the interviews and the projective techniques are presented in Figure 1.

5.2 Sincerity and agreeableness

External stakeholders provided varied responses about these categories. They were in line with the characteristics displayed by Narendra Modi during his campaign during the 2014 national elections. They related the personality traits under the category of sincerity and agreeableness with Modi. This category spanned out into themes, including Humble, Small Town, Honest, Sincere, Real, Loyal and Authentic.

A respondent from Delhi stated "He can reach to all the strata of the society" (P1D, 23 years, student). A participant from Ahmedabad expressed that "Since he knows where his roots are and knows people are aware of that he does not even try to portray himself to be a city based politician," (P2A, 24 years, student). An analogous view point was expressed by a participant from Mumbai, "He seems to be pretty modest about the fact that he is PM. He says, I do not suggest people to dream big. I tell them to action it [..]" (P2M, 22 years, student).

Modi was acknowledged as being sincere in his efforts that make him "reach to the masses" (P1D, 23 years, student) more effectively. According to most of the Ahmedabad participants, Modi had exhibited the quality of sincerity as a Chief Minister over a period of three terms (15 years):

I personally think he is pretty sincere. I have been following his state politics as well and Gujarat has actually seen development be it in terms of HDI or general economy (P3M, 22 years, student).

On the contrary, a participant from Mumbai said that sincerity is just about applying efforts for development. The respondent also believed that it should include creating awareness efforts "I had no clues about Congress work regarding social issues or structuring of the central systems, I regularly follow Modi. I know the structures and processes more clearly now" (P5M, 25 years, student). External stakeholders clearly stated that his cheerful

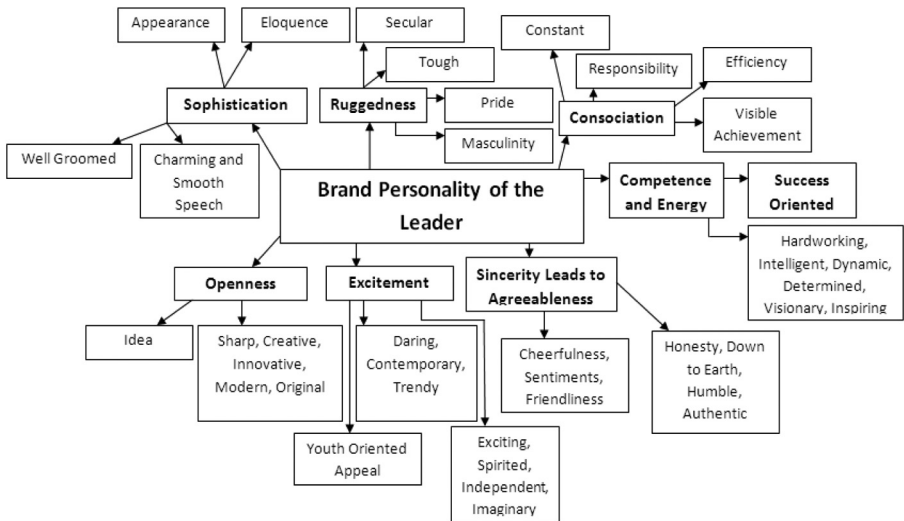


Figure 1.
Brand personality
perception of external
stakeholders

behavior and cordial approach appealed to the masses. One of the participants from Mumbai cherished the experience of watching a speech by Modi “If you hear his speeches. Railway stations have a great infrastructure. This brings such joy in his eyes when he talks about nation development” (P6M, student). A participant from Delhi recalled an incident:

There was a cricketer from Bharuch who had many supporters in the Congress party. . .but when he took 3 wickets in a match played outside the country. Narendra Modi was the first person to call and wish his father. This is how close he can get to people to make them happy (P4D, 24 years, student).

5.3 Excitement

The respondents expressed strong views about this category. According to them, he had been aptly using social media to target the youth population. His presence online overshadowed that of any other competitor. According to one of the respondents from Delhi, “He posted one with the lotus. He posts selfies with them [. . .] he is sort of instilling people like us. He is trying to relate to them” (P3A, 23 years, student). This aspect was extended and supported when one of the respondents expressed the idea of an integrated social media campaign to target the youth. They particularly approved of the addition of “new technology like 3D rallies” (P7D, 26 years, student). This was especially so when he met global political leaders and updated the same on social media platforms. These became trending topics on Twitter. A Delhi-based respondent added:

In fact recently also if you saw Hyderabad meet with Obama. . .he was wearing a bandgala which had Narendra Damodar Das Modi written everywhere [. . .]He knows how to use and when to use technology to create trends (P7A, 26 years, student).

Going on, respondents compared Modi with the former Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh. They did so to praise the daring and exciting attitude of Modi. Here, daring referred to an enterprising nature and a proactive approach. According to a Mumbai-based participant, “He has made pretty daring moves like trying to create cordial relations with contradicting countries – Russia, China, US. So you are pretty daring” (P4M, 23 years, student). Another participant from Delhi added:

[. . .] So if you look him in contrast to what Manmohan Singh. . .he just did not speak at all [. . .]. He is the first PM to start of this radio thing. All this seems very exciting (P2D, 24 years, student).

The categorization of Modi as a trendy, exciting and energetic personality was quite evident from the external stakeholders. A respondent from Mumbai held forth on Modi’s presence in the international stage. The participant cited an example of his speech in the USA seen on YouTube “[. . .]His personality is such that he is genuinely put India on a global map. He is a personality on his own” (P7M, 24 years, student). The responses projected Modi as an up-to-date politician in the central system “The way he chooses to be the Prime Minister and not because he is the Prime Minister” (P5A, 25 years, student). A participant from Delhi cited an example of his capabilities to support his ability to stay up-to-date “He actually asks all the relevant ministries to give him a 5 min presentation which has only 5 slides [. . .] [. . .] call to action” (P6D, 24 years, student). These views were extended by the respondents by explicitly mentioning that he possesses characteristics of a dictator. This extension could be seen as the negative logical extreme polarity of the quality of excitement. We found that the dictatorial trait was clearly visible in his leadership style. A respondent stated “I am the big guy here” (P7D, 26 years, student). This was amplified by another respondent, “He is dictatorial” (P8D, 26 years, student). In the projection technique, the majority of the

respondents considered him to be cool and trendy. This clearly demonstrated their selection of the traits related to Modi's personality. We were also able to discover that the leader should possess the qualities of being honest, direct and result oriented. The combination of these qualities when performativity aligned can be structurally segmented as desire to have things their way.

5.4 Openness

Many external stakeholders expressed their views about openness and its relevance in the case of Narendra Modi. Specifically, the category of openness translated into the quality of ideation. This was especially aided by the qualities of incisiveness, innovativeness and novelty of modern ideas. A participant from Mumbai appreciated Modi as a perfect client "He has to be creative and innovative enough [...] he was creative enough to capture youth at all digital touch points" (P8M, 25 years, student). The participants who had been following his speeches online stated "He is sharp and original which captures the major strata of the society at the right time" (P7M, 24 years, student) and because of his presence of mind "He knows how to connect the dots and give a very solid answer" (P4D, 24 years, student). Thus, the participants were shown a large-sized Narendra Modi who was reducing the importance of other politicians. Most participants provided it a positive interpretation. They portrayed Modi as a strong achiever who is there to stay in "power" (P1M, 25 years, student).

The respondents highlighted the point of he being someone with a "modern outlook but not a westernized one" (P3D, 26 years, student). According to them, Modi presented himself as a "true Indian" (P8A, 24 years, student). This was similar to a respondent from Ahmedabad who added "Even though he shows desineness he is modern with the notions of moving India forward. His 'Make in India' seems to be a very smart move in this front" (P3D, 26 years, student).

5.5 Competence and energy

The majority of the participants related Modi's personality traits to the categories of competence and energy. This was because he was considered as a "forward looking politician" (P4A, 24 years, student) who thrives on a success-oriented approach. Most of the respondents emphasized on his leadership qualities which included qualities such as being untiring, smart, determined and honest. However, some of these qualities have been seen as liabilities when they become excessive. This excess translated into negative traits most significantly identified as arrogance. However, the infrastructural success of Bus Rapid Transit System of Gujarat was praised by respondents from Mumbai "[...] It is conventional [...] but the fact that he got it implemented successfully shows how deterministic and hardworking he is" (P8M, 25 years, student). The development of the Gujarat tourism industry "which sold off as hot pancakes shows off his intellectual strength" (P1A, 25 years, student) was cited as a point much appreciated. The majority of the respondents said that he showed two leadership styles – "strategic" (P5D, 24 years, student) and "corporate" (P5D, 24 years, student).

One of the respondents from Mumbai explained:

He is a strategic leader because he is timely targeting his audience and communicating with them like youth on social media and rural masses he comes out to be of corporate nature [...] (P4M, 23 years, student).

Similarly, a respondent from Delhi noted about his corporate attitude at the national level and the enterprising efforts at the international level, "At a national level [...] he has set timelines under which he wants things to be done in the government offices [...]" (P4D, 24

years, student). In addition, his speed in “decision making process” (P7D, 26 years, student) was also appreciated by many participants. The “speed” (P1M, 25 years, student) in implementing the policies shows how “He has a timeframe to get everything done successfully” (P3A, 23 years, student).

To maintain ties with his old allies and continue building a positive image in front of the masses, he “Shrewdly he let RSS get away with certain things on the name of catering to the motherland officially or unofficially” (P2D, 24 years, student) and yet for the larger good of the country “with so many cultures [...] differences and linguistics [...] builds up his positive image to keep working towards a futuristic vision and inspires the same in us” (P2D, 24 years, student). According to a participant from Mumbai, “We need a guy like him who has a can do attitude too!” (P4M, 23 years, student). However, our respondents expressed that the leader becomes arrogant while delivering speeches, as his verbal projection is clearly exaggerated and not commensurate with the actual result. A respondent stated that “There is a sense of arrogance on his face” (P6D, 26 years, student). This was substantiated by another respondent, “He has projected a small thing and makes it look big” (P8D, 26 years, student). To summarize, a strong brand personality can be developed by a political leader by possessing active ideation capabilities. The combination of these qualities can be structurally segmented as the desire to express status and confirm identity.

5.6 *Ruggedness*

A majority of the participants associated Modi with the attribute of ruggedness. Here, attribute is should not be considered in its strict lexical meaning. Rather, it must be understood in a more psychological context. Thus, this category was further divided into the subcategories of subconscious and conscious qualities. Most participants associated a certain set of qualities with him. According to a participant, his work as a “RSS pracharak” (P2D, 24 years, student) has made him a more “pro hindu politician” (P2D, 24 years, student). This gave him a more non-secular outlook. However, a majority of participants credited him with being a person who was a “proud patriotic” (P7M, 24 years, student) politician. Additionally, masculinity was one of the traits that Modi possessed. This was with regards to his ability of being able to “get the work done by lazy officials” (P3M, 22 years, student). Most of the respondents related him with a rough-edged rock instead of a smooth one because of the same. One of the participants cited the reason as “he is rough [...] because of his modest background [...] he exudes this toughness” (P2A, 24 years, student). To summarize, we were able to clearly understand that a strong political brand of a leader possesses the quality of ruggedness. We were able to realize that the brand personality of the political leader also needs to possess the qualities of forward directedness and goal orientation.

5.7 *Conscientiousness*

A majority of the respondents approved of Modi’s efforts at propelling the nation toward the development. Thus, Modi was considered to be self-confident. Thus, one of the respondents from Delhi expressed, “This guy focuses more on what he did [...] what he can do [...] he seems quite optimistic and confident in that regard” (P5D, 24 years, student). However, this optimism should not become a vainglorious presentation of one’s achievements. Thus, a respondent stated, “Every attribute is exaggerated” (P8D, 26 years, student). More specifically, another respondent said, “He keeps harping about what he did in Gujarat (P2M, 22 years, student). Another respondent was equally direct:

I knew not much about him when he got nominated as the Prime Ministerial candidate of the BJP [. . .]. All I knew was how he keeps bragging about how he has done so much for Gujarat [. . .]. that's all [. . .] (P4D, 24 years, student).

5.8 *Sophistication*

This category was felt to be a direct indication of the values that constitute the frame of Modi. Modi measured up to the expectations of the majority of the participants. They felt that he was “well groomed” (P6A, 23 years, student) and “traditional” (P3M, 22 years, student). However, he was perceived to be lacking in sophistication. Thus a participant from Delhi explained “No. [. . .] I wouldn't say sophisticated. But its traditional and well groomed. I have never seen wearing him a suit [. . .] or a tuxedo [. . .]” (P7D, 26 years, student). In contrast, he was believed to have a charming and eloquent personality. He was even compared to the former Prime Ministers of the country “Nehru and Vajpayee” (P4A, 24 years, student) who were famous for being great orators. It was expressed by the participant that he was a “Prince charming to save the country rather than a wolf trying to eat the country alive” (P1M, 25 years, student). Thus, respondent from Mumbai said, “He carries himself well. I think he goes down to the deepest level of their understanding” (P8M, F, 25 years, student).

Most of them also perceived Modi as a middle-class man. In addition, he was believed to be an authoritative figure. The promises made to the masses about a glorious future full of anticipated achievements seemed realistic. A participant indicated that “We were remotely heading towards anarchy. With a vision and a past record who has resolved issues in the past. he has the confidence in our future” (P6A, 23 years, student). Supporting this, a participant from Mumbai added a perspective “He asked for their concerns [. . .] and found solutions for them. But to assuring people that there is someone out there to listen to your issues” (P4M, 23 years, student). Here, Modi resuscitated the Indian Postal Department by encouraging it “to tie up retailers to provide them postal services’ (P6D, 24 years, student).

Thus, he helped the department function efficiently. According to a participant from Delhi, Modi will “Utilize your resources properly [. . .] increase the amount of investment coming in and reduce the expenditures” (P6D, 24 years, student). However, sophistication could easily cross bounds and take the form of manipulation. The respondent felt that the leaders become calculative and shrewd while delivering messages to the voters. Thus, a respondent stated, “Sometimes he comes across as if he is cunning. He is saying things because they are politically correct. There is a bit of insincerity, very calculative” (P1A, 25 years, student). We were able to discover that the political leader's brand personality would need to possess the qualities of consistency and dedication. We discovered consistency, and dedication could be structurally segmented to lead to the desire to connect.

5.9 *Religious partisanship*

We had found that the trait of secularity was greatly feted by the respondents. The importance of this quality was seen when the respondents further expressed their views when they felt that this trait was traduced. This dimension was clearly visible when the respondents expressed their opinion about religious fanaticism and riots. Thus, a respondent, stated, “He was silent during the Godhra riots. It is like he hid behind the scenes” (P1A, 25 years, student). Another respondent again drew attention to the role of Modi during the riots, “There are questions about Godhra, and how much he did to develop Gujarat” (P5A, 25 years, student). Another respondent stated that the riots in Gujarat when Modi was the Chief Minister seem to be well hidden in the past, “With the riots comfortably behind him” (P7A, 26 years, student).

5.10 Validation through internal stakeholders

The categories developed here were used to evaluate the validity of the external stakeholders' perceptions about Modi. The categories and the themes developed were validated by the discussions held with the internal stakeholders. According to an industry expert (Digital Advertising Agency), digital media was used to capture those "10 per cent of the literate voters" (P5, creative director, Delhi) who constituted the "opinion leaders" of that stratum. They used social media to stay informed. There was an additional focus on developing a strong brand image that would support the brand personality. This image was formed by associating and carefully crafting the content to create 'brand value' (P5, creative director, Delhi). This was done to affect the mindset of the voters. A participant stated, "When an advertising is done, better functionalities are promoted. There has to be a balance between bitterness and solution for tomorrow in media [. . .] and hence establish a brand value" (P1, senior feature writer, Delhi). According to a BJP spokesperson, different communication means were used with the masses to reach the farthest corners to develop affiliations for Modi as a brand. In his words:

2 things he introduced that were very different during those campaigns were newly introduced 3D holograph rallies and campaign through Whatsapp. Messages were sent in vernacular and on the basis of region (P3, BJP spokesperson, Gujarat).

Similarly, the conduct of Modi was found to be of consequence in creating subtle connections with the audience. The respondents from a PR agency explained "there is an art of communication with the masses [. . .] your body language [. . .] matters [. . .] all these are skills acquired by him [. . .] this is called language of politics" (P7, Head events, Gujarat). The head of events from a PR agency explained how Modi donned different attires. The participant added "He wears kurta and pyjamas when he goes for a ceremonial he wears [. . .] a turban [. . .] when he goes for Vibrant Gujarat [. . .]" (P7, head events, Gujarat). One of the digital media journalists explained how Modi succeeded in "creating events" (senior feature writer, Delhi) around him to capture attention. Thus, one of the participants expressed:

Every detail of the process starting from filing a nomination [. . .] first visit to a village [. . .] chai pe charcha (discussion over tea) [. . .] all these become a brand event for him and so people support the brand (P2, online independent blogger, Delhi).

These ideas were carefully projected on social media by maintaining a fine balance between "promotion of his past experiences and new expectations" (P2, online independent blogger, Delhi). Thus, it validated the perceptions formed by external stakeholders.

More so, he continued to maintain his previously projected image during the Lok Sabha Elections. A BJP spokesperson explained:

Imagine yourself to be appointed today as the PM. What would you do the next day? Probably go late [. . .] No. [. . .] he doesn't take any leaves [. . .]. Not in past 15 years [. . .] (BJP Digital Marketing Spokesperson, Gujarat).

It was also found that the two forms of achievements played an important role in the formation of a common perception: they were visible achievements and anticipated achievements. The next section will deal with a deeper engagement with the dimensions of the framework.

6. Discussion

The purpose of this paper is to develop a comprehensive framework integral to the development of political brand personality. This development will be of greater significance,

as it is positioned in the context of post elections. This development has not been studied in earlier studies (Milewicz and Milewicz, 2014; Busby and Cronshaw, 2015). Thus, the significant contribution of this study was the development of a new framework of brand personality (Refer Figure 1) by integrating the models of Aaker (1997) and Caprara *et al.* (2001). Finally, they focused only on the positive or negative elements of brand personality. Therefore, this study provides a guide for the post-election scenario that can be applied to the case of young digitally savvy voters while balancing the positive and negative elements of brand personality. Our study could be used to enhance the contributions of one more specific line of research in political marketing. The findings of our study could be used to study how effectively the brand personality of the political leader and the party can be used as a differentiator. This is because the findings of the current study deal with the negative elements that could mar the brand personality of the leader (Rutter *et al.*, 2018). Our study provides a framework (Refer Figure 1) to develop the brand personality of the leader and enhance the relationship with the new, young and tech savvy voters before the next election. Our study is novel, as it is one of the very few studies that have engaged with brand personality in the post-election era. Thus, we have developed Figure 1 based on the new variables that were added from this primary research. This model has identified seven key personality traits of a political leader.

They are *competence* and *energy*, *sincerity* and *agreeableness*, *excitement*, *openness*, *sophistication*, *ruggedness* and *conscientiousness*. These qualities could be of extra ordinary use for political brands that wish to rebrand themselves through logos. There is current research being conducted on the emotional, attitude based and behavioral reactions to such rebranding. Our study could help understand the complexities of the political leader's brand personality and use it for successful rebranding and logo creations (Yalley, 2018). However, we also found that religious partisanship is a negative personality trait of the political leader. The first traits of competence and energy have been associated with the qualities of hardworking, intelligent, dynamic, determined and other related qualities. The next traits are sincerity and agreeableness. Sincerity is related to cheerfulness, sentiments and friendliness. Agreeableness is associated with honesty, down to earth, authentic and humble. Excitement is associated with daring, contemporary, trendy and imaginative which lead to a youth-oriented appeal. Thus, one of the most important contributions of this study was to understand that the elements of brand personality developed by its framework were effective touch points between the voters (stakeholders) and the political leaders.

Studies in this context have considered the 2016 presidential candidates of the USA and how they enhanced their social media marketing campaigns. Here, the study discovered that the political parties used the most ideal representation of the political leaders in the images used in digital marketing. Our study has certain key contributions in terms of understanding those qualities detrimental to the development of such a positive image (Muñoz and Towner, 2017).

Thus, the element of dictatorship leads the voters to either trust or distrust the political leaders as positive causal agents. The dimension of openness was related to sharp, creative, innovative, modern and original elements that lead to ideation. The dimension of sophistication was further divided into three elements, grooming leading to appearances, charming which was based on smoothness and eloquence and manipulation. The dimension of ruggedness includes toughness, pride and masculinity. Conscientiousness is related to the three elements of constancy, responsibility and efficiency. In some instances, the delivery of these results becomes over exaggerated and such exaggeration is bragging. More specifically, the tone of the leader is also seen as being arrogant while delivering these messages. These elements can negatively affect the brand personality of the leader.

Our study could also act as a strong base that could consolidate the political branding sphere and marketplace. This could be achieved by using the findings of our study to blend the aspects of social media campaigning in political branding and campaigning. Earlier literature has also studied political branding in silos. In continuation, political branding was further divided into functionality and expressiveness. This can especially be seen in the contexts of the literature stated that the political leader needs to be cordial, reliable and successful (Guzman and Sierra, 2009). In addition, political branding needs to be in accordance with time, cost and rewards. Therefore, the present study has integrated the elements of brand personality, political leaders and political branding and provided a structured and integrated approach to develop a strong political leader's personality.

7. Overall implications

The current investigation has identified that a leader has competence and energy as basic personality traits. Branding campaigns need to have storyboards focused on the hard work, dynamism and determination shown by the leader in different scenarios. Our study has also discovered that sincerity and agreeableness are the key personality traits of the leader. Thus, political branding strategies can aim for cheerfulness, friendliness and sentiments, humility and honesty as their base.

We also found that when these qualities are carefully melded in the political strategy, they will lead to optimal likeability with regard to the leader's political brand personality. However, there are certain negative elements such as religious partisanship, bragging and exaggeration of results, arrogance of the leader, dictatorial attitude and manipulation that should be avoided, as these elements can negatively affect the brand personality of the leaders. Another element integral to the strong brand personality of the political leader is that of sophistication. This element is directly related to grooming, appearances and charm. Another brand personality trait, excitement needs to be encapsulated to cover daring and contemporariness. These traits can be projected in the political campaigns by premising them on a youth-oriented appeal. Ruggedness can be imbibed to cover toughness, masculinity and pride. Finally, conscientiousness as a brand personality trait of the political leader can use consistency, responsibility and efficiency as core qualities.

8. Managerial implications and limitation of the study

The brand personality of the political leader can be used to better understand the nature of impression management. The reason for the same is that impression management directly deals with the perceptions of stakeholders. One of the best means of achieving this is reducing the dimensions of partisanship and religious bigotry. The subsequent parts will deal with the avenues for further exploration in the areas of brand personality for political leaders. The present study could be further strengthened by extending its format and scheme to make it longitudinal. Such a longitudinal study would allow for deeper examination of elements of correlation. The study could benefit from a comparison between political brand personality and sports team brands. The reason for the same is that the similarities and differences between them would strengthen future research.

The study could also be strengthened further by using the dimensions of this study to conduct a quantitative analysis. The scope of the current study precludes the inclusion of these elements. Now, the next section will closely engage with the various avenues that could be explored to ensure that the complexities of brand personality in politics can be effectively investigated.

9. Scope for extended research

Our model can be essentially used by the political leader to deconstruct their brand personality (if required). Subsequent studies can be carried out on brand personality and leadership traits, as they are closely associated, which is a limitation of the study. This study can be undertaken on other age groups such as middle-aged and old voters to understand how brand personality of the political leader emerges from this segment. Extensive content analysis of political leaders' website, content on social media and other platforms can be undertaken as it formulates brand personality. These studies could also study the political brand personality of a leader in terms of human brands. This would mutually enrich the study of human brands and brand personality development as well. In addition, extended studies could also be dedicated to the study of political branding from a rural perspective. Additional studies could consider the correspondence of authentic brands and the brand personality of political leaders. Future studies could also focus on the brand personality development of female political leaders, a topic which remains under-developed and under-researched within political branding. Likewise, the field of political branding could be enriched by studying the nature of religion as a factor influencing the brand personality of political leaders. This represents huge scope for political branding to continue to develop and evolve as an established sub-discipline.

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Further reading

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