

POLITICAL CO-BRAND IMAGE & POSITIONING
– A MIXED METHOD STUDY



By

Maria Naureen Shahid

Registration No.: 00000240682

NUST Business School,

National University of Sciences & Technology (NUST)

Islamabad, Pakistan

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POLITICAL CO-BRAND IMAGE & POSITIONING

– A MIXED METHOD STUDY



By

Maria Naureen Shahid

(Registration No: 00000240682)

A thesis submitted to the National University of Sciences and Technology, Islamabad

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Thesis Supervisor: Dr. Waseem Hassan

Co-Supervisor: Dr. Asfia Obaid

NUST Business School

National University of Sciences and Technology (NUST)

Islamabad, Pakistan

(2023)

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Signature:  _____

Name of Supervisor: Dr. Waseem Hassan

Date: 26-05-2023

Signature (HOD):  _____

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Signature (Dean/Principal)  _____

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Supervisor: Dr. Waseem Hassan	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
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Student Name: Maria Naureen Shahid

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Examination Committee:

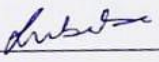
a. External Examiner 1: Dr. Muhammad Abrar
Director, Lyallpur Business School (LBS),
Faculty of Economics & Management
Sciences, GC University, Faisalabad,
Pakistan.)

Signature 


b. External Examiner 2: Dr. Saman Attiq
Associate Professor (Marketing) Air
University School of Management Air
University Islamabad. Pakistan.

Signature 

c. Internal Examiner 1: Dr. Lubaba Sadaf
Assistant Professor (NBS)

Signature 

Supervisor Name: Dr. Waseem Hassan

Signature 

Co-supervisor Name: Dr. Asfia Obaid

Signature 

Name of Dean/HoD: Dr. Naukhez Sarwar

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I dedicate this thesis to

my loving and caring *PARENTS* who have always showered their unconditional love on me, inspired me to be the best me I can be, and gave me the support, motivation, and encouragement I needed to set my goals and make them happen,

***JAVERIA*, my super supportive sister, who knew when I was upset and did everything, she could cheer me up,**

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ABSTRACT

While co-branding is an inherent feature of contemporary politics, designing, developing, and evaluating the combined potential of image and positioning of a political co-brand is still a challenge for candidates, political campaign managers, and political strategists. Despite being a crucial aspect of connection with the electorates, researchers have overlooked the development of frameworks on political co-brand image and positioning. This paucity of research on the development and management of political co-brand image and positioning indicates the need for more research. Also, the available literature gives unsettled results regarding the negative spillover effects between the party brand and candidate brands. Therefore, there have been calls for scholarly enquiry. Research was therefore needed to deconstruct and operationalize the concept of co-brand image and positioning; to identify key elements that are sensitive to the voters.

This sequential exploratory mixed method study has tried to fill these gaps by exploring and examining the political co-brand image through the lens of positioning concept from the external stakeholder's perspective. Revisiting an existing framework, this study contributes to the stream of literature on the political brand image and positioning. Revisiting aided in evaluating an already existing framework's strength and applicability in a different setting, context and for the concept of political co-brand image and positioning. It also helped in presenting a critical perspective and in making a viable contribution to the body of knowledge regarding the limited research available on political co-brand image, positioning and the negative image transference between co-brands and corporate brand.

Qualitative study explores political co-brand image, positioning, and negative image transference. The analysis of the data collected from a sample of political analysts resulted in the development of an all-encompassing framework, named as the *Political Co-brand Image and Positioning Framework*. The quantitative strand is built on the qualitative study's findings. With the introduction of a new construct (*political brand positioning and political marketing, PBPM*) to the body of knowledge, this strand not only offer a way to measure political brand

image and positioning but also confirms the capability of the newly developed framework, with a different set of respondents (sample of electorates).

It is expected that the insights this study offers will help researchers, political campaign managers, political strategists and public policy makers with a focus on improving political marketing strategies, in in formulating appropriate marketing and public policies and in fixing co-brand image alignment by comparing desired and actual positioning.

Keywords: political co-brand; political brand image; political brand positioning

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DEFINITIONS OF KEY TERMS

Brand:

A brand is a name, term, design, symbol or any other feature that identifies one seller's product/good or service as distinct from those of other sellers (*American Marketing Association, AMA Dictionary*). ISO brand standards add that a brand “is an intangible asset” that is intended to create “distinctive images and associations in the minds of stakeholders, thereby generating economic benefit/values. (*International Organization for Standardization*¹)

Brand Image:

Brand image is seen as consumer's perception, opinion, and a set of beliefs about the product and the associations a brand name carries in their mind (memory). It is a collection of mental representations (emotional and/or cognitive) an individual or a group of individuals attribute to a brand. It is what people believe about a brand—their thoughts, feelings, expectations (*American Marketing Association, AMA Dictionary; Collin & Ivanovic, 2003; Keller, 1993; Kotler, 1988; Nandan, 2005, Zhang, 2015*). The brand image can be a mirror reflection of the brand personality.

Brand Personality:

A brand's personality is the collection of traits that you associate with humans. In other words, it is how you would characterise a brand if it were a person. Brand message, images, and broader marketing initiatives all exhibit a brand's personality (*Smith, 2009; Johnson, Soutar & Sweeney, 2000*).

Brand Positioning:

Presenting a brand's benefits and qualities with the intention of taking up a specific position (i.e., position) in the minds of customers and prospects (*Aaker & Shansby, 1982*), for creating meaningful differentiation (*Bhat & Reddy, 1998*) and competitive advantage (*Blankson et al., 2013*) in relation to the competition (*Lovelock, Patterson & Wirtz, 2014*), is known as positioning.

Candidate Brand:

This term represents the candidates who are politicians running for the gov office (*Phipps et al., 2010; Kaneva & Klemmaer, 2016; Marland & Wagner, 2019; Pich, Armannsdottir & Dean, 2020; Reeves, 2016; Thelen & Yoo, 2022*).

¹ International Organization for Standardization, Brand Evaluation — Principles and Fundamentals. Link: <https://www.iso.org/obp/ui/#iso:std:iso:20671:dis:ed-1:v1:en>

Candidate Brand Image:

Candidate brand image is the collection of associations that develop in the receiver's mind based on the factors like candidate's personality, ideology, how strong his/her commitment is, motivational power, education, etc., with respect to the competitors (*Davies & Mian, 2010 and Wade et al., 2006*).

Co-brand:

This is a strategic term that describes the merging of two separate brands to form a new one. Co-branding (or "cobranding"), often known as a brand partnership, refers to a variety of branding alliances that typically involve the brands of at least two businesses (*Park, Jun, & Shocker, 1996*).

Corporate Political Brand:

A national political party, its leader, and its programs/policies are all regarded members of a corporate political brand. The leader, with his/her emphasis on party philosophy, party policy, and positioning is expected to bring the individual brands and the co-brands together under the umbrella of the corporate party brand (*Armannsdottir et al., 2019b*).

Constituencies

In British English, the term "constituency" is frequently used to describe an electoral district, although it can also be used to describe the group of eligible voters, all the citizens of the represented area, or just the voters for a particular candidate.

Electories

All the people in a country or area who are officially qualified and are hence entitled to vote in an election within a particular constituency/district/area for a particular election.

Party Brand:

This term represents a political party at the constituency level, in this study (*Smith & French, 2009*).

Party Brand Image:

Party brand image is basically the entirety of associations that develop in the receiver's mind under the influence of a set of signs like party name, the logo party used, slogans etc., which indicate and represent the party's identity (*Gorbaniuk et al., 2015; Cwalina & Falkowski, 2015; Moufahim, 2022; Smith & French, 2009; Van Steenburg, Guzman, 2019*).

Political Brand:

According to *Lees-Marshment (2011)*, political brands are the psychological composition of the associations, perception and impressions of the party brand and the candidate/politician brand. Political branding offers numerous benefits like functional and economic benefits; they act as heuristic tools for the electorates (who may be cognitive misers (*Crocker, Fiske & Taylor, 1984*)) especially when it comes to political decision making; they also act as a tool for an electorate's self-concept reinforcement; and aid the non-loyal electorates in seeking variety, just like consumer branding (*Smith & French, 2009*).

Political Co-brand:

It is the alliance between two political brands. In this study, a political co-brand represents the party brand and the candidate brand at the constituency level (*Armannsdottir et al., 2019b*).

Stakeholders:

For the purpose of this study, Internal and External Stakeholders are differentiated.

Internal stakeholders are people who work in political campaigns for political administrations and strive to influence electorates through campaigns for the political brand they represent.

External stakeholders are those who closely observe and assess public behaviour, as well as analyse each political party, its leaders, and candidates. These external stakeholders' perspectives are crucial because they have in-depth information gained through regular media monitoring of political brands (*Ormrod, 2017a*). This is their field of expertise and profession. They work in news and media organisations, private/government organisations, and educational institutions and engage with the public. They can predict the future of a party based on its performance and its interactions. They are supposed to be unbiased in their judgement of political brands, unlike the average person who may have some emotion.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS & SYMBOLS

α	Cronbach's alpha
&	Ampersand. Used in place of the word 'and'
p	It is a number between 0 and 1 representing the probability that this data would have arisen if the null hypothesis were true.
AMOS	Analysis of Moment Structures
AVE	Average Variance Extracted
CFA	Confirmatory Factor Analysis
CI	Confidence Interval
CFI	Comparative Fit Index
Covid-19	Corona Virus Disease 2019
DOI	Digital Object Identifier
EFA	Exploratory factor analysis
E.g.	Exempli gratia (Latin word meaning 'for example')
Et al.	et alia or et alibi (Latin word meaning 'and others')
Etc.	et cetera (Latin word meaning 'and the rest'. It refers to the list of things.)
HTMT	Heterotrait–Monotrait (ratio of correlations)
Ibid	Ibidem (Latin word meaning 'in the same place')
KMO	Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (Test)
ML	Maximum Likelihood
MMR	Mixed method research
PBPM	(Perceived importance of the) Political Brand Positioning and Marketing
PCA	Principal Component Analysis
PLS	Partial Least Squares
PLSc	Consistent PLS
PMLN	Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz
PPP	Pakistan People's Party
PTI	Pakistan Thereek-e-Insaf
r	Pearson's r (Correlation Coefficient)
R²	Coefficient of Determination
RMSEA	Root Means Square Error of Approximation
S.D./STDEV	Standard Deviation
SEM	Structural Equation Modelling
SOPs	Standard Operating Procedures
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
STD	Self-Determination Theory
TL	Timeline (Twitter)
TLI	Tucker–Lewis Index
VIF	Variance Inflation Factor

INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.0. Introduction

The blending of political science and marketing has resulted in the development of *political marketing* as a modern, dynamic, and distinctive field of study (Lees-Marshment, Conley, Elder, Pettitt, Raunauld & Turcotte, 2019; Thelen & Yoo, 2022). Today political marketing has become so important that it is acknowledged as an integral element in the political process. No serious candidate for political office can afford to manage their marketing campaign without the assistance of spin doctors or media gurus (Esser, Reinemann & Fan, 2001; Haselmayer, 2019). There are however some differences between how marketing activities are carried out for political offerings and how consumer products, which are important for the researchers to understand. For instance, Newman (1994) identifies three key differences. He asserts that, in contrast to mainstream marketing, political marketing efforts aim to promote successful democratic operation rather than higher revenues. Second, whereas in business the difference between winning and losing is dependent on large fluctuations, victory in politics is occasionally based on a few percentage points. Third, in contrast to politics, where candidates' personal ideologies frequently determine how far marketing research findings are implemented, businesses frequently follow through with activities based on the results of marketing research when they expect to benefit from doing so. According to Egan (1999), Lock and Harris (1996) and Wring (1997), the price electorates (or voters) pay is not in monetary terms but in feelings and in national, economic and psychological hopes; all the electorates vote on the same day and have to accept the collective choice when the winning party/candidate is not his/her preferred choice; negative advertising is quite common; and brand extension (which is introduction of a new product) is very common in political marketing. *Co-branding* is often referred to as a special case of brand extension (Park, Jun, & Shocker, 1996).

Within the discipline of political marketing, *political branding* has grown to be a distinct subfield (Scammell, 2015) where political brand is often represented by a collection of signs, symbols, a name, and design as a way of expressing a political entity's beliefs, vision, and personality. It is also a collection of popular perceptions,

connections, and images about a certain institution (Ahmed, Lodhi & Ahmad, 2017; Moufahim, 2022). A political brand is the overall sentiment, opinion, or perception that the public has about a candidate, political party, or country. In addition to being psychological, it is more general and intangible than the product. Political brands are the overall impression voters have of a political entity based on *nodes* people acquire from a variety of sources, such as behaviours, organisation, communication, and graphics. They offer a shortcut to what a political entity is about (Lees-Marshment et al., 2019). Political brands aid voters in distinguishing one political representation from another, unpacking sometimes complex political initiatives — in other words, the brand would serve as a "summary" of what the party and the candidate represents, and satisfying the populace's desire to "know" a party's or candidate's policies. Political strategists are therefore recommended to establish a political brand image to achieve a competitive advantage and votes (Cwalina & Falkowski, 2015; Moufahim, 2022; Van Steenburg, Guzman, 2019).

Political marketing is covered more routinely in mainstream media, whether it is in relation to political branding or the use of big data. It seems that without marketing, modern politics cannot function today (Lees-Marshment, et al., 2019). Today both the political parties and the candidates are considered and conceptualized as brands (Armannsdottir & Pich, 2018; Needham, 2006). Political marketing, especially branding strategies have become so important that candidates running for political office across the globe heavily rely on branding tactics and strategies. This practice is so popular that now political candidates are known as "*brandidates*" in the literature (for instance Kaneva & Klemmaer, 2016; Marland & Wagner, 2019; Pich, Armannsdottir & Dean, 2020; Reeves, 2016; Thelen & Yoo, 2022). Just like when products present a brand personality, political professionals create and promote a candidate's character as a brand personality, which ultimately gets bought by electorates. Political operators conducting campaigns and academics investigating and exploring political marketing are still looking into how voters respond to leaders' brand personas (Thelen & Yo, 2022).

Existing scholarship on brand personality and image identifies that distinctive and positive brand personality makes the party and/or leadership appear unique and aids in associating the emotional reactions formed with the favourable

association in the voter's memory (Smith, 2009; Johnson, Soutar & Sweeney, 2000). These political brands become valuable competitive assets when the features associated with the brands are considered unique, are evaluated favourably and differently than competitors (Speed, Butler & Collins, 2015). The emotions and beliefs that electorates and voters have about various political brands are primarily based on their experience (Leeper & Slothuus, 2014) and knowledge that they have accumulated about the brand over time. Therefore electorate/follower's perceptions of the party's image are improved when the appropriate information is provided to them through unpaid public media (Smith, 2009).

1.1. Background

The application of mainstream marketing concepts in the political arena is not an anomaly (O'Cass & Voola 2011; Armannsdottir et al., 2019; Scammell, 2015). Researchers have a shared understanding that both political parties and leaders/candidates can be conceived as brands (French & Smith, 2010; Needham & Smith, 2015; Smith, 2001, 2005a, 2009, etc.). In fact, for both marketing and political science, branding has become an essential and effective concept (Needham & Smith, 2015). Politicians, parties, organisations, and governments are increasingly using branding theory to help develop and manage their political goods (Moufahim, 2021). While there has been significant progress in this area of research, there are certain aspects of political branding where research is needed (Armannsdottir & Pich, 2018).

The application of *co-branding* to politics is one example of such under-research areas which have garnered little attention. Co-branding is a strategic term that describes the merging of two separate brands to form a new one (Aqeel, Hanif & Malik, 2017; Baumgarth, 2018; Nguyen, Romaniuk, Faulkner & Cohen, 2018). The notion of co-branding supports the idea of using the brands of political parties and candidates together as political co-brands (Armannsdottir, Pich & Spry, 2019b). The political co-brand at the constituency/local level combines the candidate brand and the party brand (Pich & Dean, 2015). A national political party, its leader, and its programs/policies are all regarded members of a corporate political brand (Armannsdottir et al., 2019b; Pich & Dean, 2015). The leader, with his/her emphasis

on party philosophy, party policy, and positioning is expected to bring the individual brands and the co-brands together under the umbrella of the corporate party brand (Pich & Dean, 2015).

However, in the domain of political marketing, research on political co-branding is still in its infancy, but it is being bolstered by specific requests for more information on political co-branding, such as brand image, positioning, and so on (Armannsdottir et al., 2019b; Pich & Dean, 2015). Therefore, the goal of this research is to look at the notion of brand image and positioning in the context of a co-branding partnership. Given that studies only started to show that candidates are brands ten years ago (independent from political parties), the notion of political co-branding (between party and a candidate) appears intriguing (Guzman & Sierra, 2009; Van Steenburg & Guzmán, 2019). Earlier, scholars believed that party branding was the sole kind of branding in politics. As a result, credible research on the impacts of the candidate brand on the party brand in a co-branded relationship is possible.

While exploring co-branding (alliance between the party brand and the candidate brand) for concepts like political brand image and positioning, this study suggests that electorates' expectations can be very different in developing countries than in the developed western countries. That is why marketing frameworks which have worked well in the west may not be feasible for the developing world (Chowdhury & Naheed, 2019). Additionally, current frameworks demand examination from various angles in various situations and contexts. (Armannsdottir, Pich & Spry, 2019b). Researchers have emphasized the possibility of applying and testing frameworks, theories, and concepts from one branding setting to another has been highlighted by researchers. (e.g. Schneider; 2004; Pich & Newman, 2019). In current particularly unstable and unpredictable times, this opens substantial opportunity for forming and testing frameworks of relevance for political players. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to critically examine and assess an existing framework (Armannsdottir et al., 2019b) to investigate how external stakeholders perceive and associate with the brands in the post-election scenario. This study uses the Political Co-brand Identity Framework (Armannsdottir, et al., 2019b) to explore and analyse the co-brand image and the political co-brand positioning in a post-

election setting in Pakistan in order to fill in the gaps (described in more detail in section 1.2).

Political marketing is a comparatively new yet rapidly evolving academic discipline for research which is shaping the political landscape globally (Simon & Rushchin, 2021). Political branding is one of the most important areas in political marketing as it aids in the development of a relationship and sense of identity with the public, the penetration of new markets, and the modification or preservation of reputation and support. Political brands represent the overall sentiments and perceptions that the electorates have about a political leader, candidate/politician and the political party (Lees-Marshment et al., 2019). They offer a shortcut to what a political entity is about. To engage with and win the support of potential customers (i.e. the electorates), political parties, candidates, government policies, departments, and agencies, as well as cities, states, and nations, use branding (Ibid). Political specialists, consultants, lobbyists and campaigners, as well as political parties and candidates, use commercial marketing strategies and technologies to interact with the public and establish enduring relationships (Armannsdottir, Carnell & Pich, 2019a).

The work of creating, managing, and developing brands is sometimes extremely complicated, especially in politically unpredictable contexts. The turbulent and non-static nature of political environments adds to the complexity. Indeed, political uncertainty and instability are common in many parts of the world, and they are increasingly visible in what were formerly considered more stable democracies. The issues that those democratic nations faced previously as examined by academics (for instance, Merkel & Kneip, 2018) include lack of trust in political entities and institutions when political brands failed in solving problems of the electorates. The other problems are fragmented media environment, fickle/floating voters and uncertainty in the political landscape also creates difficulties. Therefore, political brands and co-brands must guarantee that their primary beliefs are well defined. This entails determining brand identity and corresponding promise; relevant and new ways of engagement; and, achieving a desirable brand image among their target audience by delivering on their promises. Failure to deliver on a marketing promise, in the worst-case scenario, cause long-term brand harm (Moufahim, 2022).

These difficulties also offer research opportunities for the academic researchers to partake in and contribute to a better analysis of political market processes via the perspective of political branding ideas (Ibid). Thus, this study endeavours to make a viable contribution to the literature and research on political marketing and branding.

1.2. Research Gaps

The scarcity of literature and studies on co-brands in a wide range of situations, settings, contexts and conditions (Aqeel et al., 2017; Baumgarth, 2018; Ronzoni et al., 2018). There is only a dearth of research on co-branding from the viewpoints of co-brand creation, administration, maintenance, and marketing communication (Baumgarth, 2018). Although existing research on political branding asserts and views image of the brand to be an important component of its relationship with the public, political co-brand image requires further exploration through academic research and inquiry (Armannsdottir et al., 2019b; Jain, Kitchen & Ganesh, 2017a; Pich & Newman, 2020). To fully comprehend the co-brand image and its use in forging strong bonds with voters, more research is required (Jain et al., 2017a). Also, the unavailability of a tool which the political brand managers/practitioners can employ to *assess* the administration/maintenance of a political co-brand image and positioning and, which can help in *evaluating* the alignment between corporate brand and a co-brand, indicate a need for a framework. This would help campaign managers, political consultants, and candidates in making and testing necessary strategic modifications in the marketing communication planning/strategy (Kruschinski, Haßler, Jost, & Sülflow, 2022; Arceneaux, Albishri & Kioussis, 2022) required for establishing the desired brand image and/or repositioning the brand.

In addition to that, the scholarship indicates that researchers have focused on brand identity more than political brand image and positioning (Davies & Chun, 2002; Iglesias, Landgraf, Ind, Markovic & Koporcic, 2020; Liao, Dong, Luo & Guo, 2020; Pich, Armannsdottir, & Dean, 2020; Widiанти, Pawito & Hastjarjo, 2020). Additionally, the analysis of the literature indicates that brand image has not been the primary focus of current frameworks, rather the formation and management of political co-brand identity. Moreover, these existing frameworks take only internal stakeholders' perspective in consideration. Therefore, current frameworks warrant

investigated from the perspective of external stakeholders in various situations and scenarios (e.g. Armannsdottir et al., 2019b). The justification for the examination of the frameworks is backed up by sound research (e.g. Armannsdottir et al., 2019b; Schneider, 2004, p. 60; Pich & Newman, 2020) which contest the applicability of ideas, frameworks, and concepts utilised in one branding environment be transported and tested in a different setting. Authors like as Schneider (2004, p. 60) and Pich and Newman (2019) have emphasised the value of transferring concepts, theories, and frameworks from one branding environment to another. Testing a framework in this way offers an opportunity to test its strength in a different setting, context and for different concepts and enable researcher to deconstruct and operationalise under-research concepts like political co-brand image and positioning.

Furthermore, while existing research describes party and candidate brand's influence on electorates perception about the parent (or the corporate) brand (Baumgarth, 2004; Lilleker & Moufahim, 2022; Washburn et al., 2004), researchers have not reached an agreement on how the spillover effects influence the brands in a co-brand relationship (Wason & Charlton, 2015). Additionally, more research is required to understand how weak candidate brand may affect the corporate political brand since the literature on spillover effects has produced varied and conflicting results. Because of these conflicting results, it is also unclear how the unfavourable candidate brand image can influence the corporate political brand (e.g. Gray & Hughes, 2022; Washburn, Till & Priluck, 2000; Till & Shimp, 1998; Votola & Unnava, 2006). This indicates a need for more research to understand how the partnering brands interact, influence and affect each other, how a co-brand interacts with the corporate brand as well as if co-brand's (or any of the partnering brand's) negative/positive image has an influence on the corporate brand's, especially the leader's brand image (Ceccobelli & Di Gregorio, 2022). This indicates the necessity for further investigation into the influence of the partnership brands on the corporate political brand.

1.3. Problem Statement

While co-branding is an inherent feature of contemporary politics (Egan, 1999; Lock & Harris, 1996, Park et al., 1996), designing, developing and evaluating the

combined potential of image and positioning of a political co-brand is still a challenge for politicians/candidates, political campaign managers, and political strategists. Moreover, there is a dearth of published research on political co-brand image and mutual (positive or negative) relations between the image of a politician/candidate and his/her party (Aqeel et al., 2017; Baumgarth, 2018; Pich & Newman, 2019; Wason & Charlton, 2015), and negative image transference between brands (Wason & Charlton, 2015) which could explain and help in the creation and management of successful political campaigns. Research is therefore needed to deconstruct and operationalize the concept of co-brand image and positioning; to identify key elements that are sensitive to the voters (Singh et al., 2014), cultural and electoral context, and settings (Schneider, 2004; Pich & Newman, 2019) and which helps in connecting the political brand with the current and potential electorates.

This statement is explained in the following paragraphs.

Assessment of the combined potential, image, and positioning of partnering political brands (in a co-branding relationship) is a challenging trial for candidates, political campaign managers and political consultants. This is so because their main concern is to build relationship with the electorates, establish co-brand's credibility and reach through clear, consistent, and coherent communication so that the message withstands assessment and reassessment in the media. While co-branding is seen happening more frequently in politics (Egan, 1999; Lock & Harris, 1996, Park et al., 1996), clarity is needed in terms of how marketing strategies should be developed for a political co-brand that combines the unique potential of both brands to create and manage political co-brand image and positioning that can endure continuous media evaluation by journalists, and connects the political brand with the current and potential electorates. Also, the paucity of published research, in the area of political co-brand image, positioning (Aqeel et al., 2017; Baumgarth, 2018; Pich & Newman, 2019), and negative image transference (Wason & Charlton, 2015; Washburn, Till & Priluck, 2000; Till & Shimp, 1998; Votola & Unnava, 2006) between the corporate brand and its co-brands indicate that political co-branding is an understudied topic. As a result, research is required to explore and investigate political co-brand image and positioning (Pich & Newman, 2019) from the external stakeholders' perspective (Armansdottir et al., 2019b) by building on an existing framework to provide a

critical perspective that would help in deconstructing and operationalizing the concept as well as in identifying/developing key elements that are sensitive to the participants, context, and settings (Schneider 2004; Pich & Newman, 2019).

Responding to the research gaps, Political Co-brand Identity Framework (explained in section 2.5) is used as a theoretical lens to explore and assess political co-brand image, positioning and the spillover effects between the co-brand and corporate brand. This study is assessing the framework's strength in different setting and context for the concept of political co-brand image and positioning from the perspective of external stakeholders in Pakistan in the post-election context. Following the advice of the researchers (e.g. Baines et al., 2014; Needham & Smith, 2015) an inclusive strategy is used for this study to comprehend political brand positioning, which is an under-researched area.

1.4. Research Objectives

In light of the discussion in the previous sections, the purpose of this study is to examine the image and positioning of the political co-brand from the standpoint of external stakeholders. This study, therefore, is employing sequential exploratory mixed method design, and aims to,

- Explore and investigate the political co-brand image and positioning from an external perspective, and
- Explore and examine the image transference between corporate political brands and political co-brands from an external perspective.

This study aims to understand the process of formation and management of political co-brand image and positioning. It has also tried to study the spillover effects between a co-brand and the corporate political brand. It is expected that examining political brand image and positioning from the perspective of external stakeholders will identify how political marketing and branding can help in reducing the gap and discrepancies between the projected and real political brand image and positioning.

1.5. Research Questions

This section presents the research questions formulated to achieve the research objectives. As discussed in the previous sections, the literature and research on political co-branding from the perspective of co-brand creation and management is scant. In addition to that, the influence of and effect of political co-brand on the political corporate brand is not empirically explored and asessed yet. Bearing this in mind, six research questions are formulated to achieve the research objectives of this study. First two research questions are answered through the qualitative study (in Chapter 4). While the quantitative study answers the next four questions (in Chapter 5). These are,

Qualitative:

- How does political co-brand image and positioning get created in electorates' minds, at the constituency level?
- How does image (negative/positive) transfer between the political co-brand (at the constituency level) and the corporate political brand?

Quantitative:

- Can political brand image and positioning be reliably measured quantitatively?
- Do political brand image and positioning factors impact the electorates' voting intention?
- Does the brand-fit (between *candidate brand* and the *party brand*) impact the relationship between the political brand image and positioning factors and voting intention of electorates?
- Does the political leader at the corporate level influence the electorate?

1.6. Significance of the Study

Brand managers, media consultants, and political strategists must use all of their resources to create, hold, and maintain a positive yet consistent image if they want existing and potential voters to perceive the political co-brand in the right way. For

this clear, coherent, consistent, and reliable marketing and communication strategies are required. Co-branding, which is a special case of brand extension, is seen happening more frequently in politics than in consumer markets (Egan, 1999; Lock & Harris, 1996, Park et al., 1996). While researchers have studied political parties and candidate brands, there is a need to know how marketing strategies should be designed for a political co-brand which combines party brand's and candidate brand's exclusive potential. This study therefore intends to assist marketers and policy makers in designing ethical and appropriate marketing strategies for the creation and management of *political co-brand* image and positioning so that the message resonates with the voters and can withstand the assessment and reassessment in the media by the journalists. Additionally, this investigation will advance academic understanding. The objectives have offered researchers a chance to rethink political brands, particularly in unconventional contexts, based on in-depth knowledge from the viewpoints of political analysts and then quantitative data from the voters. It is expected that this will ultimately allow the sub-disciplines of political branding to advance and develop as a field of study (Needham & Smith, 2015; Nielsen, 2016; Scammel, 2015).

1.7. Contribution of the Study

This study contributes to the limited research available on political co-branding image, positioning and the negative image transference between co-brands and corporate brand. In addition to that, this mixed method study highlights the importance of expanding on the existing theories and frameworks to assess their applicability and strength. This study also aims to highlight that the existing frameworks' applicability in differing contexts, settings and for different concepts warrant empirical examination. To demonstrate this empirically, this study assessed the transfer potential of the Political Co-brand Identity Framework to while exploring and investigating the political co-brand image and positioning and to develop an updated understanding of this framework in action.

Since the political co-branding remained an underexplored area with no noticeable framework which could help in understanding how it is formed and which could aid in turning this concept into quantifiable observation, sequential

exploratory MMR is the best choice (discussed in Chapter 3). With the help of this research design, this study has also managed to present a new framework for co-brand image and positioning building on an existing framework, the Political Co-brand Image & Positioning Framework (discussed in Chapter 4 and 6). This framework is one of the major contributions of this study to the body of knowledge. This study also presents a new scale, the “*Political Brand Positioning & Political Marketing*”, abbreviated as *PBPM* (in Chapter 5) which aids in measuring the effect of marketing for the political brand image and positioning. It is therefore expected that the new framework will aid the government, media organization and political brands (parties and candidates) in formulating appropriate marketing and public policies.

This study offers essential information for practitioners, academics, and public policy makers who are responsible for developing marketing plans and enhancing brand positioning and, examine matters that can increase political trust, political brand’s trustworthiness, political stability and the continuation of democracy. It is anticipated that academics, political consultants, political campaign and media consultants, and policy makers will benefit from an informed actors' (who are stakeholders) and electorates’ viewpoint on the image and positioning of political brands.

1.8. Underpinning Theory

Since brand positioning enhances brand’s identity, this study is employing the Political Co-brand Identity Framework as a theoretical lens. This framework is based on the Jean-Noel Kapferer’s Brand Identity Prism (discussed in Chapter 2) which was introduced in 1996. Both Political Co-brand Identity Framework and Kapferer Brand Identity Prism are based on the *Brand Identity Theory*, which contends that a brand is an abstract idea that customers have, and which goes beyond a collection of goods or services. Another marketing professional, David Aaker, initially put forth this thesis in his book, "Managing Brand Equity", in 1991. According to Aaker, a brand's identity consists of a variety of distinctive connotations and traits that set it apart from competing brands in the marketplace. By deconstructing a brand's identity into six dimensions or elements, each of which adds to the brand's overall

personality and image, Brand Identity Prism expands upon Aaker's thesis. Kapferer asserts that every brand may analyse its identity using the prism elements (Kapferer, 2008). Brand Identity Prism is modified in 2015 by Pich and Dean. And then Armannsdottir, et al. (2019b) modified Pich & Dean (2015)'s framework into the Political Co-brand Identity Framework (discussed in Chapter 2).

This study also illustrates how the *Business Theory of Leadership Styles* developed by Goleman (2002; Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee, 2013) can be applied to the realm of political management. Based on a mix of emotional intelligence (EI) skills, he separates six distinct emotional leadership styles: authoritative, democratic, affiliative, coaching, coercive, and pacesetter. Each of these approaches affects people's emotions in a different way, and each has advantages and disadvantages depending on the circumstance. And, no particular style should be used constantly, according to Goleman. Instead, the six types should be used interchangeably based on the specific requirements of the situation and the people a leader is dealing with.

1.9. Context

The Islamic Republic of Pakistan served as an appropriate and under-researched location for this study. The relationships established between political parties and their leaders and voters during election campaigns typically end after the election (Jain et al., 2017). Electorates are more likely to think negative about a political co-brand when they encounter news or information that deviates from their preconceived notions about the partnering brand (Ahmed, Lodhi & Shahzad, 2011). In order to know about both political parties/candidates and the electorates, the perspective of informed stakeholders who are in touch with both sides, is crucial. The available research has mostly concentrated only on the opinions of political parties, politicians, and voters only. Therefore, more input from other stakeholders is necessary. Existing scholarship suggests that both external and internal stakeholders co-create the brand meaning (Veloutsou & Guzman, 2017). They play a crucial role both directly and indirectly in the co-creation of the corporate brand image. This is why researchers have indicated the need of studying the actors and their perceptions in different branding concepts and empirical settings (e.g. Törmälä & Saraniemi, 2018).

As a result, for the qualitative portion of this study, 12 political analysts are interviewed. They are both involved in academic research and work in the business sector, consultancies, government organisations, and so on (Hubbard & Norman, 2007; Lindgreen & Di Benedetto, 2020). Academicians, practitioners, and policymakers benefit from the perspectives of informed actors/stakeholders on the performance of political brands. There is also a need to investigate and comprehend the political brands image perception in the South-Asian area due to a lack of research on the subject (Jain et al., 2017a). By interviewing political experts, this research is conducted in the post-election environment and attempts to examine perceptions regarding the political co-brand image and positioning. This research will assist in the understanding of how to manage a political co-brand image after an election. (Qualitative research is discussed in Chapter 3 and 4 in more detail).

Qualitative data indicates that *Pakistan's centrist Tehrik e Insaaf (PTI)*; *Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N)*; and *Pakistan Peoples' Party (PPP)* are the three major political brands in Pakistan. The *Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N)* was founded in 1988 and was led by three-time Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif until he was dismissed by a court ruling in 2017. It is considered as a center-right political party. Nawaz Sharif has a large popularity in both urban and rural Punjab, where he presided over much of the development. PMLN ran a vigorous campaign for the GE2018 with their slogan “Vote Ko Ezzat Do” (Give Respect to the Vote). PMLN aspires to be known as a progressive and democratic political party (Malik, 2021).

The *Pakistan Peoples' Party (PPP)* was created in the late 60s by Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto (late). It is considered as a centre-left social-democratic party. Sindh province has a sizable fan following. In Pakistan's history, Bhutto is still regarded as the most charismatic and popular leader. This political brand aims to be known as a party that seeks to improve the economic well-being of the masses by increasing access to fundamental amenities of life (Gill, 2021).

The *Pakistan's Tehrik e Insaaf*². It was created in 1996 by Imran Khan, the ex-national cricket team captain, who is also known for his charitable efforts. It is a centrist party. Imran Khan has a huge following among the Pakistani youth and educated class who revered him for his sincerity and honesty. He is considered as one of the most charismatic personalities in Pakistan. In the 2018 General Election (GE), PTI became the dominant shareholder for the first time and formed its own government. However, Imran Khan was impeached by a *vote of no-confidence motion*³, in the parliament in Islamabad, Pakistan on 9 April 2022. PTI positions itself as a force which aims to rid the country of corruption (Tehseem, 2018).

Quantitative study is built on the findings of the qualitative study. For the quantitative study, data is collected from a different set of respondents. through self-administered questionnaires from the general population on the three major political brands of Pakistan. In this way, this study evaluates the impact of marketing activities which build co-brand image and positioning (which appeared in the qualitative strand's findings) on Pakistan's populace. Given the quarantine limitations imposed by the government of Pakistan due to the Covid-19 epidemic, the quantitative data (697 responses) was gathered online. The data (both qualitative and quantitative) is gathered in Pakistan. (Quantitative research is discussed in Chapter 3 and 5 in more detail.)

1.10. Structure of the Document

This study is comprised of six chapters. Chapter 1 gives a thorough overview of the topic, background of the study, statement of the problem, research gaps this study has tried to fill, and significance of the study. Chapter 2 will present a critical evaluation of the published/available literature on political brand image and positioning. Chapter 3 will give the idea about the research method and design which are used for this sequential exploratory study. Chapter 4 will present the findings of the qualitative strand of the study. Chapter 5 is built on the findings of

² Movement for Justice, PTI.

³ According to Article 58 of the Pakistani Constitution, a Prime Minister (along with the cabinet) is removed from office if 172 of the National Assembly's 342 members, or a majority, vote in favour of a motion of no-confidence.

the qualitative study. It will present the findings of quantitative analysis. Chapter 6 gives details of how the two studies are integrated. Chapter 6 also presents the interpretation, integration of the data analysis, discussion on the findings and conclusion of the research.

LITERATURE REVIEW

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0. Introduction

The use of commercial marketing concepts in politics and political research is not a new trend or an anomaly (O’Cass & Voola, 2011; Scammell, 2015). It is unanimously accepted by the researchers in this stream that both party and the politicians/candidates/leader are considered, conceptualized and act as brands (Armannsdottir & Pich, 2018; Guzman & Sierra, 2009; Kotler & Kotler, 1999; Needham, 2005, 2006; Needham & Smith, 2015; Pich & Dean, 2015; Reeves, De Chernatony & Carrigan, 2006; Scammell, 2007; Schneider, 2004; Smith, 2001, he2005a, 2009; Smith & French, 2009; White & De Chernatony, 2002). Branding today is deemed as a beneficial concept which is effective for both marketing and political science (Needham & Smith, 2015). Also, the appeal for utilising the political branding concept for both party brand and the candidate/politician brand has grown lately (Pich & Dean, 2015). This concept is embraced and is broadly adopted by the parties as well as the politicians/candidates for distinguishing their image and identity with respect to their competitors. This is one of the reasons that researchers have indicated need for more research to explore and examine the practicality, efficacy, and value of branding concept in politics (Harris & Lock, 2010; Pich & Dean, 2015; Smith, 2005b; Smith & French, 2009).

One of the areas in the political branding literature which has attracted sufficient attention is the concept of co-branding and its application to politics. It includes the political corporate brand and the politician brand, where political party is considered as the corporate brand and, candidate/politician as the political brand (Armannsdottir et al., 2019b). Review of the literature shows that this topic is gaining ground, and clear recommendations are made for further research and knowledge on political co-branding from the standpoint of brand image and positioning (Armannsdottir et al., 2019b; Pich & Dean, 2015).

Employing the funnel approach, this chapter starts with the introduction and discussion on the importance of branding. After introducing political brands, discussion will shift towards the two main concepts this study is addressing, namely:

brand image and positioning. Then the under-researched area of political co-branding (Aqeel, Hanif & Malik, 2017; Armannsdottir et al., 2019b; Baumgarth, 2018; Besharat & Langan, 2014) will be discussed and political co-brand identity framework will be introduced.

2.1. Political Branding

The existing literature describes political marketing as the vital application of the acceptable and well-established branding concepts, theories, and frameworks to politics (Milewicz & Milewicz, 2014; O’Cass, 1996). The purpose of applying these concept, theories and framework is to differentiate from the competitor political brands and to establish an identification for the political entities (Harris & Lock, 2010; Needham & Smith, 2015). The increasing number of professional political consultants (Panagopoulos, 2006) and the political marketing scholarship has added to both the number and nature of marketing principles which are applied in the domain of political marketing domain (Henneberg, 2004; Henneberg & O’Shaughnessy, 2007; Milewicz & Milewicz, 2014). Out of these principles, political branding appears to be more curious and therefore deserves more attention (Lock & Harris, 1996; Needham, 2006; Schneider, 2004). Today, political branding has evolved into a noteworthy and exclusive area of research (Scammell, 2015) within the domain of political marketing. Literature presents political brands as multifaceted constructs (e.g. Nielsen, 2017; Phipps, Brace-Govan & Jevons, 2010; Pich & Newman, 2020). That is why while political branding is considered an important concept, it is still opened for more scholarly research.

This section discusses the concept of branding and research on branding in the mainstream marketing literature. It then presents the discussion on research on political branding.

2.1.1. Branding in the Mainstream Marketing Literature

According to the definition by the American Marketing Association, brand can be a name, or a term or a design/logo or some feature which distinguishes a seller’s

goods/service from those of other sellers.⁴ While primarily, branding is done to distinguish the products/services from those of the competitors and help consumers in recognizing the product/services (Keller, 2020; Kotler, 2000; Murphy, 1992), some researchers e.g. Keller (2003) recognized that whenever marketers sell a new product and give it a new name, logo and design etc., they create a brand. This indicates that brands are more than being a simple identifier (Guzman, 2005). Given the fast and super fluid marketplace of today (Keller, 2020), consumer's understanding of brands has always remained extremely important to the researchers. For this study, the focus is on branding, from the voter's perspective (than marketing management) (Mühlbacher & Hemetsberger, 2008).

Today branding research has advanced and the researchers believe that consumers set the strategic direction (i.e. how positioning will be done) for the brand since they are more enlightened motivated and empowered today (Keller, 2020). However, initially (before 1980s (Kapferer, 1997)) branding was considered only an integral part of the marketing process to sell the products/services (e.g. Urde, 1999). Then by the mid-90s, there began appearing a shift in the branding research (Guzman, 2005). It was more inclined towards brand building now. Since brand was defined as a name, logo, or any other external sign, branding was considered important in informing consumer about the hidden qualities of the product (Kapferer, 1997) and in creating a distinctive image of the product (Kohli & Thakor, 1997). Branding was considered a major subject in the product strategy (Kotler, 2000), a crucial element of brand communication for building brand image of the product (Aaker & Joachimsthaler, 2000). Researchers began highlighting how brands serve the purposes of reducing the perceived risk, facilitate consumers in making the choice decision, and offer symbolic, economic benefits creating the brand value in the consumer's mind (Kapferer, 1997). Research identifies that in order to create brand value, shareholder's value has to be maximised (Doyle, 2001) which is based on factors like brand's perceived quality, brand awareness, brand's attractiveness, evocations, likeness etc. (Guzman, 2005). Then came concepts like brand orientation which emphasised on the creation, formation and protection of brand identity and competitive advantage the brand creates in relation to the

⁴ American Marketing Association. Definition of Brand: <https://www.ama.org/topics/branding/>

competitors (Urde, 1999). Concepts like brand equity (e.g. Chen, 2001; Farquhar, 1981; Farquhar, Han & Ijiri, 1991; Keller, 2003; Kim, Kim & An, 2003; Lassar, Mittal & Sharma, 1995; Simon & Sullivan, 1993; Shocker, Srivastava & Rueckrt, 1994; etc.), brand image (e.g. Park, Jaworski & MacInnis, 1986) brand personality (e.g. Aaker, 1997) and brand identity (e.g. De Chernatony, 1999; Urde, 1999) became important for the branding strategy of the companies (Guzman, 2005). The brand hexagon model (Urde, 1999) combined both emotional and rational aspects reflecting both the organization's intentions towards the brand and how the target audience decipher the brand. The model kept the brand positioning along with some other core values of brand creation in the middle, reflecting the importance of brand identity and equity.

In 1997, Aaker (1997) presented the brand personality concept and created a measurement scale. She opined that human personality characteristics are also associated with the brands. The big five were employed to for her framework to explain the symbolic functions of the brand, namely sincerity, competence, excitement, sophistication, and ruggedness. Then came models which focused on building strong brands and stressed the importance of strategy as well as tactics (e.g. the brand leadership model by Aaker & Joachimsthaler, 2000). Positioning, creating the brand image and communication remained importance for brand asset management. Brands began to be viewed as assets and concepts like brand asset management were introduced in the literature (Davis, 2002; Davis & Dunn 2002).

Researchers have also considered organization and corporates too as brands (Aaker, 2004a, 2004b; Balmer & Gray, 2003; de hernatony,1999; Guzman, 2005; Hatch & Schultz, 2003; King, 1991; Knox & Bickerton, 2003). In addition to that, researchers have studied services as brands (e.g. De Chernatony & Segal-Horn, 2001; Kim & Lee, 2017). Among the other concepts that emerged during the mid-90s and early 2000 included brand origin (e.g. Thakor & Kohli, 1996; Thakor & Lavack, 2003), brand communities (e.g. Coelho, Rita, & Santos, 2018; Mc Alexander, Schouten, & Koenig 2002; Muniz & O'Guinn, 1991, 2001), experiential branding (e.g. Koivisto & Mattilla, 2018; Schmitt, 1999), emotional branding and citizen brands (e.g. Gobé, 2001, 2002), brand stewardship (e.g. Speak, 1998) etc. Considering the importance, recent studies have paid attention to this concept from

the perspective of destination branding (e.g. Lai, Khoo-Lattimore & Wang, 2019; Mitropoulou, & Spilanis, 2020; Ruiz-Real, 2020), from the perspective of nation branding (e.g. Hao et al., 2019), and even from the perspective of co-branding (e.g. Da Liang, 2020), etc.

Political parties and candidates too have been conceptualized as brands. However, recent research has identified some lacunas which need scholarly attention. This study endeavours to address some of those gaps. The following sections discuss political brands, political brand image, positioning and co-brands in the light of available research on image and positioning.

2.1.2. Branding in the Political Marketing Literature

Political brands are theorized as the planned political representations of the political party/candidate/policies etc. in relation to the competitors' representation patterns (Nielsen, 2017) with established competitive advantage (Cwalina & Falkowski, 2015). The current study views political brand in the light of Lees-Marshment (2011)'s definition. According to Lees-Marshment (2011), political brands are the psychological composition of the associations, perception and impressions of the party brand and the candidate/politician brand. Political branding offers numerous benefits like functional and economic benefits; they act as heuristic tools for the electorates (who may be cognitive misers (Crocker, Fiske & Taylor, 1984)) especially when it comes to political decision making; they also act as a tool for an electorate's self-concept reinforcement; and aid the non-loyal electorates in seeking variety, just like consumer branding (Smith & French, 2009). The literature presents political brands as trinity of three key components. These include the party (as its brand), the leader of the party (as its tangible qualities) and the party's policies (as its primary service offers) (Butler, Collins & Speed, 2011; Davies & Mian, 2010; O'Cass & Voola, 2011; Smith, 2008; Smith & French, 2009; Speed, Butler & Collins, 2015; O'Shaughnessy & Henneberg, 2007).

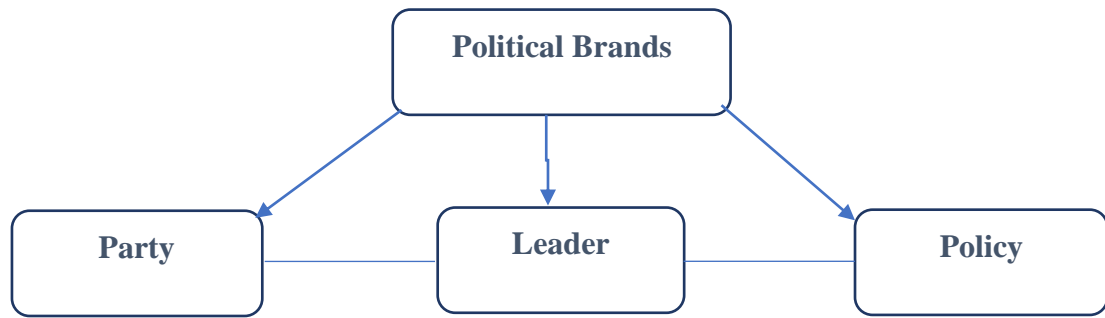


Figure 1: The Trinity of Political Brands as presented by Pich & Newman (2019)

Extant literature presents political brands as a robust concept (Milewicz & Milewicz, 2014) and as a multi-layered intangible entity (Billard, 2018; Jain, Chawla, Ganesh & Pich, 2018; Lock & Harris, 1996; Scammell, 2015; Speed, Butler & Collins, 2015) which has the power to connect with the voters on an emotional level and is capable of stimulating loyalty (Marland, 2013). They are not just the strategic competitive assets (Lock & Harris, 1996; Phipps et al., 2010; Pich, Armannsdottir & Spry, 2018) but are also the heuristic tools for the corporate representing a set of values for the consumers to help them in making quick choices (Pich & Dean, 2015). Political branding rests on the idea that political parties, leaders/candidates, and issues can be managed as products (according to authors like Kotler & Kotler 1999; Shama, 1976). Also since the seminal work of Lock & Harris (1996), there is a consensus among political marketing researchers that political entities can be considered as brands (e.g. Guzman & Sierra, 2009; Milewicz & Milewicz, 2014; French & Smith, 2010; Smith, 2009; Smith & French, 2009; etc.). In addition to that, brands are vital in politics because they make the electorate's voting decision easier (Needham, 2006) by reducing the struggle electorates exercise to know about the party, candidate/politician, and their policies (Van Steenburg & Guzman, 2019). However, it should be kept in mind that there are some major differences between political brands and consumer brands (as discussed in 2.1.4.).

Looking at the history, the broadening of the concepts like political marketing and branding in politics dates to the 60s and 70s (e.g. Kotler & Levy, 1969). While the application and the concepts were not as refined and sophisticated back then as it is today, nevertheless helped the researchers in looking at these

concepts beyond the mainstream marketing and commercial scope (Butler & Harris, 2009). Authors like Lock and Harris (1996) presented the political party as the core branded entity and outlined the intangible bundled nature of the party-candidate relationship. They explain that with political parties and candidates forming the intangible complex product together that it is often difficult for the electorates to unbundle. Electorates, therefore, mostly consider the overall package or the concept (or brand image) to make the voting choice. Research studies like Lock and Harris (1996) and Smith and French (2009) etc. explained the distinctive challenges of exploring, investigating, and managing political brands. Then, the emergence of various macro-environmental elements and the ever-increasing competition between the political parties further accentuated the need for establishing point of differences between the parties (Bulsara & Singh, 2012).

Since the formative work of Lock & Harris (1996), the political brand conceptualization has significantly advanced, especially in the last twenty years (Pich & Newman, 2020). Over this period, researchers have used various terminologies like corporate brands, candidate-politician brand, etc. for the political brands (Landtsheer & de Vries, 2015; Grimmer & Grube, 2017; Speed et al., 2015). Political branding has been studied to understand brand communities (e.g. Dermody & Scullion, 2001); brand relationships (e.g. Scammell, 2007); brand culture (e.g. Smith & Speed, 2011); brand perspective (Nielsen & Larsen, 2014), brand personality (e.g. Smith, 2009), etc. Authors like Cosgrove (2007); Needham (2005, 2006); Reeves et al. (2006) etc. have also discussed the possible negative influence of political branding on the society. The recent studies, in this regard, include Jain and Ganesh (2019), who concentrated on party leader brands; Armannsdottir et al., (2019a) focused on parliamentarians; authors like Falkowski and Jabłonska, (2020) and Marland and Wagner (2019) concentrated on candidates and legislators; Newman (2019) studied political brand communities; Harvey & Branco-Illodo (2019) studied cryptocurrencies as policy brands; and Susila et al. (2019) studied political brand communications.

However, the research on political brands in different contexts and setting have remained limited and there are many areas which are under-researched and underdeveloped and calls for more research in different context and settings (e.g.

Billard 2018; Needham & Smith, 2015; Nai & Martinez, 2019; Nielsen, 2016; Ormrod & Henneberg, 2011; Pich & Dean, 2015; Scammell, 2015; Speed et al., 2015) e.g. political brand image and political brand positioning (Pich & Newman, 2020). In addition to that, the availability of only a few frameworks for studying/assessing the political brand identity, image and positioning which can aid in the development of political brand strategy and management (Pich & Newman, 2020) is another solid area for research. In line with these points, there is explicit call for further research on political brands (e.g. Billard, 2018; Husted et al., 2018; Nai & Martinez, 2019; Nielsen, 2016; etc.) to expanding on theories, concepts, and framework with help in developing models. The frameworks/models so develop will help in exploring, investigating political brand image, and positioning. This will in turn improve the understanding of political brand management and strategy formulation.

The concept of branding is much larger and covers more than the main political entities e.g. party and candidates/leader. Study of the relevant literature indicates that just like commercial brands which reflect the experience consumers have (Keller & Lehmann, 2006), political brands are co-created with what the electorates experience within the political realms. Political parties, candidates/leaders and their actions, electorates, competitors, media etc. influence the conceptual nature of the political brand. The conceptualization of the political brands evolves in this way (Milewicz & Milewicz, 2014). Therefore, it is integral to understand and identify the main entities so that the influence of the political brand on electorate, political system and society at large, can be studied. Today when branding has seeped into politics in several ways and political branding practice is evolving (Downer, 2013), there is still room for more academic interest (Marsh & Fawcett, 2011, Pich & Newman, 2020). This indicates the need for exploring and investigating the evolving discipline of political marketing and specifically, the political branding.

2.1.3. Party as Brand Entity

The concept of branding is applicable in every context and settings where consumer choice is involved, where it is some tangible product or an intangible service. Also,

the use of branding in non-traditional markets is not an anomaly (Smith, 2009; Smith & French, 2009). Political parties are organizations through which the political candidates exchange promises and hopes with electorates' votes. This is one of the reasons of considering political parties as well as politicians as brands (Harris & Lock, 2001; Kotler & Kotler, 1999; Needham, 2005; Reeves et al., 2006; Schneider, 2004; Scammell, 2007; Smith, 2001; White & De Chernatony, 2002). Political parties are just like any other social organization with a clearly defined program, policies, strategies for electoral activities and aims of realizing the program by influencing the legislative and executive authority decisions (Gorbaniuk et al., 2015). Existing scholarship indicates consensus among researchers on political parties (whether regional, national, or international) be conceptualized as brands (e.g. Ahmed, Lodhi, & Ahmad, 2017; Gorbaniuk et al., 2015; Lock & Harris, 1996; Meyerrose 2017; Nielsen & Larsen, 2014; Rutter, Hanretty & Lettice, 2018; Scammell, 2015; Smith, 2009; Smith & French, 2009; etc.).

A political party brand has its own distinguishing features, has a unique name, slogans, logo, ideology, stance on socio-political issues, etc. which differentiates it from other parties (AMA, 1960) in each marketplace. Just like consumer brands, these symbols, names, logos etc. help electorate in identification and differentiation of the brand (party) with respect to competitors (Scammell, 2007, Smith & French, 2009) especially when electorates have observed/experience their services and they could attach meanings to these names over time. Branding is also helpful when the political party wants to project a certain political identity (Smith, 2009) as well as when the party wants to build brand loyalty (Needham, 2005; Phipps et al., 2010). Extant literature indicates that political parties' practice of marketing strategies and policies with respect to electoral activities are discussed and recognized. It is therefore evident that in order to get long-term competitive advantage over competing brands, brand communication (daily and especially during election) through appropriate medium is crucial for achieving the objective of electorate satisfaction (Osuagwu, 2008).

Political Brand Perspectives

According to Nielsen (2017), published research has looked at the political parties based on how researchers have viewed the electorates. He has divided the literature into six broad categories which represent six different political brand perspectives. The first category is related to the *economic perspective*. According to this perspective, the bond between political leaders/candidates/parties (i.e., brands) and electorates resembles an exchange process. Electorates take in all the information the political brand provides them (Harris & Lock, 2001). And the brand management employ communication strategies throughout specific marketing phases to influence the way electorates perceive the brand (Newman, 1994). To ensure that the party brand is remembered and can be recalled by electorates at the right time, a variety of spin devices, media appearances, and marketing tactics, such as the 4P's of marketing (product, place, pricing, and promotion), are used and implemented (Harris & Lock, 2001). The same microtargeting strategies are employed for the candidate brand and the leaders. The economic perspective of political brands is basically based on the viewpoint of the informed electorates who have predetermined preferences, similar to microeconomics theories applied to marketing research (Nielsen, 2017).

The second category is related to the *relational* perspective. This viewpoint calls attention to the various relationships that voters have with political parties, relationships that can be compared to human relationships and that are very personal to each voter. Instead of primarily employing the brand to express a particular identity to the outside world, this understanding is predicated on an inner reality that can be based on a voter's life narrative with a brand (Nielsen, 2017; Scammell, 2007).

The third category is the *political brand community*. From this aspect, a brand is investigated as a multilateral construct. The important intersection is between the spirited conversation that voters have with one another and the political marketer's sporadic attempts to facilitate this social consumption of political products. The way culture determines how a political experience is understood affects voter perceptions. It has an anthropological perspective. In essence, it relies

on the language of a fan base or a social tribe, which creates the framework for how these people make sense of politics. This is comparable to the strong sense of community that fans of certain sports teams or auto enthusiasts may have. Participants' identities are thereby heavily engaged in these largely fluid social networks, both occasionally and even in several at once (Nielsen, 2017).

Fourth category is *political brand personality*. According to this viewpoint, electorate attribute human personality attributes to political parties (Davies & Mian, 2010; Smith, 2009). Others are conventional, trustworthy, and diligent while others are young, exciting, and contemporary (Aaker, 1997). The political brand personality perspective highlights how animism—or how voters view political parties as having human-like qualities—affects voting. This reasoning, which is based on personality psychology, emphasises that electorates can more easily relate to parties when they are perceived to have traits similar to their own or to those of famous people. When political parties employ celebrity endorsements to present a comforting and recognisable image in the complicated realm of politics, this mechanism is amplified (Nielsen, 2017).

Fifth category represents the *voter-centric* perspective. According to this viewpoint, electorates own the brand because it derives its meaning from their associations (Keller, 1993). Cognitive psychology shapes the actor presumptions in the voter-centric political brand approach (Schneider, 2004; French & Smith, 2010; Smith & French, 2011). In this sense, an electorate is viewed as a cognitive miser who doesn't want to deal with the significant information costs of analysing policy proposals and keeping up with the daily news cycle. The network of associations that results distils the meaning of each association for each voter (Keller 1993). And every time the political brand is stimulated, these knowledge structures can be recalled by electorates. They attempt to determine the emotional and functional linkages associated with various parties. While marketers attempt to influence the associations, individuals choose to preserve in their minds (Smith and French 2011, p. 730f)

The sixth category is the *cultural* perspective of political brands. Electorate's expectations are therefore predicated on the notion that people are

cultural animals that seek to understand what is current and use this knowledge to support their personal narratives. From a party strategist's perspective, culture branding offers the possibility for 'Blue Ocean advantage for the political party that best positions itself to resonate with the mood in society (Nielsen, 2017).

Approaches of Study the Application of Branding in Politics

The available literature indicates that there have been, some concerns regarding the application of branding in politics due to the difference between the consumer and political markets (Henneberg, 2006; O'Shaughnessy & Henneberg, 2007). Literature offers two approaches of studying and analysing the application of branding in politics: one relates to *brand management* and the other relates to the *consumer perspective* about the brand (Aaker & Joachimsthaler, 2000; Smith & French, 2009). This study is utilising the customer-oriented approach to study the political brands.

The one on brand management, concentrates on the employment of branding techniques in a certain market to create a brand's identity in that market. However, this strategy is criticised. It is clearly problematic to transfer practises from one market to another without taking into account their differences (Smith & French, 2009). In some authors opinion, politics cannot not be compared with commercial markets (Henneberg, 2006; O'Shaughnessy & Henneberg, 2007). Studies like Lock & Harris (1996) which introduced the term *brands* for political parties, highlighted the differences in the product offerings as the key distinguishing feature between political party brands and the mainstream brands. Unlike the mainstream consumer brands, electorates must either accept all the party's offerings (which includes policies, stance on the issues, promises, etc.) or none of the offerings (Smith, 2009). Secondly, there have been contentions regarding negative and undesirable effects of branding on the democratic system and regarding the benefits a political party accrue at the cost of democratic political process as well as the society (Klein, 2000; Lilleker & Negrine, 2003; Needham, 2005; Scammell, 1999). Some researchers have indicated that it narrows down the political agenda, aggravate confrontations and demands conformity of behaviour, Also, the political disengagements at the local level further increases (Scammell, 1999; Lilleker & Negrine, 2003; Needham, 2005). For authors of this stream of literature, political

parties are different than consumer brands (like soap brands, for instance) and hence cannot be sold like those (Smith & French, 2009). Smith (2009) opines that while such contentions and negative analysis are valid, they are only partially so and the transfer of branding practices to any marketplace without the understanding of the market's unique features and point of distinctions, can be problematic. In Smith (2009)'s opinion, the implied role of branding gives a touch of product-oriented touch in such analysis.

The stream of literature, contrary to the product-orientated perspective, has adopted this consumer-oriented approach (e.g. Busby & Cronshaw, 2015; French & Smith, 2010; Grimmer & Grube, 2017; Smith & French, 2009; Smith 2009 quoting Keller, 2006 for an overview; Pich & Dean, 2015; etc.). This alternative strategy embraces a *consumer perspective* and concentrates on how customers discover and are inspired by brands. It explains how the image of the brand forms in consumer memory and subsequently influences consumer behaviour). Here the focus is on how brand image is developed in consumer/electorate's memories and their behaviour, eventually (Smith & French, 2009). Party brand image is basically the entirety of associations that develop in the receiver's mind (who are electorates, in this study) under the influence of a set of signs like party name, the logo party used, slogans etc., which indicate and represent the party's identity (Gorbaniuk et al., 2015). Most studies in this stream have focussed on how and why consumers learn about the political brands, with a belief that electorates have inherent drive to learn about the brands. Electorate are motivated to learn in order to determine (via cognitive learning) who they should support while dealing with the complex shedloads information about the already over-communicated world (Burton & Netemeyer, 1992; Cwalina et al., 2004; Newman & Sheth, 1985; O'Cass & Pecotich, 2003; Smith, 2009; Smith & French, 2009). In simplest parlance, this stream of literature focuses on how the political party's brand image is formed in electorate's memory and influence their behaviour. This view presents political parties as brands since it justifies how parties acts as brands to the electorates (Smith & French, 2009).

Among the major concepts used to explore and assess political parties as brands include brand image (e.g. Lock & Harris, 1996; Smith & French, 2009; Pich & Dean, 2015; Pitch et al., 2018; etc.), brand equity (e.g. French & Smith, 2010;

Reeves et al., 2006; Ahmed et al., 2017; etc.), brand identity (e.g. French & Smith, 2010; etc.), positioning (e.g. Smith, 2005a), party personality (e.g. Smith, 2009; Gorbaniuk et al., 2015; Rutter et al., 2018; etc.), ideology (Reeves et al., 2006), communication (e.g. White & De Chernatony, 2002), popular culture and personalization in politics (Scammell, 2015), etc.

Table 1 presents some of the important studies, which presents party as branded entity, in chronological order.

Table 1: Party as Branded Entity

Authors	Focus of the Study
Newman & Sheth, 1985	Created and evaluated a model of primary election voter behaviour
Burton & Netemeyer, 1992	A conceptual model of the links between enduring, situational, and reaction involvement is suggested and evaluated, from the perspective of decision-making related to a political election.
Lock & Harris, 1996	Focus is on Brand Image. This study emphasizes that the important distinctions between political and product or service marketing have not received enough attention. This study suggests future research will focus on the intersections between political science, traditional marketing, and political marketing.
Scammel, 1999	Political marketing's efforts to become a unique field of study have resulted in regular conferences and specialised literature.
Newman, 1999	This study is on political communication.
White & Chernatony, 2002	The use of branding by political parties to establish their beliefs and garner support is examined in this essay. It focuses in particular on how political parties use communication to establish, strengthen, and uphold their political brands.
Lilleker & Negrine, 2003	This study discusses the Centralized party model. This study makes the case that the centralised party model has lost favour based on interviews with those involved in politics "on the ground."
O'Cass & Pecotich, 2003	This study focuses on voters' behaviour and the influence process.
Cwalina et al., 2004	This study focuses on the models of voter behaviour in democracies.
Lilleker & Negrine, 2003	Authors have paid attention to the concepts of political communication and political marketing from the perspective of British political parties and voting behaviour in Britain.
Schneider, 2004	Author has focused on the political brand Identity and the relevance of political brands. This study also concentrates on the functions of political brands and uses GAP-Model of Political Brands.
O'Cass & Pecotich, 2003	This study is on voter behaviour from the perspective of opinion leadership.
Smith, 2005a	This study focuses on political marketing, specifically positioning of the political brands.
Smith, 2005b	The focus is on political marketing, political brands, image, and political

	events.
Reeves et al., 2006	The main themes of this study are brand equity and ideology.
Smith, 2009	This study is on partisanship and political party personality.
Smith & French, 2009	It is on brand image; consumer memory and functions of Political Brands.
French & Smith, 2010	Authors have paid attention political brand identity and brand equity.
Nielsen & Larsen, 2014	It focuses on political marketing; voting behaviour and association analysis.
Scammell, 2015	It is on political image, and popular culture from the perspective of personalization in politics.
Gorbaniuk et al., 2015	The focus is on party image and brand personality. It also looks at the dispositional attributes.
Pich & Dean, 2015	Authors have looked at brand image using qualitative projective techniques and thematic analysis.
Busby & Cronshaw, 2015	The focus is on consumer tribe, and participation branding. And Tea party.
Nielsen, 2016, 2017	Author has studies political psychology.
Ahmed et al., 2017	It is on political brand equity; socialization process and community.
Meyerrose, 2017	Author has studied the European Parliament.
Rutter et al., 2018	Focus is on websites; brand personality and differentiation.
Pitch et al., 2018	Authors have studied brand image and brand reputation using qualitative projective techniques.
Marland & Wagner, 2019	Focus is on brand ambassadors in Canada, centralization, franchising, message control; parliamentary system, party branding; party discipline; political parties; and representation.
Casiraghi, Curini & Cusumano, 2022	Authors have focused on Colours, logos, political parties, institutionalism, isomorphism, and ideology.
Etc.	

2.1.4. Candidate/Politician as Brand Entity

Literature now presents/conceptualizes candidates/politicians as political brands (e.g. Billard 2018; Caprara, Barbaranelli & Zimbardo, 1997; Guzman & Sierra, 2009; Guzman, Paswan & Steenburg, 2015; Huang, Lin & Phau, 2015; Lees-Marshment, 2011; Levesque & Pons, 2020; Nai & Martinez, 2019; Phipps et al., 2010; Simons, 2016; Speed et al., 2015; Van Steenburg & Guzmán, 2019). In the last ten years, especially after the Phipps et al. (2010)'s reconceptualization of politicians as brands, the following research has demonstrated that candidates function as brands (e.g. Van Steenburg & Guzmán, 2019) independent of the party

(e.g. Barrett, 2018; Cosgrove, 2014; French & Smith 2010; Guzman & Sierra, 2009; Schneiker, 2018; Smith, 2009; Speed et al., 2015; Van Steenburg & Guzmán, 2019).

Surprisingly, while political marketing experts frequently refer to politicians as brands in the popular press and blogosphere, the concept of political candidates as brands has received scant attention in academic research (Lott, 1991; Guzman & Sierra, 2009; Phipps et al., 2010). Earlier, while candidates/leaders appeared in the literature as focal brand-related entities they were not considered as the core branded entity, rather a separate brand entity. For instance, in the economic models of the late 80s (e.g. Lott, 1986, 1991), powerful and influential politicians were viewed as the most effect way of dealing with the competitors cost-effectively. While these early economic models also indicated brand theory's initial recognition and its transferability to the political settings (Milewicz & Milewicz, 2014), political candidates were not considered as a core branded entity. Studies like Lock & Harris (1996); O'Shaughnessy & Henneberg (2007); Smith & French (2009) presented *political parties* as the core political brands and *candidates/politicians* as products within these core political brands (with focus on specific issues/policies which are being exchanged in the political marketplace). This early literature was developed in the European countries where parliamentary system is a norm even today (Van Steenburg & Guzman, 2019). However, with the passage of time, researchers began to look at politicians/candidates/leaders too as the core political brands (e.g. Falkowski and Jabłonska, 2020; Marland &Wagner, 2019; Milewicz & Milewicz, 2014; Van Steenburg & Guzman, 2019).

Candidate Brands versus Consumer Brands

In the light of the published research related to political marketing a psychology (e.g Cwalina, Falkowaski & Newman, 2016; Gorbaniuk et al., 2017), it is safe to assert that it may not be reasonable to directly compare the consumer brands with the human brands (in politics), based on the way branding concept is understood in mainstream marketing. The contemporary political marketing considers comparing politicians to products as old fashioned and scarcely acceptable idea, which could result in mistakes and errors when planning, organising, and running successful election campaigns (Cwalina et al., 2016; Cwalina, Falkowski, & Newman, 2011;

Lees-Marchment, 2009; Newman, 1994). The argument that candidates can be marketed like soaps (e.g. Kotler & Levy, 1969) is now used to criticise the negative impacts of political marketing. This archaic dictum is nevertheless frequently employed by political actors and observers, particularly the media (Cwalina et al., 2016). Candidates are "marketed" as *service providers* rather than "sold." Firstly, the electorate, not the politician, is where the marketing concept starts. Following a selling concept implies that the candidate, while developing the campaign platform, does not look outside her/his own ideology, which may not be what the electorate wants to hear. The marketing concept and the notion behind this concept, however, prescribe what politicians should do to attract and keep voters (Ibid).

The primary distinction between a human being and a consumer brand is that the latter is a "animate" object. According to O'Shaughnessy, (1987, p. 63), politics deals with persons and not products. Cwalina et al., (2016) has looked at this comparison from the psychological perspective. According to them what distinguishes a politician's (human) brand from a product are *emotions*. In the case of a human, they are generated automatically. In the case of a product, they are mediated by its brand (with an *assigned personality* (Aaker, 1997)). In addition to that, humans have personality, and can use the self-presentation and projection techniques to impress others, so that people/voters perceive them the way a candidate/politician want them to perceive him/her (however, this may or may not help the candidates in match the "real" perceptions of the voters). On the other hand, products are "assigned" or created without such a basis as "real personality". Therefore, Cwalina, Falkowski and Newman (2016) suggests that the response which consumer brands get often involves or is based on *anthropomorphization* processes. The consequence of the automatic arousal of emotions by a human brand is also another basis for forming relations with the electorate. It is an interpersonal trust with an object that may be intentionally misleading or intentionally creating a friendship. While consumer goods/brands marketing frequently focuses on how people engage with objects, political marketing is primarily concerned with people and their interactions with one another. As a result, there are a number of traits that set political candidates apart from consumer products in terms of attitudes and impression-formation processes. Both the brain and the psychological and

behavioural levels of information processing show these variances (Cwalina et al., 2016).

It is interesting to note that repeatedly considering and hinting political candidates as products in the political branding research, has led to the recognition of concepts like party image, party policies and politician/leader image etc. as the political product/offering (Harrop, 1990; Farrell & Wortmann, 1987; Worcester & Mortimore, 2005). Authors have been of the opinion that these three components are only one-third of the total political product, with the loyalty for the party brand and the post-election party's ability-to-grow/evolve, making up the other two (Van Steenburg & Guzman, 2019 quoting Butler & Collins, 1999). The party, its leader, the decisions the leader makes regarding policies, the elected candidates and staff, symbols, distinctive characteristics, and branding aspects all contribute to the political product, which is essentially an ongoing activity (Lees-Marshment, 2003). While, according to Lock & Harris (1996), leader is the cornerstone of any the political brands in this media-dominated age (Harris & Lock, 2001). However, it is safe to declare that the human branding theory may still be at its nascent stage.

The stream of literature which moved its attention from presenting political parties to politician/candidate brand as a source of cognitive shortcut for the electorates for making voting decisions (Barrett, 2018; French & Smith, 2010; Guzmán & Sierra, 2009; Guzmán et al., 2015; Jain et al., 2018; Lees-Marshment, 2014; Phipps et al., 2010; Schneiker, 2018; Speed et al., 2015; Van Steenburg & Guzman, 2019 quoting Cosgrove, 2014), resulted in assessing the electorate-political brand relationship with respect to brand image. However, focus remained on the political party brand (Gorbaniuk et al., 2015; Nielsen & Larsen, 2014; Rutter et al., 2018; Pich et al., 2018; Scammell, 2015; Smith, 2009; Smith & French, 2009). This resulted in paucity of research studies on political candidates as brands (Kaneva & Klemmer, 2016). This also is an indication of this concept's newness (Van Steenburg, 2015).

Research (e.g. Nielsen, 2017) indicates that political brands can be categorized in the six distinct political brand classes (discussed in the previous section) based on how researchers have implicitly comprehended the manner

electorates perceive the brands from the rational/emotional/social standpoints. Therefore, it is acceptable to admit and acknowledge that these brands have multiple facets and are multidimensional. The multiple touchpoints which electorates have today and which the political candidates use to engage the electorates justifies this point (Van Steenburg & Guzman, 2019). This is one of the reasons why electorates inadvertently rely on the leader/politician brand as a short cut to take an electoral decision (Guzmán & Sierra, 2009).

Candidate Brand as a Service Provider

Candidate brands are often considered as service providers. For instance, Bruce Newman, in the book, "The Marketing of the President" (1994, p.9) writes, "The candidate is in reality a service provider and offers a service to his consumers, the voters, much in the same way that an insurance agent offers a service to his consumers. In this case, the insurance policy becomes the product sold by the agent. Although author makes references to the marketing of candidates as products throughout the book, it should be kept in mind that the product they referring to is the campaign platform. To convey impression that the marketing of candidates is similar to the marketing of a bar of soap (by Kotler) is to oversimplify and minimize the uniqueness of the marketing application to politics." O'Shaughnessy (1987, 63) stressed this point as well, saying that politics "deals with a person, not a product." Politicians should be viewed as contractors, like doctors or lawyers, who are employed for a specific amount of time. In other words, conventional marketing frequently focuses on how people engage with products, but political marketing primarily focuses on people and their interactions with one another. As a result, there are a number of features that set political candidates apart from consumer brands in terms of attitude and impression construction.

In the light of the available scholarship on "*functional*" marketing analysis of political management (Cwalina et al. 2015 quoting Henneberg, 2003), political marketing may have considerably more in common with service and non-profit organisation marketing than with *product marketing*. Because services have distinct qualities that products do not, service marketing takes into account a wide range of strategic challenges that are not relevant to the marketing of items (Cwalina,

Falkowski & Newman, 2015). Services are basically the actions, procedures, and performances that apply specialised competences (knowledge, understanding and the abilities) for the advantage of another entity or the entity itself (Vargo & Lusch, 2004). Services are intangible, heterogeneous/variable, perishable, inseparable, non-standardized, and have no owner (Berry, 1980). These traits can, to a significant extent, be applied to the field of politics (Butler & Collins, 1994). For instance, the service candidates offer and provide are *intangible*. Repeatedly voting for the same candidate brand may be based on the reputation and memories of prior services. The service may also *vary* in terms of quality and calibre depending upon the candidate brands. Just like consumer services, political services are also *perishable*. They occur immediately and cannot be saved for any amount of time. Services are *inseparable* from the candidate brands who are the producer of the services. Political services are also non-standardized. Consistency in service delivery is a challenge. Since there is no owner, electorates can use the service activity or facility, but they do not own it (Cwalina et al., 2015).

The “*service-centered*” perspective sees marketing as an ongoing process of learning. In this view, the essential unit of exchange is the application of relevant knowledge and expertise (Vargo & Lusch, 2004). Electorates exchange their vote with the candidate brand to gain the candidates specialised services. The service-centered approach to marketing is focused on the electorates and market (constituencies, etc.). This entails working with electorates, taking advice from them, and adjusting to their unique, changing demands. Here in this perspective “value” is defined by and co-created with the electorates. To put it another way, electorates judge and perceive value based on “value in use,” or the outcome of the transformation of “stuff” into a condition from which they might satiate their demands (Cwalina et al., 2015; Vargo & Lusch, 2004). This is one of the reasons why political marketing strategists must find solutions to the unique marketing issues these service characteristics cause. These tactics entail engaging in post-purchase (or post-election) communications and using personal communication (word-of-mouth) methods more than nonpersonal ones (Zeithaml, Parasuraman, & Berry, 1985). Additionally, it's important to have a strong party image. It also vital to concentrate on the selection and training of public contact persons, customer

relationship management and relationship marketing (Boulding et al., 2005; Cwalina et al., 2015; Grönroos, 1994, 1998; Payne & Frow, 2005).

According to Newman (1994), when marketing principles are applied to politics, the exchange process revolves around a politician who gives political leadership in return for electoral support. The campaign platform is the product in politics, and market research and polling are necessary to assist build the candidate's platform. Additionally, the candidate's picture is crafted using the same research methods. The picture or impression that candidates leave on electorates' minds is more important than their platform itself. A candidate's physical presence, media appearances, experiences as a political leader, and track record all contribute to the creation of their image. He asserts that the other aspects of the services (intangibility, perishability, variability, heterogeneity, etc.) become more relevant for consideration after the candidate enters the office. A political party's and candidate brand's principal mission is to forge valuable relationships with electorates and other political power brokers in order to forward the goals of all concerned. This is accomplished by a mutual exchange (Cwalina et al., 2015). A crucial component of the relationship marketing and political marketing approach is "promise". *Giving promises, keeping promises, and enabling promises* are its three main operations. Candidates and parties that are fixated on making promises may draw in new voters and initially forge connections. Promises must be honoured, nevertheless, in order to maintain and strengthen a maturing relationship. Therefore, trust—the desire to rely on an exchange partner in whom one has confidence—is crucial to developing solid relationships (Grönroos 1994).

It is also crucial to keep in mind that, to candidates and parties, there are no "consumers" for their services. Instead, the parties' initiatives are meant to persuade people to live out their political ideals in all facets of their daily lives. Researchers suggest that lowering voters' risk and uncertainty by earning their trust and building one's reputation should be one of the main techniques utilised by political candidates and parties to obtain support (Bauer, Huber & Herrmann, 1996; Cwalina et al., 2015).

Differences Between Political Marketing & Service Marketing

Political marketing differs greatly from service and consumer marketing. While marketing techniques (communication with voters) are similar, voter-influencing material and tactics differ from those used to influence consumers. Despite their obvious parallels, politics and service marketing are not the same (Cwalina et al., 2015). For instance, according to Lloyd (2005), unlike consumer services, political outcomes are consistent at the point of "production," but variances result from how voters interpret them in light of their prior understanding, experience, knowledge and expectations. He further suggests that political results can be about people or groups, and they can work alone or together. In his opinion, electorate are stakeholders in the resources which produce political results. This is inline with the published research which suggests that electorates exhibit *passive relational mode*, and are typically in *transactional mode* (Grönroos, 1997). Low election turnout, citizens' rising cynicism towards politics and candidate brands, and voters' failure to identify with particular party brands are examples of such trends (Cwalina et al., 2008). As a consequence of such trends, people are less motivated to form strong, long-lasting bonds with political parties. They tend to be more concerned with the immediate future. As a result, candidate brands and party brands use a more transactional approach: "Vote for us now"; what will happen afterwards is hard to foresee (Cwalina et al., 2015; Grönroos, 1997).

Candidate Brands as Cognitive Shortcuts

According to (Smith, 2009), the personalities of the party and the candidates reinforce each other positively and are frequently thought of as one, forming an associative network in public's memory about the brand. To save themselves from investing time and energy in figuring out the details about different party, electorates unwittingly rely on shortcuts to gain this information about the parties (Popkins et al., 1976). They rely on shortcuts like their perception of the personality of the party and of the leader they have in their mind, to eliminate the perceived risk of choosing the wrong party. However, it is easier for consumers/electorates to gain knowledge about the leader by observing their personality traits and physical appearance (Smith, 2009) than about the party brand. Leaders-image factor can influence the

political participation positively or negatively (Mangi, Shah & Ali Soomro, 2019). Leader's actions can symbolize what the party stands for through their appearance (Stanton, 2000), garments, lexicon they speak, if they are self-reliant (O'Shaughnessy, 2003), their age, character, and behaviour, how they settle conflicts, if they are honest, how strong is their commitment, their dedication and capabilities, qualification, political manifesto as well as motivational power (Aaltio-Marjosola & Takala, 2000). All these symbols influence electorates perception about the political brand. Leader's and candidates' personality attributes affect electorates' perceptions about them in comparison to their rivals. And assist in establishing and positioning the co-brand for the candidates as well as the party (Hoegg & Lewis, 2011; Shanks & Miller, 1990).

Though the human branding theory may still be at its initial stage, researchers have observed some distinguishing features which influence the effectiveness and strength of the brand. These can also be studied in the political settings and context. Based on the tripartite political offering (Needham, 2006; Smith & French, 2009; French & Smith, 2010), the relationship between the human brand and the policy-ideology is the fundamental element of *authenticity* and is therefore pivotal since it indicates if the leader/candidate is aligned with what the electorates expect. Secondly, the relationship between the party and the leader/candidate is crucial since it reflects the *authority* and position the leader/candidate has/holds in the political party and their strength to deliver what they have promised to the electorates (Speed et al., 2015). Mostly politicians (both candidates and the leader) as valued by the electorates, have remained the focus of researchers' interest.

The attention of most of the studies seems to be on how the political leader/candidates' familiarity and associations influence electoral prospects of political parties. Researcher have studied politicians and candidates from Iceland (e.g. Armannsdottir et al., 2019a); Russian (e.g. Simons, 2016); Poland (e.g. Cwalina & Drzewiecka, 2019); Britain (e.g. Davies & Mian, 2010; Harris & Lock, 2001); Canada (e.g. Marland & Wagner, 2019); and American leaders (Van Steenburg & Guzmán, 2019). The areas studied with respect to political leaders/candidates included community, political product and politician (e.g. Phipps et al., 2010),

perception, election and performance management (e.g. Davies & Mian, 2010 and Wade et al., 2006); referendums & voters (e.g. Harris & lock, 2010); social media (e.g. Needham & Smith, 2015 and Schneiker, 2018); brand image (e.g. Simons, 2016; Guzman et al., 2015; Van Steenburg & Guzmán, 2019); brand identity (e.g. Armannsdottir et al., 2019); communication (e.g. Billard, 2018; Falkowski & Jabłonska, 2020; Guzman et al., 2015); communication strategies to reposition party leaders (Scammell 2007); culture (e.g. Guzman et al., 2015); positioning (e.g. Cwalina & Falkowski, 2015); and brand personality (e.g. Barret, 2018); premiums paid in takeovers (Hayward & Hambrick 1997); public relations strategies to position female politicians (Motion 2000); and impact of leader reputation on political parties (Davies & Mian, 2007).

Table 2 presents some of the important studies, which presents party as branded entity, in chronological order.

Table 2: Candidate as Branded Entity

Authors	Focus of the Study
Nakanishi, Cooper & Kassarian, 1974	Voting for a political candidate under conditions of minimal information.
Lott Jr. 1991	This study is on campaign spending.
Caprara et al., 1997	Authors have studies political personality.
Motion, 2000	Authors have paid attention to personal public relations; women; politicians; historical narration; positioning; commodification; mediatisation; aesthetics and morality.
Smith, 2001	Author has paid attention to politics; marketing; brands; image; and political events.
Harris & Lock, 2001	In order to establish how the party and leader interact and how the public perceives the LibDem brand, special attention is paid to the branding aspects of the leader role.
Schneider, 2004	The focus is on political brand identity; and GAP-model of political brands.
Hockett, 2005	The focus of this study is on American president from the perspective of communication and culture.
Needham, 2005	The focus in on the permanent campaign model.
Needham, 2006	Focus is on political leadership, brand loyalty and brand attributes.
Scammell, 2007	Focus is on Political Communication from the perspective of Elections.

Ietcu-Fairclough, 2008	<p>In this essay, author uses a combination of critical discourse analysis and pragmatics to examine disparities in the legitimation tactics employed by and on behalf of the two presidential candidates in the Romanian elections of December 2004. These distinctions are believed to be mostly due to the types of populist discourse—a paternalist type versus a radical, anti-political type—that were used to establish the justifications for both candidates.</p>
Guzman & Sierra, 2009	<p>This study examines the presidential contenders' brand perceptions before election. Based on 58 attributes chosen from Aaker's brand personality and Caprara et al. candidate's personality frameworks, respondents were asked to rate the personalities—or brand images—of the three main political candidates. Five elements made up the final brand image framework for presidential candidates (competence, empathy, openness, agreeableness and handsomeness). The resulting framework has a practical relevance for upcoming political campaigns since it clarifies which aspects of a candidate's brand image are taken into account when making an election decision. Additionally, it offers a theoretical framework for considering political politicians as brands.</p>
Phipps et al., 2010	<p>The focus is on community and politician.</p>
Davies & Mian, 2010	<p>The goal of this essay is to investigate whether political leaders' reputations and those of their parties are comparable and to evaluate any suggested causal relationships.</p>
Harris & Lock, 2010	<p>This essay's goal is to introduce a number of studies on many topics, including the greater use of marketing in contemporary politics, opinions on its efficacy, particularly in hotly contested elections, the rise in campaign spending, and the expansion of international cooperation.</p>
Needham & Smith, 2015	<p>Authors have paid attention on the relationship between branding & ideology. From the perspective of Tea party and social media. Brand management is the main topic.</p>
Guzmán et al., 2015	<p>The focus is on brand image and self-referencing.</p>
Scammel, 2015	<p>The focus is on brand concept, and political brand image, communication; and culture.</p>
Speed et al., 2015	<p>The focus is on the importance of human branding.</p>
Cwalina & Falkowski, 2015	<p>The idea for positioning politicians is presented in the article and is based on a three-stage method of political branding. The core premise is that a political brand is regarded as a node in memory to which a number of associations are attached, with a politician's image serving as its key component.</p>
Simons, 2016	<p>The focus of this article is Vladimir Putin, a prominent Russian politician. He emerged from obscurity to become the second president of Russia (after Boris Yeltsin). The 2000 and 2012 presidential elections are in the spotlight. The objective is to identify the continuity and discontinuities in the construction of Putin's political image and reputation.</p>
Billard, 2018	<p>This essay presents two key ideas: the networking of political brands and an evolving logic of participatory aesthetics. Both of these ideas suggest that traditional "brand management" should be decentralised in favour of affectively motivated political engagement via visual communications disseminated over communication networks.</p>
Barrett, 2018	<p>the focus is on brand personality of the candidates. It also sheds light on their charisma and competence.</p>
Schneiker, 2018	<p>The focus is on the political branding of Donald Trump on Twitter.</p>

Van Steenburg & Guzmán, 2019	This study aims to determine whether voters take a candidate's brand into account while weighing their options in an election. In other words, how important of a part does the candidate's brand image play in the selection process?
Nai & Martinez, 2019	This essay evaluates the extent to which populists' personality assessments differ from those of 'mainstream politicians.
Falkowski & Jabłonska, 2019	The essay is divided into three sections. To clear up typical terminological ambiguities, the first section introduces the ideas of framing, priming, and agenda-setting as well as their parallels and distinctions. In the second, they talk about how the framing effect might be moderated by factors including knowledge, media trust, and values. The final portion reviews the psychological processes that underpin framing and priming. The discussion of the moderating and mediating role of emotions in framing effects is presented with special attention paid to the positive-negative asymmetry observed in the evaluation of political candidates and events. Cognitive mediators, such as accessibility and applicability effects, are also presented.
Armannsdottir, Carnell & Pich, 2019	Attention in this exploratory study is on Brand Identity and personal branding.
Cwalina & Drzewiecka, 2019	Authors have studies political leadership style; in different democracies to understand the candidate positioning & image.
van Steenburg & Guzman, 2019	Authors have focused on the brand image, voting intentions and political candidates for the presidential election

2.2. Political Brand Image

This section discusses the theoretical background of brand image covered in the mainstream marketing literature. This is followed by the discussion on the political brand image.

2.2.1. *Brand Image in the Mainstream Marketing Literature*

Brand image is seen as consumer's perception, opinion, and a set of beliefs about the product and the associations a brand name carries in their mind (memory) (Collin & Ivanovic, 2003; Keller, 1993; Kotler, 1988; Nandan, 2005, Zhang, 2015). It is 'the set of mental representations (emotional and/or cognitive) an individual or a group of individuals ascribe to a brand' (Bashir et al., 2020 quoting Martinez, 2015; Mengxia, 2007, 36). According to the existing studies, consumer's perception is based on the experience and interaction(s) with the tangible and in tangible elements of the product/brand (Išoraitė, 2018; Nandan, 2005) and organization (e.g. Balmer et

al., 2020; Chen, 2010; Morgan, Pritchard & Piggott, 2002). This perception is also based on the association a brand name carries in the consumer mind (Kotler, 2002).

Brand image is mostly created externally and manifested through these association and perceptions which the consumers have in their mind (Latif, Islam & Mohammad, 2015; Nandan, 2005). These associations are beyond the control of brand image creators and marketers (Rekom, Jacobs, Verlegh & Podnar, 2006) especially when it comes to controlling the way external stakeholders consider (Pich & Armannsdottir, 2015) and recognize the brand. That is why it is essential to advance comprehension about these external associations and perceptions to gain deep insight which could aid in assessing the consistency between the desired/intended image with the actual brand image (De Chernatony, 2010, p. 55). Brand Image offers the bedrock for making the right strategic decision to position the brand in the targeted segments (Išoraitė, 2018; Lee, James & Kim, 2014; Klein et al., 2019).

Besides the concepts' theoretical development of the concept (e.g. Aaker, 1991; Dobni & Zinkhan, 1990; Gardner & Levy, 1955; Keller, 1993), brand image has also been examined empirically in relation with other concepts, for instance customer satisfaction (Cretu & Brodie, 2007), brand trust (Esch et al., 2006), brand equity (Faircloth et al., 2001), readiness to pay a price premium (Anselmsson et al., 2014), etc. All this theoretical and empirical development (e.g. Driesener & Romaniuk, 2006; Gensler et al., 2015; John et al., 2006; Joyce, 1963, etc.) suggests the importance of brand image concept in the creation and management of brands (Plumeyer et al., 2017). This concept has been widely used and adopted by academics and practitioners for several technical and causal relationships since the 1950s. Brand image has recently been studied in the context of hospitality and management (e.g. Bashir et al., 2020; Song et al., 2019), cleaner productions (e.g. Zameer, Wang & Yasmeen, 2020), B2B relationships (e.g. Balmer et al., 2020), digital learning and universities (e.g. Shehzadi et al., 2020); retailing and consumer services (e.g. Errajaa, Daucé & Legohérel, 2020), packaging (e.g. Pang & Ding, 2020), banking (e.g. Rahi, Ghani, & Ngah, 2020) etc. However, overuse, and misuse of the term brand image, and the proliferation due to the unselected use of the concept, has adversely affected the value and the richness of the brand image

concept (Bullmore, 1984). Extant marketing literature presents brand image as a complex yet broad concept with several conceptualizations (Henrik & Fredrik 2006; Išoraitė, 2018; Keller, 1993; Knox & Freeman, 2006). While several authors have also attempted to define brand image, they have not reached the consensus yet as to how this construct should be conceptualized (Dobni & Zinkhan, 1990; Keller, 1993; Korchia, 1999). The definitions which have been proposed by several authors have not only remained unstable, discordant and tried to establish multiple meanings of the concept since the mid 50's (when this concept was introduced by Gardner and Levy in 1955), but the brand image's operationalization has also remained irregular. The multiple interpretations of the concept of brand image changed the actual meaning and what it originally meant (Lee, James & Kim, 2014). This absence of a fixed unified definition and strong foundation seems to be the key reason behind the hindrance in knowledge development in this area. Agreement at the definitional level is needed to achieve generalizability and comparability of the results of the studies conducted in the past as well as of the upcoming studies in the same stream of literature. A universally concord definition not only set direction for developing research questions, but also influences the research methodology, measurement of the construct, and how findings are interpreted and converted into a creative process (Dobni & Zinkhan, 1990).

A fixed unified definition will also make relevant research less confusing and easier for the academicians, research scholars and practitioners' study and interpret the identical concepts with concord terminologies and meanings in a new light (Lee et al., 2014). Since positioning depicts how the brand is different from its competitors to the potential consumers, with a concord definition and understanding of brand image, studying, and implementing appropriate positioning strategies will also be achievable (Ibid). Moreover, since brand image is an essential component of brand equity (Aaker & Biel, 2013), the main objective of marketing activities is to establish a strong degree of brand equity which could make the brand more attractive to the potential consumers. A firmly established brand image aid practitioners and researchers in building strong brand equity, however inaccurate definition can hamper the effective brand management and positioning (Lee et al., 2014).

This discussion indicated the significance and need of foundations studies which can at least give an outlining definition and justification are the crucial components (Kerlinger 1973). Existing research and scholars have also indicated a need for more research on brand image and investigate how brand image can be used to develop a distinct position in the mind of the consumer (Alsem & Kosteljik, 2008; Chen, 2010; Guzman & Sierra, 2009; Henrik & Fredrik, 2006; Knox & Freeman, 2006; Pich & Armannsdottir, 2015; Smith, 2001). Moreover, research is needed to comprehend how and why brands earn negative evaluation in a culture (Hassey, 2019).

2.2.2. Brand Image in the Political Marketing Literature

There still exists a need to additionally explore the party, the party leader, and the party policies' external brand image (Guzman & Sierra, 2009; Smith, 2001; Smith & French, 2011; Pitch & Newman, 2019; Van Ham, 2001). Majority of the published research covers electorates' perspective about the political offering. In addition to that, besides the scarcity of brand image research, the available literature also lacks in explaining the manner in which perception and associations of the external stakeholders are processed and interpreted (Smith & French, 2011; Peng & Hackley, 2009).

The term "brand image" explains the consumers' perception about the brand which are held in consumers' memories (Keller, 1993). Literature presents brand image as multidimensional construct which is customer-focused and covers the emotional and cognitive relationships which an individual develops with the brand (Keller, 1993; Keller & Lehmann, 2006). Initial studies like Lott (1986, 1991) highlighted the importance of political brand image. These studies presented the idea of positive influence of well-established politicians. Lock and Harris (1996) presented the importance of two-way communication and opined that party leader occupies centre-stage when it comes to the political brand image formation. After Smith (2001) who discussed the importance of brand image for both the party brand and the candidate brands, researchers studied the other concepts like brand identity (e.g. Davies & Mian, 2010; Phipps et al., 2020; Schneider, 2004; Scammell, 2007), communication, reputation (e.g. Scammell, 2007), brand personality and the role of

the party leaders(e.g. Davies & Mian, 2010; Guzman & Sierra, 2009; Smith & French, 2011), psychological benefits of brand image (e.g. French & Smith, 2010; Gorbaniuk et al., 2015; Smith & French, 2009), etc.

Among the most prominent research carried out since 2015 included the study application of brand image framework from the branding literature on higher education (Pich & Armannsdottir, 2015), understanding about the political brand image studies to explore the voter's perspective (including young voters) about the political brand image of political parties (Jain et al., 2017a; Pich & Dean, 2015; Pich et al., 2018); importance of the branding concept to explore political images stressing the need to bring together the economic and cultural meaning (Scammell, 2015); brand personality with respect to the social psychology to define dispositional party brand image (Gorbaniuk et al., 2015); and scales for quantitatively investigating the candidate brand image (Van Steenburg & Guzman, 2019).

Extant literature has also paid attention to how brand image is formed and, to how associations move from one to another source, and influences the way how brand is perceived (Smith, 2005b). Literature has dubbed this process as the Brand Image Transfer (or BIT) which explains the transfer of meaning from one source to another (Carrillat et al., 2010; McCracken, 1989, Gwinner, 1997). Literature further explains that the brand association of the source (e.g. event etc.) that an electorate has in their mind interacts with the association of political brand (e.g. party). This can result in a new and modified association of the political brand and a change in the meaning of the political brand. The degree of change in the meaning of the brand image relies on a number of factors like, the strength of the event and how electorates filter the information/knowledge of the event as well the event's meaning (Smith, 2005b).

Party brand image, for the purpose of this study, is defined as the entirety of associations which develop in the electorates' mind under the influence of a set of signs which indicate and represent the party's identity, for instance the name, slogan and logo of the party (Gorbaniuk et al., 2015). Candidate's brand image, just like the party brands, has a pivotal part in electorates decision making since it can influence their voting intentions (Van Steenburg & Guzman, 2019), *as discussed in*

“Candidate as Brand Entities”. Political brand image comprises of the perception and association in which develop in the electorates’ memories. It influences the electorate’s feelings, attitudes, viewpoints, etc. about the candidate/politician. Extant literature defines candidate brand image as the formation of a unique/distinct representation for the candidate/politician who can evoke associations in electorate’s mind by presenting additional values (like socio-demographical, psychological, ethnic, ethical, etc.) to the object for a specific purpose (like, voting, negotiating, governing etc.). This supports and improve the way brands are externally manifested, accepted and distinguished in the constituencies (Pich & Armannsdottir, 2018). According to Cwalina, Falkowski and Newman (2011), the image electorates form of the candidate/politician, largely consists of their subjective understanding of the things/matters and what he/she likes/dislikes about the candidate. In their opinion, political images cannot exist without the political symbolism and object in the environment which brings about emotional reaction and acceptance for the brands (Cwalina, Falkowski, & Kaid 2000; Cwalina, Falkowski, & Newman 2008, 2011; Falkowski & Cwalina, 1999). This candidate/politician brand image play an important part in circumventing the cognitive relational dimension and represent a blend of the politician/candidate’s characteristics (Caprara et al., 2002). This emotional relational aspect develops the positive (e.g. affinity) or negative brand relationship towards the candidate. The positive relationship can also become a cause of electorate’s political activism (Van Steenburg & Guzman, 2019). This is the most important reason why the candidate-cantered politics works (Cawalina et al., 2011; Wattenberg, 1991). However, there is still a need for exploring and investigating the emotional bonding between the candidate/politician and the electorates’ behaviour to understand the brand image influence on the voting decision (Kaneva & Klemmer, 2016; Van Steenburg & Guzman, 2019).

Brand Personality

In politics, brand personality encompasses the attributes and traits connected to a political party, individual politician, or political philosophy. Brand personality is one of the dimensions of brand image in the political marketing literature (Milewicz & Milewicz, 2014; Wijaya, 2013). In the mainstream marketing, brand personality is defined as the group/set of human characteristics linked with a

brand'' (Aaker, 1997). In political marketing it is often explained as the human characters that electorates find related to not just the politicians/candidate/leader but also to the political party as well (Smith, 2009; Davies & Mian, 2010). It covers the public's perception and opinion and image that a political brand portrays in order to influence the way electorates view and interact with them. Just like human personality, brand personality is built around the observed behaviour which guides consumers in inferring human traits from the brand's actions (Aaker, 1997; Smith, 2009). Political brands offer both functional and emotional value to the electorates (Hartmann, Ibáñez & Sainz, 2005; White & De Chernatony, 2002), which is why the brand personality created for the political party acts as a heuristic tool for consumers who may or may not be aware of the issues or policy debated (Rutter et al., 2018 quoting Popkin, 1994). Both political parties and leaders may have distinct, impact-oriented perceptual image and noticeable personalities (Schneider, 2004). Once developed, brand personality helps in positioning the party in the mind of the electorates, generate more favourable views, influence decision making process and brand preferences (Banerjee, 2016). This is because brands with personality not only helps consumer associate themselves with the brand and prefer it over others if it is consistent, and congruent with and reflecting their own personality (Aaker, 1999), but also favourably influences the way consumers evaluate this brand (Belk, 1988).

Besides brand personality, extant literature has also used other related terminologies, for instance voters', donors' etc. perceptions about and reaction to the political brand (Milewicz & Milewicz, 2014). Examples of multidimension research studies of brand image reflecting the complexity and importance of brand image in the political settings include Smith (2009) who focused on brand personalities in the British politics; French and Smith (2010) inspected the British electorates and their mental models of the two parties' (Conservative and Labour) brand image); and Davies and Mian's (2010) paid attention to the multiple dimensions of party images and the political leader images. Political marketing research shows that voters' perceptions of political leaders' and candidates' personalities have become more important. It can therefore be inferred that that brand personality concept (Smith, 2009) in the research on political marketing is an endeavour to capture the phenomenon of personification of the party brand's image (Gorbaniuk et al., 2015).

Communication in the Context of Political Marketing

Image influences politics just like it affects any other area of life. Nevertheless, politics can be somewhat different than the mainstream consumer brands in several critical ways (Smith, 2001). Since image is often influenced by how an organization communicates and informs about itself (King, 1991), organizations use their promotional mix (publicity, personal selling, advertising and sales promotion to supplement their advertising and personal selling efforts, etc.) to attain this objective. However, some of the promotional mix elements can be difficult to translate correctly into politics (Smith, 2001). Which is why balancing of activities are required between the key entities. Research on political brands has reflected that balancing the supplier activities (by both public and private entities) with the electorate's perception is just as important in political marketing as it is in the mainstream marketing literature (De Chernatony & Riley, 1998). Researchers have paid attention to the importance of strategic perspectives which underscores the interconnectivity and density of all brand construct factors (Milewicz & Milewicz, 2014). For instance, studies like Smith (2001) suggested factors which influence electorate's brand images of parties and candidate/leader. While Davies and Mian (2010) tried to connect the media and political brand image emphasizing that media can influence the electorate's perception which are held in their memory, about the party and the leader/candidates.

Formulation of coherent, creative messages and effectively engaging and communicating with the electorates have also appeared to be important in managing the political brand image. For instance, the Falkowski and Jabłonska (2020)'s evaluation of priming, framing and agenda setting strategies has indicated the importance of these concepts in forming persuasive messages and in managing the candidate/leader's political brand image. The framing of the messages, development of appropriate/suitable associations and desired imagery are not only strategic in nature but are a continuing part of the political brand management process. It can be inferred that if the political messages and rhetoric can capture interest, party policies and the political campaign are relevant to the target electorates, the brand image of a successful candidate and the party can positively influence voting intentions. Such studies (e.g. Falkowski & Jabłonska, 2020; Susila et al., 2019, etc.) jog our

memories about the importance of communication for all kinds of brands (e.g. leaders/candidates, policies, governments, campaigns etc. which are now considered as brand (Pich & Newman, 2020)) to offer a rationale to the electorates for their identification. Published research suggests that it is crucial for the political brands to understand how they should communicate and position their brand with respect to the competitors (e.g. Guzman, Paswan & Van Steenburg, 2015; Jain & Ganesh, 2019). Appropriate communication efforts which lets brands (leaders and parties) express and establish how important their electorate-relevant goals and objectives are to them, strengthen the relationship with the electorates. Such communication efforts supports the politician/leader/candidate brand in communicating with the electorates, and, influence electorates in such a way that electorates perceive their own image based on the core concerns, policies, and personality traits a candidate/leader reflects in their communication (verbal, non-verbal/actions) (Guzman et al., 2015).

Literature also indicates that the relationship between the leader and the electorates becomes strong when leaders have externalized their traits, can communicate with humility, have harmonized their core, and can present a personality which electorates value and can relate with (Park & John, 2010; Pich & Newman, 2020). Moreover, the connection between the party (organization) and leader can have both negative and positive implications. If leader's image weakens or if the leader has a floundering image, it can adversely affect those electorates and other stakeholders' opinion of the party (Davies & Mian, 2010).

Research has also indicated that building a credible, consistent, reliable, and trustworthy political brand image is crucial for the management of the brand. Relying on the secondary research to assess social media marketing, Jain and Ganesh (2019) paid attention to the leader politician's brand image. Such research studies indicate the usefulness of embracing a collaborative co-constructed multi-stakeholder approach for building a political brand image in electorate's minds. Recent studies have also called for conducting more longitudinal research in varying context using different methodologies so that the concept of brand image can be explored and its credibility can be assessed (Pich & Newman, 2020).

In simple words, the term political brand image suggests the way in which any political brand is understood by the electorates. It is different than the brand identity which is the communication of the political party/leader's envisaged perception to the electorates (Pich, Dean & Punjaisri, 2014). In the political branding stream of literature, the lack of availability of frameworks on brand image indicates that the researchers have mostly paid attention to the internal brand identity (Davies & Chun, 2002). And, just like consumer branding literature (e.g. Dobni & Zinkhan, 1990; Keller, 1993; Lee, James & Kim, 2014), the brand image conceptualization is not very strong (Ross & Harradine, 2011; Saaksjarvi & Samiee, 2011; Srivastava, 2011). The published research on brand image has also not paid enough attention towards the framework development and its evaluation. The dearth of brand image frameworks available are more descriptive in nature, than applied (Pich & Armannsdottir, 2015 quoting Gordon, 1999) and are blurry, due to which there are difficulties in deconstructing and operationalising the concept and its interpretations (Srivastava, 2011; Ross & Harradine, 2011; Saaksjarvi & Samiee, 2011).

This issue extends to the context of political brand image and brand management (Pich & Armannsdottir, 2015). Moreover, most of the studies have mainly used quantitative methods (French & Smith, 2010) when there is a need to explore the concept. Furthermore, several studies, like that conducted by Mortimore et al. (2014), have attempted to emphasise the challenges and volatility related to investigating image and positioning from the external stakeholders' standpoint. Possibly because of employing the quantitative methodologies, the existing scholarship is deficient in and finds it difficult to offer an accurate and sound description from the data about on how the opinions and perspectives of other stakeholders were understood (Mortimore et al., 2014; Peng & Hackley, 2009; Smith, 2001; Smith & French, 2011). This is another reason the scholarship on political brands demands more thorough exploratory research (Davies & Mian, 2010; Needham & Smith, 2015; Peng & Hackley, 2009; Pich & Newman, 2020; Smith & French, 2011).

Published research has also suggested that development of frameworks is essential in order to delve into, explore the brand image and positioning. The current frameworks/models are not very explanatory and descriptive. They are rather

offering an imprecise picture of the brand image research (Pich & Armannsdottir, 2015). In addition to that, more research is needed to explore and investigate the concept of political brand image from the standpoint of the external stakeholder (Ibid). As a result, this research study aims to fill these gaps and study and inspect the operationalization of political brand image through the lens of the positioning.

Table 3 presents some of the important research work on political brand image, in chronological order.

Table 3: Studies on Political Brand Image

Authors	Brief Description
Lott, 1986	The focus is on politicians however, politicians are not studied as brands. Identifying the positive influence of branding on the political system, this study suggests that brand names are not the real obstacles to entry; it is the cost of information that drives the use of brand names and is the more fundamental barrier to entry. This study argues that private organisations, rather than public ones, can better overcome these information costs in some ways.
Lott, 1991	It highlights the importance of brand image. A well-established politician does not have to spend a lot to win the election. Just like Lott (1986), the focus is on politicians with respect to expenditure/cost/investments in the name of political brand names. And identified the positive influence on branding.
Lock & Harris, 1996	The negative image of the brand can add to the fuzziness in the voters' perception. This study emphasized that the leader is at the centre of the party's brand image. Overall, the study focused on party as a brand and highlights the importance of two-way communication between the party and the voters. It presents a neutral influence on the political system and emphasizing that political marketing is different than the mainstream marketing. Authors contested that the existing models and theories need to be all inclusive, covering all important brand entities and facets. Exchange theory is identified as a useful vehicle.
Smith, 2001	This study finally suggests the importance of brand image for both party and leaders, explicitly. This study emphasized the positive aspects of brand image on the political system. Political parties and their key representatives presumably meet the main criteria of an impact-oriented brand in the minds of electorates as a firmly anchored, consistent perceptual image.
Bains et al., 2002	While national parties are becoming increasingly involved in local election campaigns, this coordination neglects to include local area research, telemarketing efforts, and post-election analysis exercises to track the success and failure of party strategy and campaign plan implementation.
Schneider, 2004	This study focused on both politicians and the party. They key brand facets studied included brand image and identity. This study highlights both positive and negative aspects of branding on political system. The identity-oriented approach to political marketing presented attempts to integrate integrative inside-out and outside-in perspectives, also indicates a new assessment of the democracy-theory-based assessment of political marketing.
Smith, 2005b	The study suggests that important influences on party image are 'politically relevant' events, and a conceptual model of how such events influence the images of political parties is developed. It takes into account both internal and external factors that influence the ability of a given event to affect party image. The process of image transfer is discussed, as well as the factors that influence how

	credit/blame is assigned to an event. Methods for dealing with 'negative' events are discussed. The overall model is used to assess the likely impact of a specific political event (the Iraq war) on party image. The article concludes by evaluating the model's efficacy and limitations in analysing the case and events in general.
Scammell, 2007	This article sheds light on the importance of branding as a new concept in political marketing for building image and reputation. It is studied for party and rebranding of political leader, in politics. Branding facets like brand image and brand identity are paid attention to. Consumer model of communication should be preferred over mass media model.
Guzman & Sierra, 2009	This study has paid attention to the politician's brand image and personality. They key brand facets studied were brand image and brand personality. This study presents the positive effects of branding on political system. Aaker's brand personality and Caprara, Barbaranelli & Guido (2001)'s candidate personality framework is employed.
Smith & French, 2009	This research article presents political party as a brand with an emphasize on its brand image and how it is formed in the memory. It presents party, leader, and the policies as the three key facets of the political brand. It discussed the psychological benefits of the political brands and presented both positive and negative aspects of branding on the political system.
French & Smith, 2010	This study focuses on the mental mappings and the nature of brand associations with respect to the political parties employing the Brand Concept Maps (BCM). This study identified the positive effects of branding on the political system. The focus was on brand image and equity. The brand characteristics emphasized the importance of leader/candidate with the party brand.
Phipps, Brace-Govan, & Jevons, 2010	The focal brand facets studied are brand image and brand identity. They tried to explore the role of consumers in political branding focusing on the duality of the political offering, i.e. both the party and the politician. Aaker's Brand Equity Ten is employed as a theoretical framework. They have identified the positive aspects of branding on the political system. This research paper conceptualized the politician/leader brand with reference to the part's corporate brand. This study also considered and conceptualized the services of the politician/leader (for the community) with respect to the prospects of re-election in terms of marketing and branding.
Davies & Mian, 2010	Investigates the similarity of political leaders' reputations with those of their parties and to evaluate the claim of causal links. The findings highlight the importance of a leader's reputation in managing the reputation of a political party. A change in leadership will inevitably result in a shift in the party's reputation. Both reputations interact and controlling such effects necessitates similar methods of measuring both.
Smith & French, 2011	Televised leaders' debates were held for the first time in the UK General Election in 2010. The impact of these, as well as paid advertising and uncontrolled events, is discussed, and the likely impact on the image of the three main party leaders. Brand-mapping approach is employed to examine changes in consumer perceptions of the leading brands from just before the first debate until election day to considers whether the number of leader associations increases during the campaign, which policies were associated with which leader, and the favourability of the leader associations. The leaders' overall changes are then charted using a measure of brand-image strength.
Pich & Armannsdottir, 2015	Due to the lack of models and frameworks that promote the deconstruction and understanding of brand image, the purpose of this paper was to critically apply the brand image framework to the three elements of the UK Conservative Party. This study also goes beyond the usual measurable, quantitative approach to address the limited understanding devoted to political brand image. This was the first time that all six variables identified by Bosch et al. (2006a) are used to investigate the external understanding of a brand. This study shows how the six

	<p>variables known as the 'brand image framework' can be applied to the political environment, though, the use of the brand image framework in its original conceptualization proved difficult.</p>
<p>Pich & Dean, 2015</p>	<p>This paper focuses on political marketing and used a variety of projective techniques to investigate a UK political party's "brand image" among young adults. It also offers an illustrative guide and insight into the analytical process that can be used to analyse and interpret findings using qualitative projective techniques. This paper contributes to the scantily studied by analysing projective expressions by demonstrating how to interpret and comprehend insight generated by qualitative projective techniques. This study examines and adapts the approaches of Boddy, 2005, Butler-Kisber, 2010, and Hofstede et al., 2007, and incorporates them into a pragmatic systematic framework.</p>
<p>Scammel, 2015</p>	<p>It puts image back at the centre of political marketing scholarship; it acknowledges that brand images are contested in the wider world, vulnerable to media representations, and shaped by citizen preferences, experiences, everyday media use, and interpersonal conversation. It is not possible to simply transfer political brand images from parties to voters. This article contends that the brand concept is an effective tool for comprehending political images. It challenges conventional economic versions of political marketing, which tend to downplay the importance of communication, popular culture, and personality in politics, and argues that the brand as a concept can unite the economic and the aesthetic, rational choice and cultural resonance. It proposes a model of brand distinctiveness and argues that it may be useful in both the analysis and normative evaluation of party communication.</p>
<p>Gorbaniuk et al., 2015</p>	<p>This article proposes a new conceptualization of party image in terms of perceived personality traits, derived straight from social psychology accomplishments, without consumer research as an intermediary stage. The attribution approach and the psycho-lexical approach from psychological theory are used in a four-stage study on the need for research on party image. The entire set of personality trait descriptors associated with a political party was defined as dispositional party image.</p>
<p>Nielsen, 2017</p>	<p>Author notices that less emphasis placed on brand measurement in the literature, specifically in terms of efforts to develop a metric that attempts to explain the relationship between voters and political parties. So this research papers presents how to measure a political brand by first focusing on one aspect of the diverse brand concept. Following an evaluation of the two existing brand measures in the literature, the article proposes an alternative measure that emphasises a stronger connection to the vast political science literature on voters and parties. The three measures are then compared empirically to see which one best explains voters' party sympathies.</p>
<p>Jain et al., 2017a</p>	<p>The consumer-brand relationship necessitates a thorough understanding of the methods for establishing a strong sense of cohesion. This is also correct for political branding and marketing. The political brand image is therefore one of the most effective means of developing this. Moreover, studies have found that when the party and the leader cannot portray themselves positively, voter assessments become negative, and vice versa. Almost no studies have been conducted that provide a comprehensive method of developing a political brand image. As a result, this study draws inspiration the taxonomical structure from impression management and creates a retrospective and prospective framework for a powerful political brand image.</p>
<p>Pitch et al., 2018</p>	<p>This research suggests that qualitative projective techniques can be used to deconstruct and comprehend the current image and long-term impression and repute of political brands. The findings have implications for politicians, candidates, and other political entities in addition to political parties.</p>
<p>Van Steenburg & Guzman,</p>	<p>This study investigates how voters consider the candidate's brand image when making electoral decisions to understand if candidates can serve as brands; if</p>

2019 voters regard candidates as having a brand image and if they do, how do voters evaluate election alternatives in light of the candidate brand image? if candidate brand image is crucial in the decision-making process; and if candidate's brand image influence voter intent.

Etc.

2.3. Political Brand Positioning

This section presents the discussion on the concept of brand positioning in the mainstream marketing literature. Discussion then moves towards the research on the concept of political brand positioning.

2.3.1. Brand Positioning

Positioning has surfaced as an extremely important marketing management concept theoretically, practically, and strategically, from both academic and business perspectives (Saqib, 2020). Literature presents positioning as a strategic decision which is translated into developing favourable perceptions in consumers' minds and influence their choice decisions (Aaker & Shansby, 1982), for creating meaningful differentiation (Bhat & Reddy, 1998) and competitive advantage (Blankson et al., 2013) in relation to the competition (Lovelock, Patterson & Wirtz, 2014). These perceptions and associations which form in consumers' minds, differentiate the brand from the competitor brands, and offers competitive advantage for a longer duration (Keller & Lehmann, 2009; Porter, 1996). Literature contests that positioning makes the brand appear functionally and symbolically unique and hence different than the competitors (Bhat & Reddy, 1998).

Over the year, the concept of positioning has been studied from the perspective of competition (e.g. Aaker & Shansby, 1982; Belch & Belch, 1995; Kapferer, 2004; Kotler, 2003; Kotler & Anderson, 1996; Lovelock et al., 2014; McIntyre, 1975, etc.), competitive advantage (e.g. Aaker & McLoughlin, 2007; Blankson et al., 2013; Ghodeswar, 2008; Hooley et al., 1998, 2012; Kotler, 2003; Palmer, 1994; Porter, 1996, etc.), consumer's perceptions (e.g. Arnott, 1994; Sengupta, 1990, etc.), differentiations (e.g. Bhat & Reddy, 1998; Hooley et al., 1998; Myers, 1996; Wind, 1982; Zikmund & D'Amico, 1989, etc.) and filling an

vacant slot in consumer's mind (e.g. Boone & Kurtz, 2009; Crawford et al., 1983; Ries & Trout, 1969; Wright, 1997, etc.). Since the late 60s, many researchers have attempted to define this concept from various perspectives. However, according to Saqib (2020), majority have built their definitions around Ries and Trouts (1969). Positioning is described by them as "a strategy for 'staking out turf' or 'filling a slot' in the minds of target customers."

Nevertheless, positioning is a powerful concept of brand management as it serves a bedrock on which the brand image and communication strategies are developed (Urde & Koch, 2013). Positioning statements present the brand to the external stakeholders as it should be seen (Aaker, 1996). Additionally, positioning is a strategy that involves utilising all of an organization's resources to create, hold, establish, and uphold a particular impression about the brand in the minds of the target consumers through distinct, simple and consistent marketing communication (Etzel, Walker & Stanton, 2005).

While both theorists and practitioners endorse developing, maintaining, and communicating the brand image clearly/consistently to the consumers (Bhat & Reddy, 1998), positioning concept does not offer direction for managing and maintaining a consistent image over time (Park Jaworski & MacInnis, 1986; Saqib, 2020). Literature indicates that the flow of brand meaning is multidimensional. That is why it is important for political parties to develop and maintain consistency across all real and virtual touchpoints of the corporate brand. Research is also needed on these lines (Veloutsou & Guzman, 2017). Moreover, while authors (Aaker, 1996; Kapferer, 2012) have considered this concept as an essential feature of marketing, branding and strategy, literature lacks studies, which provides a clear theoretical overview and definition of the concept (Saqib, 2020). This has given rise to ambiguities and confusions about the theoretical and practical effectiveness and applicability of positioning (Urde & Koch, 2014). This suggests that future studies should generate deeper understanding into the dynamics of the concept and expand the different settings and different types of brands.

2.3.2. *Brand Positioning in the Political Marketing Literature*

Positioning is a method of developing and managing the consumer's impressions, associations, and pictures of the political product/offering based on the values and beliefs attached to the offering (Cwalina and Falkowski, 2015). The pivotal role positioning, and its multistage process plays in politics, has long been recognized (Mauser, 1983). Just like the mainstream marketing, positioning in political marketing is also about holding and maintaining desirable brand image in the minds of the electorates (Al Ries & Trout, 1981; Bohnen, 2021a, 2021b). It involves the political brand's capacity to employ resources to develop and hold a specific consistent image, impression, and perceptions for the political brand in the voters' mind- and ways of thinking via clear and coherent communication with respect to the competitors (Baines, Lewis, & Ingham, 1999). It is basically a mental practice of developing and maintaining an image related to the cognitive representation of the party brand and candidate/politician brand in the voter's way of thinking and reasoning (Cwalina et al., 2011). Positioning refers to the methods parties and candidates employ to establish their positions in the constituencies (Bigi et al., 2015). In Trout's words, "all politics is perception, posturing and positioning" (Smith, 2005a quoting Trout, 1996, p 79). Positioning is also a kind of voting marketing analysis strategy to evaluate the position of the party and candidate brand in relation to their competitors (Baines et al., 2002; Cwalina et al., 2011; Lees-Marshment, 2011). This "planning" to seek electorate's attention and a preferred place in their minds in relation to the political competitors (Kotler & Kotler, 1999) must be clear credible, consistent and must offer an easily communicative competitive advantage (Lees-Marshment, 2011). For current and potential electorates to think about the political brand in the correct way, it is important to create the "ideal place" in their minds. Linkages in the voters memories are important which are encouraged in a variety of ways, according to Baines et al. (2014, 174). For instance, *rationality* (linked to specific policies or proposals); *affectively* (related to the image of a party or a leader or are tied directly to certain emotions); and *cognitively* (linked to actions taken by leaders or parties or to outside events) (Lees-Marshment et al., 2019).

According to the available literature, political parties, just like any product or organization, can have several associations. When these associations combine, together they form a complete impression. Positioning is built by combining and emphasizing the favourable associations and deemphasizing the unfavourable ones. Positioning also indicates a frame of reference suggesting the point of reference being the competition (Smith, 2005a quoting Aaker & Shansby, 1982). These association and perceptions which are formed in electorates' minds are basically established on their experience with the with the brand (Leeper & Slothuus, 2014). This understanding about different brands and their competitors develops steadily over the years. If the political brand's (party and/or leader) policies matches with the target electorates opinions, ideology and attitudes, electorates would vote for that political brand (Grossback, Peterson, & Stimson, 2005; Leeper & Slothuus, 2014). This is the very reason when the right information through unpaid public media is reached to the electorates/voters, their perception about the political brand image is improved (Smith, 2009).

Positioning almost often involves competing with other groups, ideas, people, or things. According to Baines et al. (2014, 173), positioning entails creating coherent and consistent images despite attempts by adversaries to weaken their credibility and consistency. Because of this, a major difficulty for political parties and organisations is not just figuring out how to position themselves in relation to a target demographic and, if required, how to refute alternative narratives, but also figuring out how successful they have been in spreading the intended message (lees-Marshment et al., 2019). This is why it is crucial for the political brands to develop a credible message which resonate with the electorates, withstand scrutiny and all kinds of distortions when the message is interpreted and reinterpreted in the media (Ibid).

The concept of positioning is of greatest importance in the political marketing analysis given this multistage process starts with the assessment of the political leader/candidate with respect to the competitor's strengths and weaknesses (Cwalina et al., 2011 quoting Richard M. Johnson; Newman, 1999a;). It is a proactive and iterative process of delineating, modifying, and observing electorate's perception about the party and candidate brand (Kalafatis, Tsogas, & Blankson,

2000). Some research studies have suggested that positioning is formed on the cognition and effect (e.g. Mahajan & Win, 2002; Smith, 2005). Cognition fosters on the arguments in favour of the politician/candidate and it concentrates on the issues, problems electorates face, the benefits electorates sought. Effect is then linked to feelings and emotions linked with a candidate. According to Cwalina et al., (2011), this is the reason candidate/politician image is of prime importance for emotional positioning and positioning through his/her policies on the issues electorates face. Not all the electorates are cognitively capable to assess the political brands (e.g. party, leader, candidate/politician, and policies they offer). The candidate brand image is also important because most of the people, being cognitive miser (Fiske & Taylor, 2008; Nisbett & Ross, 1980) rely on candidate/leader/politician's personality as a short-cut mechanism, to assess the complete political offering (Cwalina et al., 2011).

Literature indicates that positioning aids the political brands (including parties, leaders, candidates, governments etc.) in the creation, improvement, amending/re-creation, communication and of and increasing support for the desired image, policies, political brand's ideology, reasoned arguments, and other political service offerings to the electorates in an effective manner (Khatib, 2012) which is established on the economic and/or social issues (Cwalina & Falkowski, 2015). According to the researchers, positioning is dependent on the blend and coordination of the party, its leader, and the candidate's internal strengthens/capabilities with external opportunities. This aids in mapping the exact position of the political brand with respect to target strategy and the political competition (Bradshaw, 1995; Mauser, 1983; O'Shaughnessy, 2002). Besides the assessment of the strengths/weaknesses of the political brands in relation to the competitors, the political brand's positioning is often done through policies on issues, images and/or the through the Worcester and co-researchers' "political triangle" (Smith, 2005; Worcester & Mortimore 2005; Worcester & Baines, 2006). Political triangle suggests the importance of interaction between the three facets which include electorates' attitude towards the party (or the party image); attitude towards the leader (or the leader image); and their policies on the issues the country is facing (Cwalina & Falkowski, 2015).

Moreover, positioning supplements in the communication of differential advantage during high competition and aids in establishing in the consumer's mind that the brand is better than the competitors (Smith, 2005a). However, extant literature (e.g. Baines et al., 1999) also indicates that positioning in the political markets is often product-oriented (and not market-oriented) since it is a part of the marketing process which become active only when the policy has been formulated. It is therefore crucial for the leaders/candidates as well as the political parties to revisit the promises they made with the electorate and the policies they formulated, to develop credible and reliable policies, image, and other service offerings. Marketing processes then helps in communicating to promote and informing electorates about this new policy (Baines et al., 1999).

Communication of policy plays a pivotal role in positioning the political brands in electorates' minds. Study of extant literature indicates that the political brands' communication of policy related stance, especially with respect to the political campaigns, have been studied from multiple perspectives. Some authors have studied with respect to the sequential process of several stages like how the electorates view the party and the leader/candidates, their opinion about the political brand with respect to the competitors and their stance on any particular policy/issue, the segments which should be treated as the target as well as developing the brand image for both the party and the leader/candidate (Maarek, 1995; Newman, 1994). Literature also indicates that candidates are often positioned leaders, challengers, followers or nichers, based on their status in the electoral race (e.g. Butler & Collins, 1994; Lees-Marshment, 2011). This then provides guidance in formulating strategy to exploit the market (Johansen 2012: 113) with respect to the competition (Ormrod, Henneberg & O'Shaughnessy, 2013: 134). However, research did not explain the implication of the employed competitive positions by the political brand, as well as how that position influences the communication related to the policies. But it is evident in the light of literature that such communication should continue even after coming into power so that they could be elected next time as well (Baines et al., 1999; Mandelson, 1987).

Moreover, positioning is crucial for the political actor's (party, leader and/or candidate) abilities to reach out to the targeted segment of the electorates

(their constituency, i.e.) effectively, and in building a long-lasting bond with the electorates (Simons, 2020). Political positioning is grounded in developing and maintaining a consistent political brand image built around a strong theme related to the relevant issues, while the competitors try to dampen the credibility of the brand. For achieving this, building strong and healthy connection with the electorate is crucial and should be the key objective. Consequently, in Baines et al. (1999)'s opinion, political brands (parties and candidates) try to maintain the consistency in image through campaign teams, spin-doctors and rapid rebuttal to explain the facts and deny the allegations (if any) to an event, story or political statement etc. While the rebuttal process may differ from country to country (e.g. ads placement on news channels, press releases, press conferences etc.), the use of technology and various advanced communication channels for running campaigns, today have made this task easier (Baines et al., 1999).

Baines et al. (2014, 175) summarise the discussion by explaining positioning to be susceptible to at least "four sliding degrees of abstraction based on decreasing control over the message". What a political brand "wishes to convey" is at the top level. But this must take into account the truth of what the candidate/party brand consistently and plainly states, how journalists and other commentators perceive it, and lastly what the "whole public feels about the communications they receive." Lees-Marshment et al. (2019) include the effect of political opponents' intentions to openly contest the positioning efforts, to this. In order to tackle positioning challenges, Bannon (2004) has suggested five guidelines: *position clarity* (be aware of your competitive advantage and what voters think about it); *position consistency* (a voter must know where they stand, and the political brand must take a persistent and consistent stance); *positioning credibility* (voters' assessments of the merits of political initiatives take preference); *offer value that rival products do not offer, in order to be competitive*; *communicable* (targets must be able to quickly understand the position). Collins and Butler (2002)⁵ presented their theory of market positioning and suggested four categories of positioning strategies, namely Market Leader, Challenger, Follower, and, Nicher. Market leader is presented as a defensive

⁵ In "The Idea of Political Marketing" by O'Shaughnessy, N. O., O'Shaughnessy, N. J., Henneberg, S. C., Henneberg, S., & Henry, C. (Eds.). (2002). Greenwood Publishing Group.

strategy for maintaining the position in the market. Market leader has broad appeal as compared to the Nicher political brand. Nicher brand cannot become a leader in a single electoral period. Challenger political brands position themselves on the new issues while Followers try to copy the Market leader. In addition to that, published research also suggests that to be marketing oriented, political brands employ populist strategies (Lees-Marshment et al., 2019).

Winder and Tenscher (2012) suggests that political brands should clearly identify the voters, their needs and frustrations, and present solutions (i.e. Marketing Intelligence). Skilled communicators play a critical role in creating and promoting the message (i.e. Product Design and Communication). And then the political brand tries to increase the vote bank by building strong relationships with the voters. And, according to Lees-Marshment (2008) any market oriented government will face challenges in maintain its position when the political brand loses the advisors who can present the message bluntly; when the leaders begin to consider themselves invincible with more knowledgeable and experienced than anybody else; when the opposition is weak and is not posing any threat; when the government is slow in delivering; and when the government has no time to plan future product (i.e. political offerings) development.

In line with Winder and Tenscher (2012), literature identifies successful campaigns as those which effectively accommodate the diverse groups of electorates who could be issue-oriented voters or are under an influence of the politician/leader's personality and may have a variety of preferences, likings, lifestyle and interests (Cwalina & Falkowski, 2015). This is done after the identification of target segments, management of images, perception etc. that the electorates have in their mind (based on their beliefs and values) associated with the political brands, to establish the political brands (especially candidate's) position (Cwalina et al., 2011; Cwalina & Falkowski, 2015). Then strategies are formed exploiting the knowledge about the corporate brand (comprising of the party, leader/candidates and the policies) to cater each segment and group in order to establish a strong competitive advantage (Cwalina & Falkowski, 2015). Political brands (especially candidates), therefore, must construct their messages for each group after carefully cognitively creating a map of opinions, preferences, emotions,

feelings etc. and assigning them to the different groups of electorates. In this way the information messages constructed help in building a solid agreement psychologically with the different electorate segments and groups (Ibid).

In order to figure out how a brand has modified its image qualities relative to the positioning that brand managers and the management had envisioned, it is important to compare expected and actual positioning, according to existing scholarship (Bains et al., 2014). Extant literature indicates that the research work on positioning has mostly focused on this concept along with brand image (e.g. Cwalina & Drzewiecka, 2019; Cwalina & Falkowski, 2015); voter behaviour (Newman, 1999a); segmentation (Baines, 1999); the public relations (PR) strategies employed by women candidates to position themselves (Motion, 2000); triangulation and voter decisions (Worcester & Baines, 2006; Worcester & Mortimore, 2005); leadership styles (Cwalina & Drzewiecka, 2019); political communication and positioning (Cwalina & Falkowski, 2015; Van Steenburg, 2015; Lees-Marshment, 2003; 2014), in the creation and management of political brands (e.g. Bohnen, 2021a, Bohnen 2021b) etc. It has been studied in the US, Canada, Australia (e.g. Lees-Marshment, 2014; Pavlov & Mizik, 2020), UK (e.g. Baines et al., 1999; Smith, 2005a), Poland (e.g. Cwalina & Falkowski, 2015), Georgia (e.g. Cwalina & Drzewiecka, 2019), New Zealand (e.g. Motion, 2000), etc.

However, in spite of the important part branding plays in politics and in gaining an advantage over the competitors, literature on political brand positioning is scant (Cwalina & Falkowski, 2015; Van Steenburg, 2015). Since positioning is quite prominent concept in the mainstream marketing, this is quite surprising that positioning is utilized as a complementary or as a side concept in some of the political marketing research (Smith, 2005a). This is again an indication that more exploratory qualitative research is needed to discover how perceptions are formed in electorates' mind.

In addition to that, while the existing literature suggest a more consumer-focused and consistent branding approach which also involves emotional dimensionality for political brands (Jain et al., 2017a), most of the research carried out has been quantitative in nature (e.g. Mortimore et al., 2014). This unavailability

of research on political brand image from the external stakeholders' (i.e. electorate's) frame of reference (Baines et al., 2014; Needham & Smith, 2015; O'Cass & Voola, 2011) calls for conducting more exploratory research. It is needed to explore the mental associations and positioned perceptions (Peng & Hackley 2009; Pich & Armannsdottir, 2015; Smith 2001; Smith & French, 2011). More qualitative research in this area will aid in uncovering the positioned perception (Mortimore et al., 2014) and understanding of the difference(s) between actual and intended positioning (Baines et al., 2014).

Also, while many researchers have given different definition of the positioning concept, there still does not exist any coherent definition of positioning. According to Saqib (2020), an all-inclusive definition of positioning should cover positioning perspectives like competition; empty slot/mind; consumers' perception, differentiation, and competitive advantage. Moreover, while this concept has received much attention in the mainstream marketing being a source of competitive advantage, literature in the political marketing stream calls for more research (Smith, 2005s; Pich & Newman, 2020).

Moreover, researchers have indicated that political brands are multifaceted, and it is crucial to expanding on the existing concepts and frameworks in settings and contexts other than they have been studied previously. This will help in extending existing frameworks to other concepts like political brand image, reputation, value co-creation and positioning as well in developing new frameworks which could work in different contexts and settings (Pich & Newman, 2020). Following these guidelines, this study is testing the Framework developed by Armannsdottir et al. (2019b) to investigate and analyse the positioning and image of political co-brands, in Pakistan. In this manner, the study's purpose is to assess the usefulness of the Political Co-brand Identity Framework as an instrument for studying the positioning and image of political brands.

Table 4 presents some of the important research work on political brand positioning, in chronological order.

Table 4: Studies on Political Brand Positioning

Authors	Description
Baines, Lewis & Ingham, 1999	This study examines the method of communicating public policy during political campaigns and demonstrates how political parties position themselves in relation to issue positions when addressing particular voter groupings. The suggestion of a model for evaluating public policies with positioning ramifications acknowledges that parties that made up the previous administration have a significant advantage over the opposition when it comes to conducting electoral campaigns because they can access the government's communication networks.
Motion, 2000	This study is an empirical examination of the public relations tactics and strategies used by female politicians. It examines how female politicians should employ public relations strategies to position and establish their own legitimacy as political figures rather than allowing others to do it.
Lees-Marshment, 2003	This study suggests that in order to fully utilise political marketing, the sector must now proceed in a different path. Political marketing requires a comprehensive strategy that incorporates concepts and techniques from marketing, as well as knowledge from both management and political science literature. This strategy can be applied to legislatures, local governments, the media, and public services in addition to party electoral behaviour.
Worcester & Mortimore, 2005	The focus is on the specifics of the survey questions employed and how the data is analysed, specifically demonstrating how each technique lends itself to summarising the results in an understandably graphic format. It also addresses how, even when the topic of the survey is the same, the objectives of media polling and private polling result in very minor variations in how polls are conducted.
Smith, 2005a	The notion is described and real-world examples of its use in politics are given after pointing out the dearth of positioning research pertaining to political marketing. The examination of the 2005 election begins by looking at how political problems have been framed over time and concludes that overall, this gave Labour a competitive edge. The positioning issues that the three national parties in British politics are currently facing are then brought to light. The positioning methods used throughout the campaign itself are then explored, both in terms of policies and image/emotional positioning approaches, using a basic positioning model. At this point, it is explained how the opposition parties are attempting to reposition Labour and how the latter is responding defensively. The parties' broader positioning in relation to electoral segments is then taken into account. The attempt to explain the election outcome in terms of the relative success or failure of the chosen positioning strategies comes as the paper's conclusion.
Henneberg, 2006	A hypothesis is put out that uses the two key components of strategic marketing theory concerning customer orientation—leading and following—to determine a party's approach toward political marketing management. Utilizing their positions on these two components, three typical categories of political parties can be classified according to their strategic stances. There is a brief discussion of the consequences of strategic postures for the accomplishment of specific political marketing functions and organisational challenges. While catch-all parties have shifted toward being Tactical Populists, traditional parties with a rigid content-based approach to policymaking can be described as Convinced Ideologists.
	While all of these attitudes have the potential to come out as dogmatic or unreliable and erratic, a third posture—that of a relationship builder—is suggested. By employing a relational approach to marketing, as recommended in the expanding literature on strategic marketing and marketing orientation, this merges leading and following. This Relationship Builder position is a theoretical one that requires practical study in the political sphere to be understood. As a result, various

	<p>hypotheses have been developed to encourage additional empirical and theoretical study in a manner that is consistent with the requirements of theory-building and hypothesis-driven investigation as indicated for this relatively new discipline of political marketing.</p>
<p>Khatib, 2012</p>	<p>This study tries to look at fundamental elements that could affect political marketing's success. The results show that the success of political marketing is positively and significantly impacted by market segmentation and targeting, candidate positioning, and developing strong image (to candidate and party). According to the study's findings, the success of political marketing was most strongly influenced by candidate or party image. The findings also indicated that effective market research and a market-focused strategy had no bearing on the success of political marketing.</p>
<p>Baines et al., 2014</p>	<p>The article demonstrates how combining traditional survey design and semiotic analysis to assess leadership positioning can offer insights into what image attribute dimensions end up in the minds of the public (actual positioning) and on what image attribute dimensions party marketers are attempting to position themselves on (intended positioning). It suggests that the combined methodological approach would be especially beneficial for brands that require repositioning, whose image attribute positions change significantly over time, and those that want to target previously unresponsive target audience segments.</p>
<p>Cwalina & Falkowski, 2015</p>	<p>The idea for positioning politicians is presented in the article and is based on a three-stage method of political branding. While developing specific marketing strategies associations (in the memory, attached, with a politician's image) — whether positive, negative, or neutral—must be shared with rival candidates as well as with a prototypical ideal candidate, seen as a model and point of comparison. Associative overlap approach, created by Szalay, is one of the most useful tools used to measure these relationships. The degree of resemblance between items (words, people, or groups) is expressed using this measure, which is based on free verbal associations, depending on the number of comparable replies (associations) they elicit in common. This affinity between politicians is the focus of the first stage of branding, which places candidates in different voter segments and is based on multidimensional scaling methods. The mutual interactions between specific aspects (positive and negative, common and distinctive), which make up a politician's image, are defined at the second stage. The third stage of political branding connects positioning outcomes to electorate choices. On the basis of empirical study, this branding framework for political candidates is developed. The findings of the conducted research indicate that a politician's greater predicted quality is a result of both enhancing his favourable traits and minimising his flaws.</p>
<p>Van Steenburg, 2015</p>	<p>Political advertising is a topic that is being studied more and more. However, the wide range of study findings to date show that the field is still looking for a direction and a unifying theory. In an effort to inspire and direct future studies of political advertising, a review of 129 published research articles specifically related to the use of advertising in the marketing of elections revealed eight themes within this body of work and helped identify gaps that led to six recommendations for areas of future research.</p>
<p>Cwalina & Drzewiecka, 2019</p>	<p>Political marketers must continuously analyse the electorate's perceptions and preferences while placing candidates. The study's goal was to identify the ideal president's leadership style profile. The study was carried out in two nations with varying levels of democratic development (Poland and Georgia). The findings display voters' perceptions of actual political individuals as well as their desires for the ideal presidential style on a two-dimensional perception map created by agency and communion. The problems raised widen study on the significance of leadership traits in the construction of candidate images.</p>
<p>Newman, 2019b</p>	<p>The purpose of this article is to clarify how science has become a political brand. Even while politics and science have interacted for millennia, more contemporary social, cultural, and political developments have brought attention to the use of science in daily life and policymaking. The March for Science was established in</p>

Pavlov & Mizik, 2020	<p>2017 as a result of what many people in the United States and other nations saw as government leaders' anti-science positions. In addition to drawing more attention to the scientific community, the political spectacle of the March for Science came to define the reputation of science in society. I discuss the implications of the science brand for the scientific enterprise and how the scientific community thinks about the strategic communication of their brand within the political marketplace by drawing on research on the role of brands in consumer culture, including political marketing, brand resonance, and brand community.</p> <p>They explain the concept of a brand's political positioning—the degree to which a commercial entity's perception of itself (brand image) resembles that of a significant political party—and demonstrate how it affects business valuation and sales in the wake of the 2016 US presidential election. Authors suggest shifting consumer preferences toward (away from) the brands perceptually associated with the winning (losing) political party as a mechanism to account for the observed performance impacts. They provide evidence to support this mechanism: the sales react immediately after the election (fourth quarter of 2016), the documented valuation effects are stronger for consumer-facing firms, and the firm value is correlated with public opinion toward the political entity to which the corporate brand is perceptually similar.</p>
Das Gupta, 2020	<p>The author has looked into the creation of the Aam Aadmi Party as a new political force that capitalised on the popularity of the Janlokpal (civil society movement), as well as the marketing tactics that the party employed during the national elections—basically positioning and branding strategies—and the institutionalisation of the party. As part of the research plan, published data from secondary sources were used to analyse the new party's development from a marketing standpoint.</p>
Etc.	

2.4. Co-Branding

Co-branding is the strategic partnering of two existing brands and their exclusive potentials to form a single distinctive identity for the new brand (Besharat & Langan, 2014; Kapferer, 2012; Ma et al., 2018; Nasution, Arnita & Purnama, 2020; Votolato & Unnava, 2006). Co-branding aids in the positive image transference as well as integration of the physical attributes and build synergy between the brands in the co-branding relationship (Nasution et al., 2020). While there is still to date no universal definition of co-branding, authors have used several terms for co-branding, e.g.: co-marketing alliance, joint branding, ingredient branding, multi-branding, composite brand extension (Ahn & Sung, 2012; Besharat & Langan, 2014). Co-branding synergizes the potential of the brands and take advantage of their strengths (Rao & Ruekert, 1994; Leuthesser et al., 2003) and differentiate the products/services from competitors (Muller, 2005).

Researchers have identified that collaboration of the potentials like consumer awareness, new target markets reach, their expertise, resources, reputation etc., which each of the brands bring to the alliance, is the reason behind the integration for forming a co-brand (Kumar, 2005). It doubles the equity level of the brands (Washburn, Till & Priluck, 2000) and improves the attribute profile of brands suggesting improved brand image for at least one of the brands in the alliance (Park, Jun & Shocker, 1996). Co-branding also influences consumers' perceptions about the quality positively, even about the imperceptible or unnoticed attributes of the brands (Rao, Qu & Ruekert, 1999). When multiple brands bring their distinctive positive features, the new brand so formed starts appearing appealing to the consumers. Literature suggests that consumers have a perception that high quality brands partner with the brands at the same level (Ibid). That is why brands which are often perceived as low-quality brands, are evaluated favourably when they partner with a favourable brand (Levin, Davis & Levin., 1996). Literature therefore argues that consumers' perceptual fit and their attitude towards the brands is an important aspect which influences the co-brand's success. The second more important component is the transference of attributes between the brands in the alliance and the co-brand. High degree of congruence improved the chances of co-brand's success (Jamar, 2020). Image transference (Waters, 1997) is also another important reason.

While authors (e.g. Desai & Keller, 2002; Simonin & Ruth, 1998) have discussed the positive spillover effects of co-branding, negative effects are still not explored and calls for more research (Besharat & Langan, 2014; Votola & Unnaya, 2006). Moreover, research in relation to communication between the partnering brands which could explain how it influences or effects/hinders in the management of the brand image and identity, is also needed (Besharat & Lnagan, 2014). This finding of such research will add to the limited understanding of the spillover effects. Furthermore, the existing research on this topic hints at exploring this concept in different contexts and settings (Grebosz-Krawczyk & Pointet, 2017; Leuthesser et al., 2003).

2.4.1. Political Co-brand Image & Positioning

Co-branding is explained as a strategic approach of forming a new brand by combining two existing brands (Abratt & Motlana, 2002; Aqeel et al., 2017; Baumgarth, 2018; Besharat & Langan, 2014; d'Astous et al., 2007; Kumar, 2005; Nguyen et al., 2018). According to Armannsdottir et al. (2019b), the concept of co-branding justifies the conceptualization of the combination of political party and candidate-politician brands as co-brands. They define political co-brand as a group of brands manifested from the amalgamation of two existing political brands. In simple words, co-branding is basically a complex and strategic alliance between the party brand and the candidate-politician brand (Phipps et al., 2010). While national political party's leader, programmes, and platform are all seen as components of a corporate brand. (Armannsdottir et al., 2019b; Pich & Dean, 2015).

The leader is required to emphasise a particular type of ideology, party policy, and strategy, for the various brands and co-brands to unite under the corporate party brand (Pich & Dean, 2015). The corporate brand is basically a coalition of competing local individual brands (Pich, Armannsdottir & Spry, 2017). It is an organization of the trinity (Smith & French, 2011; Speed et al., 2015) of dimensions (e.g. local leaders/candidates, party and policy) which together constitute this brand. Each dimension of the trinity has its own distinguishing characteristics which the electorates can use to distinguish these brands from the competitors (Davies & Mian, 2010; Guzman & Sierra, 2009; Jain et al., 2018; Nielsen, 2016; O'Cass & Voola, 2011; Smith, 2009). As far as the strategic management and alignment with the corporate political brand in concerned, co-brands are dichotomous and maintain their independence.

Assessing the available literature on co-brand, it appears that research has proven the individuality of the co-brands distinct from their corporate political brand and co-brands' success in the creation and development of identity (e.g. Armannsdottir et al., 2019b). However, some gaps require scholarly inquiry. For instance, current publications have noted the absence of studies on co-brands, particularly in various contexts and situations (e.g. Aqeel et al., 2017; Baumgarth, 2018; Ronzoni et al., 2018). There still exists a gap in the assessment and

investigation of a political co-brand's image, positioning, and spillover effects between the partnering brands in the co-branding relationship (Pich & Newman, 2020). In addition to that, the available literature appears to have neglected exploring and investigating this concept to understand how it is formed or created, how it is managed and how marketing communication is designed (Aqeel et al., 2017; Baumgarth, 2018).

Moreover, although the published research on political branding views the *image* and an important component of the brand's relationship with voters, the concept has yet to be widened and is still up for scholarly investigation especially with respect to political co-branding (Armannsdottir et al., 2019b). Research is required to comprehend brand image and its value in establishing a close bond with voters (Jain et al., 2017a). Most research investigations have looked at the political choices/services from the perspective of the electorate (Nielsen, 2016). However, the paucity of research on political brand image does not provide insight into how associations and perceptions are processed from the viewpoint of external stakeholders (Peng & Hackley, 2009; Smith & French, 2011).

Also, while research explains that co-branding can influence the perceptions about the parent brands (Baumgarth, 2004; Washburn, Till, & Priluck, 2004), research on the spillover effects of the brand in a co-brand relationship seems to have not reached any consensus (Wason & Charlton, 2015). It is not clear how the negative personality of candidate brand (who is a politician) is capable of affecting the image of corporate brand. In addition to that, the research (like Washburn et al., 2000 and Votola & Unnava, 2006, etc.) carried out to study the effects of image transference (or the spillover effects), has shown contradictory and conflicting findings and hence has not reached any consensus yet. Therefore, this concept warrants further investigation to understand the interactions between brands, especially between co-brand and the corporate political brand. Furthermore, while existing literature suggest a more consumer-centred and consistent branding approach which also involves emotional dimensionality for political brands (Jain et al., 2017a), most of the research carried out has been quantitative in nature (e.g. Mortimore et al., 2014). This More exploratory research needs to be conducted due to scarcity of studies on political brand image from the standpoint of external

stakeholders (Baines et al., 2014; Needham & Smith, 2015; O’Cass & Voola, 2011). It is needed to explore the mental associations and positioned perceptions (Peng & Hackley 2009; Pich & Armannsdottir, 2015; Smith 2001; Smith & French 2011). More qualitative research in this area will aid in uncovering the perception (Mortimore et al., 2014) and understanding of the difference(s) between actual and intended positioning (Baines et al., 2014).

Bearing all these gaps in mind, this research intends to delve into the concept of brand image and positioning with the purpose of exploring and examining political co-brand’s image and positioning. The notion of a co-branding relationship among party brand and candidate brand appears exciting to explore since available scholarship indicates that researchers in the last ten years have just recently started treating candidate/politicians as individual brands separate from their party brand (Van Steenburg & Guzmán, 2019). The research published earlier have only contesting political party as a brand without taking candidates/politicians into account while examining and/or discussing political branding (as debated in the preceding sections). Acknowledging this aspect, published research (e.g. Nielsen, 2016; Phipps et al., 2010; Serazio, 2017; Speed et al., 2015 etc.) has indicated the necessity and significance (Armannsdottir et al., 2019b) of scholarly inquiry to explore and examine the formation of the candidate brands. It is thus safe to assume that the influence, impact and effect of the candidate on the political party indicates opportunity and suggest possibility for research.

In summary, the extant literature indicates that the research on co-branding is insufficient (e.g. Aqeel et al., 2017; Armannsdottir et al., 2019b; Baumgarth, 2018; Besharat & Langan, 2014). Research is especially needed with respect to different contexts and settings (Armannsdottir et al., 2019b; Leuthesser et al., 2002; Ronzoni et al., 2018; Wason & Charlton, 2015) and, related to the creating, communication and management of the co-brand (Aqeel et al., 2017; Armannsdottir et al., 2019b; Baumgarth, 2018; Besharat & Langan, 2014; Volckner & Sattler, 2006; Wason & Charlton, 2015).

Table 5 presents some of the important research work on political co-branding, in chronological order.

Table 5: Studies on Political Co-branding

Authors	Description
Pich & Armnnsdottir, 2015	<p>This essay aims to fill the knowledge gap regarding how to operationalize a political brand's external brand image. This study shows how the six factors, sometimes known as the "brand image framework," can be applied to the political climate. The brand image framework's original conceptualization, however, proved difficult to implement. To take into account the political environment, many of the brand image variables were clarified, rearticulated, and made simpler. An in-depth understanding of how to research the political brand image of David Cameron's Conservative Party was made possible by this sophisticated conceptualization. This study fills a gap in the body of knowledge by operationalizing external brand image and offers academics and practitioners working within and beyond the realm of political branding a framework for comprehending the outward orientation of brands. Political and non-political brands may also utilise this study as a foundation to examine external brand image and assess how well it aligns with internal brand identity.</p>
Pich & Dean, 2015	<p>Building strong brands is essential to gaining a competitive edge. Brands can be thought of as heuristic tools that assist consumers to make quick and effective decisions by encapsulating a number of values. An interest in the concept of the political brand has recently emerged as a result of the widespread adoption of the idea of a political brand and the rhetoric of branding by many political parties in an effort to set themselves apart. In order to determine whether Kapferer's brand identity prism can be used to political branding, this article studies the UK Conservative Party brand under David Cameron's leadership. The brand identity prism is expanded and operationalized in this study to create a "political brand identity network" that shows how the constituent parts of the candidate political brand and the corporate political brand are related to one another. This model, which is essential for practitioners, may show how the brand is displayed and communicated to the audience and acts as a helpful tool to determine consistency between corporate and candidate political brands.</p>
Jain et al., 2017a	<p>The taxonomical framework of the study is taken from impression management. Focus group talks were conducted to elicit the general perceptions of pertinent respondents in order to support this. As a result, authors had eight FGDs, each with ten participants. Three political observers were interviewed as additional evidence for this study. In addition, the categories and themes of political brand image were defined as follows: political brand image and self-promotion, political brand image and exemplification, political brand image and humility, political brand image and tenacity. The themes of improvement, exemplification, humility, tenacity, and self-promotion subsequently emerged. So, for a powerful political brand image, this study establishes a solid retrospective and future structure.</p>
Aqeel et al., 2017	<p>Aqeel, Z., Hanif, M.I. and Malik, M.S. (2017), "Impact of co-branding and brand personality on brand equity: a study of telecom sector in Pakistan", <i>Journal of Business and Retail Management Research</i>, Vol. 12 No. 1, pp. 86-93.</p>
Armannsdottir et al., 2019a	<p>This essay conceptualises politicians as having personal political brands and focuses on an understudied and underdeveloped typology of political branding. Additionally, this study responds to clear recommendations for greater research studying the evolution of intended brand identity, particularly from the perspective of the brand creator. This qualitative case-study methodology demonstrates how personal political brands develop, articulate, and market their identities. Through the use of a defined brand motto and offline-online communication methods, personal political brand identities were developed and managed, revealing a level of congruence with their party-political brands. This research also highlights the difficulties in controlling the authenticity and integration of personal political brands, particularly with coalition partners. The Personal Political Brand Identity Appraisal Framework is suggested in our research as an operational instrument to introspectively assess personal political</p>

Armannsdottir et al., 2019b	<p>brand identity, building on the six-staged analytical process of personal branding. Political players in various situations and locations can use this paradigm to evaluate their own personal political brands from a variety of angles.</p> <p>Political co-brands, also known as candidate-politician brands, are still understudied from a research perspective. Calls for greater comprehension of political co-brands and how their producers manage and position them lend support to this. This article examines how political co-brand identity is created and managed through time, examining alignment between the political co-brand and political corporate party brand. It is framed by the ideas of internal brand identity and co-branding. This multi-case study illustrates how effective political co-brands establish identities that are specific to their audience, frequently different from the corporate political brand and formed years before electoral success at the polls. This research also shows that political co-brands are contradictory in terms of strategically managing a degree of alignment with the corporate political brand while maintaining a degree of independence.</p>
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2.4.2. Spillover effects & Image Transference Between the Partnering Brands

As discussed in the previous sections, co-branding helps in positively influencing the electorates' perception about the attributes of the brand in the co-brand relationship (Rao, Qu & Ruekert, 1999). In this way, co-branding positively improves the attribute profile of brands suggesting improved brand image for at least one of the brands in the alliance (Park, Jun & Shocker, 1996). When multiple brands bring their distinctive positive features, the new brand so formed starts appearing appealing to the consumers (Rao & Ruekert, 1994). In this way image transfers between the partnering brands.

In a co-branding relationship between the party and the candidate's personality of the party and personality of the candidates positively reinforce each other. They are often thought about as one brand, and the associative network of the overall brand develops in the electorates' memory (Smith, 2009). Inadvertently, to save themselves from investing time and energy in figuring out the details about different party, electorates rely on shortcuts to gain this information about the parties (Popkins et al., 1976). They rely on shortcuts, like their perception of the personality of the leader, that they have in their mind. They do this unintentionally to eliminate the perceived risk of choosing the wrong party (Smith, 2009). However, it is easier for consumers to gain knowledge about the leader by observing their personality traits and physical appearance (Smith, 2009) than about the party. Leaders-image

factor can even influence the political participation positively or negatively (Mangi, Shah & Ali Soomro, 2019). Leader's actions can symbolize what the party stands for through their garments, selection of words, simplicity, self-reliance (O'Shaughnessy, 2003), their age, character and behaviour, how they settle conflicts, if they are honest, how strong is their commitment, their dedication and capabilities, qualification, political manifesto as well as motivational power (Aaltio-Marjosola & Takala, 2000). All these symbols influence electorates perception about both of the brands (which have formed the co-brand). Hence, existing scholarship confirms that an individual candidate brand can enhance the party brand (e.g. Phipps et al., 2010).

Literature also identifies that a carefully planned brand communication helps in developing a credible political brand image, engage and attract new co-brand's voters (e.g. Jain, Pich, Ganesh & Armannsdottir, 2017b), give clear knowledge about the co-brand, its competitors and its agenda/manifesto (Banerjee & Choudhary, 2016). It is clear that branding political image is essential for being in control. Moreover, literature suggests that for building, maintaining, and holding a position/image in consumers' mind, content, style and tone of communication are often more important than the choice of media (De Vreese & Boomgaarden, 2006). According to the available literature, strong positioning and marketing communication can help in promoting favourable image and eliminating the negative perceptions associated with an of the tripartite political offer i.e. party, leadership and its policy (Needham, 2006; Smith & French, 2009; French & Smith, 2010) to position the brand favourably (e.g. Jungblut & Jochen, 2021; Speed et al., 2015 quoting Keller, 2008).

But how do such strategies improve the overarching positioning of the co-brand? Research has not assessed the political co-brands communication strategies with respect to positioning of the political co-brands yet. This area calls for more research. What happens when electorates find contradiction in the parent brand's (corporate political brand, i.e.) verbal and non-verbal communication? How does that affect co-brand's image and positioning? These are still the questions which require scholarly attention. The spillover effect of communication strategies of the brands in the co-brand alliance needs to be explored. This will aid in comparing the post-alliance positioning effects with the pre-alliance positioning strategy. It will

also help in assessing if co-brand positioning strategy was a workable one or not. These are some of the areas which have not been studied yet (Singh et al., 2014).

Study of literature also suggests that while positive spillover effects have been assessed (e.g. Desai & Keller, 2002; Simonin & Ruth, 1998), there is a need to investigate the negative spillover consequences. (Besharat & Langan, 2014; Votola & Unnaya, 2006). Political brands with dented reputation face challenges like creating an image that portrays their positive side which could fit the position they desire (Landtsheer & De Vries, 2015) through communication. Negative and dented image of the candidate or leader can adversely affect the electorates' trust (Hetherington, 1998) discouraging them from participating compared to when their reputation is in good standing (De Vreese & Boomgaarden, 2006). Literature explains that the low-quality brands are evaluated positively when they partner with a strong brand with favourable image (Levin, Davis & Levin., 1996). Electorates' perceptual fit, their attitude towards the brands and the image transference attributes among the brands in the co-branding relationship influences the co-brand's success. Literature (e.g. Jamar, 2020; Waters, 1997) suggests that the better the degrees of congruence between the partnering brands, the more successful a co-brand is.

The Political Co-brand Identity Framework is used in this study to address and fill in the gaps (see, for example, Pich & Newman, 2020). In a post-election scenario in Pakistan, it is used in this study to understand and examine the co-brand positioning and co-brand image. Thus, the purpose of this study is to determine whether this Framework can be used as an instrument to evaluate the positioning and image of the brands. The framework is explained in Section 2.5.

2.5. The Need for Revisiting Existing Frameworks

Comparison between the existing literature on brand image (Pich & Armannsdottir, 2015; Saaksjarvi & Samiee, 2011; Srivastava, 2011) and on brand identity imply that the conceptualization of brand identity is given more consideration by the researchers (Davies & Chun, 2002; Pich et al., 2020). Moreover, (*as discussed in previous sections*) the existing frameworks also seems to concentrate on brand identity more than brand image (for instance research by Kapferer, 2008 and Pich et al., 2020). This again implies that the brand image conceptualization and

operationalization through the development of new or evaluation of existing frameworks is not paid attention to by the researchers (Johns & Glymothy, 2008; Ross & Harradine, 2011; Srivastava, 2011; Pich & Armannsdottir, 2015). In addition to that, the available frameworks are not grounded in the political brand image research (Pich & Armannsdottir, 2015; Srivastava, 2011) and are more descriptive than applied (Pich & Armannsdottir, 2015). This indicates the gap related to the operationalization of the brand image concept and the scarcity of framework on brand image, which can aid in operationalizing the brand image understandings.

Research studies like Levesque & Pons (2020), Huang, Lin & Phau (2016) and Schneider (2004, p. 60) have been pointing out the need and potential of employing instruments developed for one branding setting, in studying a different/diverse settings/context, to assesses their workability and transfer potential. Studies have also supported the idea of employing the existing frameworks and extending to different cultures, context, and geographic settings, for example Albalawi & Sixsmith, 2017; ElMassah et al., 2019; Gujarathi & Kulkarni, 2018; and Labrecque, Markos & Milne, 2011. Studies like French and Smith, (2010), Guzman and Sierra, (2009), Newman (1999)a, Phipps et al. (2010), Reeves et al. (2006), Schneider, (2004), Smith and French, (2009) and Smith, (2009) and White and De Chernatony (2002) are some of the examples from literature which demonstrates this idea of employing and modifying branding tools (including the frameworks and scales) to suit the setting and study the chosen political context. The critical application of existing concepts, models, theories, and frameworks harness the theoretical and practical development and advancement in areas like political marketing and branding especially when researchers periodically replicate and compare results (Armannsdottir et al., 2019b, Lock & Harris, 1996; O’Cass, 2001; Speed et al., 2015).

Reflecting on the available literature on political branding, Pich and Newman (2019) also recommend revisiting the existing theories, concepts (concepts like engagement, identity, image, reputation, equity, and positioning), and framework (developed for certain concepts) to offer critical perspective and to assess their further development, extension and applicability in different settings and contexts (Pich & Newman, 2020). Critically assessing and applying existing tools

(or frameworks of political brands) to a sub-area or another political context aids in not only exploring the internal and/or external orientation of the political brands but also offers a chance to operationalize the tool in another environment or context. For example, Pich and Dean (2015) operationalized Kapferer’s (2008) Brand Identity Prism.

Among the prominent work in this direction in the last 10 years include Pich and Dean (2015)’s study which presented a framework on political brand identity. They proposed that the framework be tested for exploring external brand image. Attempts like this aid in reviewing variations, inconsistencies, and contradictions between brand identity (internal) and brand image (external). Moreover, when a framework is evaluated for a different concept, in a different setting and in a different context, researchers are in a better position to assess the strength of the framework and offer critical perspective.

Pich and Dean (2015)’s framework was further revised by Armannsdottir et al. (2019)b who presented a modified framework to examine the development and management of political co-brand identity (please see Figure 3). The Political Co-brand Identity Framework has six dimensions and includes all the important characteristic of brand identity.

Table 6 presents summary of some of the important research work on the brand image frameworks, in chronological order.

Table 6: Research Studies on Brand Image Frameworks

Authors	Description
Part et al., 1986	A core marketing activity is communicating a brand image to a target audience. The authors offer a normative framework for choosing, putting into practise, and managing a brand image through time called brand concept management (BCM). The framework entails a step-by-step procedure for choosing, introducing, expanding upon, and solidifying a brand concept. At each of these stages, the concept directs positioning techniques and, consequently, the brand image. Whether the brand concept is experiential, symbolic, or utilitarian affects how this concept-image tie is maintained. The market performance of the brand should be greatly improved by maintaining this linkage.
Kahle & Kim, 2006	An overview of the theoretical and conceptual frameworks on the formation and mental representation of images from diverse angles is provided in the first section of this book (especially Chapter 1 by Boush & Jones (2006). In order to comprehend image and consumer behaviour, the writers talk about how mental imagery is created, how it is processed, and how it is constructed. The chapters provide an overview of earlier research in the specific field of picture study and

	propose ground-breaking new conceptualizations and methodologies for the investigation of mental representation of images.
Guzman & Sierra, 2009	<p>This study examines the presidential contenders' brand perceptions before of Mexico's 2006 election.</p> <p>By creating a special conceptual model for the political marketing context, this study aims to widen the notion of loyalty to political brands akin to commercial brands. The model makes an effort to bridge the gap between marketing and political marketing literature by tying together the relationship between political brand awareness, political brand image, political brand quality, political brand trust, and political brand loyalty. Through the literature of marketing, political marketing (PM), customer-based brand equity (CBBE), psychology, consumer (voter) behaviour, and political science, the conceptual model generates various useful theoretical contributions.</p>
Alkhalaf & Halim, 2015	<p>This essay offers a clear explanation of the analytical procedure that can be used to evaluate and understand data obtained using qualitative projective methodologies. Academics who have minimal knowledge with projective techniques can nonetheless use this. The external image of various political brands can also be explored and analysed using this paradigm, which may be helpful for practitioners like marketers, political parties, and candidates. Greater expressive understanding is made possible by qualitative projective techniques' ability to elicit information that could otherwise be hidden if typical direct data collecting methods like interviews and questionnaires are used.</p>
Pich & Dean, 2015	<p>The party brand is mostly consigned to the background in the literature, with some advocating political brand management based on policy features and others viewing candidate attributes as the primary source. According to this study, present strategies would cause parties to be less receptive to the reality of election campaigns. The goal is to comprehend how three political components—party, candidate, and policy—are managed to create an all-encompassing political brand that can appeal to target people. According to the research, a party's ability to reach its target voters is increased by its candidate, party, and policy features. For efficient political brand management, the study suggests the idea of "political brand architecture (PBA)".</p>
Mensah, 2016	<p>Impression management's taxonomical structure is used in the investigation. Focus group talks were conducted to elicit the general perceptions of pertinent respondents in order to support this. As a result, they had eight FGDs, each with ten participants. Three political observers were interviewed as additional evidence for this study. In addition, the categories and themes of political brand image were defined as follows: political brand image and self-promotion, political brand image and exemplification, political brand image and humility, political brand image and tenacity. The themes of improvement, exemplification, humility, tenacity, and self-promotion subsequently emerged. So, for a powerful political brand image, authors have established a solid retrospective and future structure.</p>
Jain et al., 2017	<p>The brand alignment framework can aid practitioners in illuminating political brand elements and how the voter perceives them. Researchers must comprehend whether, how, or why citizens are persuaded by a more polarised marketing message in light of the growing political polarisation. The political brand may suffer from social media problems as well, which could skew the carefully developed brand. In other political circumstances, there are chances to assess and use this concept. The brand alignment model advances current branding theory by emphasising the difficulties in developing brand meaning, operationalizing the differences between brand and how the electorate perceives it, and, finally, determining whether internal conflicts within the political party pose a risk to the brand's consistency.</p>
Pich et al., 2019	<p>This essay aims to fill the knowledge gap regarding how to operationalize a political brand's external brand image. campaign, this research examined the</p>

2018	<p>deconstruction of the Party brand from the perspective of young people critically evaluating the transferability of the six brand image variables by Bosch, Venter, Han, and Boshoff. This study shows how the six factors, sometimes known as the "brand image framework," can be applied to the political climate. The brand image framework's original conceptualization, however, proved difficult to implement. To take into account the political environment, many of the brand image variables were clarified, rearticulated, and made simpler. This study fills a gap in the body of knowledge by operationalizing external brand image and offers academics and practitioners working within and beyond the realm of political branding a framework for comprehending the outward orientation of brands. Political and non-political brands may also utilise this study as a foundation to examine external brand image and assess how well it aligns with internal brand identity.</p> <p>This chapter serves two purposes. In order to study political brand identity and political brand image in relation to various typologies of political brands in global contexts, authors first provide fundamental branding concepts and frameworks within political marketing. Additionally, authors contend that political brands are made up of numerous interconnected but frequently unique sub brands. However, in order to succeed at the polls, all political brands should work to be positioned and viewed by a variety of stakeholders as genuine, united, compelling, trustworthy, and intelligible. Second, they put theory into practise and offer two distinct, condensed case studies that are based on qualitative empirical research. In addition to a research agenda, they finish by giving implications for theory and practise.</p>
Pich & Armannsdottir, 2022	
Levesque & Pons, 2020; Huang, Lin & Phau, 2016; Schneider, 2004	<p>Research studies have been pointing out the need and potential of employing instruments designed for one branding setting/situation, in other settings different. It will help in assessing their workability and transfer potential.</p>
Albalawi & Sixsmith, 2017; ElMassah et al., 2019; Gujarathi & Kulkarni, 2018; and Labrecque, Markos & Milne, 2011.	<p>Studies have also supported the idea of employing the existing frameworks and extending to different cultures, context, and geographic settings. Studies like French and Smith, (2010), Guzman and Sierra, (2009), Newman (1999)a, Phipps et al. (2010), Reeves, De Chernatony, and Carrigan (2006), Schneider, (2004), Smith and French, (2009) and Smith, (2009) and White and De Chernatony (2002) are some of the examples from literature which demonstrates this idea</p>

2.5.1. The Brand Identity Prism

The Brand Identity Prism, also known as the *Kapferer Brand Identity Prism* and first proposed by Jean-Noel Kapferer, a professor of marketing strategy, is a concept for describing a brand's identity through its characteristics (or elements). The prism diagram is an effective tool for identifying not only a brand's core characteristics, but also how the characteristics interact with one another to enhance brand identity. According to Kapferer, the most powerful brands smoothly weave all six

characteristics into a cohesive brand identity and message - with all six facets relating to the brand's core spirit. The prism is presented in Figure 2.

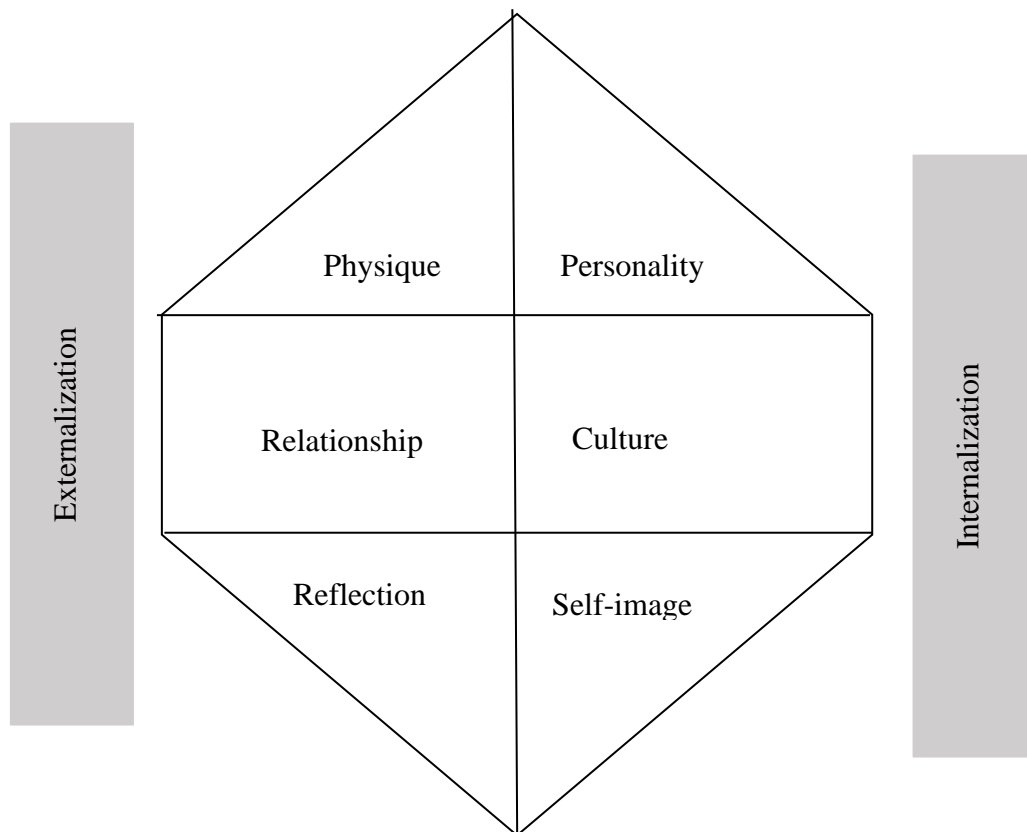


Figure 2: Brand Identity Prism (Kapferer, 1997, 2008, 2008)

A brand identity prism is basically a six-sided prism. Out of the six characteristics, three characteristics on the left side represents the externalization, while the three on the right side represents internalization. Personality, Culture, and Self-image are the three dimensions of internal expression. Internal expression refers to intangible characteristics and behaviours, whereas external expression refers to externally visible, often physical characteristics and behaviours (Armannsdottir et al., 2019b; Kapferer, 2008).

The characteristics at the top represent the marketer, while the bottom elements represent the consumer. Basically, the prism has the marketer's (sender's) style and themes on one side, which are received by the consumer (recipient) on the

other. The prism's other axes indicate the extent to which activities are internalised or externalised. When flipped over, the brand identity prism becomes an integral part of the three-part brand identity pyramid. The *Brand Kernel* is the overall essence or core of the brand. The *Brand Style* makes the brand personality from the essence. And *Brand Themes* are style executions. While more sophisticated tools are used today, Brand Prism is still a favourite (especially when we need to quickly understand a new brand or a competitor). To be successful, a brand must present a consistent image in the minds of its customers. All six aspects of the brand must be consistent with the central brand essence. The six characteristics are,

Physique: Physique discusses the brand's physical attributes which is everything the customers may see about the brand and the organization. When a brand name is stated, a set of physical characteristics associated with it are brought to mind by consumers. According to Kapferer, this element must be viewed as the brand's foundation. What does the brand look like is an important consideration with reference to this component. What useful uses may a consumer make of it? And how is it identifiable? Physique may include the logo, style guide, iconography, colour palette, and the product presentation.

Personality: This characteristic outlines not only what is said but also exactly how it is said, and it is not restricted to verbal communication. Personality is the character and the essence of the brand. Customers can be made to believe that every brand-related communication comes from a real person with distinct personality qualities by communicating with them in a certain way. This can be achieved by employing a certain writing style, particular design elements, and particular colour palettes, everything from lettering selection to communication tone. This is often referred to as a brand's human qualities.

Culture: Culture is the autobiographical account of your brand. It explains where the brand has come from, what is the belief system and values to which the brand adheres to, and why are these important to the brand. A brand's behaviour must be based on its culture, which is a set of core beliefs and values (products and communication). The connection between a company's brand and its culture is direct.

Reflection: This feature alludes to the stereotyped brand-user and serves as the basis for identification. Reflection describes the type of person brands want the customer to be, who would the brand reach out to the most. Brand management can convincingly manoeuvre the brand identity toward that target group while taking into account all of the prism's other characteristics. However, this notion may or may not match the traits of the intended audience.

Relationship: This characteristic explains the interaction between a brand and its consumers. This is about more than a financial exchange. It is about building and maintaining a positive relationship with the consumers from the first interaction to the post-purchase period. A strong and healthy relationship exceeds customer expectations and results in brand loyalty.

Self-image: Customers imagine their ideal selves through self-image. This knowledge enables businesses to better serve their clientele.

Despite the scarcity of exploratory research on 'political brand identity,' Pich and Dean (2015) made an exception by exploring the 'corporate' political brand of the UK Conservative Party under David Cameron's leadership. This was accomplished by using Kapferer's (2008) six dimensions of brand identity as a framework to investigate the political 'corporate' brand identity. Despite acknowledging that the corporate political brand was a coalition of distinct identities or local-brands (in Armannsdottir et al., 2019b study, these are the political co-brands), Pich and Dean (2015) provided no insight into the candidate-politician brand identities. They revised the brand identity prism to create an upgraded framework known as the *Brand Identity Network*, which was geared to the sub-discipline of political branding. As a result, Pich and Dean (2015) regarded the Brand Identity Network as a viable, transferable instrument for trying to capture internal brand identity. However, it is important to remember that their study only looked at corporate political brand identity and called for future research to look at other types of political brands (such as candidates-politicians). As a result, Armannsdottir et al. (2019b) broaden and modify the brand identity network's dimensions to represent the distinct nature of political co-brands, which they

rearticulate as the Political Co-Brand Identity Framework (introduced in section 2.5.2.). It is based on *Brand Identity Prism*.

2.5.2. The Political Co-brand Identity Framework

Armannsdottir, et al. (2019b) modified Pich & Dean's (2015) into the Political Co-brand Identity Framework (presented in Figure 3).

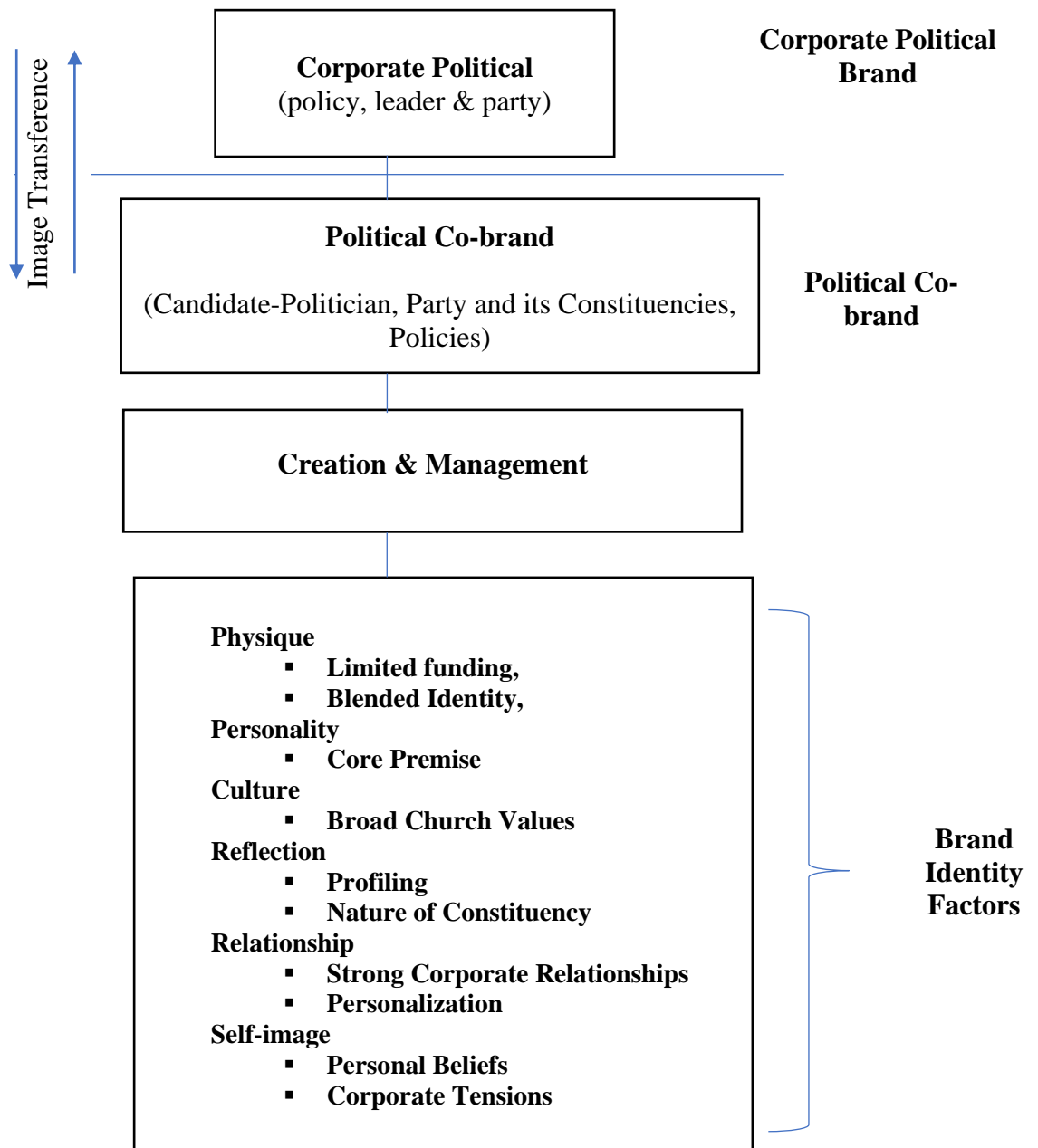


Figure 3: Political Co-brand Identity Framework by Armannsdottir et al. (2019b)

This modified and revised version of the framework is a pragmatic instrument, and it can be used to study and inspect brand identity both internally and externally. It has been recently used to explore the political co-brands in UK (Ibid). This modified framework formed to inspect the formation and management political co-brand identity. The Political Co-brand Identity Framework recognizes the links and connexion amongst the key elements of the partnering brands and of the corporate brand. It also explains how a co-brand is marketed/promoted to get public's attention. This framework is useful for exploring and studying the relationship between the corporate and individual brands, as well as, for assessing the consistency between these distinct individual brands (Pich & Dean. 2015). Consistent with the concept of brand identity, this framework is often employed for examining the internal orientation of political brands (Kapferer, 2008; Pich & Dean, 2015; Ponnam, 2007). In this way it aids in expounding the discrepancies and contradictions between brand identity (which reflects the internal orientations) and brand image (external) (Nandan, 2005; Wong, 2010).

Physique signifies the physical characteristics, properties, and communication tools the political co-brands employ to build co-brand image and positioning. Physique represented limited funding and blended identity in the original framework. Blended identity is dependent on the availability of funds.

Personality signifies the figurehead of the political co-brand representing the co-brand at the constituency level. He/she could also be the party head.

Culture signifies the co-brand's culture, philosophy, heritage, ideology, and core values. It is important for the political co-brands to show and prove consistency between what the party values and what the party head and the candidates gives importance to and value.

Reflection explains the political co-brand's outward expression dimension. It signifies the perception of the external stakeholders like voters and supporters. These are the people who relate with the political brand both at the corporate level and at the constituency level. It also assesses how alert and vigilant the candidate brands are in their respective constituencies.

Relationship signifies the strength of the relationship between the political co-brand at the constituency level and the corporate brand. It also represents the bond that exists between candidate and the electorates within the candidate's respective constituency. Relationship is represented in the framework by characteristics such as customization of communication and strong business relationships.

Self-Image signifies the political corporate brand's and the figurehead's opinion, statements, and beliefs from the political co-brand's standpoint. Self-image explains the relationship between the internal stakeholders. It is an inward expression dimension.

While the modified framework by Armannsdottir et al. (2019b) was first created to study the development and management political co-brand identity, yet the evaluation of the framework as well as conceptualization from the point of view of *external* stakeholder's needs to be examined beyond Europe in different settings, concepts and for different concepts (Ibid). As positioning amplifies the intended co-brand identity, this model can be a good instrument for exploring the co-brand positioning. Because this model can aid in exploring the similarities and dissimilarities between co-brand's identity and external image, one can expect it to be a good instrument for assessing co-brand's positioning as well. The Political Co-brand Identity Framework is therefore used in this study to study, comprehend and investigate political co-brand image and positioning.

2.6. Summary of the Chapter

This section presents the summary of the literature reviewed for this study. The published work on political brands reflects that just like the mainstream brands, political brands too are complex and multidimensional with some under-researched area. Political co-brand in this study signifies the political party and the candidate brand, at the constituency level. While corporate brand represents the party, its leader, and country-wide rules, programs and policies. However, the application of co-branding in politics has attracted limited attention. While researchers have studied and examined the positive spillover effects, there is explicit calls for exploring the negative spillover effects to understand how political brands with dented repute build image and positioning. Also, despite the crucial part image and

positioning plays for branding in politics and in developing competitive advantage, literature on political brand positioning is inadequate.

At least four sliding degrees of abstraction based on decreasing control over the message can affect positioning. The highest level is what a campaign or political party wishes to portray. However, this must take into account the veracity of what the candidate or party repeatedly and unequivocally asserts, how it is viewed by media professionals and other critics, and finally how the "whole public feels about the messages they receive. In order to manage and handle positioning challenges, it is important to have position clarity among the electorates; positioning credibility; a competitive offer value for the electorates that rival products do not offer; and a good communication plan.

Available literature indicates that the research on political co-branding is in infancy and is inadequate specifically with respect to different contexts and settings and, related to the creating, communication and management of the co-brand. Furthermore, there is a need for framework to understand how image is build for a political brand and how a political brand positioning is done. Also, to assess existing framework to evaluate their strength in different contexts, concepts and for different concepts. When theories, concepts, and framework are reassessed and expanded on, this helps in the developing and/or modification new/existing frameworks, models etc. Researchers suggest that such endeavours can enhance the insight on political brand management and strategy formulation.

While there is scarcity of frameworks on brand image and brand positioning, authors of Political Co-brand Identity Framework and other indicates that this framework warrants examination in a different context and for different concepts. Therefore, to address these gaps, this study is examining image and positioning for the political brands and trying to understand the negative spillover effects between corporate political brands and political co-brands. This study is also evaluating the workability and strength of the Political Co-brand Identity Framework to comprehend political co-brand image and positioning. The study is designed from the external standpoint.

PHILOSOPHY & DESIGN

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODS

3.0. Introduction to Research Methods

When a framework is tested and assessed in different settings for a different concept, it helps researchers in deconstructing and operationalizing concepts (as discussed in Chapter 2). The intention behind deconstructing any concept is to study the internal logic of the concept. Operationalization, on the other hand decreases the subjectivity and improves the reliability of the concept so that it can be accurately measured. Such endeavours require researchers to make use of both qualitative and quantitative methods.

Pich and Dean (2015) (who studied internal brand identity) and Armannsdottir et al., (2019b) (who modified their framework to study the creation and management political co-brand identity) deployed qualitative methods. The current study has employed both qualitative and quantitative methods to explore and investigate political co-brand image/positioning from both political analysts and the public's (electorates) perspective. This study intends to understand multiple perspectives employing more than one method to come up with knowledge which addresses important facets of co-brand image and positioning, and practical implications for handling the challenges in the real world.

This chapter explains the philosophy, methodological choice and research design (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2015) governing this study. This chapter justifies the *research design* adopted for this study, in the light of the philosophical world view of this study.

3.1. Philosophical Worldview

The philosophical assumptions are often referred to as “worldview” (see Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018; Kaushik & Walsh, 2019 quoting Lincoln, 1990⁶; Patton 2002; Rossman & Rallis, 2003) or “paradigm” (coined by Kuhn, 1970).

⁶ Lincoln, Y. S. (1990). The making of a constructivist: A remembrance of transformations past. In “The Paradigm Dialog”. Edited by Egon G. Guba. Newbury Park: Sage, p. 67–87.

Worldview is explained as “a basic set of beliefs that guide actions” by Guba (1990). The philosophical ideas or the philosophical worldview, govern research mostly but remain hidden (Creswell, 2014; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018; Slife & Williams, 1995). Nevertheless, they have a significant influence on the overall research (Creswell, 2014). These are the essential set of ideas that steer the researcher’s actions, identify their worldview (Lincoln, Lynham & Guba, 2011) and structure their research. While the research study’s philosophical ideas may largely remain concealed (Creswell, 2014 quoting Slife & Williams, 1995), they are the backbone of the research being carried out. These beliefs guide the researcher’s choice of methods employed for the study. The commonly employed world view in research includes post-positivism, constructivism, transformative, and pragmatism (Creswell, 2014).

The paradigms or worldviews like post-positivism, constructivism, participatory action frameworks, or pragmatism, etc. are all fundamentally philosophical in nature and integrate research facets like axiology (*opinion about the role of values/morals/ethics in the research process*); ontology (*assumptions related to the nature of reality*); epistemology (*assumptions related to how we know what we know about the world, how we earn knowledge, the connection between the knower and the known*); methodology (*the collective understanding about the appropriate means for acquiring knowledge about the world*); and rhetoric (*the collective understanding about the language of research*) (see Creswell, 2014; Kaushik & Walsh, 2019; Lincoln et al., 2011; Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2016). Each paradigm is a conceptual tool and solve a certain kind of a problem with a distinguishing standpoint about the axiology, ontology, epistemology, methodology, and rhetoric of research (Kaushik & Walsh, 2019).

The philosophical idea this research espoused is pragmatism.

3.1.1. Pragmatism

According to Lees-Marshment et al. (2019), political marketing is a young topic of study which is why there has not been a great deal of discussion on the methodology available in the literature yet. Because it is based on current events

and provides notions and analysis that may be put to use, it captures the actuality of political practise. Pragmatism is the ideal philosophy for studying political marketing and other relevant topics of this field. The four Ps (product, pricing, promotion, and place) "*require significant stretching to make much sense in politics*"⁷, according to Scammell (1999). Pragmatism, according to James (1907), "*stands for no specific results.*" It does not have any doctrines and dogmas. Pragmatism is quite an appropriate philosophy which can be employed to question conventional wisdom or academic wisdom (Lees-Marshment, 2019). Even the widely acceptable authors like Creswell and Plano Clark have recommended pragmatism for mixed method research designs over post-positivism (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

While post-positivism is a school of thought in the philosophy of science that challenges and extends positivism, pragmatism is a school of thought that stresses the practical application of ideas. One significant distinction between the two is that post-positivism is concerned with the shortcomings of positivism as a theory of knowing, whereas pragmatism is concerned with the usefulness or practicality of ideas. Post-positivism is not regarded as a general philosophy of life, but pragmatism is. In terms of science, post-positivism criticises positivism's notion that it is possible to investigate the world objectively and without regard to values. Pragmatism emphasises the practical application of concepts in scientific inquiry.

⁷ These components are similar to those used in conventional marketing but have been modified for the unique setting of political campaigns. The goal of a political marketing campaign is to shape and uphold the candidate's or party's reputation while influencing the attitudes and actions of voters in the run-up to an election. The political product is not just policies but the entire behaviour of a political organization or practitioner, including political figures and volunteers, not all of which are controllable or tangible. The political product is also constantly evolving and is never complete. It includes candidate brand's image, party image, political staff/members, symbols, logo, etc. It also encompasses their values, beliefs, policies, and track record. Price refers to the resources and investments made by the political campaign to win over voters, including campaign spending, time, and effort. Place refers to the channels used to reach voters, such as door-to-door canvassing, television and radio advertising, social media, and public events. Promotion refers to the tactics and strategies used by political campaigns to communicate with voters and gain their support. This can include political advertising, public speaking, debates, and press coverage.

This study is looking at the world with the lens of pragmatism. Among the pioneering authors whose work propelled the philosophy of pragmatism includes founding fathers/authors like Charles Sanders Peirce (*philosopher*); Peirce James, John Dewey (*psychologist, philosopher, educationist and social reformer*); George Herbert Mead (*philosopher, sociologist, and psychologist*) (Cherryholmes, 1992; Kaushik & Walsh, 2019), Chauncey Wright (*philosopher and mathematician*); Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr. (*jurist*), Nicholas St. Johns Green (*philosopher and lawyer*); Arthur F. Bentley (*philosopher and political scientist*) (Creswell, 2003, 2014 quoting Murphy, 1990; Kaushik & Walsh, 2019 quoting Maxcy, 2003; Morgan, 2014; Ormerod, 2006; Pansiri, 2005; Patton, 1990; Rorty, 1990, etc.) and many other academics.

Pragmatism philosophy contends reality may not be static and changes frequently. It asserts importance of actions and states that human actions are linked to their past experiences and what humans learn from the consequences of those experiences. Hence, human thoughts regarding the possible consequences are inherently linked with their actions (Kaushik & Walsh, 2019). That is why pragmatism argues that there can be several ways of deciphering the world and for carrying out research because there can be multiple realities and using one perspective maybe not give a clear picture (Saunders et al., 2016). Pragmatism involves both inductive and deductive approaches. While pragmatism aids in exploring multiple perspectives (ontology) and gives a free hand to the researcher to use the methods which work best to address the research question(s) (epistemology) (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018), researchers have opined that the spotlight has remained on epistemology giving less importance to ontology (e.g. Hathcote & Meixner, 2007; Lohse, 2017; Maarouf, 2019; Morgan, 2007; Pratt, 2016). Since researchers can move to the opposite ontological position to achieve the research objectives, a clear ontological perspective (i.e. under what conditions/situations/circumstances a researcher should decide to pursue subjective or objective stance) is extremely important (Maarouf, 2019).

According to Maarouf (2019), researchers who follow pragmatism, their conceptualization of the ontological stance lies in the centre on the objectivity-

subjectivity continuum. She has called this ontological stance as the reality cycle. The reality circle is founded on the notion that there is one reality which exists in a specific context at a specific juncture, and there can be multiple perceptions of this reality in the social actor's mind. This reality will only continue if the conditions and the context remain the same/constant. Since different social actors perceive this reality differently, their perceptions can influence their behaviour. The behaviours create new contexts with the passage of time, the new context produces new reality. This notion of reality cycle offers a pragmatic way of studying reality which changes only continually and supports the mixed method research approach. It offers supports to researchers in switching between objectivity and subjectivity to study the same phenomenon (i.e. the same one reality) from two differing ontological stances. Ontology guides the epistemological stance of the researcher. As his/her position changes, his/her point of view also changes. As the researcher changes his/her point of, knowledge can become observable or unobservable. Maarouf (2019) has dubbed this point as "double-faced knowledge" and has opined that double-faced knowledge quashes the criticism raised on pragmatic researchers for linking their research with pragmatism merely for their mythological ambitions.

Nevertheless, the spotlight is on the consequences of the research and the use of multiple methods (mixed methods) of data collection for addressing the research questions. Pragmatism, in short, is basically a real-world oriented pluralistic (i.e. employs multiple methods) philosophy (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018; Morgan, 2014). The application of pragmatism in the business and other social research is not an anomaly (e.g. e.g., Baert, 2005; Gage, 1989; Howe, 1988; Mendling et al., 2021; Mitchell & Education, 2018; Patton, 1988; Watson, 2010, 2013; etc.). Recently, this philosophical world has been studied by Christensen (2020) for professing the importance of pragmatism for conducting mixed method research (MMR); Cruickshank (2020) studied from the perspective of solidarity, critique and techno-science; Jansson et al. (2020) studied drivers of outsourcing and back sourcing with the help of pragmatism; Ormerod (2020) reviewed the application of this philosophical paradigm in the selected areas of professional

practice; Powell (2020) presented a critical view of quantitative research in relation to the application of pragmatism; etc.

This study also does not merely adopt pragmatism because it is practically appealing and can justify the use of mixed method research (MMR). Pragmatism is adopted for the wider philosophical basis as well (Morgan, 2014). Pragmatism professes the need for ambition to generate research which is useful and solve problems and ascertain vague settings/conditions/situations which are found/observed from inspecting the ways of acting/behaviour/experience of respondents (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Kelly & Cordeiro, 2020; Feilzer, 2010) from different ontological positions. Pragmatism is more concerned with offering implications and consequences for the challenges/problems faced in the real world (Creswell & Clark, 2003, 2018; Rorty et al., 2004) rather than only indulging in the philosophical arguments on the nature of reality and truth (Patton, 2005).

This study intends to present knowledge which could aid practitioners in identifying and understanding the interconnectedness between their experience, the knowledge they possess already and how they should act (Morgan, 2014; Kelly & Cordeiro, 2020) to develop favourable image and positioning for a co-brand. Since this study is dealing with political co-brand image and positionings which have not been given much attention previously and there also exists a scarcity of framework available on these concepts, pragmatism is adopted for a more experiential investigation here. It is expected that by starting the research process with an emphasis on generation knowledge and information, pragmatism will guide in creating a research plan which will ensure that there is no barrier between the real life and the research, and where the research respondent experiences/knowledge are crucial for the assuring the practical relevance of research (Kelly & Cordiro, 2020).

3.2. Methodological Choice & Research Design

As indicated in the preceding section, pragmatist researchers and scholars have already rebuffed the perception that social science research can only access reality

relying on single method of inquiry (Kaushik & Walsh, 2019) since they do not view the world in absolute unity (Creswell, 2014). This philosophical paradigm refuses the choice linked to the paradigm wars and profess that truth cannot be based in the dualism between reality (independent of mind) and within the mind (Creswell, 2014, p.44). Hence, pragmatism is a deconstructive paradigm which encourages employing mixed method research (Feilzer, 2010) because it philosophically accepts that there can be multiple realities which require empirical investigation to solve a real-world practical problem (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007; Rorty, 1999). This philosophical worldview emerges out of actions, situations or even consequences rather than antecedents (which is the case in post-positivism). It, therefore, allows researchers to use all the available and accessible approaches/methods/techniques (including both positivism and constructivism) which aid in understanding and driving knowledge about the problem and best meet the research purpose/objectives, using pluralistic knowledge (Creswell, 2014).

3.2.1. Mixed Methods Research (MMR)

Over the years, different authors and researchers offered various definitions of mixed method research (MMR) (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011, 2018) with focus on methods and methodology (e.g. Green, Caracellie & Graham, 1989; Tashakkori & Creswell, 2007; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998, 2003), on methods, philosophy and the purpose of research (e.g. Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007; Johnson, Onwuegbuzie, Turner, 2007), on different ways of looking at and making sense of the world (e.g. Green, 2005; 2007), etc. In the light of the available literature, mixed method research (MMR) can be defined as an approach which uses a combination and integration of both qualitative and quantitative data (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018; Greene, 2007; Johnson et al., 2007) to get a clear and complete understanding of the problem by employing a distinctive design which includes philosophical assumptions and theoretical frameworks (Brannen, 2005; Creswell et al., 2011; Creswell, 2014; Hossain, 2012; Morse & Cheek, 2014). Integration aids in increasing the worth of mixed method research especially when it is applied to the entire process of the research, not just the data

(Bazeley, 2017; Fetters et al., 2013; Fetters & Molina-Azorin, 2017; Guetterman, Molina-Azorin & Fetters, 2020). Researchers have paid attention towards this aspect and have studied integration from different angles. For instance, studies have been conducted to understand how integration is achieved and how knowledge was gained (e.g. Boeje et al., 2013; O’Cathain et al., 2007), conceptualization of integration (e.g. Creamer, 2018; Fetters & Freshwater, 2015; Fetters & Molina-Azorin, 2017; Knappertsbusch, 2020; .Lynam et al., 2019), and data collection and analysis (e.g. Alexander, Eppler & Comi, 2020; Castro et al., 2010; Guetterman, Fetters & Creswell, 2015; McCrudden & McTigue, 2018; Peroff et al., 2020) etc. While research has accomplished the advances in this direction, there still exists space for developing more new procedures for integration which can further advance the mixed method research (Guetterman et al., 2020).

The current study is exploring an under-researched concept of political co-branding. It is assessing a framework to generate viable knowledge about building and maintaining a political brand image/positioning. Mixed method research (MMR) is employed for this study since it encompasses both qualities of positivism and constructivism (Feilzer, 2020). MMR specifically appears to be the best choice for this study since for generating precise information, it is important to look at the reality from different ontological stances (Maarouf, 2019). Positivism relies on the quantifiable observations which can be tested through the statistical measures looking for the causality between variables. Positivism believes that the world is external, objective and the society/social facts moulds the individuals. On the other hand, constructivists believe individual moulds the society and knowledge are the meaning which people drive out of the it and it is earned by talking to people about their meaning (Golicic & Davis, 2012). While both paradigms are not only contradictory but incommensurable, the researchers who have professed them as complementary (Azorin & Cameron, 2010) suggest the combination of these two paradigms to form the mixed method research design.

Mixed method methodological approach merges the qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis for a specific research (Azorin & Cameron, 2010 quoting Plano Clark, 2005) and aids researchers in achieving a meticulous analysis with through understanding (Califf, Sarker & Sarker, 2020; Chereni, Sliuzas & Flacke, 2020; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2006; Golicic & Davis, 2012; Venkatesh, Brown, & Bala, 2013; Zachariadis, Scot & Baratte, 2013; Zachariadis, Tarantilis, & Kiranoudis, 2013; etc.).

Table 7 presents the comparison between different research methodological choices.

Table 7: Pragmatism and Corresponding Methodological Choices (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018; Bryman, 2012)

Mixed Method Research Design	Sequence Decision	Priority Decision
	<i>QUAL</i> → <i>QUAN</i>	<i>Equal</i>
<i>Sequential Exploratory</i>	QUAL → quan	Qualitative
	qual → QUAN	Quantitative
	QUAN → QUAL	Equal
Sequential Explanatory	QUAN → qual	Quantitative
	quan → QUAL	Qualitative
	QUAN+QUAL	Equal
Convergent Parallel	QUAL+quan	Qualitative
	qual+QUAN	Quantitative

* Capitals and lower case signify the priority; → signify sequence; + indicates concurrent. The italicized row represents the research methodology priority and sequency decision of this study.

The first column in Table 7 represents the three major types of mixed method research, namely, *Sequential Exploratory Research Design* (where quantitative study is designed on the findings of qualitative study's data analysis and findings); *Sequential Explanatory Research Methods* (where qualitative study is builds on the quantitative study's data analysis and findings), and *Convergent Parallel Research Design* (where both qualitative and quantitative data collection takes place at the same time). The second column represents the sequence or

choice of order. Sequence represents which technique comes first. In other words, it explains if the data collection connected with any of the three methods conducted before the other, after it, or simultaneously. The → represents the sequence, while the + indicates that data collection of both studies takes place simultaneously. The third column represents the choice of priority i.e. how much of the data collection process is qualitative versus quantitative, or do they both have similar weight/magnitude in the study. The italicized row represents the research methodology priority and sequency decision of this study. The research method design is further explained in section 3.2.2.

3.2.2. Sequential Exploratory Mixed Method Research Design

Sequential exploratory research design combines both qualitative and quantitative data to inform the theory and generate hypothesis (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). It is especially useful when the researcher wants to generalize, assess/test the applicability of qualitative (exploratory) findings on a population, quantitatively, and for developing a new research instrument. It is also employed when the qualitative findings generate new research questions which require to be tested and supported by the quantitative data. In addition to that, it can also be used in situations when the researcher(s) wishes to identify and recognize the most important variables to quantitatively investigate a phenomenon but it is not clear which variables would be suitable or variables are not known (Baran & Jones, 2020, p. 262-274; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018; Morgan, 1998). The nature of qualitative studies is more exploratory while quantitative studies are more descriptive in nature. When qualitative study is conducted first, the following quantitative study is grounded more effectively and sometimes even without relying on theoretical concepts and model (Morgan, 2015). When qualitative research generates hypothesis and provides the solid basis on which quantitative research questions are generated and hypothesis can be tested, the purpose of employing the missed-method research is justified (Ibid).

Since this research study is endeavouring to explore the under-researched areas and assessing a framework, sequential exploratory design is employed for

this study. The intention has been to generalize the qualitative findings by testing those findings quantitatively. Qualitative data was collected first to explore the concept, gain insights, and analyse the results. These results/findings then direct the framing of quantitative research design. The qualitative data, in this way, aided in developing the appropriate hypothesis which can be tested by the quantitative research (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018; Morgan, 2015). Qualitative findings also helped in identifying the right set of variables for investigating the political co-brand image and positioning concepts as well as to triangulate the qualitative findings (Creswell, Plano Clark, Gutmann & Hanson, 2003; Morse, 1991) on the on a larger sample of the population, quantitatively. Therefore, contingent on the extent of quantitative side's dependence on the qualitative side of the study and the magnitude of each side, the quantitative follow-up design for this research can be represented as QUAL → QUAN (Granikov, et al., 2020; Ivankova, 2014; Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2009; Morgan, 1998, 2015). Sequential exploratory research design of this study is presented in Figure 4. Qualitative data is collected through interviews (see Chapter 4) while quantitative data is collected through survey (see Chapter 5).

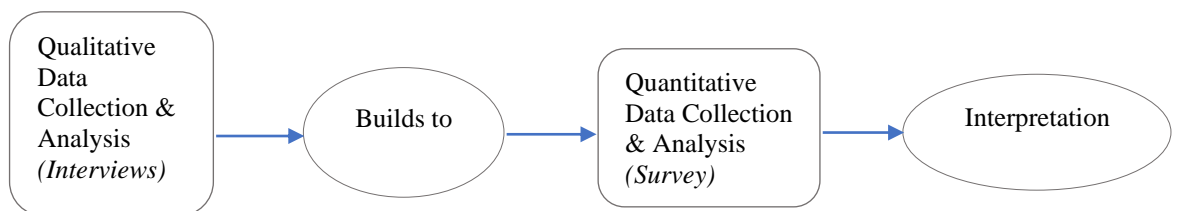


Figure 4: Exploratory Sequential Mixed Methods Research Design of this Study (Creswell, 2014; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018)

Methodological developments are evident in the social sciences and humanities research studies (Armannsdottir et al., 2019b; Aguinis, Ramani & Cascio, 2020; Calderwood & Mitropoulos, 2020; Dille & Plotnikof, 2020; etc.). However, there still exists a need to refine the quality of designing and

implementing the QUAL → QUAN methods to guarantee that the procedure is rigorous and systematic (Ivankova, 2014). This is one of the aims of this research.

This research is applying the sequential exploratory mixed method research design and can be represented as QUAL → QUAN (as discussed in the previous section). Qualitative strand (QUAL) explores an under-researched area and presented information (in the form of the findings) which leads to the development of a new framework/model. This not only helped in adding worth to the assessment of Political Co-brand Identity Framework's applicability from the perspective of co-brand image and positioning in a different context/setting but aided in identifying variables suitable for assessing the concepts quantitatively. Quantitative strand (QUAN) investigated the generalizability of the qualitative findings to verifying the results on larger sample of the population.

3.2.3. *Integration*

Integration and drawing connection are the crucial mixing procedures in this sequential exploratory mixed method research design. Various sections reflect these ideas in this study explaining how and at what stage of research process integration occurs, how and to what extent is the quantitative strand is connected to and based on the qualitative strand's findings, as well as how the qualitative strand is embedded within the quantitative strand (Zhang & Creswell, 2013).

A lot of studies have attempted to define and categorise integration (e.g. Creswell, 2015; Maxwell, Chmiel, & Rogers, 2015; Morse & Niehaus, 2009; Plano Clark & Ivankova, 2016; etc.), however, consensus is still not achieved on any one definition (Fetters & Molina-Azorin, 2017). Some studies presented integration as a synonymous lexicon with the word "mixing", while others stressing the importance of the "point of interface" in the mixing of methods (e.g. Morse & Niehaus, 2009). Some authors opined that integration is all about blending the results of both sides and how researchers bring together data depends on the type of the mixed method design or the combination and interrelation of the components of each side (e.g. Creswell, 2015; Plano Clark & Ivankova, 2016). While some authors studied integration of approaches and methods from

the perspective of systematic designs (e.g. Maxwell et al., 2015). For this research, the definition by Fetter and Molina-Azorin (2017) is ideal. They define integration as “*the linking of qualitative and quantitative approaches and dimensions together to create a new whole or a more holistic understanding than achieved by either alone*” (p. 293). The "integration trio" is the name given to this all-encompassing idea that incorporates all the factors that methodologists, philosophers, applied researchers, and ethicists believe to be crucial and necessary for mixed methods approaches. The definition by Fetter and Molina-Azorin (2017) encompasses what integration is realistically. This definition does not focus on methods only, even though it is based on Teddlie and Tashakkori's (2009) all-inclusive description of integration. Table 8 presents the three levels of integration in this study.

Table 8: Level of Integration

Level	Approaches Adopted for this Study
Design	Sequential Exploratory Design
Method	Building
Interpretation & Reporting	Contiguous

The *sequential exploratory mixed* method research design represents the integration at the design level. As explained in the aforementioned paras, prior to gathering quantitative data, the qualitative data is collected and evaluated. The findings of the qualitative study have informed the quantitative study, which explains integration through *building*. This study needs to go through multiple stages of research because it is establishing a new framework. The findings of both the studies are presented in this thesis however the qualitative and quantitative findings of their respective analysis are presented as separate studies in different sections. This represents the contiguous approach of integration at the interpretation and reporting level.

Figure 5 encompass the discussion in this section and presents a flowchart showing the sequential exploratory mixed method research design integration procedure is this study.

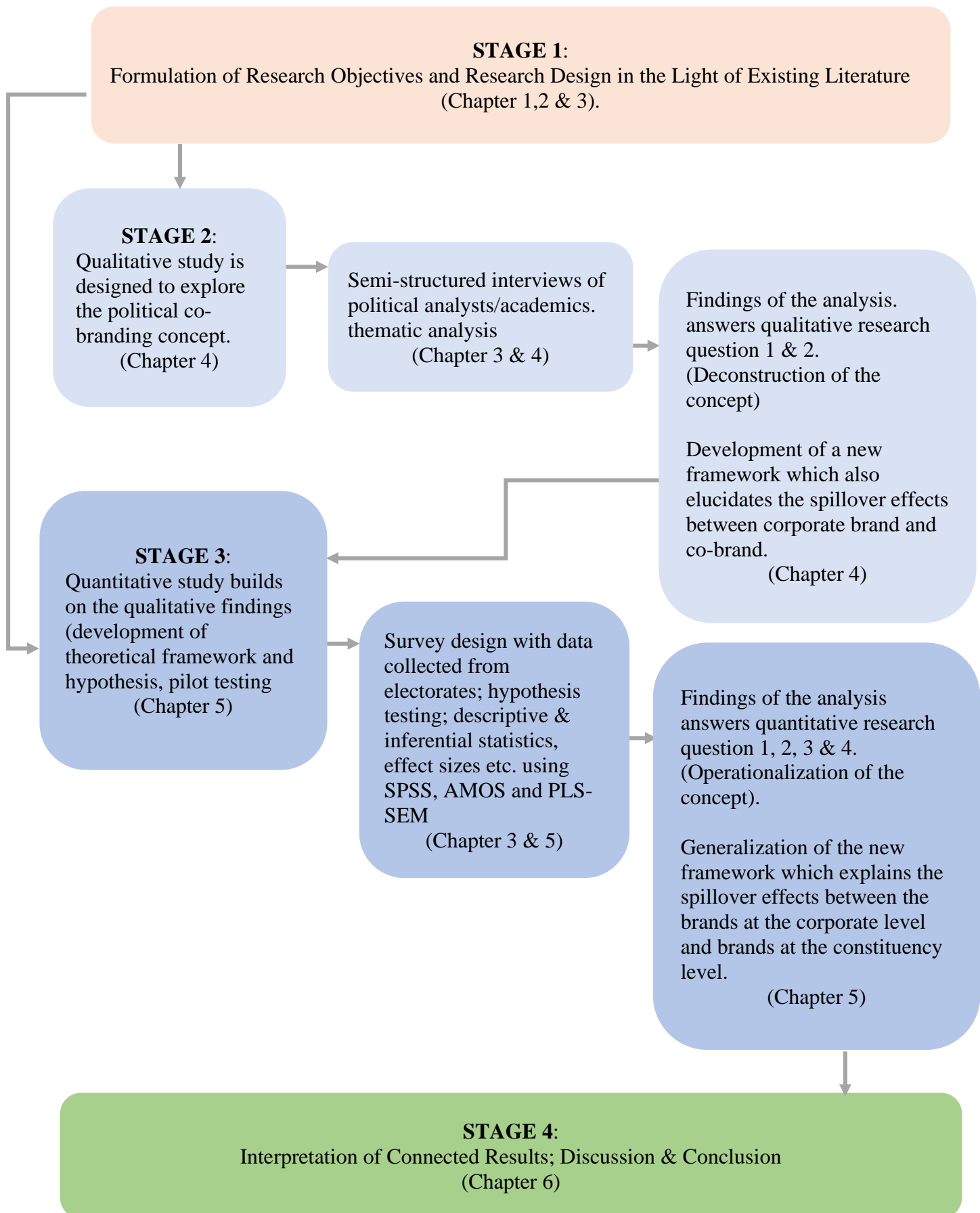


Figure 5: Flowchart Presentation of the Integration Procedure (Sequential Exploratory Mixed Method Research Design)

After the literature (qualitative and quantitative) has been reviewed, qualitative side is designed and implemented first to answer the qualitative research questions. The qualitative strand's sample is chosen keeping in mind the research philosophy, gaps, and the overarching research objectives (indicating the philosophy, methodology and methods). The study is exploring the concepts, so the experts were chosen to get insights about the concepts and set objectives of the study. The themes/codes which emerged are the findings which answered the research questions, and identified the information needed for the next stage. These open-ended qualitative findings guided the quantitative pilot test designing, identification of the right variables in the light of the literature and the governing philosophy.

These findings refined the research questions and formation of hypothesis (again reflecting the philosophy, methodology and method of the research) for the quantitative assessment (i.e. to assesses the reality from a different ontological position). In this way quantitative side was designed and implemented. Data (close-ended) is collected from a sample of the general population to assess and verify the finding, as well as to empirically test the developed framework. The results are analysed with the help of descriptive and inferential statistical techniques to find the answers to the mixed method research objectives. In the last chapter, qualitative and quantitative results are discussed and integrated. The discussion also sheds light on the extent to which quantitative results have interpreted, explained, and generalize qualitative findings.

This research study intends to seek additional value by trying to pay attention to all the dimensions of this research. For instance, philosophy, theory and framework, literature review, rational for employing mixed method research along with the aim and objectives do this research, sampling, the qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis, the language, and interpretations of research etc. The dimension also includes confirming and guaranteeing a valuable, quality, and credible *meta-inference* in the mixed methods studies (Ivankova, 2014). According to Teddlie and Tashakkori (2009, p. 157), meta inference is “a conclusion generated through an integration of the inferences that

have been obtained from the results of the QUAL and QUAN strands of a mixed method study”. The integration of the inferences stemmed from all the dimensions of mixed method, is a crucial phase in a mixed methods study process. This research, therefore, does not interpret integration based on the qualitative and quantitative data only. It rather sticks to the rigorous standards for maintaining inference quality to guarantee their credibility as well as validity (Ivankova, 2014).

3.3. Cross-sectional Research

Survey strategy mostly involves cross-sectional research designs due to the time constraints researchers face (Bryan, 2016; Bryman & Bell, 2019; Malhotra et al., 2017; Saunders et al., 2019) and the nature of the phenomenon being studied (Saunders et al., 2019). In such types of design (which are also called the sample survey research designs, data is collected at one point in time from the given sample drawn from the population (Malhotra et al., 2017, p. 93). Such designs can also be used for the mixed methods studies (Saunders et al., 2017). Most of the studies on political branding and co-branding (discussed in Chapter 2) have also used the cross-sectional designs.

Despite the extensive use of cross-sectional design, longitudinal designs are generally regarded a better option for studying causal relationships (Spector, 2019) because of issues related to the common variance bias and causal inference (Rindfleisch et al., 2008; Spector, 2019). However, research studies have justified with help of philosophy of science that under certain circumstances, results from cross-sectional data demonstrate validity compared to the longitudinal designs (Spector, 2019).

The purpose of this study is to explore political co-brand image and positioning and how the image transfers between co-brand and the corporate brand. The best time to study has been the post-election settings, in the light of the research questions of this study. It is the times when both political experts/analysts and the electorates can assess the political brands. Therefore, this mixed method study is employing the cross-sectional research design.

3.4. Ethics & Role of the Researcher

It is crucial that researchers are aware with the ethical guidelines before performing research that involves people. The core principles should include values like the respect for people, goodness, and justice. Researcher's ethical considerations and research standards should be highest when there are human subjects involved in the research being carried out. Human participants are virtually often used in business and management research (Saunders et al., 2016). Marketing researchers have a responsibility to act morally toward people and society. To produce high-quality research findings, marketing research must follow ethical guidelines (Malhotra, Nunan & Birks, 2017).

For the qualitative research, my duties/responsibilities included abiding with the ethics and the protocols as described in the Belmont Report (1978)⁸. Belmont Report specifies the ethical principles and guidelines for the protection of human subjects of research. I have tried everything in my capacity to safeguard the study participants' privacy and anonymity, shown respect, and complied with recruitment and consent procedures that safeguard human subjects. For the qualitative research, respondents who accepted the interview request, were asked to read, and sign the *consent form* (please see APPENDIX A-II), which included information about the purpose of the research, the interview's duration, and their consent to have the interview recorded. Before the interview, the questions were presented to the respondents so they could decide if they wanted to participate. Respondents were also emailed their interview transcripts after the interviews so that the data they offered could be analysed. Alpha-numeric codes rather than names are used to differentiate their responses because their privacy is of utmost significance in this study.

⁸ United States. National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical, & Behavioral Research. (1978). The Belmont report: ethical principles and guidelines for the protection of human subjects of research (Vol. 2). Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research.

For quantitative analysis, I have followed research ethics explained by Evan & Marlow (1986), Saunders et al. (2016, Chapter 6) and Malhotra et al. (2017, Chapter 30). The ethical standards research followed included the need for truthfulness, the need for informed permission, the anonymization and retention of data, the right of access to data for participants, and the obligation of confidentiality for all study participants. Respondents were requested to fill the questionnaire online. They were not forced to fill the questionnaire. Since the topic of this research is related to politics, respondents were curious and had some queries. I tried to satisfy the respondents' questions related to the research, before respondents accepted the request.

3.5. Qualitative Data Collection & Design

This section presents detail about the qualitative data collection and how the analysis is carried out for this study.

3.5.1. Approach

An inductive method is used in this investigation. There are just a few studies available which explain and elaborate the concept of political co-branding. Therefore, more investigation is necessary to investigate political brands from the perspective of external knowing actors/stakeholders (Armannsdottir et al., 2019b). It's reasonable to say that political branding research is still in its early stages, and a qualitative method may assist provide rich data regarding respondents' perceptions, beliefs, and views (Pich & Dean, 2015). As a result, a qualitative empirical method is seen to be better appropriate for studying this still-under-researched subject. It's been highlighted as a good technique to use while looking into fresh topics of study (Davies & Chun, 2002; Smith & Sparkes, 2020).

3.5.2. Method

The semi-structured interview approach is used to study the respondents' perceptions in depth regarding the significant issues that arose in their replies during the interviews (Galleta, 2013; Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2011) to better understand their perspectives as political analysts. In addition to the

prepared questions, this permitted to ask spontaneous yet specific question during the free-flowing conversation portions of the interviews. In this way, insights about the level of electorates satisfaction as well as about the factors that influence political branding (Jain et al., 2017a) are gained.

This study is trying to collect fact, insights to understand respondents' opinions, experiences, attitudes predictions, behaviours, about the under-research areas in the domain of political co-branding. This type of interview allows researchers to use a predetermined list of questions to explore the reality from the respondents. The responses can be then compared to assess the reality. Semi-structured interviews allow reciprocity among the interviewer and the respondent (Galletta, 2013). On the basis of the responses received, researcher/interviewer can improvise the follow-up questions (Polit & Beck 2010; Rubin & Rubin, 2005). In addition to that, the inductively initiated research can then be assessed deductively so that the emerged theory and facts can be analysed from a different ontological stance (Kallio, et al., 2016; Saunders et al., 2019). Inductive approach begins with observing a social phenomenon followed by data collection to develop a theory which explain why the phenomenon occurs. Deductive approach quantitative test the theory to describe the phenomenon. Authors (e.g. Bryman, 2012; Malhotra, Nunan & Birks, 2017; Rowley, 2012; Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2019) have recommended semi-interviews for such kind of research studies. The recent major work on political co-branding which has also employed interview includes Armannsdottir, et al. (2019b) and Pich & Armannsdottir (2018).

The interview guide was created during a three-week period (Interview guide is attached in *APPENDIX A-I*). The draft was updated and improved numerous times throughout this time. A consent form was read and agreed upon by participants (attached in *APPENDIX A-II*). This document explained the research's aim, duration of the meeting, and sought permission to have the conversation recorded. List of questions covered a variety of topics in order to get a sense of how respondents felt about various political brands. The questions were addressed all aspects of brand image and positioning. Questions about brand

personality traits and communication were among the topics addressed in the interview guide (with an emphasis on how brands mobilise public). Based on the insightful and valuable information gathered from the political analysts, the interview guide aided in the investigation of their perceptions.

Data collection from such well-informed group of professionals, aid in enhancing the practise and performance of political branding. Practitioners have the insight, competence, and understanding that a general electorate may lack (Coar, & Sim, 2006). They are the knowledgeable stakeholders who aid in the creation of public opinion and the enhancement of a brand's worth. Political analysts participate and have an impact on political brand-related debates on major platforms.

3.5.3. Sampling & Data Collection

Respondents were selected for the study using a non-probabilistic purposive sampling technique in accordance with the standards established for reaching the goals of the research (Guest, Bunce & Johnson, 2006). With a smaller sample and a more uniform population, purposive sampling is more successful. It helps in collecting data from the sample of respondents who share similar traits and characteristics. In this study, purposive sampling has aided in collecting data from the respondents who possess the qualities I was looking for in my sample. And the research questions are specific to the respondents' interest. The respondents are academics and practitioners who work as political analysts. They may be described and characterised as educated elites who are connected to academia and/or employed by the corporate world, consultancies, and government agencies (Hubbard & Norman, 2007). Involvement of professionals/practitioners as key participants in research is not a new concept in many disciplines, for instance teachings (Jenlink, 2014; Covington et al., 2017; Herbet, 2010); medicine/nursing (Coar & Sim, 2006), etc. The B2B stream of literature in marketing includes research on branding, markets, and services, among other topics, that emphasise the importance of stakeholders (Konecny & Kolouchová, 2013; Tarnovskaya & Biedenbach, 2016). Though, given the paucity of expert stakeholder research in the field of political branding, an inside perspective from the vantage point of

these *external stakeholders* is required. Furthermore, because previous studies frequently considered the viewpoints of candidates or voters only, studies must gain broader perspective from a variety of stakeholders. Different stakeholder groups may help to increase and grow the brand's value and capabilities. amid difficult periods and circumstances (Tarnovskaya, & Biedenbach, 2016). For example, practitioner research improves and enhances brand performance, much as stakeholder perception of a brand contributes to its success an effectiveness in B2B businesses (Gyrd-Jones et al., 2013). Various studies have questioned the relevance and application of academic research (published in reputable publications like Journal of Marketing and Marketing Intelligence & Planning) to the needs and requirements of practitioners (examples of such studies include Crosier's 2004; Hubbard & Norman, 2007 and Scriven, 1937). Evidence suggests that it is important to minimise the gap and difference between academic research and its application to practitioners (Brennan, 2004) because place emphasis on problems and solutions relevant to what the managers and practitioners face and deal with. This study intends to make a significant contribution in that direction.

To achieve a more informed response, a competent political analyst who are famous for their critical thinking and for not supporting any political brand, were contacted. They are better educated, more involved in political debates, and take part in policymaking. Because political knowledge and comprehension of democracy are interconnected (Galston, 2001), it can be argued that educated individuals are more informed and politically, democratically, and ideologically awakened, and actively engage in the examination of Pakistani politics (Carpini, 1997). They can interact with elected and notable key figures and officials and other influential figures who take major decisions (Ibid). They work in a variety of colleges, government and commercial organisations and are well-versed in the issues that concern Pakistani society. When they communicate their insights through media, they may become an incentive for their listeners' political thinking development and even a trigger for forming consumers' opinions (Cohen & Kahne, 2011). Such well-versed analysts are politically motivated (Weeden & Kurzban, 2016) who hold strong beliefs, yet they understand importance of supporting democracy (Galston, 2001). They have a

better understanding of political circumstances than the general public (Feldman & Johnston, 2014; Jacoby, 1991). They are knowledgeable outsiders who serve as reviewers, looking at, and studying political brands and examining their moves and their electorates. As a result, policymakers and academics will value their input and ideas (in relation to the topic of this study).

For the purpose of this study, internal and external stakeholders are differentiated. *Internal stakeholders* are people who work in electoral efforts for political administrations and try to sway and persuade voters by running campaigns for the political brand they stand for. *External stakeholders* scrutinise every political party, their leaders, and candidates in addition to closely observing and evaluating public's attitude towards the brands and choices. The viewpoints of these external stakeholders hold significance because they have in-depth knowledge obtained from frequent media tracking of political brands (Ormrod, 2017a). Their expertise and career reside on this. They work and collaborate with news and media outlets, government, commercial corporate organisations, research institutions, and engage with the public. They can predict the future of a party based on its performance and its interactions. They are supposed to be unbiased in their judgement of political brands, unlike the average person who may have some emotion.

After extensive discussion with the guidance and evaluation committee member, an inclusion criterion was agreed on and I compiled a list of political experts (i.e. all the evaluators should be neutral, educated, in the field for 15+ years). The list only contained prospects (both men and women, with no distinctions as to gender) who have maintained trust among the general public for their honest observations and who have worked in this field for a considerable amount of time, without associating themselves with any political party, leader, or candidate (to avoid prejudiced thinking). Respondents have held executive roles inside their institutions, written for local and international media organisations, or kept in touch with them. Respondents who did not seem to fit these requirements were taken out from the list (screened out).

I tried to contact all the analysts who were recognised for their critical thinking. A total of 20 people were contacted. Unfortunately, just a few of them were available to speak with. However, only 12 of them accepted the interview request. Among the respondents were two women and 10 men. Table 9 presents respondents' demographics.

Table 9: Respondents' Demographics -Qualitative Study

Name	Interview Duration	Language	Employment	Organization	Age
K1	45 min	Urdu/English	Professor (Management & Public Policy)	Policy Research Centre	35-40
S4	125 min	Urdu	Professor (Management & Public Policy)	Policy Research Centre	35-40
M2	90 min	English	Researcher & Analyst	Research Institute	35-40
Y1	30 min	Urdu/English	Dean & Researcher	Education Institution	55-60
H2	25 min	English	Product Manager & Marketing Researcher	Private Organization (Media)	35-40
Q5	30 min	English	Director & Political Analysts	Education Institution	35-40
A3	90 min	Urdu/English	Retired Govt officer	Govt. Organization	57-60
G3	60 min	Urdu/English	Defence Analyst	Govt. Organization	60-65
J5	35 min	English	News and Current Affairs	News and Media	45-48
Z1	30 min	English	Director & Political Analyst	Govt. Institute	55-57
M5	30 min	Urdu/English	Researcher Peace and Conflict Studies	Education Institution	30-34
S2	20 min	Urdu/English	Researcher (Customer Perception)	Private Research Organization	50-55

3.5.4. Analysis

I tried to contact external stakeholders who can offer comprehensive and in-depth information on the phenomenon being studied. A list of target population was prepared. Sample frame was determined for the purposive sampling technique.

Then the process of contacting respondents began upon getting access to their respective official contact numbers, emails, and twitter handles.

For this study, 11 of the 12 interviews with a homogenous set of respondents (all competent actors/stakeholders) (Guest et al., 2006; Saunders, 2012) are recorded (using voice recorder) and transcribed (MS office). Due to the respondents' demanding schedules or because they were not present in the city, three of the interviews were performed over the phone. A participant preferred that his interviews not be recorded, but he permitted to jot down notes during the interview. These conversations lasted an average of 35 minutes, and all the interviews took up 73 pages. All of the transcripts were single line spaced and I Times Roman with 12 font size). I made three columns for each of the transcript: one for narratives; one for the codes, and one for the themes. Please see *Coding for Analysis* in the following section.). Since all the 12 participants are political analysts and academics who are not supporting any political brand (Body, 2016), the sample is homogenous. According to Guest et al. (2006), Saunders (2012), and Sandelowski (1995), a sample size of 12 is acceptable for attaining data saturation if the respondents are a homogeneous group (Body, 2016). Francis et al. (2010) and Ando et al. (2014) are two other studies that have supported the use of a sample size of 12 for the analysis. They suggest that when it comes to higher-level concepts, they believe that 12 interviews are adequate to produce thematic codes.

Thematic Analysis

The data is analysed using a thematic analysis procedure, and I utilised my judgements when classifying categories generate the key themes following studies like Bird et al., (2009); Hofstede et al., (2007) and Butler-Kisber (2018). This style provided conceptual flexibility and freedom and assisted in comprehending the complex facts (Braun & Clarke, 2006). I have tried to follow steps and guidance prescribed in studies like Butler-Kisber (2018), and Rubin & Rubin (2012), Kvale (1996) etc. Prior to defining and naming each of the relevant themes, the notes I scribbled during the interviews and audio recordings had be transcribed, read numerous times to get acquainted with the collected data, and

assigned initial codes. For coding in this manner, I have followed the suggestions given by Glasser and Strauss (1967); Spiggle, (1994), Strauss (1987, 1998), Lincoln and Guba (1985), Strauss and Corbin (1998) and Williams and Moser (2019). In order to corroborate everything participants expressed throughout the interviews; the interviewees were also given access to the transcriptions. Getting to acquaint with the data, emerging trends/topics in the data, results and insights, was the first step now. Emergent topics were revisited in the second step to go deeper than what was initially seen. By the seventh interview, the pattern and saturation had become obvious, also no fresh or additional codes developed further (Saunders et al., 2017; Constantinou et al., 2017). The tenth interview verified emergent results (i.e. themes). And the final interviews (11th and 12th) validated the findings which I had sensed when reviewing the data (Sandelowski, 1995). The data was nonetheless re-analysed in order to further explore its deeper meanings (which is driven by context), sub-themes, categories. Finally core categories emerged from the data. It was a long and arduous procedure. Instead of conclusive generalisations, this research attempts to find depth. This is accomplished through numerous hours of discussion aimed at eliminating and explaining the inconsistencies (Butler-Kisber, 2018). The hidden connotations began to surface at this point.

Coding for Thematic Analysis

The initial level of coding, the *open coding*, concentrates on finding the emergent themes. At this stage, using comparable words and phrases as concept-indicators, I examined the responses and grouped them into broad first thematic areas and created codes to label them. I tried to identify distinct concepts and topics for categorisation through open coding. By establishing initial broad thematic domains for data aggregation, the first level of data was arranged. At this stage, I tried to express facts and phenomena as concepts. Expressions (single words, short word sequences) were classified according to their meanings in order to attach annotations and concepts.

After that, I started connecting the codes in *axial coding*. Axial coding further refined and *categorised* the initial themes. The acquired data was read, re-

read, and categorised when open coding was finished and switched to axial coding. In preparation for selective coding, discrete thematic groups were intended to be established. For the purpose of creating core or major codes, axial coding identifies relationships between open codes. The most closely related (or overlapping) open codes with strong supporting evidence are aggregated to form major (core) codes. It was an ongoing analysis which required cross referencing and categorization in order to in order to accomplish the organising goal.

Selective coding carries on from axial coding at a higher level of abstraction. The process of enabling deeper data refinement, choosing the main thematic category or the *core category*, and then methodically lining up the main theme to other categories that have been judiciously coded, is crucial to enabling the story or case to emerge from the data categories. After essential concepts arising from the coded data categories and subcategories have been determined by open and/or axial coding, selective coding was the last step in the data analysis process. Based on the axial coding, I selected *core categories* (or the seven themes). At this (third) level, I connected all categories together around one core category. In other words, it allowed to incorporate ordered data categories from axial coding into coherent phrases/expressions/terms that are rich in meaning. With this done, I was able to move towards the framework development. Please see Annexure Annexure A-IIIa and A-IIIb for more detail.

All of the seven themes fit within The Political Co-brand Identity Framework's six dimensions, eventually. By examining if the themes (which represent the elements of brand image and positioning) fit logically into the six components of the framework, the applicability of the framework and its structure/design in other settings, situations and contexts for sub-branding concepts, is determined.

3.5.5. Reliability & Validity

In order to establish the appropriateness, trustworthiness and credibility of research, it must be reliable and credible (Sevilmiş & Yildiz, 2021). Employing a variety of criteria, such as triangulation, data saturation, and data trustworthiness

in a qualitative research study ensures reliability and validity (Lincoln & Guba, 1986; Rose & Johnson, 2020). According to Lincoln and Guba (1986), credibility, transferability, durability and confirmability increases the trustworthiness of the research. To establish reliability (i.e. if the research is repeatable), this study has employed thematic analysis and have given a rich explanation of the methodology (i.e. dependability). To accomplish validity (i.e. if the research design is capable of answering the research questions and is trustworthy), this study has tried to establish credibility (internal validity), transferability (external validity), believability and confirmability (objectivity). Table 10 presents this detail in a clearer way.

Table 10: Qualitative Study - Rigour Criteria (Lincoln & Guba, 1986; Rose & Johnson, 2020)

Rigour Criteria	Strategy Employed
Dependability <i>(Reliability)</i>	Thematic Analysis. Rich Description of the Study Method
Credibility <i>(Internal Validity)</i>	Selection of Right Literature Helped in Designing Interviewing Process, Techniques and Method. Triangulation (Complementarity)
Transferability <i>(External Validity)</i>	Purposeful Sampling, Data Saturation
Confirmability <i>(Objectivity)</i>	Reflexivity (personal reflexivity)

Assessing the trustworthiness is essential to ensuring reliability in qualitative research (Golafshani, 2003). Trustworthiness enhances the rigour of any qualitative research (Shenton, 2004). The interview guide prepared for the semi-structured interviews, add trustworthiness of the research. The way it is prepared, enhances the credibility, confirmability, and dependability of the study (Kallio et al., 2016) as well as the transferability and reflexivity (Korstjens & Moser, 2018).

Dependability

Dependability (i.e. reliability) makes sure the results of this qualitative research can be replicated using the same participants, coders, and environment (Lincoln & Guba, 1986). It is explained by the steadiness of the finding over time as well as by the recommendations given by the researcher of the study based on the assessment of the data, interpretations, and findings of the study (Guest et al., 2012; Kallio et al., 2016; Korstjens & Moser, 2018; Shenton, 2004). Thematic analysis ensured the dependability. Interview guide has been the data collection tool and it is attached in the *APPENDIX A-I*.

Credibility

Credibility means if the research is trustworthy. Credibility creates trust that the findings are accurate, credible, and believable from the participants' point of view. Credibility comes from reading the appropriate literature and gaining sound understanding of political brands and the selection of the right methodology (Jensen, 2008, p. 139–140; Shenton 2004) bearing in mind the gaps identified. Credibility ensures the internal validity. This aided in enhancing the confidence placed in the truth of the research findings as well as in establishing that the findings stand for believable information extracted from respondents' original responses and the interpretation of the responses (Guest, MacQueen & Namey, 2012; Korstjens & Moser, 2018).

Triangulation increases the credibility and confirmability of the research. Triangulation is the utilization of various methods or data sources in qualitative research to build a thorough understanding of phenomena (Patton, 1999; Polit & Beck, 2012) while answering the research questions considering the different theoretical perspectives to generate a surplus of knowledge (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). This concept is looked at as a qualitative research strategy to assess the validity (Denzin, 1978, Bryman, 2006) of the research.

In this sequential exploratory mixed method research, quantitative study is complementing the qualitative study findings. While quantitative study builds

on the qualitative study, triangulations assess the qualitative findings with the quantitative results. In this way it aids in convergence and corroboration while enhancing the meaning and interpretation of the research (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018; Creswell & Poth, 2016; Morgan, 2019; Tonkin-Crine, et al., 2015). In this study qualitative and quantitative data are collected following the methodological perspective (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018), to study reality from two different ontological stances and methods (Denzin, 2017; Polit & Beck, 2012). These include the expert stakeholders and then from Pakistani population. So, data is collected from two different types of respondents (Carter et a, 2014) to answer the research questions. The use of two different methodologies generated two different types of data. This heightened the richness, depth, complexity, as well as rigour of the study (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018; Flick, 2018) and aided in assessing validity of qualitative results.

Researchers have indicated that methodology connects the theoretical framework, the gap this study is attempting to address, and the methods used with theoretical viewpoints as well (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018; Hesse-Biber, 2010). This study is not an example of weak triangulation because it does not use the quantitative technique alone as a criterion or assessment strategy to validate the qualitative finding. It is a robust triangulation programme that instead aims to develop more knowledge by carefully choosing methods, such as quantitative survey to support qualitative findings (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018).

In this sense, out of the three types of triangulations (convergence, complementarity, and divergence/dissonance), *complementary triangulation* approach is employed in this study. By employing two or more independent measurements to confirm the outcome of this study, the goal is to boost confidence in the findings. The results of two or more rigorous methodologies together offer a more complete picture of the outcomes than either strategy could do on its own. In this study, complementary triangulation combines data from qualitative and quantitative methodologies in an effort to create a more complete picture of the research issues. Datasets from both quantitative and qualitative research can be merged in this type of analysis. It is not expected that the

outcomes will be identical, but rather that they will make sense in connection to one another and contribute to painting a more complete picture of the study problem by providing more detailed information on a subject. This type of analysis has employed a staged process (presented in Figure 4), where qualitative method helps in gaining baseline knowledge for quantitative data collection (Nightingale, 2009).

Transferability

Transferability ensures the external validity. This study endeavours to establish that the outcome/results based on the interpretation of the respondent's responses is transferable (i.e. can the findings be generalized in another context and setting with the same type of respondent samples). However, this study does not make any claims. The data collected is in accordance with the context and using the purposive sampling technique resulted in respondent sample with the characteristics required for the research. Sample was chosen based on the research questions and objectives. So, there exists a relationship between respondents and the research question as well. Respondents found the research questions specific to their interest. Therefore, while transferability is likely, the context, settings and the type of respondents do not let any researcher to make any claim (Korstjens & Moser, 2018; Moser & Korstjens, 2018). This study provides detailed information on data, sample size and demographic, how the research is carried out, interview process, and other related details (Korstjens & Moser, 2018).

Confirmability (Reflexivity & Positionality Statement)

Confirmability in this research refers to the researcher's objectivity and represents the extent to which this study can be confirmed by other researchers as well as that the data is not the imagination of the researcher but the true and actual representation of the reality (Kallio et al., 2016; Korstjens & Moser, 2018). Reflexivity and researcher's positionality help in assessing the confirmability of the qualitative findings.

I was conscious and critical of what I already know/believe, my self-reflection and research relationship with the respondents. This process of examining one's own views, opinions, and behaviour while conducting research so that these opinions, beliefs and knowledge do not impact the research, is called *reflexivity*. While *positionality* is what the researcher already knows and believes. Recognizing the researcher's contribution to the investigation is a fundamental role of reflexivity. Being reflexive is recognising any personal beliefs that might have unintentionally influenced the research. Researcher's existing knowledge, presumptions, and beliefs could have an impact on this study. In simple words, reflexivity is a form of critical reflection which helps a person in examining the position he/she has been assuming as a researcher and in incorporating this position into the research. Similar to the procedures for creating measuring tools for validity in quantitative research, it is a crucial technique to achieve rigour in qualitative research. Bearing this in mind, I avoided my own preferences, biases, and preconceptions (Dodgson, 2019; Korstjens & Moser, 2018) regarding the political aspect of this study. I also tried to remain attentive to the cultural, political, social, and ideological origins of my viewpoint and opinion. I also tried to remain attentive to the perspective, position-on-issues and opinions of those who accepted my request for interview.

Reflexivity is carried out by analysing my own beliefs and judgments (during data collection and analysing it after coding was done) in order to safeguard the research findings. I maintained a reflexive journal. I prepared a summary for each and every interview as soon as I completed transcribing each interview. I was also adding details about what and why I understood (based on my existing knowledge and ideology) when respondents explained and expressed their opinion. This practice helped me in refraining from incorrectly assume anything while trying to remember what the respondent meant while expressing their point of view regarding a particular subject. Before working on the final analysis, I discussed the details with my teachers so as to be sure that I am not making any false claims, not even inadvertently. This is one of the ways I tried to make meaning of the data. The summary includes my opinions as well as procedural information about why a question was posed to clarify a point in case

of ambiguity. In addition to that the data was continuously compared with the news appearing on the national media. This helped the researcher in maintain objectivity in the research.

Reflexivity informs the researcher's *positionality* (Holmes, 2020). While reflexivity entails the researcher examining their presumptions and coming up with solutions to them, positionality is concerned with the researcher expressing their preconceptions about the study topic, the research design, context, and method, as well as the research participants. Positionality refers to both a person's worldview and the stance they take on a research study and its social and political setting (Foote & Bartell, 2011; Holmes, 2020; Savin-Baden & Major, 2013; Rowe, 2014). Researcher's worldview, or "where the researcher is coming from," are related to his/her *ontological* presumptions, *epistemological* assumptions as well as his/her assumptions about human nature and agency (Holmes, 2020; Grix, 2019; Marsh, et al. 2018; Sikes, 2004). Positionality is typically determined by situating the researcher in relation to three factors: the research topic, the research participants, and the setting and methodology of the study (Grix, 2019). According to Savin-Baden and Major (2013), positionality "reflects the position that the researcher has chosen to adopt inside a given research study" (p. 71). It affects the methods used in research as well as the findings and conclusions (Rowe, 2014). Positionality can be observed to have an impact on the entire research process. It acknowledges and accepts that social actors who are currently active in society have already understood the social environment that scholars are studying (Homes, 2020).

Being a marketing student, it has been interesting to see how marketing is used in different fields and industries. It is clear to notice how political candidates and parties employ marketing tactics, sometimes even unknowingly, to lure and persuade the electorates choice and decision making in their favour. The decisions electorates then take has an influence on their lives for the next five years, and sometimes even longer. Pakistan is a hybrid regime where political instability has been a major problem since many decades. It is not a hidden fact that when there is political instability, the political structures of a country's government become

unstable and their propensity to fall apart quickly increases. Political unrest caused policymakers' time horizons to narrow, resulting in less-than-ideal macroeconomic short-term policies which often have harmful effects on the electorates lives. This can result in more frequent policy changes, which would increase volatility and harm macroeconomic performance. As a Pakistani national, I have always felt that political candidates and political parties who are the key players who play a more role in making electorates' lives easy. Just as the published research on political marketing explains, I observed that political co-branding is extremely common in Pakistan. It is very common for the candidates to change sides, switch parties, and become member of another party (which a totally different image, ideology, and political stance than the candidate) to expand their spheres of influence. The analysts on mainstream media frequently highlight this issue.

Sometimes strong candidates are attracted and welcomed by the party which is planning to build its hold in the candidate's constituency. As per the easily accessible knowledge on mainstream media and social media that I have been exposed to, I have noticed that sometimes such a candidate is considered weak (in terms of vote bank), famous for being fickle and hence unreliable. It intrigued me that when a candidates switch parties to join another party which has a different ideological and political stance, how is it perceived by the population who is aware of this phenomenon. I also wanted to understand if marketing helps a co-brand in building image and positioning. So, I have tried to apply mainstream marketing concepts to understand how a political co-brand is perceived, and, if the partnering brands in the alliance influence the way each of them is perceived. I wanted to understand what impact a weak candidate has on the partnering party brand on the corporate brand; how its image is formed and how political marketing tools can help in positioning the political co-brand. So, in order to create an informed judgement on the matter, I thought it would be better to start by conducting interviews with persons whose job it is to research political brands, their political actions, and how those actions effect economic policy. I wanted to look at the population results to make sure the conclusions were correct. I have also tried to employ every possible methodology which could help me understand

how a political co-brand image formed, held and maintained within the constituency.

Throughout the research, I tried everything in my capacity to safeguard the research findings and that my personal political views and ideology (which had developed based on the knowledge I have been exposed to), do not influence any of the steps of my research. I have strictly adhered to the Lincoln and Guba (1986) to maintain rigour. Having said that, I acknowledge that no study will ever be completely impartial and that my education, knowledge and observation have given me a certain perspective on the world. I also accept that various identities may interpret the same information differently.

3.6. Quantitative Data Collection & Design

The section presents detail about how the quantitative data is collected and assessed.

3.6.1. Approach

This strand has adopted deductive approach. It is expected that this study will contribute to the stream of literature which sheds light on the concept of political brands' image development and positioning. After exploring the concept, this study is employing the top-down approach and assesses the qualitative findings related to the co-brand image and positioning aspects. For this purpose, data is collected from the electorates so that the findings can be triangulated, and newly developed framework can be refined and understood from the electorates' perspective.

In this study Smart PLS-SEM is used to execute regression, reliability, and validity tests on the data. While SPSS and AMOS as used to validate and double check some test results (e.g. correlations, goodness of fit etc.). In the last decade, the number of PLS-SEM applications has increased significantly (Hair et al., 2022; Sarstedt et al., 2022). PLS-SEM is typically employed in exploratory research to generate theories. When assessing a model, it focuses on explaining the variation in the dependent variables (Hair Jr., Hult, Ringle & Sarstedt, (2017).

The multivariate statistical approach of structural equation modelling (SEM) allows researchers to estimate and test causal links. This approach was developed in the field of genetics to investigate the combined influence of one or more independent factors represented in a route diagram, which is why it is also known as path analysis in general (Dakduk, González & Portalanza, 2019).

Researchers are increasingly resorting to second-generation approaches to overcome the restrictions and limitations in the first-generation approaches. Researchers can use structural equation modelling (SEM) to model and estimate complicated interactions between several dependent and independent variables at the same time. The ideas under examination are usually unobservable and may only be assessed indirectly through a variety of indicator variables. Researchers can use structural equation modelling (SEM) to add unobservable factors that are assessed indirectly through indicator variables. In addition, they make it easier to account for measurement error in observable variables (Chin, 1998; Hair et al., 2017). SEM accounts for the measurement error in observed variables when estimating relationships. As a result, the approach achieves a more accurate measurement of the theoretical notions of interest (Hair et al., 2017; Hair et al., 2022, Chapter 5).

PLS is appropriate for this investigation since the intention is not to accept or reject any theory, rather this research is exploring an under-researched concept. The goodness of fit test, which is critical for accepting or rejecting any hypothesis, may be assessed using AMOS and other tools. PLS, on the other hand, aids in the exploration of ideas. And this thesis delves into the subject. This isn't to say that PLS can't be used to do confirmatory factor analysis (Hair et al., 2019), however. The significant growth in the number of papers in the top 30 journals of marketing suggests that using PLS-SEM over the last decade has demonstrated that PLS-SEM is a significant tool in the methodological arsenal of marketing researchers (Sarstedt et al., 2022).

3.6.2. Method

The causal study is using self-administered questionnaire as the survey tool for collecting quantitative data. It carries a fixed set of items to collect individual's data on the topics under discussion (Krosnik, 2018, p. 439-455; Lavrakas, 2008). The usage of questionnaire for the survey design in political marketing is not an anomaly (e.g. Van Steenburg & Guzman; Yalley, 2018). It is very popular among business and management researchers (Saunders, et al., 2019). Among the advantages this data collection strategy offered, the ease of collecting data from a larger sample remained on the top (Rowley, 2012). Speed, cost, and reliability were other benefits this strategy offered (Malhotra et al., 2017). Surveys are frequently used in exploratory and descriptive studies where both description and inferential statistics is employed to analyse the results based on causality among variables (Saunders, 2019). I did not have much control on the data in this case, unlike the qualitative strand.

All the scales used in this study are taken and adapted from previous literature with proven reliability and validity. The scales employed cover the emotion-cognition aspects. The questionnaire begins with the section which request information about the study respondents' demographic details. Besides the common demographics characteristics like age, occupation, and education (following Chowdhury & Naheed, 2019), this section of the questionnaire also carries questions on respondent's interest in politics, his/her ideology and ideological attitude towards social issues, socio-economic issues, etc. (following Cwalina & Drzewiecka, 2019 and Abou Khalil & Aoun, 2020). The best possible scales for the constructs emerged in the qualitative findings, are chosen. These scales are introduced in section 3.6.5. The validity and reliability of the scales are presented in section 3.6.8.

Respondents were asked to fill the rest of the questionnaire for one of the three prominent Pakistani political brands (PTI, PMLN and PPP) which have emerged as the major brands in the country. The intention was to collect data which would make the analysis detailed by comparing the political brands based on the co-brands associated with them.

The close-ended structured self-administered questionnaire (Bryman, 2012; Malhotra et al., 2017; Saunders et al., 2019) developed for this study is developed is attached in *APPENDIX B-I*.

3.6.3. Sampling

This section is designed in the light of the results of the qualitative analysis to investigate political co-brand image, positioning, and image transference. The qualitative strand guided the quantitative data collection. Qualitative data analysis identified constructs which are tested using variables which help in assessing the cause-and-effect relationship through the quantitative method (survey design).

Element/Sampling Frame comprised of consumers over the age bracket of 18 years. (Sampling Unit will be same as Element). Slovin's formula was supposed to be employed for calculating the sample size which would be appropriate to be collected from the population. It is:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + Ne^2}$$

where, n= sample size, N = size of the population, and e = 0.05, the acceptable sampling error. Data was supposed to be collected from major cities of Pakistan. This study requires a sample of respondents from at least two major cities of Pakistan, at the bare minimum. Including Rawalpindi and the Federal Capital, Islamabad. However, due to COVID-19 pandemic, collecting data through internet remained the only option available.

Non-Probability Convenience Sampling technique is adopted for both pilot and the main study. It is easy to collect data through this technique. Also, it is less time consuming, and least expensive technique compared to other forms of sampling. Convenience sampling is useful in collecting basic data and trends (without the complications of using a randomized sample). It is of good service when the researcher wants to document some qualities/features of a phenomenon that may occur within a given sample. It also helps the researcher in identifying relationships between the different phenomena.

Convenience sampling (also known as *Accidental Grab* or *Opportunity Sampling*) was employed keeping in mind that the recent social science research supports the use of non-random sample. For example, the literature that argue that non-probability, online panels are now increasingly accepted in social research, as researchers find that their quality is not so different from probably samples (Ansolabehere & Schaffner, 2014; Beam, et al., 2018; Salganik, 2018). The study's focus on producing and testing a theoretical model is another reason for employing this non-probability sampling. Indeed, statistical inference seems crucial for a proper data analysis, and interpreting results and drawing conclusions (Laake & Fagerland, 2015). However, inference can be less important than the contribution in terms of theory. Thirdly, while researchers have indicated a lot of limitations of the convenience sampling due to its subjective nature, since the population of Pakistan is very large with many distinct regions where social media are not adopted, randomization would not have been the right choice for this study. So, convenience sampling focused on a representative geographic region was employed to save time and (Etikan, Musa & Alkassim, 2016) and to help make generalization about the population.

3.6.4. Data Collection

Non-contrived settings are suited for this *cross-sectional* study. Data is collected from different set of respondents for his strand. It is collected through self-administered questionnaires employing convenience sampling technique (as discussed above) from Pakistanis. In this way this study assessed if findings of qualitative strand on the population of Pakistan. The quantitative data is collected online (Malhotra et al., 2017) for the quantitative strand, given the life threatening Covid-19 pandemic quarantine restrictions by the government of Pakistan. The pandemic has impeded possibilities of any kind of physical data collection (Moises, 2020; Ribeiro-Navarrete, Saura & Palacios-Marqués, 2021).

Keeping in mind the practicality online tools of data collection offer during the pandemic where it is direly important to follow the quarantine protocols, google forms (a free and conventional platform) is used for online data collection (Moises, 2020). The link was the shared with the respondents on

Twitter, Facebook groups/pages and personalised emails to prospects, between July 5, 2020 – January 25, 2021 (a period of 18 months). On Twitter, the link⁹ was posted on the timeline (TL) several times and was also tweeted to people randomly on daily basis (around 50-60 tweets per day) in the initial 5 months. In this way data for this study is gathered two years after the national and provincial elections on July 25, 2018 (to elect members of the National Assembly and four provincial legislatures) and almost two years before the next elections (scheduled for October 13, 2023, unless National Assembly is dissolved sooner). In the National Assembly elections 2018, the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) received the most votes and seats and hence was elected to govern the country.

It has been observed that electorates experience cross-cutting exposure on social media which is believed to be crucial for a strong democracy and building good political understanding and knowledge about political brands. Reason behind this being that cross-cutting exposure improves mutual understanding among the population and make them tolerant towards the disagreeable viewpoints (Huckfeldt, Johnson, Johnson & Sprague, 2004; Mutz, 2006). Therefore, given the Covid-19 pandemic situation, the advised standard operating procedures (SOPs) during the quarantine and keeping in mind the role social media has been playing in politics, the post-election settings are chosen. The online data collection from the Pakistani electorates not only helped in understating a larger picture, probing the effects of political marketing mix, the service quality of the political brands but the effects of communication on people's political and psychological attitudes (Min & Wohn, 2018).

People indulge in a range of activities to establish and express their views on the world and how it is run, and they attempt to participate in and influence the decisions that impact their lives through political involvement. It is expected that this study will help the political brands as well as political

⁹ Questionnaire on Political Co-Brand Image and Positioning:
<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfrynrrMz9smcCBkcNeazN0Db0-3BffSpa7IEkW4D2-MXD2Tw/viewform>

marketing researchers and practitioners in understanding online consumer political behaviour and in designing the campaigns accordingly.

3.6.5. *Measures*

The selection of variables discussed in this section is based on the findings of qualitative analysis. The questionnaire used for data collection is attached in *APPENDIX B-I*. This study has tried to select the most appropriate and latest scales which are published in reputable journals in the field of political marketing and branding.

The Political Marketing Mix Scale by Chowdhury and Naheed (2019)

The scale by Chowdhury and Naheed (2019) appears to be the suitable match for gauging four of the six dimensions of the new framework (Physique, Personality, Culture and Reflection). This scale has nine dimensions with 38 items. The nine dimensions are *People and Evidence* (8 items); *Party* (5 items); *Persuasion* (4 items); *Product* (3 items); *Personality Traits* (2 items); *Place* (4 items); *Promotion* (5 items); *Polling* (4 items); and *Price* (3 items). The indicators in these nine dimensions are assessed with the help of a 5-point Likert scale (where 1 = not at all important; 2 = less important; 3 = neither important nor unimportant; 4 = important; and 5 = most important). This scale not only fits well with the qualitative findings but also for its ability to tap into what is relevant to the electorates of the developing South Asian countries. Since it has recently been developed, assessing this scale to tap perceptions of the electorates warrants examination in other developing countries (Chowdhury & Naheed, 2019). Employing this scale in Pakistani context will aid in assessing its validity yet again. The nine dimensions are employed since the items appear to be the best fit for the factors which have emerged because of the qualitative data analysis.

Slogans, electioneering tactics like billboards, posters, etc. to promote the candidate and their party are categorized as *promotion*. The items include Election slogan of the candidate; Election music of the candidate; Use of posters of the candidate; Billboards of the candidate; and Rallies by the candidate. *Place*

represents indicators which cover factors emerged in theme 2 (candidate's availability within the constituency). These are: Frequent public appearance; Candidate is known in the area; Candidate living in the area; and Availability of the candidate in the area throughout the year. *Personality Traits* are represented by: Candidate's articulation power, and Candidate's modesty. *Product* is represented by: Past political records of the candidate; Image of the candidate as a leader; and Image of the candidate as community person. *People & Evidence* is represented by: Election gates of the candidate; Large sculptures with election symbol; News clippings in favour of the candidate; Use of national leaders (like party Chairman) in the campaigns; Use of celebrities in the campaigns; Use of national icons in the meetings, Showing off muscle power by the candidate; and Candidate's connection with the local administration. *Party* is represented by: Political party of the candidate; Ideology of the party candidate belongs to; Symbol of the party candidate supports; Connection of the party with the outer world; and showcasing remarkable achievements of the party. While *Persuasion* covers promotional tactic used with in the constituencies. While it also represents the factors emerged in the Cultural dimension of the framework, it is considered for Physique for its inclination towards the promotion of candidate more. It covers indicators like: Direct postal mail by the candidate; Use of social media by the candidate; Financial charity made by the candidate; and Use of family members in the campaigns. *Polling* is represented by these items: Collecting information about the voters of the area; Popularity survey before applying for the candidacy; Listening from the voters before preparing the election manifesto; and Collecting information repeatedly to detect the change of popularity. While *Price* is represented by: Economic cost if the candidate is elected (tax or extortion may rise); Psychological cost if the candidate is elected (insecurity, harassment); Gender viewpoint of the candidate.

VOTQUAL by Abou Khalil and Aoun (2020)

The scale by Abou Khalil and Aoun (2020) is employed to assess the factors emerged in the newly developed framework's dimensions (especially Reflection). VOTQUAL has 21 items. It assesses responses on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = very

satisfied; 2 = rather satisfied; 3 = neither satisfied nor unsatisfied; 4 = rather unsatisfied; and 5 = very satisfied). VOTQUAL has emerged from SERVQUAL (Parasuraman, Zeithaml & Berry, 1988) and calculates the difference between electorate's perceived (P) and expected performance (E), i.e. P-E. This scale focuses on candidate brand (not the party brand) and has five dimensions, namely: *physical characteristics* (perceptions only, 8 items); *trustworthiness* (1 item), *helpfulness* (3 items); *competence* (5 items); and *empathy* (performance minus expectations, 4 items).

The indicators in the *physical characteristics of the candidate* have items like age, gender, highest previous political office; diplomas; family background; looks; charisma; and outward appearance. These items resemble factors which have appeared in the Personality dimension of the Political Co-brand Image Framework. The indicator in the *trustworthiness of the candidate* is one item (respect of promises) and *helpfulness of the candidate* (three items including willingness to help; swiftness in providing public services; and personal services) resemble the factors which have appeared in the Relationship dimension of the Political Co-brand Image Framework.

The indicators in the *competence of the candidate* include items like skills in managing critical situations; managing conflicts; credibility; capacity to provide security; and courtesy. These items resemble factors which have appeared in the Self-image dimension of the Political Co-brand Image Framework. The indicators in the *empathy of the candidate* have items like understanding voter's needs; knowing voters personally; availability; and skill to communicate with the voters. These items resemble factors which have appeared in the Reflection dimension of the Political Co-brand Image Framework. While two of the items appear to be more suitable for the Personality dimension. Looking deep into it suggests that electorates can only assess if the candidate brand knows about the electorates and understand their needs, problems, when/if they visit the constituency. From this perspective, empathy can be considered for the Reflection dimension of the Political Co-brand Image and Positioning Framework.

Candidate Brand Image by Guzman & Sierra, (2009)

Candidate brand image is assessed via question statement “*To what extent do you believe the following adjectives describe each of the candidates and yourself?*” on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Somewhat disagree; 4 = Neither agree nor disagree; 5 = Somewhat agree; 6 = Agree; 7 = Strongly Agree) through 26 items including: Hard-working; Intelligent; Leader; Successful; Constant; Responsible; Dynamic; Energetic; Enterprising; Sharp; Creative; Innovative; Modern; Original; Cheerful; Sentimental; Friendly; Cool; Young; Generous; Loyal; Sincere; Reliable; Glamorous; Good looking; and. Charming.

Voting Intentions by Van Steenburg & Guzman (2019)

For assessing the influence of candidate brand image and positioning on electorate’s voting intentions, a 5-point Likert scale is used (1 = Strongly disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Neither disagree nor agree; 4 = Agree; 5 = Strongly agree.) It is *voter intention* scale by Van Steenburg and Guzman (2019). It has five items, which are: I would vote for that candidate; I would seek out more information about that candidate; I would like to investigate that candidate’s stance on the issues; It is unlikely that I would vote for that candidate. (reversed); and, Given the opportunity, I predict I would vote for that candidate.

Candidate-Party Brand-Fit

The four-item Candidate-Party Brand-Fit scale was derived from existing measures on brand extension from Roswinanto (2015), to gauge the perception of the candidate's and his/her party's fit in the participant's constituency. He employed a seven-point Likert scale with "Strongly Disagree" and "Strongly Agree" as the two poles. The item in his study were: I think these two brands (“New Balance” and “V Water”) are consistent with each other; I think these two brands (“New Balance” and “V Water”) are complementary to each other; I think these two brands (“New Balance” and “V Water”) fit each other; and I think these two brands (“New Balance” and “V Water”) are related to each other. Roswinanto

(2015) relied on Nunnally, (1978)'s the Cronbach's alpha value to consider the constructs' reliability, with a threshold value of 0.70 indicating adequate reliability.

For this study, the items are based on parent-parent brand recognizing that the *candidate* and the *party* brands are often the most prominent brands in each constituency. So, “New Balance” and “V Water” labels (as used in Roswinanto, 2015) were replaced with “candidate” and “party” brands. The items include *I think these two brands (“party” and “candidate”) are consistent with each other; I think these two brands (“party” and “candidate”) are complementary to each other; I think these two brands (“party” and “candidate”) fit each other; and, I think these two brands (“party” and “candidate”) are related to each other.*

Goleman's Typology (Cwalina & Drzewiecka, 2019; Goleman, 2000)

Goleman's typology (Goleman, 2000) is employed to investigate the respondent's opinion about the corporate brands and their positioning with the help of the perceptual map that it generates on two fundamental categories/dimensions: agency (competence, decisiveness, and trust) and communion (integrity, warmth and trust). It is a useful tool for assessing political personalities' brand image. These scales tap the perceptions (which evoke associations and contribute to the emotional reception of the personalities (Cwalina, Falkowski & Newman, 2011)) of the electorates about the political brands (leadership) in this study. To the best of my knowledge, there are just a few studies which have assessed the typology of leadership styles in politics (e.g. Cwalina & Drzewiecka, 2015, 2019; Drzewiecka & Cwalina, 2014). Since Goleman's typology has not been employed outside some European countries and US (Cwalina & Drzewiecka, 2019), this study will be one of the few initial studies to test its application outside US in the South Asian region. Goleman's typology offers an alternative way of investigating the positioning of candidates and leadership. In this way this study is broadening the discussion on ideal political leadership (Cwalina & Drzewiecka, 2019) in Pakistan.

The factors emerged in the Self-image dimension of the Political Co-brand Image and Positioning framework suggests the image transference (both negative and positive) between the co-brand and the corporate brand (both ways i.e. from co-brand to corporate brand as well as from corporate brand to co-brand). In addition to that, the role of the leader (corporate level) has appeared to be larger than life. To assess that, Goleman's Typology is adopted for this study. The intention to understand not only how the leaders are positioned in the electorates mind but if it really is the leader (corporate level) who has such a huge influence on the associated co-brands. In this way, Goleman's typology is used to investigate the electorates' perception and preference of an ideal political leadership style (corporate brand). The resulting output is perceptual maps which presents leader brand image plotted on it with respect to the competitors/counterparts.

Goleman (2000) has offered six styles of leaderships in Including coercive, authoritative, affiliative, democratic, pacesetting and coaching (presented in *APPENDIX B-II*). *Coercive* style is marked with characteristics like the immediate demand for compliance, the largely negative impact on the organizational environment and climate etc. Despite these negative points, leaders who have this style work great in crucial times or when it comes to the crunch or in case of problems with workers. Leaders with *authoritative* style, organize and mobilize people toward vision and performs especially good when new direction is required. Leaders with *affiliative* leadership style focus on harmony and builds emotional bonds, works great when people are coping with difficult circumstances. Leaders who follow *democratic* style of leadership creates consensus, believes in the participation of the workers in the decision making especially when there is a need to get feedback from the team members. The workers can share the ideas however the leader retains the final decision. Leaders with *pacesetting* style of leadership sets high performance standards and can work effectively with those people who are motivated and who have competence so that they can give quick results. Leaders who follow *coaching* style, develop and train people for the future and aid in setting long term strengths (Cwalina & Drzewiecka, 2015).

Out of these six styles, *authoritative*, *democratic*, *coaching*, and *affiliative* leaders generally impact the environment positively. Among these three, authoritative leaders have been found to be the most strongly positive. While, *coercive* and *pacesetting* leaders achieve the lowest level of sympathy and support, out of the six styles (Goleman 2000) and often have the negative impact on the environment (Cwalina & Drzewiecka, 2019). Literature suggests that *coercive* and *pacesetting* leadership styles have close match with the autocratic style (Lewin, Lippitt, & White, 1939), transactional or task-oriented leadership (Burn, 1978). While *authoritative*, *democratic*, *coaching*, and *affiliative* are said to have similarities with transformational leadership (Cwalina & Drzewiecka, 2015, 2019).

Short characteristics (traits and behaviours applied to political activity) of six styles (1 = coercive (do what I tell you), 2 = authoritative (come with me), 3 = affiliative (people come first), 4 = democratic (what do you think), 5 = pacesetting (do it as I do now), and 6 = coaching (try this)) are presented (question 27 in the questionnaire in *APPENDIX B-I*). Each of the six styles drives from a particular combination of emotional intelligence (Goleman's 2000) since there is a relationship between emotional intelligence and good leadership (Barling, Salter & Kelloway, 2000; Cwalina & Drzewiecka, 2019 quoting Gardner & Stough, 2002 and Palmer, Gardner, & Stough 2003).

The list of Pakistani political leaders contained the following political personalities: *Imran Khan* (Chairman, PTI); *Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto* (former President of Pakistan and founder PPP); *Benazir Bhutto* (former Prime Minister of Pakistan and chairman PPP); *Asif Ali Zardari* (former President of Pakistan and chairman PPP); *Nawaz Shareef* (former Prime Minister of Pakistan and founder PMLN); and, *Shahbaz Shareef* (current leader of the opposition in the National Assembly of Pakistan, former Chief Minister of Punjab province and current President PMLN). These personalities are chosen bearing in mind the results of the qualitative data analysis and findings.

3.6.6. *Pilot Testing*

Researchers have suggested to carry out the pilot studies to assess the design of the questionnaire and which could offer some useful hints for the future research (e.g. García-Moyano et al., 2021; Solstad et al., 2020; Sturgis, 2006; Van Teijlingen & Hundley, 2002, 2010). Pilot testing for this study is carried out through SPSS on an initial sample of 30 respondents.

For this study, most of the scales are borrowed and adapted from the existing literature with validated reliability. For the variables in the questionnaire, the reliability is linked to the construct validation. Construct validation is assessed by evaluating the Cronbach's alpha value. This value represents the homogeneity of the items (Hammond, 2006), internal consistency or, in other words, the average correlations of the items (Cronbach, 1951) or the intercorrelations of the observed indicator variables (Hair et al., 2017). The α value should be greater than 0.7, according to the researchers (Hammond, 2006). Some recent studies have however also suggested that relying on item selection for homogeneity (Cronbach alpha) may lead to the narrow operationalization of the constructs. Such studies profess that the researchers should instead rely on building a strong argument, instead of maximising the internal consistency, based on strong theoretical basis if the items are not found to be correlated to each other (e.g. Stadler, Sailer & Fischer, 2021).

Each of the four dimensions (out of five) of the VOTQUAL scale is measured based on the responses related to the performance and the expectation of the performance. The difference between the performance and the expectation of the performance is calculated (by subtracting the expectations from performance), just like it is done when dealing with the SERVIQUAL scale. (A positive gap score shows that performance have met or surpassed expectations. A negative gap score shows that performance is not up to the expectations.) Then, the reliability and validity is assessed.

Fourth item of the voting intentions scale was reversed scoring before assessing the reliability. It was 0.752 with all the 5 items. Deleting the fourth item

enhanced the internal consistency with $\alpha = 0.88$. The Cronbach's alpha coefficients of the scales' items from a small sample of 30 responses are shown below in Table 11. The items of all the variables showed Cronbach's alpha (α) value above 0.7.

Table 11: Pilot Study – Reliability (Cronbach's alpha)

Scales	Number of Items	Cronbach's alpha
Political Marketing Mix	38	0.91
VOTQUAL	21	0.87
Candidate Brand Image	26	0.99
Voting Intention	4	0.88
Brand-fit	4	0.88

The respondents were contacted online (Twitter, Facebook, and personalized emails, as discussed earlier) and were requested to fill the questionnaire. The reliability and validity were again tested with full data set through PLS-SEM. The results are discussed in last part of this section.

3.6.7. Data Overview

Data for the quantitative strand is collected between July 2020 and January 2022. In these eighteen months, 697 respondents from different cities, districts, and towns, accepted the request and filled in the questionnaire. This section presents results of *descriptive statistics* based on the data collected for this research study from across Pakistan (after cleaning the data and assessing the normality of distribution).

Gender, Age, Education & Occupation

Gender: The respondents include data collected from 421 men and (60%), 273 women (40%) in the survey. The mean is found to be 1.396 and SD is .48941.

Age: The sample includes more younger respondents (aged 18 to 35 years old). 207 (30%) respondents reported they are between the age of 18 to 25 years; 290 (41.4%) between 26 to 35 years of age; 146 (21%) between 36 to 45 years of age; 34 (5%); and 16(2%) reported they are within the age bracket of 46 to 55 and 56

to 60 years of age, respectively. Only 4(0.6%) reported they are in the 60-&-above age category. The mean is found to be 2.1019 and SD is .9951.

Education: Majority of the respondents reported that they have Honour's and Master's degree. Around 259 (37%) respondents reported they have Master's degree while 191 (27.2%) reported they completed their Honour's degree. 28(4%) respondents reported they have completed highest level of education, PhD. While there 12(2%) reported they have completed the basic level of education (Primary) and 8(1.1%) reported they have completed secondary school certificates exam. The mean is found to be 5.5079 and SD is 1.16966.

Occupation: Around 200 (28.7%) respondents reported themselves as students; 60(8.6%) as government employees; 187(26.8%) private job holders; and 30 (4.3%) as housewives. 68 (9.8%) respondents reported they run their own business. 34(5%) respondents reported themselves as unemployed. There were students who are also working in offices (including both private jobs and government offices) among the sample. The mean is found to be 3.5036 and SD is 2.68302.

Table 12 summarises the educational qualifications of respondents and their occupation information gender- and age-wise. This evidence demonstrates that the sample is representative of the entire population since the sample includes more younger respondents (between 18 to 35 years old).

Table 12: Respondents' Educational Qualifications and Occupational Information

Gender	Age	Educational Qualification	Frequency	Percentage	Occupational Information	Frequency	Percentage
Male	18-25	Primary passed	1	1.0	Student	56	54.4
		SSC passed	3	2.9	Gov. Job	2	1.9
		HSC passed	8	7.8	Private Job	18	17.5
		Honor's passed	26	25.2	Business	2	1.9
		Master's passed	44	42.7	Self-employed	6	5.8
		Above Master's degree	21	20.4	Unemployed	9	8.7
					Student & Self-employed/Private job/business	8	7.7
	Total	103	100.0	Other	2	1.9	
				Total	103	100	
	26-35	Primary passed	3	1.6	Student	22	12.0
		SSC passed	1	.5	Gov. Job	28	15.3
		HSC passed	39	21.3	Private Job	51	27.9
		Honor's passed	43	23.5	Business	32	17.5
		Master's passed	46	25.1	Self-employed	18	9.8
		Above Master's degree	28	15.3	Unemployed	10	5.5
		Ph.D	20	10.9	Other	4	2.2
		Post Doc	3	1.6	Student & self-employed/Private or Gov. Job/Business	18	9.9
	Total	183	100.0	Total	183	100	
	36-45	Primary passed	2	2.2	Gov. Job	6	6.7
SSC passed		1	1.1	Private Job	42	46.7	
HSC passed		10	11.1	Business	20	22.2	
Honor's passed		30	33.3	Self-employed	18	20.0	
Master's passed		35	38.9	Other	4	4.4	
Above Master's degree		10	11.1				
Ph.D		2	2.2				
Total		90	100.0	Total	90	100.0	
46-55	Primary passed	1	3.6	Gov. Job	2	7.1	
	SSC passed	2	7.1	Private Job	12	42.9	
	HSC passed	1	3.6	Business	6	21.4	
	Honor's passed	10	35.7	Self-employed	8	28.6	
	Master's passed	13	46.4				
	Above Master's degree	1	3.6				
	Total	28	100.0	Total	28	100.0	
56-60	HSC passed	4	28.6	Gov. Job	4	28.6	
	Honor's passed	3	21.4	Private Job	4	28.6	
	Master's passed	6	42.9	Business	2	14.3	
	Above Master's degree	1	7.1	Other	2	14.3	
				Retired Gov officer	2	14.3	
Total	14	100.0	Total	14	100.0		
60 & above	Honor's passed	2	66.7	Private Job	2	66.7	
	Master's passed	1	33.3	other	1	33.3	
	Total	3	100.0	Total	3	100.0	
Female	18-25	Primary passed	3	2.9	Student	90	86.5
		HSC passed	13	12.5	Gov. Job	2	1.9
		Honor's passed	28	26.9	Private Job	8	7.7
		Master's passed	48	46.2	Unemployed	4	3.8
		Above Master's degree	12	11.5			
	Total	104	100.0	Total	104	100.0	
	26-35	HSC passed	27	25.2	Student	20	18.7
		Honor's passed	27	25.2	Gov. Job	14	13.1
		Master's passed	42	39.3	Private Job	32	29.9
		Above Master's degree	7	6.5	Business	4	3.7
		Ph.D	3	2.8	Self-employed	10	9.3
		Post Doc	1	.9	Unemployed	11	10.3
					Housewife	10	9.3
		Total	107	100.0	Other	4	3.7
	36-45	Primary passed	2	3.6	Student & self-employed	2	1.9
		SSC passed	1	1.8	Total	107	100.0
		HSC passed	10	17.9	Student	12	21.4
		Honor's passed	19	33.9	Gov. Job	2	3.6
		Master's passed	22	39.3	Private Job	16	28.6
		Above Master's degree	2	3.6	Self-employed	4	7.1
				Housewife	16	28.6	
Total	56	100.0	Other	4	7.1		
46-55	Honor's passed	2	33.3	Self-employed & housewife	2	3.6	
	Master's passed	4	66.7	Total	56	100.0	
				Private Job	2	33.3	
	Total	6	100.0	Business	2	33.3	
56-60	Honor's passed	1	50.0	Housewife	2	100.0	
	Master's passed	1	50.0				
	Total	2	100.0	Total	1	100	
60 & above	Master's passed	1	100.0	Housewife	1	100.0	
	Total	1	100	Total	1	100	

According to the surveys conducted at the national level, Pakistan is among the countries with largest young population. 64% (two third of the total population, approx.) is below the age of 30, and 29% of it comprises of Pakistanis within the age bracket of 15 to 29 years (Ahmad, 2018; APP, 2018; Najam & Bari, 2017). According to the 6th Population and Housing Census 2017 and the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, men comprise 51% of the total population while women form 48.76% of the total population (Desk, 2017), and the sex ratio of the entire country is 105.07 while that of the Federal Capital, Islamabad stands at 111. Pakistan is one of the densely populated countries dealing with change in the demographic conditions (Sathar, 2011, 2020). Since Pakistani society is considered pro-active due to the active participation of youth (Mushtaq, Abiodullah & Akbar, 2011), most young respondents in the sample appears to be a good representative of the population. Also, the frequency analysis figures of this study seem in-line with Ahmad (2018), APP (2018) and, Najam and Bari (2017). In this way the sample collected for this study, resembles the population of Pakistan.

While sample does not reflect the rural population, it is reflective of the overall Pakistani population. Respondents filled the questionnaire in English. According to the Pakistan Economic Survey, the literacy rate has improved by 2% compared to 2015-16. It is 60% in 2018-19 (APP, 2020). While the literacy level ranges and levels vary regionally across the country, English language has appeared to be fast spreading with approximately 49% of the population that can understand English¹⁰. The literacy rates in major cities are approx. 75% 11. The

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(a) "Here's how Pakistan ranks among world's English speaking countries". The Express Tribune. Link: <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1236300/heres-pakistan-ranks-among-worlds-english-speaking-countries>

(b) "English in Pakistan". The Nation. Link: <https://nation.com.pk/24-May-2018/english-in-pakistan>.

(c) "English — more than a subject". Dawn. Link: <https://www.dawn.com/news/1095878>

(d) "Mapped: The world by English-speaking population". The Telegraph. Link: <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/travel/maps-and-graphics/mapped-english-speaking-countries/>

(e) "Which Countries Have the Most English Speakers? – K International". Link: www.k-international.com

literacy rate in 2017 was approx. 59%, out of which 47 % were women and 71% were men ¹². From this perspective, the population seems to represent a large majority of the Pakistani population who can understand the political matters.

Ideological Attitude, Socio-Economic Stance, & Opinion on Politics

Ideological Attitude: Out of the 697 respondents, altogether 247 (36%) reported themselves as liberals (*56 have chosen “very liberal”, 103 chose “liberals”, while 88 have reported themselves as “more liberal”*). Altogether 54 (19%) reported themselves as conservatives (*8 have chosen the category “very conservative”, 32 chose “conservative” and 100 respondents have preferred the category “conservative” for themselves*). 310 (44%) of the respondents appear middle-off-the-road. The mean is found to be 3.6069 and SD is 1.31103.

Socio-Economic Stance: The questionnaire requested the respondents to report their stance on the ideological socio-economic issues. 188 (27%) reported themselves as liberal (*42 respondents have preferred the category “very liberal”, 100 have chosen “liberal” while 46 have gone for the category “liberals”*). 205 (29%) reported themselves as social (*25 respondents have preferred “very social”, 80 have chosen “social”, and 100 have chosen “more social”*). Around (304) 44% of the respondents reported themselves as middle-off-the-road people. The mean for socio-economic stance is 3.9469 and SD is found to be 1.45183.

Opinion on Politics: The questionnaire also requested the respondents to report their opinion on politics. Altogether 241 (34.5%) reported themselves as left-winger (*56 have chosen “left-wing oriented” opinion on politics, 86 have chosen “leftist” while 99 have chosen “left-oriented”*). 104 (15.2%) reported themselves as right-wing oriented (*28 have chosen “right-wing oriented, 36 have chosen “right oriented” while 40 have chosen “rather right oriented” opinion on*

¹¹ “Education in Pakistan”. Asia Pacific, World Education Services (WES). Link: <https://wenr.wes.org/2020/02/education-in-pakistan>

¹² “Pakistan: Literacy rate from 2006 to 2017, total and by gender”. Economy & Politics. Statista. Link: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/572781/literacy-rate-in-pakistan/#:~:text=In%202017%2C%20Pakistan's%20total%20literacy,than%2071%20percent%20of%20men.&text=In%20Pakistan%2C%20women's%20education%20is,been%20going%20up%20for%20years.>

politics). 352 (51%) of the respondents reported themselves to be neither left wing oriented nor right wing oriented. The mean for socio-economic stance is 3.6514 and SD is found to be 1.36572.

Analysis suggests there are more liberals among those who have participated in this study than conservatives. Table 13 shows the details for gender and each of the age group.

Table 13: Ideological Attitude, Socio-Economic Stance, and Opinion on Politics

Gender	Age	Ideological Attitude	Frequency	Percentage	Socio-Economic Stance	Frequency	Percentage	Opinion on Politics	Frequency	Percentage
Male	18-25	Very liberal	12	11.7	Very liberal	4	3.9	Very left-wing oriented	4	3.9
		Liberal	13	12.6	Liberal	12	11.7	Leftist	8	7.8
		More liberal	9	8.7	More liberal	17	16.5	Rather left-oriented	12	11.7
		Partially liberal, Partially conservative	41	39.8	Partially liberal, Partially social	33	32.0	Center	61	59.2
		Rather Conservative	18	17.5	More social	23	22.3	Rather right-oriented	6	5.8
		Conservative	8	7.8	Social	14	13.6	Right oriented	4	3.9
		Very conservative	2	1.9				Right-wing oriented	8	7.8
		Total	103	100.0	Total	103	100.0	Total	103	100.0
	26-35	Very liberal	12	6.6	Very liberal	8	4.4	Very left-wing oriented	8	4.4
		Liberal	22	12.0	Liberal	22	12.0	Leftist	24	13.1
		More liberal	26	14.2	More liberal	12	6.6	Rather left-oriented	28	15.3
		Partially liberal, Partially conservative	93	50.8	Partially liberal, Partially social	83	45.4	Center	103	56.3
		Rather Conservative	20	10.9	More social	22	12.0	Rather right-oriented	6	3.3
		Conservative	10	5.5	Social	24	13.1	Right oriented	8	4.4
					Very social	12	6.6	Right-wing oriented	6	3.3
		Total	183	100.0	Total	183	100.0	Total	183	100.0
	36-45	Very liberal	6	6.7	Very liberal	4	4.4	Very left-wing oriented	6	6.7
		Liberal	8	8.9	Liberal	12	13.3	Leftist	6	6.7
		More liberal	10	11.1	More liberal	4	4.4	Rather left-oriented	18	20.0
		Partially liberal, Partially conservative	56	62.2	Partially liberal, Partially social	46	51.1	Center	50	55.6
		Rather Conservative	6	6.7	More social	13	14.4	Rather right-oriented	6	6.7
		Conservative	4	4.4	Social	8	8.9	Right oriented	2	2.2
					Very social	3	3.3	Right-wing oriented	2	2.2
		Total	90	100.0	Total	90	100.0	Total	90	100.0
	46-55	Very liberal	2	7.1	Very liberal	2	7.1	Leftist	6	21.4
		Liberal	4	14.3	Liberal	2	7.1	Rather left-oriented	6	21.4
		More liberal	2	7.1	Partially liberal, Partially social	14	50.0	Center	8	28.6
		Partially liberal, Partially conservative	8	28.6	More social	6	21.4	Rather right-oriented	4	14.3
Rather Conservative		8	28.6	Social	2	7.1	Right oriented	4	14.3	
Conservative		4	14.3	Very social	2	7.1				
				Total	28	100.0	Total	28	100.0	
Total		28	100.0	Total	28	100.0	Total	28	100.0	
56-60	Liberal	6	42.9	Liberal	6	42.9	Leftist	4	28.6	
	More liberal	2	14.3	More liberal	2	14.3	Rather left-oriented	4	28.6	
	Partially liberal, Partially conservative	2	14.3	Partially liberal, Partially social	2	14.3	Center	4	28.6	
	Rather Conservative	2	14.3	Social	2	14.3	Right-wing oriented	2	14.3	
	Very conservative	2	14.3	Very social	2	14.3				
				Total	14	100.0	Total	14	100.0	
	Total	14	100.0	Total	14	100.0	Total	14	100.0	
60 & above	Partially liberal, Partially conservative	2	66.7	Social	2	66.7	Very left-wing oriented	1	33.3	
	Very conservative	1	33.3	Very social	1	33.3	Center	2	66.7	
				Total	3	100.0	Total	3	100.0	
	Total	3	100.0	Total	3	100.0	Total	3	100.0	
Female	18-25	Very liberal	8	7.7	Very liberal	20	19.2	Very left-wing oriented	22	21.2
		Liberal	30	28.8	Liberal	20	19.2	Leftist	14	13.5
		More liberal	16	15.4	More liberal	2	1.9	Rather left-oriented	14	13.5
		Partially liberal, Partially conservative	32	30.8	Partially liberal, Partially social	42	40.4	Center	42	40.4
		Rather Conservative	14	13.5	More social	8	7.7	Rather right-oriented	6	5.8
		Conservative	4	3.8	Social	12	11.5	Right oriented	4	3.8
								Right-wing oriented	2	1.9
		Total	104	100.0	Total	104	100.0	Total	104	100.0
	26-35	Very liberal	14	13.1	Very liberal	4	3.7	Very left-wing oriented	12	11.2
		Liberal	12	11.2	Liberal	18	16.8	Leftist	16	15.0
		More liberal	19	17.8	More liberal	7	6.5	Rather left-oriented	13	12.1
		Partially liberal, Partially conservative	48	44.9	Partially liberal, Partially social	46	43.0	Center	50	46.7
		Rather Conservative	10	9.3	More social	16	15.0	Rather right-oriented	6	5.6
		Conservative	2	1.9	Social	14	13.1	Right oriented	6	5.6
		Very conservative	2	1.9	Very social	2	1.9	Right-wing oriented	4	3.7
		Total	107	100.0	Total	107	100.0	Total	107	100.0
	36-45	Very liberal	2	3.6	Liberal	6	10.7	Leftist	6	10.7
		Liberal	6	10.7	More liberal	2	3.6	Rather left-oriented	4	7.1
		More liberal	2	3.6	Partially liberal, Partially social	34	60.7	Center	30	53.6
		Partially liberal, Partially conservative	24	42.9	More social	12	21.4	Rather right-oriented	6	10.7
		Rather Conservative	22	39.3	Social	2	3.6	Right oriented	8	14.3
								Right-wing oriented	2	3.6
					Total	56	100.0	Total	56	100.0
		Total	56	100.0	Total	56	100.0	Total	56	100.0
	46-55	Liberal	2	33.3	Liberal	2	33.3	Very left-wing oriented	2	33.3
		More liberal	2	33.3	Partially liberal, Partially social	2	33.3	Leftist	2	33.3
		Partially liberal, Partially conservative	2	33.3	Very social	2	33.3	Center	2	33.3
		Total	6	100.0	Total	6	100.0	Total	6	100.0
56-60	Partially liberal, Partially conservative	2	100.0	Partially liberal, Partially social	2	100.0	Right-wing oriented	2	100.0	
60 & above	Very conservative	1	100.0	Very social	1	100.0	Very left-wing oriented	1	100.0	

Interest In the Political News/Affairs, Trust on Political Reports and Opinion About Journalists

Interest in Political News/Affairs: The frequency analysis suggests that out of the 697 respondents, 539 (77.3%) respondents reported they have interest in the current affairs and politics (*161 have preferred response category “rather yes”, 239 have chosen “pretty strong” and 139 have chosen “very strong”*). 102 (14.7%) respondents reported they do not take much interest (*50 have chosen response category “not at all”, 30 have chosen “almost not” and 22 have preferred “rather not”*). While 56 (8%) reported it is hard for them to say. The mean is found to be 5.1822 and SD is 1.68916.

The gender-wise frequency analysis shows that among men (of all the six age categories), 358 respondents take interest in politics (*including those chose categories “rather yes”, “pretty strong” and “very strong”*). Among women, 181 respondents reported they take interest in politics (*who have chosen response categories “rather yes”, “pretty strong” and “very strong”*). Table 15 displays the detailed information (both gender- and age-wise).

Trust on Political Reports: Responding to the questions on trust on political reports, 173 (25%) respondents reported they trust the political reports in the media (*who have chosen response categories “rather yes”, “pretty strong” and “very strong”*). 261 (37.5%) reported they do not trust the reports in the media (*who have chosen categories “not at all”, “Almost not” and “rather not”*). While 263 (38%) reported that it is hard for them to say. The mean is found to be 3.6169 and SD is 1.34907.

The gender-wise frequency analysis shows that among men (of all the six age categories), 101 respondents trust political news and reports on current affairs (*including those chose categories “rather yes”, “pretty strong” and “very strong”*). Among women, 72 respondents reported they trust political news (*who have selected response categories “rather yes”, “pretty strong” and “very strong”*). Table 14 displays the detailed information (both gender- and age-wise).

Opinion About Journalists: Responding to the question on journalists, 216 (31%) respondents reported have positive opinion about the journalists (*they selected response categories “rather yes”, “pretty strong” and “very strong”*). 326 (46.7%) reported they do not hold positive opinion about the journalists (*these respondents have chosen categories “not at all”, “Almost not” and “rather not”*). While 155 (22.2) reported that it is hard for them to say. The mean is found to be 3.3902 and SD is 1.63902.

The gender-wise frequency analysis shows that among men (of all the six age categories), 139 respondents have positive opinion about the journalists (*including those chose categories “rather yes”, “pretty strong” and “very strong”*). Among women, 77 respondents expressed they have positive opinion about the journalists (*they chose response categories “rather yes”, “pretty strong” and “very strong”*). The response of 191 men and 135 women (who chose response category “not at all”, “almost not” and “rather not”) suggested they do not have positive opinion about the journalists. These results are in-line with the qualitative study’s findings which indicate the role of media in the positioning of political brands and lack of trust on the political reports. Table 14 displays the detailed information (both gender- and age-wise).

Respondents’ Source of Political News & Information

Friends, the internet, newspapers, and television, according to the results of the frequency analysis, are where respondents receive their political information. They rely on conversing with friends, reading the newspaper, and utilising the internet the most out of these four essential alternatives. It appears that approx. 21% of respondents only search for news on the internet. Most of them also indicated that they do not seek out news in the media. This suggests that people are extremely sceptical about news reported in the media. Table 15 displays the details.

Table 14: Interest in Political News, Trust on Political News and Journalists

Gender	Age	Interest	Frequency	Percentage	Trust on Political News	Frequency	Percentage	Trust on Journalists	Frequency	Percentage
Male	18-25	Not at all	2	1.9	Not at all	7	6.8	Not at all	19	18.4
		Almost not	2	1.9	Almost not	15	14.6	Almost not	14	13.6
		Rather not	4	3.9	Rather not	9	8.7	Rather not	13	12.6
		Hard to say	8	7.8	Hard to say	44	42.7	Hard to say	31	30.1
		Rather yes	24	23.3	Rather yes	22	21.4	Rather yes	18	17.5
		Pretty strong	42	40.8	Pretty strong	6	5.8	Pretty strong	4	3.9
		Very strong	21	20.4	Very strong			Very strong	4	3.9
		Total	103	100.0	Total	103	100.0	Total	103	100.0
	26-35	Not at all	2	1.1	Not at all	10	5.5	Not at all	40	21.9
		Almost not	6	3.3	Almost not	20	10.9	Almost not	23	12.6
		Rather not	4	2.2	Rather not	34	18.6	Rather not	22	12.0
		Hard to say	18	9.8	Hard to say	81	44.3	Hard to say	40	21.9
		Rather yes	40	21.9	Rather yes	30	16.4	Rather yes	46	25.1
		Pretty strong	65	35.5	Pretty strong	6	3.3	Pretty strong	8	4.4
		Very strong	48	26.2	Very strong	2	1.1	Very strong	4	2.2
		Total	183	100.0	Total	183	100.0	Total	183	100.0
	36-45				Not at all	14	15.6	Not at all	20	22.2
		Almost not	2	2.2	Almost not	10	11.1	Almost not	12	13.3
		Rather not	4	4.4	Rather not	18	20.0	Rather not	16	17.8
		Hard to say	8	8.9	Hard to say	32	35.6	Hard to say	12	13.3
		Rather yes	14	15.6	Rather yes	16	17.8	Rather yes	26	28.9
		Pretty strong	38	42.2				Pretty strong	4	4.4
		Very strong	24	26.7						
		Total	90	100.0	Total	90	100.0	Total	90	100.0
46-55				Not at all	2	7.1	Not at all	4	14.3	
				Almost not	4	14.3	Almost not	2	7.1	
	Rather not	2	7.1	Rather not	6	21.4	Rather not	4	14.3	
				Hard to say	6	21.4	Hard to say	4	14.3	
	Rather yes	8	28.6	Rather yes	8	28.6	Rather yes	14	50.0	
	Pretty strong	10	35.7	Pretty strong	2	7.1				
	Very strong	8	28.6							
	Total	28	100.0	Total	28	100.0	Total	28	100.0	
56-60				Rather not	4	28.6	Almost not	2	14.3	
				Hard to say	4	28.6	Hard to say	4	28.6	
	Rather yes	6	42.9	Rather yes	6	42.9	Rather yes	8	57.1	
	Pretty strong	4	28.6							
	Very strong	4	28.6							
	Total	14	100.0	Total	14	100.0	Total	14	100.0	
	60 & above	Not at all	1	33.3				Rather yes	2	66.7
		Pretty strong	2	66.7	Pretty strong	2	66.7	Very strong	1	33.3
				Very strong	1	33.3				
Total		3	100.0	Total	3	100.0	Total	3	100.0	
Female	18-25	Not at all	28	26.9	Not at all	10	9.6	Not at all	28	26.9
		Almost not	14	13.5	Almost not	18	17.3	Almost not	14	13.5
		Rather not	4	3.8	Rather not	10	9.6	Rather not	20	19.2
		Hard to say	8	7.7	Hard to say	36	34.6	Hard to say	24	23.1
		Rather yes	28	26.9	Rather yes	22	21.2	Rather yes	16	15.4
		Pretty strong	14	13.5	Pretty strong	6	5.8			
		Very strong	8	7.7	Very strong	2	1.9	Very strong	2	1.9
		Total	104	100.0	Total	104	100.0	Total	104	100.0
	26-35	Not at all	14	13.1	Not at all	14	13.1	Not at all	22	20.6
		Almost not	6	5.6	Almost not	14	13.1	Almost not	10	9.3
		Rather not	4	3.7	Rather not	8	7.5	Rather not	15	14.0
		Hard to say	10	9.3	Hard to say	40	37.4	Hard to say	24	22.4
		Rather yes	19	17.8	Rather yes	23	21.5	Rather yes	26	24.3
		Pretty strong	38	35.5	Pretty strong	8	7.5	Pretty strong	8	7.5
		Very strong	16	15.0	Total	107	100.0	Very strong	2	1.9
		Total	107	100.0	Total	107	100.0	Total	107	100.0
	36-45				Not at all	2	3.6	Not at all	4	7.1
					Almost not	18	32.1	Almost not	12	21.4
					Rather not	8	14.3	Rather not	4	7.1
		Hard to say	2	3.6	Hard to say	18	32.1	Hard to say	14	25.0
		Rather yes	22	39.3	Rather yes	8	14.3	Rather yes	18	32.1
		Pretty strong	22	39.3	Pretty strong	2	3.6	Pretty strong	4	7.1
		Very strong	10	17.9						
		Total	56	100.0	Total	56	100.0	Total	56	100.0
46-55				Not at all	2	33.3	Almost not	4	66.7	
				Almost not	2	33.3				
				Rather not	2	33.3				
	Hard to say	2	33.3				Hard to say	2	33.3	
			Pretty strong	4	66.7					
Total	6	100.0	Total	6	100.0	Total	6	100.0		
56-60	Not at all	2	100.0	Hard to say	2	100.0	Not at all	2	100.0	
60 & above	Not at all	1	100.0	Very strong	1	100.0	Very strong	1	100.0	

Table 15: How Respondents Find Out About Political News

Gender	Source	Frequency	Percentage	
Male	Talking to friends	4	1.0	
	Newspaper	2	.5	
	Watching TV	8	1.9	
	Internet	86	20.4	
	I am not looking for news in the media	5	1.2	
	Watching TV & Internet	30	7.1	
	Talking to friends, Newspapers, TV, Internet	78	18.5	
	Talking to friends, Newspapers, Watching TV, Internet, Not looking for news in the media	4	1.0	
	Talking to friends, internet	24	5.7	
	Newspapers, Internet	32	7.6	
	Talking to friends, Watching TV	4	1.0	
	Newspaper, Watching TV, Internet	36	8.6	
	Internet, I am not looking for news in the media	6	1.4	
	Talking to friend, Watching TV, Internet	39	9.3	
	Talking to friends, Newspaper, Watching TV	6	1.4	
	Talking to friends, Newspaper, Internet	28	6.7	
	Talking to friends, Newspaper, Radio, Watching TV, Internet	14	3.3	
	Newspaper, Internet, I am not looking for news in the media	4	1.0	
	Talking to friends, Newspaper, Internet, I am not looking for news in the media	4	1.0	
	Talking to friends, Internet, I am not looking for news in the media	4	1.0	
	Newspaper, I am not looking for the news in the media	1	.2	
	Talking to friends, Wating TV, Internet, Not looking for news in the media	2	.5	
	Total	421	100.0	
	Female	Talking to friends	6	2.2
		Newspaper	2	.7
		Watching TV	22	8.0
		Internet	65	23.6
I am not looking for news in the media		18	6.5	
Watching TV & Internet		22	8.0	
Talking to friends, Newspapers, TV, Internet		38	13.8	
Talking to friends, internet		14	5.1	
Newspapers, Internet		10	3.6	
Talking to friends, Watching TV		2	.7	
Newspaper, Watching TV, Internet		12	4.3	
Internet, I am not looking for news in the media		8	2.9	
Talking to friend, Watching TV, Internet		28	10.1	
Talking to friends, Newspaper, Internet		12	4.3	
Talking to friends, Newspaper, Radio, Watching TV, Internet		6	2.2	
Talking to friends, Internet, I am not looking for news in the media		6	2.2	
Talking to friends, Newspaper, Radio, Internet		2	.7	
Newspaper, I am not looking for the news in the media		1	.4	
Talking to friends, Not looking for news in the media		2	.7	
Total		276	100.0	

3.6.8. *Reliability & Validity of the Scales Employed*

To assess the reliability and validity of the five variables, tests were run on complete data set of 697 responses through PLS-SEM. This study assessed the Internal consistency reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity for each of the five scales, which includes Political Marketing Mix, VOTQUAL, Voting Intention, Candidate Brand Image and Candidate-Party Brand-Fit.

The extent to which items within an instrument assess different parts of the same feature or concept is referred to as **internal consistency reliability** (Revicki, 2014). *Cronbach's alpha* is a conventional internal-consistency criterion that offers a reliability estimate based on the intercorrelations of the observed indicator variables. Another criterion for assessing the internal consistency reliability is *composite reliability*. Composite reliability described the varying outer loadings of the indicator variables. Lack of internal consistency reliability is hinted if the values of Cronbach's alpha and Composite reliability are below 0.6 (Hair et al., 2017).

Convergent validity is one of the construct-validity concerns (Gregory, 2007). According to Hair et al. (2017), the degree to which a measure correlates favourably with other measures of the same construct is known as convergent validity. Researchers analyse the outer loadings of the indicators and the *average variance extracted* (AVE) to determine convergent validity of reflective constructs. The AVE is a popular criterion for determining convergent validity. The grand mean value of the squared loadings of the indicators related with the concept is used to determine this criterion (i.e., the sum of the squared loadings divided by the number of indicators). The results for Internal consistency reliability and convergent validity are presented in Table 16

In Chowdhury & Naheed's (2019) study, Cronbach's reliability for all the Political Marketing Mix factors was above.05. In this study, the Cronbach's alpha for each of the factor is found to be above 0.7. While composite reliability values

are also satisfactory and are found to be above 0.8 (see Table 16). The convergent validity values for all the nine dimensions are satisfactory. However, the AVE for the complete 38-items scale of Political Marketing Mix is 0.4, which is slightly lower than the acceptable limit.

In Abou Khalil and Aoun's (2020) study of Lebanon voters, the reliability of these measures varied from Cronbach's $\alpha=0.62$ to $\alpha=0.87$. For this study's sample of 697 respondent data, the Cronbach's reliability value is 0.87 with 21 items. While the composite reliability value is found to be above 0.834. VOTQUAL is a marketing word that relates to the marketing of services or relationships. As a result, the assessment of this scale may be taken as a reflection of the candidate's perceived ability to create relationships with voters. A relationship based on mutual pleasure and trust. Because creating relationships is a fundamental component of political marketing strategy, VOTQUAL easily combines with the Political Marketing Mix scale into a larger idea. The composite reliability values are also within the acceptable limits.

In study conducted by Van Steenburgh & Guzman (2019) in the context of the 2012 U.S. presidential election, the dependability of the Voting Intention scale was 0.90. The Cronbach's dependability value for the four items in this study is found to be 0.871. Composite reliability is found to be 0.912. The convergent reliability value is 0.7, which is also within the acceptable limit.

In Guzman and Sierra's (2009) examination of the 2006 Mexican presidential election, the reliability of these factors ranged between Cronbach's $\alpha=0.80$ and $\alpha=0.89$ for Candidate Brand Image. The candidate's ratings on these dimensions are closely correlated, and this data is used to calculate the candidate's overall brand image index. The greater the value, the more pleasant the overall impression of the image. Cronbach's alpha dependability value for all 26 items was judged to be 0.987. Composite reliability is found to be 0.988. The convergent validity value is also within the acceptable limit.

The Cronbach's alpha value for Candidate-Party Brand-Fit in this study is found to be 0.871. The composite reliability value is found to be 0.912. The

convergent validity value is 0.721. Bootstrapping test (PLSc) showed significant results.

Table 16: Convergent Validity, and Internal Consistency Reliability of the Scales

	Internal Consistency Reliability		Convergent Validity
	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
1. People& Evidence	0.866	0.895	0.519
2. Party	0.812	0.870	0.574
3. Promotion	0.890	0.919	0.696
4. Persuasion	0.721	0.826	0.545
5. Polling	0.887	0.922	0.747
6. Price	0.794	0.880	0.711
7. Product	0.890	0.932	0.820
8. Place	0.898	0.929	0.765
9. Personality Trait	0.752	0.890	0.801
Political Marketing Mix	0.955	0.958	0.400
1. Competence	0.908	0.931	0.731
2. Empathy	0.796	0.867	0.621
3. Helpfulness	0.810	0.887	0.724
4. Trustworthiness	1.000	1.000	1.000
5. Satisfaction	0.929	0.936	0.648
VOTQUAL	0.855	0.834	0.500
Voting Intention	0.871	0.912	0.721
Candidate Brand Image	0.987	0.988	0.759
Candidate-Party Brand-Fit	0.871	0.912	0.721

Discriminant validity is the typical methodological counterpart to convergent validity, and it examines how different assessments of one concept are from measures of other components in the same model (Hulland, 1999). According to Hair et al. (2017), when discriminant validity is established, it means that a construct is unique and encompasses phenomena that are not represented by other constructs in the model. *Cross-loading* is one of the used measures which differentiates latent variable correlations to the square root of AVE vales. Cross-loading accesses the outer loading (i.e., correlation) of an indicator on the linked concept should be larger than any of its cross-loadings

(i.e., correlation) on other constructs. The other measure for discriminant validity is Heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) ratio of correlation (Hair et al., 2017).

Henseler et al. (2015) proposed the method's improved performance and found that it can produce greater specificity and sensitivity rates (97% to 99%) than the Fornell-Lacker (20.82%) and cross-loadings criterion (0.00%) by the use of a Monte Carlo simulation study. A lack of discriminant validity is shown by HTMT scores that are near to 1. Comparing the HTMT to a predetermined threshold is necessary when using it as a criterion (Ab Hamid, Sami, Sidek, 2017). Any HTMT score higher than this threshold indicates lack of discriminant validity. A 0.85 criterion is recommended by some authors (Kline, 2011). However, Gold, Malhotra and Segars (2011) disputed it and suggested a value of 0.90.

Fornell and Larcker (1981) recommend using Average Variance Extracted to test discriminant validity (i.e., the average variance shared between a construct and its measures). The square root of each construct's AVE should be bigger than the greatest correlation with any other construct (Hair et al., 2017; Hulland, 1999)¹³. The square root of AVE (along the diagonal, in each of the five tables) should be greater than the correlations values so establish discriminant validity.

This study has evaluated the heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT) of the correlations (Henseler, Ringle & Sarstedt, 2015). HTMT estimates what the real correlation between two constructs would be if they were assessed precisely (i.e., if they were perfectly reliable). Deattenuated correlation is another name for real correlation. The absence of discriminant validity is shown by a deattenuated correlation between two constructs near to one (Hait et al., 2017). For all the scales employed, the values on the left side of the AVE diagonal are less than 1. This indicates that discriminant validity is established.

¹³ This is represented in a correlation matrix that contains the square roots of the average variance extracted values obtained for each of the constructs along the diagonal, as well as the correlations between distinct constructs in the bottom left off-diagonal parts of the matrix. The diagonal elements in the relevant rows and columns should be considerably bigger than the off-diagonal elements for appropriate discriminant validity (Hulland, 1999).

The results for the five scales are presented in Table 17.

Table 17: Discriminant Validity of the Scales – HTMT criteria

1. Political Marketing Mix

	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.
1. People& Evidence	<i>0.721</i>								
2. Party	0.616	<i>0.758</i>							
3. Promotion	0.777	0.676	<i>0.835</i>						
4. Persuasion	0.742	0.729	0.912	<i>0.738</i>					
5. Polling	0.412	0.716	0.593	0.764	<i>0.0864</i>				
6. Price	0.408	0.642	0.532	0.708	0.769	<i>0.843</i>			
7. Product	0.293	0.697	0.381	0.555	0.733	0.737	<i>0.905</i>		
8. Place	0.404	0.663	0.499	0.623	0.688	0.668	0.794	<i>0.875</i>	
9. Personality Trait	0.373	0.730	0.511	0.664	0.712	0.751	0.818	0.892	<i>0.895</i>

Note: The square roots of the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) are shown by diagonal and italicised characters. The HTMT values are the elements below the diagonal.

2. VOTQUAL

	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
1. Competence	<i>0.855</i>				
2. Empathy	0.533	<i>0.788</i>			
3. Helpfulness	0.464	0.477	<i>0.851</i>		
4. Trustworthiness	0.284	0.324	0.353	<i>1.000</i>	
5. Satisfaction	0.062	0.092	0.063	0.052	<i>0.805</i>

Note: The square roots of the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) are shown by diagonal and italicised characters. The HTMT values are the elements below the diagonal.

3. Voting Intention

	1.	2.	3.	4.
1. Vote for candidate	<i>1.000</i>			
2. Information about candidate	0.596	<i>1.000</i>		
3. Candidate's stance	0.545	0.808	<i>1.000</i>	
4. Would vote for the candidate	0.709	0.548	0.562	<i>1.000</i>

Note: The square roots of the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) are shown by diagonal and italicised characters. The HTMT values are the elements below the diagonal.

4. Candidate-Party Brand-Fit

	1.	2.	3.	4.
1. Consistent	<i>1.000</i>			
2. Complementary	0.634	<i>1.000</i>		
3. Fit	0.570	0.673	<i>1.000</i>	
4. Related	0.559	0.641	0.688	<i>1.000</i>

Note: The square roots of the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) are shown by diagonal and italicised characters. The HTMT values are the elements below the diagonal.

5. Candidate Brand Image

	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.	11.	12.	13.	14.	15.	16.	17.	18.	19.	20.	21.	22.	23.	24.	25.	26.
1. Hard-working	<i>1.000</i>																									
2. Sharp	0.760	<i>1.000</i>																								
3. Creative	0.753	0.867	<i>1.000</i>																							
3. Innovative	0.789	0.849	0.925	<i>1.000</i>																						
4. Modern	0.726	0.750	0.797	0.806	<i>1.000</i>																					
5. Original	0.821	0.795	0.824	0.859	0.827	<i>1.000</i>																				
6. Cheerful	0.785	0.763	0.807	0.793	0.824	0.839	<i>1.000</i>																			
7. Sentimental	0.685	0.661	0.682	0.673	0.718	0.705	0.808	<i>1.000</i>																		
8. Friendly	0.761	0.751	0.806	0.782	0.798	0.800	0.870	0.792	<i>1.000</i>																	
9. Cool	0.707	0.674	0.715	0.716	0.738	0.750	0.810	0.746	0.825	<i>1.000</i>																
10. Young	0.548	0.620	0.621	0.623	0.631	0.580	0.659	0.619	0.670	0.669	<i>1.000</i>															
11. Intelligent	0.859	0.816	0.819	0.831	0.772	0.823	0.761	0.662	0.762	0.682	0.588	<i>1.000</i>														
12. Generous	0.792	0.725	0.757	0.780	0.761	0.813	0.819	0.741	0.823	0.800	0.656	0.755	<i>1.000</i>													
13. Loyal	0.837	0.789	0.772	0.797	0.793	0.867	0.850	0.735	0.791	0.759	0.622	0.815	0.866	<i>1.000</i>												
14. Sincere	0.853	0.754	0.768	0.790	0.763	0.878	0.819	0.715	0.804	0.753	0.579	0.811	0.861	0.915	<i>1.000</i>											
15. Reliable	0.805	0.775	0.809	0.826	0.744	0.834	0.777	0.676	0.781	0.705	0.597	0.803	0.812	0.883	0.906	<i>1.000</i>										
16. Glamorous	0.533	0.498	0.556	0.558	0.626	0.556	0.670	0.646	0.641	0.673	0.658	0.509	0.631	0.560	0.561	0.524	<i>1.000</i>									
17. Good looking	0.610	0.543	0.594	0.601	0.664	0.645	0.724	0.690	0.699	0.752	0.678	0.590	0.692	0.664	0.658	0.599	0.835	<i>1.000</i>								
18. Charming	0.608	0.550	0.599	0.597	0.672	0.659	0.740	0.717	0.715	0.747	0.670	0.597	0.710	0.665	0.659	0.586	0.818	0.913	<i>1.000</i>							
19. Leader	0.863	0.796	0.778	0.798	0.752	0.817	0.762	0.668	0.755	0.683	0.531	0.885	0.764	0.829	0.826	0.804	0.505	0.602	0.584	<i>1.000</i>						
20. Successful	0.811	0.729	0.737	0.758	0.726	0.779	0.746	0.660	0.741	0.691	0.572	0.823	0.757	0.787	0.789	0.755	0.576	0.626	0.617	0.831	<i>1.000</i>					
21. Constant	0.822	0.812	0.810	0.844	0.754	0.824	0.798	0.696	0.790	0.724	0.625	0.846	0.785	0.831	0.820	0.844	0.513	0.590	0.581	0.852	0.825	<i>1.000</i>				
22. Responsible	0.829	0.835	0.850	0.865	0.780	0.842	0.786	0.668	0.803	0.710	0.614	0.867	0.788	0.856	0.839	0.887	0.516	0.569	0.580	0.853	0.813	0.897	<i>1.000</i>			
24. Dynamic	0.841	0.847	0.808	0.848	0.756	0.829	0.809	0.702	0.769	0.719	0.621	0.837	0.793	0.837	0.818	0.810	0.570	0.620	0.635	0.840	0.820	0.860	0.874	<i>1.000</i>		
25. Energetic	0.850	0.834	0.812	0.842	0.810	0.846	0.806	0.701	0.762	0.725	0.606	0.842	0.786	0.833	0.826	0.785	0.572	0.632	0.635	0.832	0.818	0.816	0.841	0.907	<i>1.000</i>	
26. Enterprising	0.819	0.818	0.811	0.814	0.782	0.832	0.809	0.717	0.761	0.723	0.605	0.823	0.780	0.819	0.792	0.778	0.599	0.645	0.654	0.824	0.807	0.824	0.840	0.874	0.884	<i>1.000</i>

Note: The square roots of the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) are shown by diagonal and italicised characters. The HTMT values are the elements below the diagonal.

Cross-loadings examined the outer loading of each of the indicator (in all five scales) on the linked concept. Cross-loadings tables make it easy to look at several items to assess which ones have high loadings on the same construct and which ones have high loadings on many constructions.

In each scale, the values are found to be larger than any of the cross-loadings on other constructs. The gray shaded regions in all the five tables represent the loadings on the linked concept. For Political Marketing Mix and VOTQUAL, the vales are also checked for their respective dimensions as well.

Results are presented in Table 18.

Table 18: Discriminant Validity of the Scales – Cross Loadings

1. Political Marketing Mix

		1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	Political Marketing Mix
1. People & Evidence	PM1	0.652	0.385	0.426	0.367	0.293	0.337	0.199	0.255	0.253	0.475
	PM2	0.632	0.324	0.476	0.361	0.223	0.141	0.086	0.200	0.102	0.398
	PM3	0.835	0.412	0.573	0.493	0.335	0.300	0.226	0.346	0.271	0.575
	PM4	0.777	0.497	0.518	0.466	0.282	0.218	0.264	0.322	0.270	0.548
	PM5	0.754	0.296	0.504	0.466	0.176	0.198	0.125	0.198	0.130	0.438
	PM6	0.759	0.366	0.512	0.455	0.279	0.265	0.192	0.254	0.217	0.501
	PM7	0.575	0.128	0.394	0.266	0.087	0.128	-0.038	0.084	0.047	0.265
	PM8	0.745	0.516	0.510	0.525	0.399	0.367	0.355	0.417	0.399	0.627
2. Party	PM9	0.569	0.710	0.423	0.396	0.325	0.281	0.363	0.413	0.373	0.571
	PM10	0.302	0.800	0.330	0.349	0.521	0.453	0.540	0.449	0.476	0.607
	PM11	0.393	0.649	0.512	0.440	0.409	0.262	0.301	0.299	0.247	0.524
	PM12	0.319	0.791	0.368	0.463	0.457	0.508	0.476	0.435	0.513	0.617
	PM13	0.447	0.823	0.580	0.513	0.582	0.448	0.562	0.564	0.548	0.738
3. Promotion	PM14	0.486	0.658	0.760	0.591	0.559	0.480	0.496	0.498	0.506	0.736
	PM15	0.522	0.367	0.778	0.531	0.336	0.353	0.133	0.259	0.268	0.531
	PM16	0.626	0.444	0.904	0.640	0.422	0.372	0.229	0.344	0.329	0.646
	PM17	0.623	0.443	0.889	0.659	0.439	0.333	0.211	0.319	0.289	0.633
	PM18	0.584	0.000	0.832	0.633	0.437	0.330	0.348	0.460	0.356	0.667
4. Persuasion	PM19	0.302	0.401	0.458	0.678	0.500	0.398	0.353	0.341	0.364	0.543
	PM20	0.559	0.530	0.674	0.801	0.484	0.396	0.422	0.474	0.420	0.695
	PM21	0.468	0.448	0.507	0.801	0.481	0.471	0.415	0.457	0.472	0.645
	PM22	0.433	0.270	0.526	0.661	0.336	0.317	0.126	0.219	0.187	0.452
5. Polling	PM23	0.422	0.541	0.554	0.613	0.819	0.463	0.461	0.466	0.407	0.694
	PM24	0.360	0.519	0.484	0.538	0.864	0.574	0.547	0.514	0.510	0.707
	PM25	0.232	0.526	0.373	0.467	0.879	0.598	0.642	0.564	0.572	0.689
	PM26	0.303	0.535	0.439	0.508	0.893	0.602	0.603	0.580	0.517	0.715
6. Price	PM27	0.317	0.465	0.383	0.453	0.581	0.865	0.544	0.488	0.534	0.645
	PM28	0.318	0.471	0.429	0.498	0.580	0.893	0.522	0.484	0.472	0.654
	PM29	0.258	0.382	0.328	0.411	0.470	0.766	0.497	0.457	0.460	0.560
7. Product	PM30	0.212	0.531	0.287	0.380	0.571	0.582	0.893	0.595	0.595	0.647
	PM31	0.243	0.548	0.315	0.432	0.586	0.567	0.922	0.631	0.607	0.678
	PM32	0.287	0.555	0.358	0.449	0.611	0.530	0.902	0.711	0.614	0.708
8. Place	PM33	0.416	0.593	0.472	0.493	0.553	0.524	0.682	0.886	0.662	0.757
	PM34	0.430	0.497	0.464	0.510	0.503	0.475	0.594	0.882	0.620	0.715
	PM35	0.217	0.405	0.323	0.387	0.495	0.471	0.556	0.872	0.589	0.612
	PM36	0.257	0.515	0.338	0.423	0.598	0.502	0.659	0.858	0.693	0.685
9. Personality Trait	PM37	0.342	0.515	0.462	0.461	0.495	0.507	0.554	0.641	0.898	0.676
	PM38	0.228	0.525	0.304	0.442	0.545	0.530	0.645	0.675	0.892	0.656

2. VOTQUAL

		1	2	3	4	5	VOTQUAL
1.Competence	Competance1	0.880	0.439	0.339	0.012	0.259	0.766
	Competance2	0.857	0.371	0.328	0.032	0.247	0.726
	Competance3	0.840	0.391	0.332	0.069	0.192	0.722
	Competance4	0.883	0.403	0.368	0.073	0.252	0.767
	Competance5	0.813	0.344	0.354	0.063	0.206	0.698
2.Emathy	EMPATHY1	0.357	0.802	0.347	0.014	0.226	0.608
	EMPATHY2	0.301	0.760	0.244	-0.110	0.191	0.519
	EMPATHY3	0.422	0.843	0.339	-0.027	0.289	0.660
	EMPATHY4	0.349	0.742	0.284	0.066	0.204	0.565
3.Helpfulness	HELPFULNESS1	0.364	0.321	0.856	-0.017	0.384	0.607
	HELPFULNESS2	0.392	0.375	0.885	0.079	0.210	0.638
	HELPFULNESS3	0.258	0.291	0.810	0.006	0.215	0.509
4.Satisfaction	Age	0.103	-0.049	0.038	0.856	0.014	0.117
	Charisma	0.038	-0.010	-0.007	0.783	-0.002	0.074
	Diplomas	0.009	0.044	-0.017	0.768	0.077	0.084
	FamilyBackground	-0.005	-0.025	0.032	0.819	0.067	0.068
	Gender	0.051	-0.075	0.017	0.824	0.012	0.070
	HighestPrevOff	0.073	0.026	0.062	0.870	0.124	0.149
	LooksPhysiognomy	-0.019	-0.039	-0.010	0.753	-0.015	0.028
	OutwardAppearnace	-0.027	-0.057	-0.026	0.760	0.014	0.016
5.Trustworthiness	TRUSTWORTHINESS1	0.271	0.292	0.319	0.063	1.000	0.458

3. Voting Intention

	1	2	3	4	Voting Intention
1. vote for candidate	1.000	0.596	0.545	0.709	0.835
2. information about candidate	0.596	1.000	0.808	0.548	0.873
3. candidate's stance	0.545	0.808	1.000	0.562	0.862
4. would vote for the candidate	0.709	0.548	0.562	1.000	0.825

4. Candidate-Party Brand-Fit

		1	2	3	4	Brand-Fit
1.consistent	1. ParentBrandFit_1	1.000	0.634	0.570	0.559	0.808
2.complementary	2. ParentBrandFit_2	0.634	1.000	0.673	0.641	0.870
3.fit	3. ParentBarndFit_3	0.570	0.673	1.000	0.688	0.866
4.related	4. ParentBrandFit_4	0.559	0.641	0.688	1.000	0.852

5. Candidate Brand Image

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
1.HardWorking	1.000	0.859	0.863	0.811	0.822	0.829	0.841	0.850	0.819	0.760	0.753	0.789	0.726	0.821	0.785	0.685	0.761	0.707	0.548	0.792	0.837	0.853	0.805	0.533	0.610	0.608
2.Intelligent	0.859	1.000	0.885	0.823	0.846	0.867	0.837	0.842	0.823	0.816	0.819	0.831	0.772	0.823	0.761	0.662	0.762	0.682	0.588	0.755	0.815	0.811	0.803	0.509	0.590	0.597
3.Leader	0.863	0.885	1.000	0.831	0.852	0.853	0.840	0.832	0.824	0.796	0.778	0.798	0.752	0.817	0.762	0.668	0.755	0.683	0.531	0.764	0.829	0.826	0.804	0.505	0.602	0.584
4.Successful	0.811	0.823	0.831	1.000	0.825	0.813	0.820	0.818	0.807	0.729	0.737	0.758	0.726	0.779	0.746	0.660	0.741	0.691	0.572	0.757	0.787	0.789	0.755	0.576	0.626	0.617
5.Constant	0.822	0.846	0.852	0.825	1.000	0.897	0.860	0.816	0.824	0.812	0.810	0.844	0.754	0.824	0.798	0.696	0.790	0.724	0.625	0.785	0.831	0.820	0.844	0.513	0.590	0.581
6.Responsible	0.829	0.867	0.853	0.813	0.897	1.000	0.874	0.841	0.840	0.835	0.850	0.865	0.780	0.842	0.786	0.668	0.803	0.710	0.614	0.788	0.856	0.839	0.887	0.516	0.569	0.580
7.Dynamic	0.841	0.837	0.840	0.820	0.860	0.874	1.000	0.907	0.874	0.847	0.808	0.848	0.756	0.829	0.809	0.702	0.769	0.719	0.621	0.793	0.837	0.818	0.810	0.570	0.620	0.635
8.Energetic	0.850	0.842	0.832	0.818	0.816	0.841	0.907	1.000	0.884	0.834	0.812	0.842	0.810	0.846	0.806	0.701	0.762	0.725	0.606	0.786	0.833	0.826	0.785	0.572	0.632	0.635
9.Enterprising	0.819	0.823	0.824	0.807	0.824	0.840	0.874	0.884	1.000	0.818	0.811	0.814	0.782	0.832	0.809	0.717	0.761	0.723	0.605	0.780	0.819	0.792	0.778	0.599	0.645	0.654
10.Sharp	0.760	0.816	0.796	0.729	0.812	0.835	0.847	0.834	0.818	1.000	0.867	0.849	0.750	0.795	0.763	0.661	0.751	0.674	0.620	0.725	0.789	0.754	0.775	0.498	0.543	0.550
11.Creative	0.753	0.819	0.778	0.737	0.810	0.850	0.808	0.812	0.811	0.867	1.000	0.925	0.797	0.824	0.807	0.682	0.806	0.715	0.621	0.757	0.772	0.768	0.809	0.556	0.594	0.599
12.Innovative	0.789	0.831	0.798	0.758	0.844	0.865	0.848	0.842	0.814	0.849	0.925	1.000	0.806	0.859	0.793	0.673	0.782	0.716	0.623	0.780	0.797	0.790	0.826	0.558	0.601	0.597
13.Modern	0.726	0.772	0.752	0.726	0.754	0.780	0.756	0.810	0.782	0.750	0.797	0.806	1.000	0.827	0.824	0.718	0.798	0.738	0.631	0.761	0.793	0.763	0.744	0.626	0.664	0.672
14.Orignal	0.821	0.823	0.817	0.779	0.824	0.842	0.829	0.846	0.832	0.795	0.824	0.859	0.827	1.000	0.839	0.705	0.800	0.750	0.580	0.813	0.867	0.878	0.834	0.556	0.645	0.659
15.Cheerful	0.785	0.761	0.762	0.746	0.798	0.786	0.809	0.806	0.809	0.763	0.807	0.793	0.824	0.839	1.000	0.808	0.870	0.810	0.659	0.819	0.850	0.819	0.777	0.670	0.724	0.740
16.Sentimental	0.685	0.662	0.668	0.660	0.696	0.668	0.702	0.701	0.717	0.661	0.682	0.673	0.718	0.705	0.808	1.000	0.792	0.746	0.619	0.741	0.735	0.715	0.676	0.646	0.690	0.717
17.Friendly	0.761	0.762	0.755	0.741	0.790	0.803	0.769	0.762	0.761	0.751	0.806	0.782	0.798	0.800	0.870	0.792	1.000	0.825	0.670	0.823	0.791	0.804	0.781	0.641	0.699	0.715
18.Cool	0.707	0.682	0.683	0.691	0.724	0.710	0.719	0.725	0.723	0.674	0.715	0.716	0.738	0.750	0.810	0.746	0.825	1.000	0.669	0.800	0.759	0.753	0.705	0.673	0.752	0.747
19.Young	0.548	0.588	0.531	0.572	0.625	0.614	0.621	0.606	0.605	0.620	0.621	0.623	0.631	0.580	0.659	0.619	0.670	0.669	1.000	0.656	0.622	0.579	0.597	0.658	0.678	0.670
20.Generous	0.792	0.755	0.764	0.757	0.785	0.788	0.793	0.786	0.780	0.725	0.757	0.780	0.761	0.813	0.819	0.741	0.823	0.800	0.656	1.000	0.866	0.861	0.812	0.631	0.692	0.710
21.Loyal	0.837	0.815	0.829	0.787	0.831	0.856	0.837	0.833	0.819	0.789	0.772	0.797	0.793	0.867	0.850	0.735	0.791	0.759	0.622	0.866	1.000	0.915	0.883	0.560	0.664	0.665
22.Sincere	0.853	0.811	0.826	0.789	0.820	0.839	0.818	0.826	0.792	0.754	0.768	0.790	0.763	0.878	0.819	0.715	0.804	0.753	0.579	0.861	0.915	1.000	0.906	0.561	0.658	0.659
23.Reliable	0.805	0.803	0.804	0.755	0.844	0.887	0.810	0.785	0.778	0.775	0.809	0.826	0.744	0.834	0.777	0.676	0.781	0.705	0.597	0.812	0.883	0.906	1.000	0.524	0.599	0.586
24.Glamorous	0.533	0.509	0.505	0.576	0.513	0.516	0.570	0.572	0.599	0.498	0.556	0.558	0.626	0.556	0.670	0.646	0.641	0.673	0.658	0.631	0.560	0.561	0.524	1.000	0.835	0.818
25.GoodLooking	0.610	0.590	0.602	0.626	0.590	0.569	0.620	0.632	0.645	0.543	0.594	0.601	0.664	0.645	0.724	0.690	0.699	0.752	0.678	0.692	0.664	0.658	0.599	0.835	1.000	0.913
26.Charming	0.608	0.597	0.584	0.617	0.581	0.580	0.635	0.635	0.654	0.550	0.599	0.597	0.672	0.659	0.740	0.717	0.715	0.747	0.670	0.710	0.665	0.659	0.586	0.818	0.913	1.000

3.7. Summary of the Chapter

This study follows the philosophy of pragmatism, the conceptualization of the ontological stance of which lies in the centre on the objectivity-subjectivity continuum. Pragmatism is a pluralistic philosophy and helps in understanding untrodden and untapped research paths. However, this study has not employed this philosophy merely because it is practically appealing and can justify the use of MMR. It is chosen as the governing philosophy for this study because pragmatism offers practical implications and outcomes for the problems faced in the real world. Since this study aims to present useful information related to the under-researched co-brand image and positioning concept for researchers, policy makers and practitioners, this appeared as the best choice. MMR includes attributes of both positivism and constructivism and helps in generating precise information looking at the reality from different ontological stances. Sequential exploratory MMR aided in achieving a meticulous analysis with through understanding. Qualitative study resulted in the formation of a framework which was assessed and refined by the quantitative study. Choice of methods should be consistent with that of the research design. Data collection methods for the qualitative study is semi-structured interviews. While for the quantitative strand, self-administrative questionnaire (survey) is chosen. This chapter also presents the details about both qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis.

QUALITATIVE FINDINGS & ANALYSIS

CHAPTER 4: QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS & DISCUSSION

4.0. Introduction

This chapter explores political co-brand Image, positioning, and image transference between the political co-brand (at the constituency level) and the political corporate brand (at the national level). The framework developed by Armannsdottir et al. (2019b) (presented in Figure 3) is employed as a theoretical lens to explain the findings. This chapter also presents findings of the assessment and application of Political Co-brand Identity, in the post-election context. In this way this chapter presents findings of the qualitative analysis and presents the key research findings with reference to the two overarching qualitative research questions (stated in Chapter 1).

The semi-structured interviews have resulted in identifying seven crucial elements for forming image and positioning of a political brand. 7 emergent themes represent the factors needed for establishing any political brand's image and positioning elements. Section 4.1 answers the two research questions and presents the seven themes. The chapter culminates on section 4.2 which explains how the themes fit within the 6 dimensions of the framework and the development of the *Political Co-brand Image and Positioning Framework* and negative image transference between the co-brands and the corporate brand.

4.1. Findings

This section presents the seven broad themes which emerged as a result of qualitative data analysis. This section answers the first two qualitative research questions (stated in Chapter 1). The cardinal themes which surfaced for image and positioning include (1) *slogans & political rhetorical*; (2) *candidates' availability*; (3) *popularity & charisma*; (4) *political culture*; (5) *issues in constituencies & electorates characteristics*; (6) *performance, governance & democracy*; and (7)

vision, credibility, consistency & reliability. The themes and sub-themes are summarised in Table 19a. (Please see *APPENDIX A-IIIa and AIIIB* for a more detailed table and perceptual map.) These themes represent factors which create formidable image for a political brand and position the brand in electorates' mind.

Table 19a: Themes & Sub-themes – Co-brand Image and Positioning Creation & Management

Themes	Sub-themes
1.Slogans and Political Rhetoric	Slogans, not solutions (<i>Party related factor</i>); Fake and vague promises (<i>Candidate related factors</i>)
	Choice of words; Sledging (<i>Candidates related factor</i>)
2.Candidate Availability	Candidate's non-appearance (<i>Candidate related factor</i>)
3.Popularity & Charisma	Personality & popularity of the founder (<i>Figurehead related factor</i>)
	Charisma (<i>Figurehead/candidate related factor</i>)
4.Political Culture	Political dominance & Economic Affluency as Essential Ingredients (<i>candidate related factors</i>)
	Leader-centric Politics (<i>Candidate related factor</i>)
	Political Salesmanship & Strategies to Shape Electorates' Perception . (<i>Figurehead/candidate related factor</i>)
5.Issues in Constituencies & Electorates Characteristics	Knowledge about the pressing issues in the respective constituencies
	Electorates' characteristics like personality, ideology, and literacy etc. (<i>candidate related factor</i>)
6.Performance, Governance & Democracy	of the people, by the people, for the people (<i>candidate and party related factor</i>)
7.Vision, Credibility, Consistency & Reliability	Vision (<i>figurehead related factor</i>)
	Credibility, consistency & reliability (<i>candidate and party related factor</i>)

The results have suggested that PTI, PMLN and PPP are the three major players in Pakistani politics. Respondents inadvertently use examples of PTI, PMLN and PPP while expressing their point of view.

Theme 1: Slogans & Political Rhetoric

The analysis demonstrates how communication strategies like political slogans and candidates' political rhetoric create image in electorates' mind and position the brands. This theme elaborates how party slogans (given by the leader) and political discourse (by the candidates on different media platforms) and aid in the image transference between the co-brand (which is working in the district or constituency) and corporate brand. Two sub-themes are grouped under this theme. These are *slogans, not solution* and *choice of words*. These elements of communication have become the fabric of the political brands and voting is done on the basis of slogans, at the constituency and national level.

Sub-theme 1: Slogans, not solution

Data collected through interviews suggests that slogans are influencing electorates in analysing and evaluating the co-brands in their respective constituencies. The effectiveness of a slogan, in particularly Pakistani context, is that it is a country where literacy rate is very low, majority live in the rural areas and are deprived of basic needs and opportunities to live a better life. The lack of education increases a person's gullibility and naivety and influences how they process information and how much evidence they require before accepting it as true. This finding was recurrent in the data besides the quintessential regional demographic characteristics (e.g. zaat, bradari, influence and charisma of the leader, etc.) for making slogans powerful. This population does not have access to necessities including healthcare, education, and knowledge of the law, among others. In one analysts' opinion,

We are looking at a mostly illiterate and semi-literate society... I think jingles, catchy slogans still sell because there is lack of awareness, education, understanding of things [cognitive skills]. So, they are very important. (H2)

Findings show that slogans are heavily used by the political candidates (representing their co-brand) because they capture the attention of the electorates by luring them to believe that their needs, and deprivations will be fulfilled by the political candidate. Slogans are knitted with the party brand's name with which the co-brands are associated (especially the three major political brands: PTI, PMLN and PPP), and influence minds and convince electorates in believing that the brand is reliable. Findings tell that the slogans inform electorates about what the co-brand intends to offer to them in their constituency. In this way slogans create a buzz in the target market. Slogans are deputized for political brands because they help in the ideal representation of the co-brands in their respective constituency. Not just that, they aid in picking up the brand, as well as in assuming and associating positive meaning to the brand.

One common view among the interviewees was that slogans which come from the party leader (from the corporate level, i.e.), is followed by the electorates more at the constituency level because of their emotional allegiance with the leader:

Slogans are very important...when coming from a grand leader, people really follow it. Sometimes it is the fundamental denominator of success of any political party..(Q5).

This has appeared to be one of the main reasons why candidates mostly rely on political rhetoric and sloganeering in a low literacy-rate population in Pakistan, according to the data. For instance, data provided evidence that PPP (Pakistan People's Party)'s founder, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto vowed to meet the basic needs. The slogan he gave was *Roti, Kapra aur Makaan* (which means *Food, Clothing and Shelter*, in English) promised to satisfy the basic needs to propel electorates to prefer him:

...if we go back to let's say 30 years from hence, I can recall there was a slogan called *roti, karra aur makaan*. It attracted the people and people voted for political party for their slogan. They didn't get it for five years. And then whenever thereafter they got the chance to come back into the election, again it was the same slogan but with greater vigor, with changed leadership. And again, people thought that this time hopefully people [candidates] will be sincere, and they will deliver. And the same slogan...It appealed, and people [electorates] again brought the same party into power... They never

presented any clear strategy for improving the lives of the masses. Their slogan was that this is the poor man's party, this is the labourer's party... (G3)

PPP's slogan helped the co-brands gain traction in major cities, towns and even in the low-literacy parts of the country. While PPP's reputation has suffered as a result of the poor performance of its co-brands (particularly candidates), findings show that the slogan remains popular among the general public. Electorates believe slogans more when it is given by the party leaders to express the ideal depiction of what a brand values. Despite the problems electorates face when candidate fail their expectations, underachieve, and disappoint, this appears to be a strong factor of positioning the co-brands favourably. Findings show that the perception about co-brands (candidates, specifically) performance is not satisfactory, but the slogans appear to have been successfully encouraging the acceptability of not just the brand but its new generation of candidates as well. This is an indication of the power of slogan. They are helping co-brands in creating the oomph and positively influencing the perception of the electorates withing their respective constituency.

Another political party which appeared in the data frequently was PTI. Findings indicate that the slogans which intended to encourage people for a national cause (e.g. eradication of corruption) may work in the constituencies in the urban regions, but have no impact on the rural population. Findings show that the sloganeering of Pakistan Tehreek e Insaaf¹⁴ (PTI)'s political mobilization efforts were trying to make people think and was encouraging people for a national cause, which was the eradication of corruption, at the constituency level. Rural residents were unable to understand the significance of fighting corruption. What is important for them is their own day to day life. For them, satisfaction of basic needs is more important than dealing with issues like corruption:

Slogans against corruption attracted the educated people, they attracted the youth. They didn't have much attraction in the rural areas where people didn't understand much, where the life is very difficult...They [people in the rural areas] are concerned about ...common utilities and services which a

¹⁴ PTI, the ruling party at the moment, inspired and set the voters mood about the eradication of corruption. Urban youth and the educated segments were their focus of attention.

man would need. And their life revolves around these. So, masses in rural areas ...are not bothered who is indulging in corruption ... but they are definitely bothered about their own day to day life...[People] will buy a slogan which appeals to them, ... people do not have that kind of education, wisdom, forth thought that they should be able to analyse that this man is telling lies. So, they go by those slogans, they go by those lies etc. They start accepting, start feeling happy about it. And, at the end of the day, they are the sufferers because thereafter [post-election] nobody [political brands] bothers about those slogans. (G3)

Data has also provided evidence that slogans are the fake promises which do not offer any solutions. Findings show that slogans are perceived as political co-brand's promises and are used so heavily that they cast a spell on the electorates and create favourable image of the brand. This image in their mind becomes the most effective way a brand is seen by the electorates.

Findings show that the slogan of PTI (Pakistan Tehrik e Insaaf) *Naya Pakistan* (which is translated as *New Pakistan* in English), shepherded a fresh era and spread unaided awareness about the party, leader and its co-brands' with an intended strategy of promising *change*. For instance,

... recently this Pakistan Tehreek e Insaaf's Tabdeeli was embraced by the youth. They wanted change ... this slogan ushered a new era in the history...(Q5)

The slogan *Naya Pakistan* promised a ray of hope during hopelessness (Bhagat, 2018) and hence managed to earn appeal in the youth population and elicited a positive response. It appears that the youth who are the impressionable supporters, believed in everything Imran Khan (Chairman PTI) said without introspection, for example, one of the analysts who is also an academic researcher expressed this point in the following words,

They are talking to the youth. But they are not educating the youth on politics... politics is not about destroying State institutions. It is not about attacking... It is about responsibilities... (M2)

However, *Naya Pakistan* appeared as a vague slogan giving no clear roadmap regarding the co-brands strategies. For example, one of the analysts (who is looking at the political brands for more than 20-25 years) expressed this as:

Now we are living in the age of sound bites, tweets, tickers... they are reductionist view. Sometimes even slogans don't have meaning. For example, I give you example of Tony Blair's slogan, "New Labour, New England [Britain]". What does it mean? How you will define it? ...You can phrase catchy things but can't deconstruct when you explore the slogans little deeper...it is a contentless discourse. No substance. We will create a Naya Pakistan. What does Naya Pakistan mean? (Z1)

PTI's catchphrase/motto 'Naya Pakistan' frequently came up during the conversation. Slogan's main goal was to promote leadership's conviction related to fighting injustice and corruption. While those residing in the rural regions were unable to see the fight against corruption as vital, Naya Pakistan evolved as a hazy brand image with no clear path for the majority of the people living in the urban regions. Another analysts/policy specialist expressed the same opinion in the following words:

Everybody understood change in their own way. For example, change to me might mean that this drum of water right in front of us will be filled with water. My boss may have his own understanding of change. Slogans are those ambiguities that surround them [the majority of the populace]. They [political brands] build the web around them [the populace] in such a manner, that they [populace] can't resist falling into the trap. (S4)

From the findings it appears that the political co-brands are using attractive slogans and jingles as a strategy to mesmerise electorates with an image so that they perceive their co-brands as the right choice. They try to touch electorates sympathetic chord to be perceived as the only brand which can pull them out of their miseries as well as to mobilize electorates at the constituency level with an ulterior motive of gaining power and achieving political ambitions. Slogans are perceived as political co-brand's promises and are used so heavily that they cast a spell on the electorates and create favourable image of the brand in their mind which becomes the only way a political brand is perceived and positioned in the electorates mind. They are effective in Pakistan not just because a substantial percentage of Pakistani is generally ignorant, uninformed, and illiterate or semi-literate, but also because slogans are effective when the intended audience perceives them to be pertinent to them. Be it be the educated youth who is actively using tech devices and social media apps or the people living in rural areas.

Political co-brands use slogans as a means of swaying public opinion in and ultimately perceptions, in their favour as well as their thought process so that their cognition halts and they get involved emotionally:

When people begin to think and understand, start throbbing drums, make noise. This affects people's cognition [thought process]. Noise kills the questions which pop up in their minds. Slogan is a strategy. Slogans are a tool to quiet the questions [which pop up in voters mind] (S4)

Regulatory focus theory also explains this phenomenon. People want to achieve a desired state and avoid anything that is a mismatch to that perceived desired state. Slogans play this crucial role of reminding the electorates of their hopes of living under the government which is promising and presenting an ideal picture of a country. Then every time they get exposed to the slogan, they inadvertently associate their hopes and dreams with the brand. Slogans are the expression of ideology and offer the most effective means of mobilizing people.

In summary, it appears from the findings that slogans which are given by the party leader, set tone even at the constituency level. Such slogans play a crucial role in establishing the party and its candidates' image and positioning. Findings also show that slogans can affect the young lot's political engagement. This means that political brands, especially the corporate brand, need to be more responsible while trying to mobilize and engage the young lot, across Pakistan. Comparing the findings with the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics' analysis, it becomes further clear that slogans are affective because a substantial portion of the population is either unaware, uneducated, or semi-literate but also problem laden. Be it be the educated youth who is actively using tech devices and social media apps or the people living in rural areas. They are successful if the target demographic finds slogans meaningful to them. This is why sloganeering relies on finding the proper target market (which is primarily the 67.5 percent (according to the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics) of the population that lives in rural regions and the 24.3 percent (Farooq, 2018) of Pakistanis who reside in urban areas). This group lives in poverty and lacks access to essential services such as health care, education, and socio-legal knowledge. Slogans and political rhetoric on the electronic media specially give hope to the electorates regarding the co-

brand's expected performance. The findings in this way show that slogans have an impact on how Pakistani voters assess and evaluate political brands. This was a recurring theme in the data.

Sub-theme 2: Choice of words

Findings show that besides slogans the selection of words candidates use on TV and in person, is a strategy to attract the masses to establish a favourable brand image. For example:

...this is tradition in our country that campaigning is done on promises, slogans and berating the other political parties or their opponents (G3)

Data reports that the ways in which candidates (PTI, PMLN and PPP) engage in conversation with each other on the media, the frequent use of ill-suited political vocabulary and word choices on TV talk shows and on social media adversely affects the political brands' image. However, the use of rhetoric regarding politics on TV which also involves condemning and criticizing opponents in all kinds of media and other places, help co-brands in inspiring the masses. One of the analysts who has been assessing political brands since more than 20 years expressed this idea in the following words,

In our society, if you go to villages, there is a furore, there is a story, "this guy is great! today he insulted the boss!" That kind of tradition trickled down to our talk shows. Political vocabulary has deteriorated because of television. (Z1)

Another analysts who has been particularly looking at the political trends on the social media expressed the same opinion in the following words:

It's just same gimmickry taking place every day... I think they are trying to address the large bulk of our society where the jingles, where that Punjabi culture of threats, making fun of each other, throwing allegations is there. So, they are playing for the audience, masses. So, it is not what I would call very intelligent, but it works... facts should be presented as facts. I don't see any facts. I see repetition of the same things over and over and again... There is nothing new. Nothing which adds to the pool of knowledge or adds to someone's thinking, learning, or anything (H2).

Findings show that diverse perspectives are not respectfully expressed on television particularly. Findings show that it is a political brand strategy of

forming a desirable political image so that they are viewed as being open and utterly truthful, courageous, and determined because this style is well-liked by the general public, especially in rural areas. It matches with the rural culture and mindset of majority people living in the rural areas. Instead of sharing facts (something which adds to their knowledge) with the electorates on television, they use such strategies as means for building brand's image and positioning.

In summary, the choice of words candidates (representing their co-brand and the corporate brand) use on television shape and change people's perceptions of the political co-brands and the corporate brand, according to the findings. The present political rhetoric and word choices on media are usually improper and ill-suited for the society. However, this trend is widespread among the general public in Pakistan, particularly in rural regions. This is a tactic used by the three major political brands, to create and maintain an endearing image of being fearless, fair, truthful, and courageous. The findings show that electorates are more likely to support a co-brand when offensive political language is used and competitors are castigated in the media.

Theme 2: Candidates' Availability in their Constituencies

Analysis demonstrates that political candidates' presence in their respective constituencies is an important factor for creating desirable image of the brands in electorates' mind. This section presents findings which also elaborates how candidates' presence/absence (in their respective constituencies) affect the image transference between the corporate brand and the political co-brand.

Sub-theme 1: Candidates' Non-appearance

Data support evidence that the nonappearance in the constituency leaves a bad impression of the candidate which ultimately affect the image of the party brand (they are associated with). For example:

...they [candidates] detach themselves from the public and then they don't even visit them [electorates]. They rarely visit [their constituencies after elections].in the last election we saw the candidates who had been contesting...when visited [their constituency] again [for their GE2018]

campaign, they were pelted with stones and eggs...They hadn't visited their constituencies [after GE2013], They hadn't done anything for their areas. (A10)

Findings reveal that when electorates see that their elected representative are not doing anything to alleviate the constituency's problems, they switch to candidate brands who appear to them as somebody who can pull them out of their miseries. After election, the elected members rarely visit their offices. For instance, one of the analysts who covers political and security issues and who appears in political discussions frequently on news channels describe this issue in the following words:

I think the problem which we have is not the pre-election time, the post-election time [but] is the continuity and the availability of that person to the public good throughout the tenure...we see that most of those who have been elected to the national assembly rarely if ever go back to their offices and that creates public apathy with regards to democratic system if it actually the best way forward for them or not. And if so, whether it is delivering for them. So, that is why you find oscillation in people's views, expectations, and somebody being converted into a leader [party leader at the corporate. (M2)

This is an interesting finding since it suggests that the candidates can adversely influence the impression of the co-brand. The negative image of the candidates can affect the electorates' trust on the brand. Also, this negative image of the electorate can transfer from the constituency level to the corporate level and ultimately affect the leadership image. This negative image ultimately benefits the corporate brand's competitors. One of the analysts/research academicians expressed his opinion in the following words,

They [candidates] have one single aim. They want to come into power... May also want to serve the nation. But most of the time most of these people want to come into power...to satisfy their ego or to replenish the money that [have spent on] their election campaign. Rest it is nothing. (Y1)

During election campaigns, political candidates visit their constituencies frequently and the political party leaders travel across the country making promises to solve electorates' issues. Such visits may serve as crucial elements of the political campaigns. These activities have a positive influence and position the political brands favourably. However, after winning the elections and coming into

power when candidates do not visit their respective constituencies, this becomes a cause of unfavourable image for the candidate. The party with which the candidate is associated, is ultimately also seen in the same light.

In summary, it appears that candidate's presence in the constituency has a direct influence on the way a political co-brand gets positioned in the electorates' mind. Most of the respondents expressed exasperation about the absence of the candidates in their respective constituencies while suggesting the lack of seriousness of the co-brands in their respective constituencies.

Theme 3: Popularity & Charisma

This theme explains political leader's popularity and charisma create image for a co-brand, in electorates' mind. This section presents findings which also elaborates how political leaders' popularity and charisma influence the image transference from the political corporate brand towards the political co-brand (at the constituency level).

Findings show that the party leaders, especially Imran Khan, Nawaz Shareef and Zulfikar Ali Bhutto (late) play a major role in inspiring loyalty towards their co-brands. Electorates vote to support the brands if they admire party leader (at the corporate level). Findings reveal that the party leaders is larger than life for the electorates. Leaders are revered and praised for their charisma, intelligence, popularity, legislations, reforms, knowledge, public speaking as well as for their skill of convincing the target market, even after their death. Such leaders included Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto (late) and his daughter Benazir Bhutto (late). For instance, the respondents who are observing political brands for more than 20 years expresses their opinion in the following words:

I saw Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto purely on the basis of charisma mustering the support of masses at large scale. People were prepared to sacrifice their lives after him. It was only charisma. His own speaking power. He was a very intelligent, brilliant man. (G3)

Bhutto was a charismatic personality because he spoke his heart and he spoke about the interest of the people... the only political personality that Pakistan has got since the creation of Pakistan was Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. The

most charismatic, most able, and competent person who had the capacity to lead the Muslim world... (J5)

She [Benazir Bhutto] used to bring some intellectual touch to the political conversation. It was not ruthless discourse. (Z1)

Findings show that necessarily legislation improves conditions and raises people' perceptions of fairness and trust in the leader. In the end, it may also benefit the image and positioning of the corporate brand and the associated co-brands. The lack of seriousness can adversely affect the perception about the political brand. (This point is further explained in Theme 6). One of the respondents expressed this in the following way,

Why there is no new legislation? This is across the board... a criticism for all political parties. Their primary job is not to sit on the television show and argue. Their primary job is to legislate. You are faced with the problem. Legislate. Lobby. Work inside the parliament. Why is it that all politics in Pakistan is discussed outside the parliament? So, they have to give preference... to the most Premier State institution in the country and that is the Parliament of Pakistan. (M2)

However, there was a sense among interviewees that leaders (corporate political brand) are so popular and brand loyalty is so strong that even when people are aware that the co-brands (of the corporate brand they like) have underperformed, they will prefer it. For instance, one of the respondents explained:

Personality of the leadership appeals more to the electorates when it comes to voting... Pakistan Tehreek e Insaaf is Imran Khan. Muslim League Noon is Nawaz Shareef. Another party [PPP] is Zardari. Nobody besides them...there are political workers who accept that my political party is corrupt, and my leader is corrupt...[When you ask them] who will you vote for? Same party!...this is because of factors like affiliation with the leader... People associate themselves with the leader. (A10)

Findings show that charisma is a positive quality as long as the political leaders and candidates understand their responsibilities, perform the duties well and responsibly abiding by the boundary lines constitution set for them, as one respondent expressed:

There is nothing wrong in being charismatic personality as long as you are not violating the constitutions and as long as you are not crossing the lines of

public servant. As a government servant, your charisma should not out-grow your constitutional legal mandate and jurisdiction. (J5)

Results provided evidence that after PPP's Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, Imran Khan, chairman PTI, earned huge fame and popularity in Pakistani politics. Imran Khan had been a sports celebrity and philanthropist who brought the same passion to his politics. Analysis of the data suggested that a large population trusted Imran Khan and his sincerity towards achieving the targets he vowed to achieve. This helped co-brands associated with PTI to succeed. However, findings also indicate that negative image transfer from corporate level towards co-brand level when leadership overemphasises an issue — for instance, corruption — ignoring the functions it is supposed to perform for the electorates at the constituency level. For example,

We are... extremely interested in how the world sees us and how we see the world. We... [have] been described over and over again as the most dangerous people living in the most dangerous part of the world... Where is the right of the ordinary law-abiding citizen of Pakistan whose identity in the global affairs has been taken away? Do you want to travel to another [country] where they say your Prime Minister is corrupt, or that the only issue in Pakistan is corruption? This is not what all Pakistan stands for. So [there is] overemphasis on the issues without coming up with solutions. We don't have a positive drive. We have slogans. [We] don't have deliverable democracy. And when you don't have deliverable democracy, what happens? People rise. Icons are built. And then icons come down crashing. Why? because they have no reality in the processes in which people are [living]. What happens 2 hundred and eighty million people? What happens to your identity? my identity? Identity of an average Pakistani who has done no crime. Who has been a good global citizen? Who gave them the right to term us as the most corrupt people or the most dangerous people? Who? (M2)

This point is further elaborated in Theme 6 (Sub-theme 1).

In summary, leadership is essential in establishing a favourable co-brand image. Even at the constituency level, all parties are centred around their leaders. Despite candidates' unavailability in their individual areas, the charisma of the leader appears to be favourably impacting the electorate's perception. This indicates that corporate brand's good image passes on to the co-brands. For Pakistanis, political leaders of the three major political parties were and still are larger-than-life figures. Their personality and charisma play a significant role in establishing a good image for their respective co-brands. Electorates

unintentionally rely on their demeanour and charisma—specifically, the persona and celebrity image of the founder—in order to simplify the cognitive overload and for making voting decisions regarding co-brands. This seems to be the most significant determinant of how a political co-brand is positioned. A successful leader in Pakistan has the ability to talk in public and strike a connection with the audience. As a result, amid poor performance, the rural populace (low literacy rate) still has faith in the corporate figurehead (PTI, PMLN, & PPP) and vote for them.

Theme 4: Political Culture

The findings show that elements like candidate's political dominance; their economic affluence; leader-centric politics; and how skilful the political brands are at Political Salesmanship & Strategies to Shape Electorates' Perception, are integral parts of political culture. This theme also elaborates how all of these elements influence the image transference from the political corporate brand towards the political co-brand (at the constituency level).

Three sub-themes emerged under this theme namely power and economic affluence as essential ingredients; leader-centric politics; and political salesmanship.

Sub-theme 1: Political Dominance & Economic Affluence as Essential Ingredients

A dominant view amongst the respondents was that the electorates, especially in the rural constituencies, perceive the candidates who has economic affluence, authority, living a lavish life to be powerful enough for representing them. The chances of the co-brand to succeed increases when the candidate possesses these qualities. The chosen candidates (who are/will become the elected officials) are expected to act as a bridge to connect the constituency with the federal government so that voters can use any resources and amenities they are entitled to and that were stated to be available to them, during the election campaigns. Promises (which were made during electioneering) are turned into electorates' perceptions of performance (PTI, PMLN & PPP).

For instance, one respondent expressed this point in the following words:

...people are willing [accept] the extravagant lifestyle of political leaders and others because that goes with the culture. They are expecting that person to play an extraordinary role in terms of being powerful enough to act as an intermediary...conduits of interface between different government officers...their desire that some government resources should be applied to their region, some of their you know basic standards are improved so this is how people expect them to actually act. People want them to be a liaison actually between government in terms of redirection of resource, redirection of others.” (M2)

Findings also reveal that political candidates’ financial power, connections with the political personalities (leaders etc.) and bureaucracy play a crucial role in making their position strong in their respective constituencies. All these factors make the electorates dependent on them. One analyst explained this in the following words:

...they [candidates] are very powerful. They assert their influence ... through their social connections...[Electorates] have a natural dependency towards [their] local leader, whether it is MNA¹⁵, MPA¹⁶... [who] assert themselves through... money...and the strings they hold because of the bureaucracy. That’s where the power comes from [at the constituency level]. (H2)

This is appearing as one of the points in the data which seems to influence the image and positioning of the co-brands adversely as candidates with such credentials cannot leave a good impression on electorates minds for long. In other analyst/research academician words,

... they need to bring some transparency and they should give chance of leadership to those coming from the grass root level and they should introduce some democracy in their political parties and dynastic politics should end because it will only help certain families and the elite... And those who deserve ... people who are young and who are enthusiastic and who sacrificed for the sake of ideology, they should come forward. Not the families and the elites. So, there is a need to have a regulatory reform (Q5)

¹⁵ The democratically elected members of the national assembly of Pakistan are called Members of the National Assembly or MNAs.

¹⁶ The democratically elected members of the national assembly of Pakistan are called Members of the Provincial Assembly or MPAs.

The findings indicates that this contributes to the strengthening of leader centric politics in Pakistan (discussed in the next sub-theme).

Sub-theme 2: Leader Centric Politics

A dominant view held by the respondents based on their informed assessment of electorates and multiple constituencies shows that candidates come from financially strong family with strong social connections (as discussed in sub-theme 1). Findings reveals that a large illiterate, landless, socially, and financially deprived and marginalised population is being controlled by financially strong candidates. In certain cases, electorates are asked to vote for a candidate the feudal lord recommends. There was a common view among the respondents that the candidates like the party leaders, represent elites. It appears from the findings that political brands, at every level are leader-centric and this is a major cause of dynastic politics in Pakistan. Family members of the leader continue to participate in politics under the aegis of the leader. They are perceived as not truly democratic or institutionalised political organisations. One of the analysts explicitly expressed this in the following words:

...if tomorrow people's party wins the election, the Bilawal Bhutto becomes the Prime Minister. How can we say that he is the only choice available in our country?... Tomorrow Bilawal may have his own children and he may aspire or his sister may be the Prime Minister. This is what the families are doing. Let's say if Nawaz Shareef is removed from the scene, Maryam Nawaz is there. Maryam Nawaz goes away then you have Hamza Shahbaz.
(G3)

Findings show that the personality and charisma of the leader pay a pivotal role in the politics and contribute to dynastic politics with many members of the same family participating in politics. People cast votes in their names. Candidates (who are financially strong with political backgrounds) and their partnering party brand's connection with the leaders makes their position formidable in their respective constituency. For instance,

These are leader centric political parties... so personality matters... Unfortunately, party is like my childhood game when somebody who can afford bat and ball, they will be the captain automatically they will bat twice maybe and put all the citizens as fielders. So, we have a very weak political party culture... we have a leader-centric parties...All parties suffer from the

same predicament. Take the example, PTI was created in 1996. Since then only one person is the Chairperson. Jamiat Ulma e Islam, after Mufti Mehmood his son is [the party president]... Bhuttos, since the birth of PPP. PMLN since its creation within [Shareef] family ... ANP, Wali Khan family. So, name any party, it is not a disease confined to one specific party. It is I would say wide-spread. (Z1)

In PMLN, N [stands] for Nawaz. [without] Nawaz ...it doesn't exist. Peoples' Party has the legacy of having these Bhuttos. So, they are not really democratic or institutionalised political organisations. And that's the same case in the whole [Indian] Sub-Continent, not just in [Pakistan], even in Nepal, in India of course. (M5)

Leader is so important that the parties are named after their leader. For instance, in PMLN, N stands for Nawaz. And in JUI-F, F stands for Maulana Fazlur Rehman. And that's the same case in the whole region. Almost all political parties are leader-centric and place a strong emphasis on leader's charisma, stature in country's politics, and members prefer to be led by the same political family.

In summary, the personality of the leader, economic affluence and their charisma plays a pivotal role in the politics of Pakistan and contributes to leader-centric politics. Almost all political parties (including PTI, PMLN & PPP) have candidate who are economically powerful, politically well-connected candidates. Parties are centred around their leader and vehemently dependent on the charisma and popularity of the founding leader. The electoral support a leader and candidates get in different constituencies and districts is dependent on the leader's reputation and standing in the constituency. Respondents commented that the inclination toward leader-centric politics has permeated political society. Furthermore, the zaat-baradari system has a strong impact on the political decisions of electorates (as explained in theme 1). This implies that when heads of a tribe or a clan support a certain party and political leader, electorates of the region belonging to the same clan and tribe would in all case support this party and leader. Cast and clan system is popular at virtually most of the socioeconomic classes, and it is reinforcing leader-centric politics in Pakistan.

Sub-theme 3: Political Salesmanship & Strategies to Shape Electorates' Perception

From the way political co-brands mobilise people, it appears that the political parties either no longer adhere to their original ideologies or have none. This practice is prevalent at the co-brand as well as at the corporate level. From the findings it seems that the policies, attributes which any corporate should value, ideas which can serve as a foundation for the co-brands and a reference point to the electorates, are missing. From the data, it appears that is rather about presenting properly crafted material to the electorates. This is akin to putting aside the ideological benefits which can increase their chances of positioning the co-brand favourably. It appears that media, media specialists and their paraphernalia for framing leaders, candidates and parties favourably in the eyes of the electorates, have become more powerful than ever, just like other countries in the world:

I think towards the end of the 20th century and beginning of 21st century when this cyber spaces, satellite television came then a new notion started which is called “designer politics” that you market your design, you develop a product, you market the leader [and candidates]...Now it is no more battle of ideas and we have more emphasis on good governance that invariably produces good managers, not the people who have passion or ideology. Same happened in Pakistan. Initially when designer politics started, we had media cells. Own photographer will magnify the crowd, send the images which give a pleasant impression of a leader. Then we also had spin doctors here... Then came private channels and talk shows gave a very different view of a leader. Media, if it was print, maybe if leader said something naïve, the sub-editor edited it. If it was being manufactured by your own propaganda machine, then again you had the liberty to release the contents which please you or which you privilege. But now this television debates, these live-debates, they expose the leadership in their real format. So, again ideology is missing. It is more like asserting your will, your enthusiasm, and things like that. Ideologies have taken a back seat...with the advent of televised debates, designer democracy emerged. Earlier maybe not every citizen had the opportunity to listen to the leadership. They had the mediated image of the leader. But now here the leader is sitting on TV you can watch... Even in societies where educational, cultural capital is high, you end up producing couch potatoes and Trump is the classical example who became the beneficiary of that process. (Z1)

Data supports evidence that that in countries like Pakistan, political co-brands should strictly adhere to the ideology of the corporate brand to favourably position the co-brand (this is the second recurrent point in the data). The way they

behave give an impression that there is absence of ideological foundation at both co-brand and corporate levels:

Firstly, a political party... should have some foundation. An ideology...They must follow the constitutional and legal framework of the country which is agreed upon. And secondly, every political party should think about people at large (Q5)

Most of the respondents were of the opinion that while it is important for the political co-brands to be truly democratic and receptive to the electoral needs, ongoing development and advancements in the communication platforms have improved their ability to use publicity strategies. For instance, in promoting and creating sensation around the political brands, shaping electorates' opinions, raising their interest, etc.:

Around the world as in Pakistan, the role of media is very very integral in reshaping the peoples' perception. Reshaping, shaping, and reshaping peoples' perception (M5)

Data supports evidence that since the electronic media helps in regulating and controlling perceptions about the co-brands, the discussions on television (especially the ones related to any policy in which competing candidates participate), play a major role in influencing the image and positioning of the co-brands. Findings reveal that candidates investigate and try to comprehend events and incidents so that a sequence of marketing can be planned with an intention to mould political opinions of the voters through TV channels, in the brand's favour. Data suggests that different TV channels support their favourite corporate brands and television is used to create hype, conquer minds by posting and tweeting barrage of well-planned, and well-articulated messages. Co-brands are exercising political salesmanship, and this means the end of ideology. Image creation is all about the brand's campaign, appearance, slogans, berating opponents rather than forming policies and talking to the electorates using intelligent reasoning.

Some channels are friendly. Some to certain parties. Other channels are not that friendly. They are biased... In opinion making TV plays a major role...Social media is also very effective in creating an opinion. (A3)

The influence of political communication of this kind through various media can be so strong that it can mould public opinion and perception to create a particular image. An issue of minority interest can be transformed into an issue which is supported by a vast majority with the help of promotion on media:

It is all perception management ... in the past it was press, now TV. ... audience is developing its opinion on the basis of support [knowledge/information] they get from media ..it [media] is one of the major ingredient of public perception. And, then they play a role. There is nothing else for the audience, for a voter to distinguish between political parties. They have to depend on what the media is telling them... Basically, media is the source of information to make the opinion of the voter. (Q5)

Besides TV, data reported evidence regarding the promulgation of political narratives through social media and easy access of this content to the naïve and gullible public including the young lot. It has emerged as a source of political promotions with some unwanted aspects and repercussion which may be harmful for the society. For instance:

Social media is a megaphone in everybody's hand whether lunatic, whether creative, scholar, intellectual, everybody has the same megaphone... because of the social media, everybody has the simplistic naive solutions to inherently very complex problems... this creates lot of troubles but definitely it is the outreach, unfiltered, uncensored, original messages...Television is locale bound. You have to sit somewhere and watch. Print is locale bound. You have to sit somewhere and read. This [social media] could be like walking, sitting, sleeping, travelling, eating. So, real 24/7 is this one. You are not free. That [print and electronic media] 24/7 requires that you to sit somewhere.... Not everybody, why Prophets? Why not wisdom was spread on equitable bases. Society is somehow endured differently. Those who are endured to interpret, create knowledge. But some are only endowed to consume knowledge, make sense of knowledge, make use of knowledge. So, this inequality is very much divine. (Z1)

Almost all of the respondents were of the opinion that just like television, social media is also being exploited for promoting content suitable to the political candidates and the partnering brand, for instance:

“..electronic and social media is actually I would say it is being used for vested interest by different stakeholders... Every day, every evening you look at twitter, there's a trend being built up.and, it's all paid-for activity...and it's actually dangerous ...I think we have got hundred and fifty plus million mobile phones users in this country, 3G, 4G if you look at the PTA [Pakistan Telecommunication Authority]'s data more than two thirds of your population has access to 3G - 4G phones and connections. So, such

influence, whether it's Facebook, Twitter or WhatsApp, it is actually scary at times.” (H2)

Five of respondents were of the opinion that social media has given a new form of political direction to the youth participation in Pakistan where youth is the largest cohort using the social media, among other demographic groups. Findings reveal that while electronic media can create propaganda and/or excitement, social media can also be equally risky:

... electronic media has a short-term impact [comparatively]. ..it can create hypes. ... one image goes, and it can leave history but the picture stays in your phone forever till you delete it. How many people in Pakistan hold the smart phone? So, we need to be very careful in terms of which group it is going for, number one. Number two: is this that age group which is looking for responsibility or is it that age group which is looking for a cause. So that is the difference. (M2)

It appears from the finding that designer politics (political salesmanship, i.e.) and designer democracy is not a good strategy in countries like Pakistan, especially when political brands have deviated from their ideology. Designer politics or the political salesmanship becomes a cause of negative image transference. Based on values they have in high regard and consider important, Pakistani voters select political co-brands that have similar ideology as the voters/electorates. Findings show that the ideological grounding of a political brands is crucial for the positioning the corporate brand as well as its co-brands. This encapsulates the political leader's character, a way of life, behavior, cast, credibility, ethics etc. Findings reveal that the cast-system, which entails the clan leader suggesting support for any political party, is mostly responsible for the electorate's political decisions. The electorate in that region/district always vote favouring the brands head has preferred. This seems to be the primary factor explaining Pakistanis aversion to designer politics:

... we need to understand that politics in Pakistan is also hierarchical. Hierarchical in terms of just the way you have identity. People have tribal system, people have baradari, people have, you know have religious affiliations, ethnic affiliations. And, voting is not necessary done on the basis of electronic or print media, ...or social media impact... there is a saying in media, “overexposure kills”. So is the truth for politicians as well. (M2)

Hence, designer politics and designer democracy may not be a good strategy in countries like Pakistan. Television ratings may not depict the true picture about how consumers feel about the political brands:

...in Western societies if television ratings are high, there is probability that you will win election. Our precedent is if you advertise more on television, [it may not work]. Benazir Bhutto used to be demonised on television. We had one television [PTV]. Still, she used to win. So, classically Pakistan defies designer democracy. (Z1)

Findings show that Political Salesmanship & Strategies to Shape Electorates' Perception strategies including the commercial marketing tactics have taken a potentially harmful hold on politics. When politics is sold like a soap to build political brands' image, these tactics negatively influence the political co-brands positioning. This is because political brands veneer off their ideological groundings ignoring the political ideology of the electorates. Political ideology seems to be important for the electorates. Data analysis reveals that ideology is followed so passionately that even after the candidate/leader has passed away, his/her legacy continues. It is therefore important for the political co-brands to keep their voters in focus and understand their needs and wants.

In summary, the findings shows that co-brands place a greater emphasis on designer politics than on ideology and the corporate brand's philosophy. The analysis indicated that the advancement of political brands' skills in using publicity techniques to create hypes, raise attention, and shape public opinion and perception has progressed due to the ever-increasing sophistication and complexity of communication technologies. As per the analysis, electronic media assists in the manipulation of voter views. In Pakistan, the impact of media professionals and their instruments appears to have risen in order to build a positive brand image. According to the findings, brands investigate and study events and occurrences. The electorates' political opinions are then shaped and reshaped through a succession of campaigns. Today, it appears that political brands (PTI, PMLN & PPP) advertise their leader through carefully crafted material/content for the electorates. Ideology is important to electorates/voters and they will always judge a brand on the basis of its ideology. They will inadvertently rely on their values and socio-cultural and socio-economic factors

and use these factors as benchmarks to assess any political brand. Designer politics or the political salesmanship is clearly not working in Pakistan.

Theme 5: Issues in the Constituencies & Electorates' Characteristics

This theme brings together factors that explain the significance of the public's views, perception, and opinion about a candidate's acquaintance with local issues, community concerns, and electorate characteristics, etc. Such factors shape the image of political brand and help to position the brands favourably. This section also elaborates image transference from the political co-brand (at the constituency level) towards the political co-brand based on the candidate brands' understanding of their respective constituencies.

Sub-theme 1: Knowledge about the pressing issues in the constituencies

Findings show that the co-brands associated with the three major corporate brands (PTI, PMLN and PPP) understand the needs and problems in their respective constituencies to establish their image and positioning within the region. Making use of their knowledge about public's needs, wants, demands, concerns and other relevant information, political brands try to connect with the people living their respective constituency and try to position the brand favourably. One analysts/policy researcher explained in the following words:

....they [political brands] know what are the critical issues in Pakistan. ..political parties and the politicians know very well what are the issue [electorates face] in their areas [constituencies]...They know each and everything [about the electorates]. That's why they use those slogans and words in their speeches/public and meetings. (K1)

Findings show that the emotionally charged public speeches which reflect the candidate knows about the pressing issues, help them to be perceived as worthy of electorates support. Such populist speeches inspire a certain reaction from the electorates. Analysis also reveals that intelligent ideas are not presented instead the political rhetoric mostly revolves around addressing the grievances, poverty and the related problems electorates face in their respective constituencies. This is done to give them hope and build their interest and leaving an impression that the co-brand can pull them out of the miseries. Data suggests

that co-brands can prepare this rhetoric because they are well-aware of the electorates' real concerns, their needs, and problems. Speaking in detail, one analyst explained this strategy in the following words:

...the reason of this brand loyalty can be attributed to the voter's grievances, insecurities, crises, identity crisis, helplessness, compulsions, anticipation, and expectation of getting protection from the party, he maybe from a rural background.... For instance, in every single election or in every single debate, they use or pronounce the same conditions...if you presume for a while that if these conditions do not exist in a certain time and space, they will have nothing to sell. The way they mobilise the people is certainly not based on kind of strategic issues. It is just the grievances, short comings or issues which are being dealt or face by the individuals at a very micro level, and they need these conditions remain as it is to ensure the legitimacy. It is absolutely not in their interest to for instance eliminate or overcome the poverty or these other conditions, educations [etc.]... because the moment they are gone, there is nothing else to sell or nothing else to mobilise, so couple of things in addition to this, they do rather project a sense of collectively, identity based cleavages and identity based groups that will keep on enclosing the groups or the constituency ...Whatever political organisation there are, they have no deepness, no depth in them. (M5)

Findings reveal that candidate use this knowledge in public meetings, speeches and on media. They vow to solve problems and provide easy access to the basic amenities through political rhetoric, slogans, corporate brand's leader image.

In summary, when the political brands use the information to only strike a chord with the public without solving issues, they try to address the constituency needs without understanding the electorates' characteristics, this adversely affects their image and positioning. This point is further explained in the next sub-theme.

Sub-theme 2: Electorates' Characteristics

Most of the respondents explained that electorates do not read manifestos of the corporate brands to discover and learn about their rules and policies related to how its co-brands should perform:

... we are not literate enough or well exposed to the idea that reading their manifestos is very important and then gauging their performances on the manifesto. (M5)

However, what political brands need to understand is that Pakistan is a progressive country, unlike how it is portrayed mostly. Pakistanis need progressive development, progressive approach towards religion and they are vocal about this need. Unfortunately, political brands have not understood this and that is why they fail to deliver. In one of the analysts' words,

Pakistan is a very ideologically forward state...this is not something which most people try to term Pakistan as. But if you talk to ordinary Pakistanis, they want progressive approach towards religion, they want equal participation in different programs, and they are vocal about it... sometimes yes radicalized in certain things... but majority of the Pakistanis believe that they need progressive development. And that's where most of these leaders infringe upon...fall in expectations is the fall in deliverance." (M2)

People need relief from their problems. They want equal representation, and they want alleviation of the problems they are facing,

...people are looking that their rights are being undermined or whether or not they are being equally represented... are their concerns being adequately...mitigated or not, is there a sufficiently informed voice on that or not? so that's why you see people resort to the popular version of the truth and also sometimes their constituencies are pushed back in terms of what is accepted political opinion." (M2)

The findings show that there are problems which electorates are dealing with. When a constituency's needs are not satisfied, it affects electorates and general public's perceptions about the political brand. This point indicates that high power distance and low humane orientation can also adversely influence any brand's image. (Since, electorates are dependents of people in power to inform their concerns to the government, this indicates the low humane orientation.)

While expressing their viewpoint, some of the experts revealed that respondents have limited cognition, are culturally sensitive and illiterate or semi-educated (as discussed in theme 1). To them, their ideology (as discussed in theme 5) and regional cultural factors are important. Moreover, a large number of Pakistani populations is comprised of young lot who are naïve and lack political acumen. They follow icons and celebrity personalities without introspection as a result co-brands are assessed and evaluated on the basis of the image of the leader's personality. Even for the co-brand's image, commitment to the leadership (at the corporate brand) appears absolutely essential in establishing an appealing

image and positioning. Such characteristics work as heuristics for the electorates in evaluating and observing strengths/weaknesses as well as the similarities/dissimilarities between the capabilities of the brand with those of its rivals. However, findings also show (as reflected in the respondents' narratives) that the heavy reliance on heuristics might lead to choosing moves that are erroneous and flawed.

Theme 6: Performance, Governance and Democracy

A good image and positioning are formed by a political brand's and corporate brand's performance, as well as by governance skills and respect for a democratic system. When co-brands are weak in any of these skills, it becomes a cause of negative image transference from the political co-brand (at the constituency level) towards the political co-brand, and vice versa.

Sub-theme 1: of the people, by the people, for the people

Findings show that the co-brand's strength of connection with the parent corporate political brand and its policies, is crucial for establishing its image. It appears from the findings that following the corporate brand, co-brands vows to improve the economic condition of the State and the people (PTI and PPP) and will eradicate corruption (PTI). This is depicted in their slogans and rhetoric on television. However, electorates judge the political co-brands and their corporate brands ultimately on the basis of co-brands efforts towards democracy, performance, and governance. These three features have emerged as important areas for judging any Pakistani political brand. Findings show that this dimension are evaluated and compared on the basis of the hopes electorates have about the co-brand's performance. Governance, competence, democratic way of governance and sincerity are integral elements of developing a favourable co-brand image. It seems a co-brand can only survive if they perform:

... election process is one phase in democracy. Second phase is how do you intend bringing reforms? What are your policies? ... They [voters] want to know is it about them? is it for them? Is it by them? So, these three things are extremely important to the people of Pakistan and the voters of Pakistan..... the testing of people [candidates] will always be on the governance related

issues. People are interested in issues, like corruption, but if it is not translating into their daily lives and the governance is not committing to it, we have seen political parties being eliminated...All [of the] political parties unfortunately are not at the same level as our voters are... We need to recognise the fact that for an ordinary voter most important factor of his life is whether or not he is getting democracy implemented in his daily life. (M2)

Democracy, governance, and performance related points appeared several times in almost all the interviews. Democracy is more about a system of government that offers the people control over decisions that should affect how they live their daily lives. And democracy should be not limited to the right to cast the vote (source) and the rise to political parties through promotional tactics:

...the most important issues for any political brand are to deal with the basic democracy issues. And it's related to governance...That basically means that essentially, they [candidates] are conduits ... between different government officers [with a] desire that some government resources should be applied to their region [constituency] ...[and] some of their [electorates] basic standards [conditions] are improved. So, this is how people [electorates] expect them [co-brands, specifically the candidates] to actually act. People want them to be a liaison between government in terms of redirection of resource. (M2)

The biggest challenge for all the co-brands is to build, maintain and hold a trustworthy relationship with them through performance and governance. Electorates may not have college or university academic degrees, but they can understand what is being done for them and how:

Their voter is actually educated... they can not only think...Maybe a family could be less modern according to their [political brand's] standards but it doesn't mean that just because they[electorates] appear culturally sensitive, they [electorates] are not progressive in their thinking or they don't understand what's being done to them or they don't understand their rights (M2)

It seems that while voters anticipate and expect the political brands to maintain the promises they made while running for office, they virtually always are aware that these brands are never sincere about doing so. Candidates spend more effort in justifying themselves, their parties on the television talk shows than in policy making and its implementation related matters within the parliament. Meanwhile, electorates are hoping to get what they were promised during the pre-election time:

Now after, the elections, those people who have voted for the party, they have their own hopes. (G3)

We have slogans. [We] don't have deliverable democracy. And when you don't have deliverable democracy, what happens? People rise. Icons are built. And then icons come down crashing. Why because they have no reality in the processes in which people are [living]... State building is a serious affair, and you have to be serious. It is not something that you randomly do... we need to understand that once you are in government, it is not about being on a TV program to justify what you have done... (M2)

Findings support evidence that the party leaders' charisma has a major influence in inspiring loyalty towards their co-brands at the constituency level. Analysis suggests that the poor performance of the co-brands is affecting their corporate brands in a negative manner.

According to the findings it is clear that relationship lacks confidence when it comes to performance and fulfilment of pre-election pledges. This has a detrimental impact on the co-brand's image and placement. Because leaders are held in high regard by electorates at all levels (urban and rural seats), poor performance by co-brands reflects poorly on the leader. Despite the fact that PTI does not represent any cultural or ethnic group, PTI's reputation and image which is established as a result of its co-brands' performance, is not entirely positive. This shows that the co-brand's image was being transferred to the corporate brand. The political brands need to reinvent and reposition themselves. They need to be more customer oriented. Findings show that the political brands are not well aware of their electorates' needs and expectations. They are pursuing the same age-old style of politics. Highlighting any issue is not enough. They need to specify what is to be done in order to achieve this objective. This is indicative of low uncertainty avoidance.

Theme 7: Vision, Credibility, Consistency & Reliability

This theme show that corporate brand's credibility, consistency, reliability and vision are aiding in forming favourable image and positioning the associated brands favourably.

Sub-theme 1: Credibility, competence, consistency & reliability

Findings show that political co-brands should be competent and credible. Credibility and competence come only when the partnering brands in the co-branding relationship (between the candidate and the party) are aware of the issues and have planned strategies, and then deliver. Data provides evidence of the below average performance of the co-brands (PTI and PPP). Performance of the candidates has appeared to be affecting the image of not just the partnering party brand (in their respective constituencies) but the corporate brand's image as well. Co-brands' focus should be on performing better than the competitors and their candidates should solve the matters within the Parliament. Candidates job is to deliver and do justice to the faith which has been put in them, following the corporate brand's designed strategies for the betterment of their constituencies. Findings reveal that political parties (PTI and PPP) have turned more market-oriented and function almost the same way as any other commercial brand. If the corporate brand is introducing a new concept for bringing improvement in people's life (e.g. PTI's eradication of corruption promises), then co-brands (specifically the candidates) should perform accordingly and try to practically prove its importance as well otherwise the bad performance of the co-brand negatively influences the image of the corporate brand:

You can't give slogans which you can't realise. You can't give principles which you can't uphold. If you have given the principle, then you must stand by that principle. It can't be that your principle stance will include passages of the past. It must then be principle! Only then you will have a leader of national calibre. Otherwise, you will have icons, images, mirror images, but not leaders. You will have star value but not leaders. We need to differentiate between political leaders and iconic representation of political class. We have an iconic representation of political class but absence of political leaders. (M2)

I think for any leader, political or other, the credibility comes from one the ability to live up to his or her words, deliver on what promises are made but that's where the important part is you promise what you really think you can deliver. Credibility is your word, your action, and your reputation. (H2).

In order to be perceived as credible, co-brands are expected to act on the promises made with the electorates. When the slogans given by the corporate

brands (PTI and PPP) are not translated into reality by the co-brands, the bad performance of the co-brand positions the corporate brand negatively:

Yes, *Naya Pakistan* but where is the political responsibility which you are affording as a concept to your people. You are saying Roti, Kapra and Makan. Fine. But where is the political responsibility of this effort being transferred to people? If you are talking about justice, what about that justice being transferred? (M2)

Findings show that there is a need to differentiate between political leaders and iconic representation of political class. Pakistan has an iconic representation of political class but absence of political leaders. It appears that because of the unsatisfactory performance of the co-brands, there exists dissatisfaction among the electorates and leaders are also seen in the same light.

Sub-theme 2: Vision of the Figurehead

Findings show that while the unsatisfactory performance affects the development of the leader's image, opinions and perceptions about the leader's foresightedness, wisdom and vision may also have a role in image transference between brands (more particularly, between corporate brands and co-brands). Leader's vision maintains political brands' attention on the larger picture and objectives. They develop plan and policies which the co-brands carry forward to deliver and resolve their respective constituency needs. If this does not happen, it can have detrimental impacts on the corporate brand, ultimately. One of the analysts expressed this point in the following words,

...people are confronted with a very different level of information. Different level of challenges. You can't turn around and make a principle approach on something and come up with a tern and say this is Pakistan's problem... while an average Pakistani is dealing with it in a very complex manner. Where are your health policies? Where are your youth policies? Where are your governance polices? Where are your solutions to Pakistan? How much time have you invested...for solving people's problems? How much weightage have you put in? or is it all about victimization? Or proving a point? Is that all Pakistan's politics should stand for? (M2)

Findings show that the vision and planning of the corporate brand guides the co-brands for running affairs of the constituencies. In this regard, data also revealed that it is not ideal for the leaders to commit what is not possible for the

co-brands to deliver in the given economic conditions of the country. The bad performance ultimately brings bad reputation for the corporate brands. For instance:

...when you haven't done homework, you rely on slogans. Your intentions maybe good and perhaps you even want to do what you are saying but because you haven't come prepared, now you are realising what the difficulties are. ...He [leader] is honest. But ...has no vision. Then ...relies much on slogans and says things without realising the consequences of those things, without realising his own abilities, without realising the capacity of his party that will they be able to deliver this or not If [you] keep making these fake pledges, you may be very sincere, even if you are faithful and really want to do that, but ultimately people will take it as a lie ultimately when you will not be able to fulfil the aspiration of the people or whatever you had said at that time. In this, I have a feeling that this is only because that this man hasn't done his homework properly (G3)

Respondents explained their perspective using examples of Mohammad Ali Jinnah, Winston Churchill, Mao Zedong, and Nelson Mandela. They explained the role of a visionary leaders in positioning this political brand and who never over-promised, were honest, demonstrated integrity and delivered what they promised. Findings suggest that there is absence of visionary leadership in Pakistan as one analyst/research academician explains:

.... they give the impression that they are not prepared to run the entire country. I wish them well... I hope they deliver. But I know they are not prepared. (Y1)

It appears from the findings that the corporate brand's vision sets a route for the co-brands to follow. The leader formulates the plans at the corporate level, but the co-brands carry them out at the constituency level. The co-brand's positioning and image are influenced by the party leader's vision, wisdom, intellect, reliability, and capability Co-brands have to adhere to the promises they made while running for office in their districts. Slogan represents the corporate brand's values, what it stands for and what the leader aspires to do for the public. Competence, credibility, and consistency will all contribute to the image of a reputable co-brand. Competence breeds trust, which is built when a co-brand has done their homework, devised tactics, and delivered on what their slogans promise

(PPP, PTI). Findings show that co-brands should get involved in legislation and policymaking to have a positive influence.

The findings show a co-brand should be active in deliverance and upholding the trust and reliance that electorates have in them. While the party leader has a significant impact on the image of co-brands, subpar performance of co-brands exposes leaders and speaks volume about the corporate political brand's inability, specifically the leadership's ineffectiveness, unskillfulness, and incompetency. As a result, co-brand's tarnished/hampered/negatively image begins to impact the corporate brand's image. Corporate brand is seen as untrustworthy and then is perceived as an inept brand with a tarnished reputation.

The six dimensions of Armannsdottir's framework are discussed in Section 4.2, demonstrating how they aided giving a structure to the findings of this study.

4.2. Application of Political Co-brand Identity Framework

This section presents findings which elaborate how Political Co-brand Identity Framework can be applied as a tool for exploring other sub concepts. This section illustrates how the seven themes fit into this framework which has ultimately resulted in the formation of a new framework. While doing so, this section also implicitly makes a comparison between the Political Co-brand Identity Framework and the new framework which deconstructs the image and positioning concepts and explains the process of positioning a political co-brand.

The new framework is named as the “Political Co-brand Image and Positioning Framework”. It examines the inclinations and attitude of political brands from the standpoint of political analysts, who are the external stakeholder. This new framework is presented in Figure 4 at the end of this section (after explaining each of the six dimension and the factors which have emerged within each, in this study). Table 19b summarises the discussion in this section.

Table 19b: Dimensions of the Framework, Themes, Sub-themes – Co-brand Image and Positioning Creation & Management

Six Dimensions of the Framework	Themes	Sub-themes
Physique	1. Slogans and Political Rhetoric	Slogans, not solutions (<i>Party related factor</i>); Fake and vague promises (<i>Candidate related factors</i>) Choice of words; Sledging (<i>Candidates related factor</i>)
	2. Candidate Availability	Candidate’s non-appearance (<i>Candidate related factor</i>)
Personality	3. Popularity & Charisma	Personality & popularity of the founder (<i>Figurehead related factor</i>)
		Charisma (<i>Figurehead/candidate related factor</i>)
Culture	3. Political Culture	Political dominance & Economic Affluency as Essential Ingredients (<i>candidate related factors</i>)
		Leader-centric Politics (<i>Candidate related factor</i>)
		Political Salesmanship & Strategies to Shape Electorates’ Perception . (<i>Figurehead/candidate related factor</i>)
Reflection	4. Issues in Constituencies & Electorates Characteristics	Knowledge about the pressing issues in the respective constituencies
		Electorates’ characteristics like personality, ideology, and literacy etc. (<i>candidate related factor</i>)
Relationship	5. Performance, Governance & Democracy	of the people, by the people, for the people (<i>candidate and party related factor</i>)
Self-Image	6. Vision, Credibility, Consistency & Reliability	Vision (<i>figurehead related factor</i>)
		Credibility, consistency & reliability (<i>candidate and party related factor</i>)

1. Physique

In Armannsdottir et al. (2019b)’s framework, Physique dimension outlines the communication methods and strategies. Their study suggests that creating a successful political co-brand identity is a lengthy process. This process requires constant and clear localised messages which are tailored for the target population.

They suggest that communication strategies should be carried out through affordable communication tools (during and after the elections) while making the best use of the market research methods. Besides these elements, they have highlighted the importance of coherence between co-brand and corporate political brand.

This study follows the Armannsdottir et al. (2019)'s definition of Physique and explains the viewpoints of those who do not work with/for the political brands. Physique signifies the opinion of electorates about the impression of co-brand's physical aspects such as candidate's availability for the people within the district) as well as the intangible aspects (like the ways of verbal/oral/non-verbal communication with the people in the districts, etc). In this study, the intangible components of communication are depicted by slogans and political rhetoric (theme 1), whereas the physical element/property of this dimension is indicated by availability in the constituency (theme 2). The first two themes hence appeared appropriate for this dimension. These two factors/themes position the political co-brand and are a cause of negative/positive image transference between a political co-brand and a corporate brand.

Slogans when given by the founding leaders after studying the population and their needs, work like magic. Slogans are successful when the target demographic perceives the slogan to be relevant to them. Also, the leader's personality and charisma enhance the catchphrase. Even when the co-brand underperforms, the slogan remains popular. This indicates that co-brands receive favourable image from the corporate brand. The corporate brand uses slogans as a road map and a pledge to the electorate about what they intend to achieve. Co-brands make use of slogans as a tactic to win over the views of the public (including supporters and electorates) in their favour. However, the subpar performance of a co-brand ultimately affects its image and its basis of positioning in electorates' minds. Corporate brand is ultimately also seen in the same light. While the electorates feel that the political brands made fake promises during the election campaign. In this way, slogans which cannot be materialised become a cause *transferring negative image* between the brands. In addition to that, any

slogan which cannot be easily deciphered, is an indication of image transference due to the weak planning, homework and ideological support from the corporate brand.

Choice of words are candidate related factors. Finding show the use of inappropriate political language in the political discussion on the television as well as on social media contributes towards building a bad reputation for the candidates. The image which is build for the candidates in this way also affects the political party. The *negative image* developed for the co-brand then ultimately affects the corporate brand's reputation, adversely.

Candidate's availability is the second theme. It appears from the findings that there is a strong relationship between the candidate brand's presence within the constituency throughout their tenure and electorates' perception about them. When after elections, candidate remain absent in their district and do not interact with the people to listen to their concerns and solve community issues, this creates a bad political co-brand image and becomes a cause of *negative image transference* from the candidate towards the party. And ultimately adversely affects the people's perception about the corporate brand. It appears that candidates' absence is impacting not just the electorate's opinion about the corporate brands and a source of comparison between co-brands, but also an aspect of democratic system's legitimacy and credibility.

2. *Personality*

In the Political Co-brand Identity Framework, Personality represents the personality of the candidate brand who is the figure head of the co-brand at the constituency level. Armannsdottir et al. (2019b) suggest that the slogans and political message for campaigns are formed based on the candidates' own personal convictions and reflected their "personality's" overarching theme. In addition to that the development of the political co-brand is strategic, and varied in nature, and identities are customised to each distinct constituency, requirements and wishes of the constituents.

Personality in this study also represents the personality of the candidate and the leader, from external stakeholder's perspective. It emphasises how their personality affects voters' perception about the co-brand image (compared to the personalities of the competitors' candidates and leaders). Hence popularity and charisma (theme 2) of the leader brand fits coherently in this dimension.

Chairperson (or leader)'s personality, character, power and charm are important aspects that aid in positioning a co-brand favourably, given the founding leaders are larger than life for the electorates. Leaders have an exceedingly imposing image and are regarded as saviours by their diehard and staunch followers and the public. This is why the slogans they introduce are trusted and have the power to enhance the image of all the brands associated with the leader. Corporate political brand in this way transmits *positive image* towards political co-brands. The data supports evidence that the party leader (corporate figurehead) personality, as well as the co-brand's devotion to the corporate brand figurehead, are significant factors in forming the co-image brand's and positioning. When political co-brands underperform, the candidate brands (representing the co-brand) repeatedly remind electorates about their allegiance to the leader to keep the image and positioning of the co-brand intact (at the constituency level).

3. Culture

In the Political Co-brand Identity Framework, Culture encompasses set of beliefs, the core values, heritage and ideology of the political brands as important factors which have an influence on the brand image According to Armannsdottir et al. (2019b), political co-brand should project consistency between party values and the party leader's values.

In this study, this Culture encompasses the political brand's beliefs, values and legacy. It also represents the values of the candidate, (who represent the co-brand and is considered a figurehead at the district level) and of the leader (corporate brand). These values shape and influence electorate's viewpoints that help form and sustain brand image and positioning. This also guarantees that the

leader's message and co-brand's values are in sync. The beliefs and values of the co-brand should also align with those of the corporate brand. The fourth factor, culture, fits into this dimension coherently. An important part of a political co-brand's reputation is their level of influence and financial stability, their ties with influential families, and their standing in society.

As discussed in the previous section, the electorate's assessment of the candidate brands, the leadership at the corporate level, and whether or not the electorate's philosophy matches with the co-brand's ideology, affect the co-brand's image. Politically well-connected, economically affluent and power candidates are perceived as having the ability to act as a bridge between the electorates and the government. This is common in low-literacy areas. Since parties are leader centric, *positive image transfers* from the corporate political brand towards the co-brand. However, if candidates do not perform according to the wishes of the electorates, it causes a transfer of bad reputation first between the partnering brands and then, in the end, between the co-brand and the corporate brand.

Electorates place emphasis on ideology. They rely on their ideology to make sense of the world. Findings show that parties and candidates have strayed from their primary ideologies and brands are not positioned on the basis of ideology. Instead, meticulously designed material is offered to both current and prospect electorates, and images are created for the leader and the candidates on the electronic and social media. This *heavy* use of 'designer politics' appears to be a cause of *negative image transference* from the co-brand towards the corporate brand.

4. Reflection

In the Political Co-brand Identity Framework, Reflection represents the political co-brand's perception of who identifies with the corporate political brand. The reflection dimension in Armannsdottir et al. (2019b) shows that key elements in the creation and growth of the political co-brands include constituency profiling,

adapting identities to electorates' wants and requirements, and constructing identities based on the nature of constituency.

The elements which have appeared to fit in this dimension for the concept of image and positioning, are not very different than the ones which have appeared in Armannsdottir et al. (2019b). This dimension presents factors which help in assessing the constituency and managing them appropriately. The factors in Reflection help in establishing the desired image and positioning of the co-brands. This dimension provides details on the internal elements that external stakeholder can use to evaluate co-brands' image. Reflection includes the opinions of stakeholders regarding the political co-brand's engagement with electorate to satisfy their basic needs and solve problems of the constituency. Reflection covers factors which the candidates should especially take into account when there is a need for improving the image (because the co-brand has fallen short of meeting the expectations of the general public). These factors reflect the political co-brand's aware of their respective constituencies.

The co-brands will always be judged based on how they perform, and this is why they need to collect information about the pressing issues in their respective constituency and about the electorates. They utilise this information to connect with electorates, capitalising on their complaints to create a desired brand image and position their separate co-brands. Once they are equipped with this knowledge, they shape their communication and governance strategies in such a way that they begin to appear appealing to the electorates and the general public. This results in a transmitting favourable image towards the corporate brand. Political brands are aware of electorates' requirements, needs, difficulties and challenges. However, according to the findings, they only make use of this information for their appealing populist communication style (to build relationship with the public through media). This becomes a cause of *transfer of unfavourable image* between the candidate and party. And ultimately corporate brand is also seen in the same light.

The factors which have emerged in this study are not very different than the ones in Armannsdottir et al. (2019b). The nature of these factors is however very different than the European settings and contexts.

5. Relationship

Relationship in Armannsdottir et. al. (2019b) represents the connection between the political co-brand and the *internal* stakeholders including the local supporters, campaigners, employees, and constituents. Relationship also represents the connection between the political co-brand and the corporate political brand.

Relationship in this study reveals how strongly external stakeholders perceive the political co-brand to be associated with the electorates as well as with the corporate political brand. Relationship represents the actual expectation of electorates from the political brands. How well a co-brand is performing, how good it is at governing the constituency and if it is ensuring democracy, are crucial for developing a favourable image for the co-brand in comparison with the rivals. These factors represent the relationship of a political co-brand with the electorates. Hence, theme 6 fits within this dimension.

Candidate brand related aspects include performance and governance. Whereas democracy has seemed to be a party brand related issue. *Positive image transfers* from political co-brand towards the corporate political brand when the political co-brand delivers, through its performance and governance, what it promises during the election campaign. Democracy is not only about the electorate's freedom to cast vote. Democracy is more about a system of government that offers the people control over decisions that should affect how they live their daily lives. If a political co-brand is successful in implementing democracy, *positive image transfers* towards the corporate political brand and the corporate political brand is also seen in the same light.

6. Self-Image

Self-image in Armannsdottir et. al. (2019b) represents the opinions, private statements of corporate political brands, from the standpoint of the political

cobrand. In their study, this dimension shows how personal beliefs are employed to create and manage political co-brand identity. They suggest that when there is a conflict between the personal values of the co-brand and the corporate political party brand (in terms of message consistency and popularity within the local constituency), there is an adverse effect on the formation of political co-brand identity, and, on upholding a distinct political co-brand identity.

This study is following the same definition of Self-image. Vision of the founding leader and the credibility, consistency and reliability of the co-brand (theme 7) in comparison with rivals, represent Self-image in this study. External stakeholders' perceptions of the political co-brand image is based on the leader. The leader at the corporate level, formulates the plan. The political co-brands carry forward those plans. Failure on co-brand's part could result in a transfer of unfavourable perception from the co-brand to the corporate brand.

In the light of this discussion, it has become clear that the structure of the Armansdottir et al. (2019) framework can withstand different settings and contexts. However, the factors/elements within some of the dimensions have completely changed. In this way a new framework, the Political Co-brand Image, and Positioning Framework, is developed. The framework is presented in Figure 6. Both negative and positive image transfers between corporate political brand and the co-brand, represented by the two-way arrows. This study presents the external stakeholders' opinion about political co-brands' external expression (covered by Physique, Reflection and Relationship dimensions) as well as the internal expression of a political co-brand (which is covered in Personality, Culture and Self-image).

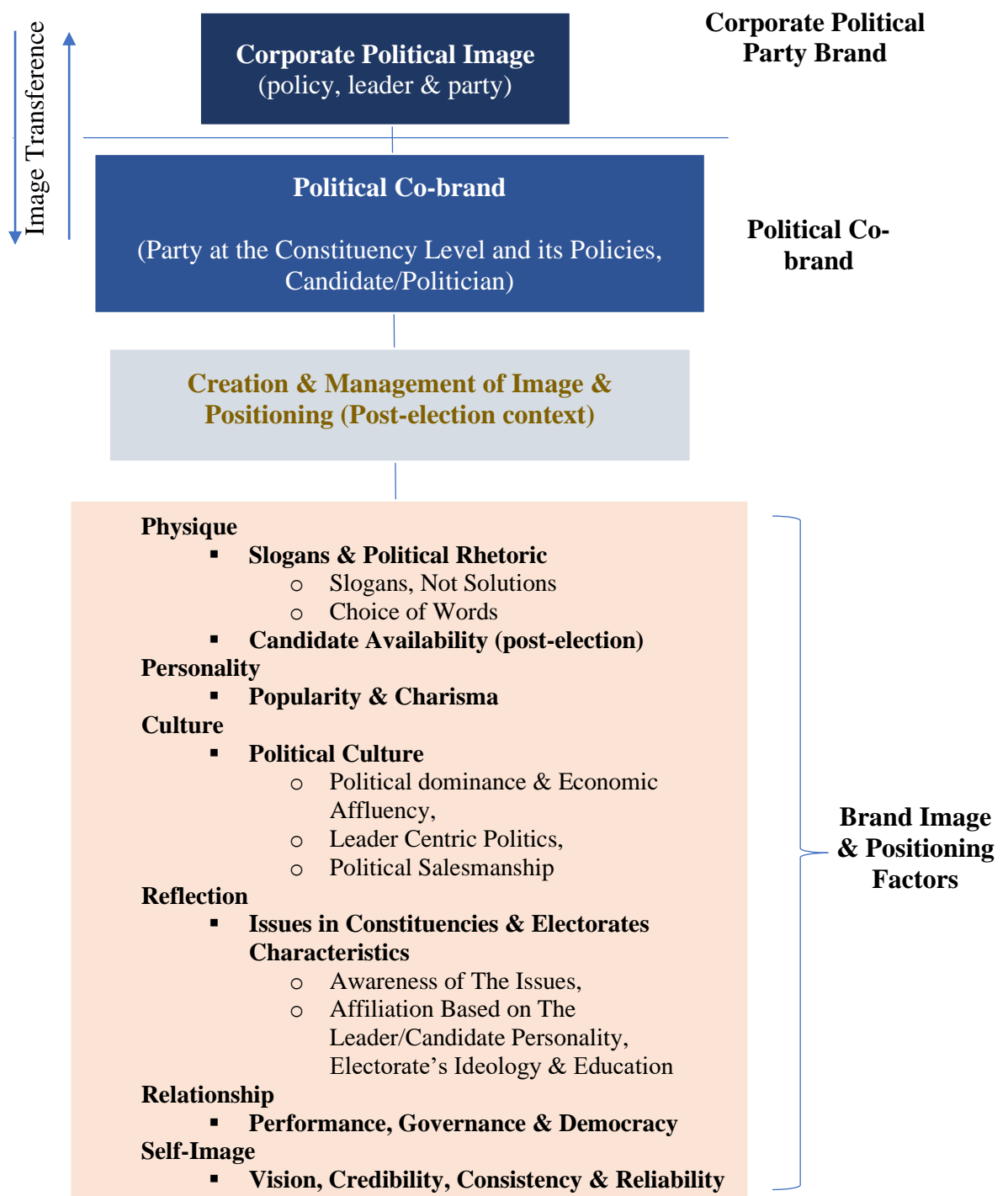


Figure 6: Political Co-brand Image & Positioning Framework¹⁷

¹⁷ Published as Shahid, Waseem and Sadaf (2021).

Political analysts are studying these political brands since many years and hence they are in a better position to explain how political co-brand image and positioning can be improved. Political brands give value to their analysis and design their strategies accordingly (for example, for creating brand identity etc.). Now to empirically test, if the image and strategies hold importance for the general Pakistanis/electorates, this study designed a quantitative study. So, before moving on to the quantitative study, five additional interviews (two women and three men) aided in validating the findings of the qualitative study and in drawing a link between political analysts and the Pakistanis who are the voters. Data for these five interviews is collected through the convenience sampling technique. The findings again showed the importance of the strategies which the political analysts have discussed in the qualitative study. These interviews aid in identifying the right variables for investigating the findings.

4.3. Summary of the Chapter

Thematic analysis has yielded seven themes which represent the key factors which influence the creation and management of a political co-brand. These include *slogans and political rhetoric; candidates' availability in their constituencies; popularity & charisma; political culture; performance, governance, and democracy; vision, credibility, consistency & reliability.*

These themes fit well within the six dimensions of the Political Co-brand Identity Framework, such that,

The first two themes (Slogans & political rhetoric and candidate availability) fit within the *Physique* dimension.

The third theme (Popularity and charisma of the leader) fits in the *Personality* dimension.

The fourth theme (Political Culture which covers Political dominance & economic affluency, leader centric politics, and political salesmanship) fits in the *Culture* dimension.

The fifth theme (Issues in constituencies & electorates characteristics, awareness of the issues) fits within the *Reflection* dimension.

The sixth theme (Performance, governance & democracy) fits in the *Relationship* dimension.

And the seventh theme (Leader's vision and political co-brand's credibility, consistency & reliability) fits in the *Self-image* dimension.

This indicates that the six dimensions of the framework withhold in different settings and contexts. However, the elements within the six dimensions changed. The assessment of Armansdottir's Framework for the concept of co-brand image and positioning in a different setting and context resulted in the formation of *Political Co-brand Image and Positioning Framework*. This new framework is one of the major contributions of this study to the body of knowledge. This framework deconstructs the concepts of co-brand image and positioning and helps in operationalizing it. The findings also explain the spillover effects between brands.

QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS & FINDINGS

CHAPTER 5: QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS & FINDINGS

5.0. Introduction

This chapter builds on the qualitative study's findings. investigates the political co-brand Image and positioning and the spillover effects between the political co-brand (at the constituency level) and the political corporate brand (at the national level). This chapter presents the key findings of the quantitative analysis with reference to the four major quantitative research questions (stated in Chapter 1).

The quantitative study looks at the reality from a different ontological perspective to investigate the brand image and positioning with a completely different set of respondents. The qualitative findings aided in identifying the variables which are used to measure political co-brand's image and positioning by assessing the impact of the factors (Chapter 4). The quantitative study provides preliminary investigation of the hypothesis generated in the light of the research questions and the qualitative findings.

This chapter begins with Section 5.1, which presents the discussion on and justification for the theoretical model for the quantitative analysis. This model is prepared in the light of the qualitative findings and available literature. Section 5.2. presents the findings of the quantitative analysis. Section 5.2.1. answers the first quantitative research question. Section 5.2.2. answers the second and third quantitative research questions. While section 5.2.3. answers the last quantitative research question.

5.1. Theoretical Framework Based on the Qualitative Findings

This section builds the theoretical framework based on the qualitative findings, for the quantitative analysis. As per the qualitative study findings, the factors within the six dimensions act as promotional tools and reflect the marketing strategies used for the political brands. Therefore, these factors offer the most appropriate starting point for devising a quantitative method for assessing

political brand image and positioning. This is one of the unique findings of this study. The factors in *Physique*, like slogans, have appeared to be used heavily to supplement the image and positioning reminding the electorates of the promise the slogan is making with them (Cwalina & Newman, 2011). These slogans not only represent their importance in the political culture as well. Similarly, the politically rich rhetoric and the selection of words which has references to populist communication repertoires on several media, build image and positions the co-brand better than the competitors (Antil & Verma, 2020; Condor et al., 2013; Chadwick, 2017; Van Aelst et al., 2017). The factors in the *Personality* dimension included leadership's popularity, and charisma (Antil & Verma, 2020; Guzman & Sierra, 2009; Little et al., 2007; Yousaf, 2016). Factors like candidate's role and economic affluence, leader-centric politics are within the *Culture dimension* electorates' demographic characteristics e.g. ideology, cast/clans (Chandra, 2007; Hussain, 2020; Martin, 2020). *Reflection* dimension encapsulated factors like the candidate's understanding of the constituency while performance, governance and democracy are *Relationship* dimension factors (Liaquat et al., 2019). *Self-image* dimensions factors such as leader vision, consistency, reliability, and credibility have seen to be positioning the brands (Valgardsson et al., 2020).

These factors or elements (within the six dimensions of the framework) are marketing initiatives that aim to influence electorates' "perceptions" of a political brand. They are the political brand's image building and positioning factors. It appears from the qualitative study's findings that these actions tacitly influence voters' perceptions. The image and positioning factors offer a point of differentiation for the brands (Latif, et al., 2015) by forming the combined effect of associations in the electorates' memory (Farquhar & Herr, 1993; Keller, 1993, 1998; Keller, Parameswaran & Jacob, 2011). Their aggregate impression influences the way electorates perceive the political brands, emotionally. How a political brand is valued with respect to competitors depends on electorates' perception of the brand. The political brand positioning is mostly determined by how brand information is communicated to electorates. The positive perception

about the political brand influences the political brand's image and positioning positively and vice versa (Loureiro, 2013).

The findings show that there is a bidirectional relationship between the *candidate's brand image* and the marketing initiatives (i.e. *image and positioning factors*). While the candidate brand image is enhanced when these *political brand image and positioning factors* are managed well, candidate brand image offers touchpoints with which electorates can feel the impact of *image and positioning factors*. It appears that the electorates judge the entire political offering based on their perception about the candidates and their image (Barrett, 2018; Cosgrove, 2014; Landtsheer et al., 2008; French & Smith, 2010; Guzman et al., 2015; Guzman & Sierra, 2009; Phipps et al., 2010; Schneider, 2004; Schneiker, 2018; Smith, 2009; Speed et al., 2015).

In line with the available literature, the qualitative study also shows that the candidate's brand image has a considerable influence on voting choice and electoral decision-making via the *political brand image and positioning factors* (Van Steenburg & Guzman, 2019). The *political brand image and positioning factors* influence electorates' voting intention only when electorates have developed a certain perception (positive or negative) of the candidate brand. This is one of the reasons why image & positioning factors can influence the strength of the relationship between candidate brand image and the electorate's voting intention. The voting intention reflects the electorate's impression and general attitude toward the brand (Warshaw, 1980; Yalley, 2018), besides the ultimate focus of all political marketing initiatives is to influence voters' perceptions and intentions to vote (Spears & Singh, 2004; Yalley, 2018). Understanding candidate brand image is critical for marketers and practitioners interested in understanding voting intentions (i.e., the intention to vote for the candidate and the party with which he or she is affiliated) and behaviour (Van Steenburg & Guzman, 2019).

Electorates' thoughts about voting are influenced by how they are presented with information about the candidate and the party, through political marketing. The power of the candidate brand image (Guzmán & Sierra, 2009) is

boosted further by the *political brand image and positioning factors* when attention given to political candidates by various media outlets (Dahl et al., 2017), which influences electorates' perceptions, intents, and ultimately their decision. Electorates assess political brands favourably or unfavourably based on the impressions formed in their minds because of the information being marketed to them (Barrett, 2018; Cosgrove, 2014; Landtsheer et al., 2008; French & Smith, 2010; Guzman et al., 2015; Guzman & Sierra, 2009; Phipps et al., 2010; Schneider, 2004; Schneiker, 2018; Smith, 2009; Speed et al., 2015).

Based on these ideas along with the justification of variables selection (in Chapter 3), this quantitative study attempts to assess the impact of a candidate's brand image on electorate voting intention (Balmas & Sheafer, 2010) through the political brand image and positioning factors. Figure 7a makes it easy to understand this discussion.

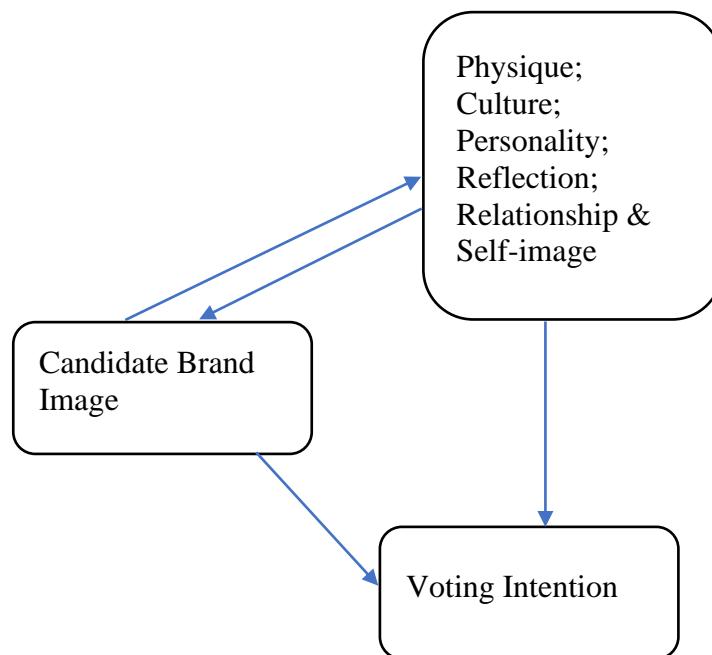


Figure 7a: Relationship Between Candidate Brand Image and Voting Intention via Political Brand Image and Positioning Factors

According to the qualitative data, electorates evaluate the compatibility of the candidate brand and the party brand based on their respective image. This image develops depending on how good political brands are at meeting constituency needs. This research therefore also looks at how well a co-brand's image matches individual image of each of the partnering entities (Riley, Charlton & Wason, 2015). In other words, it symbolises the perceptual fit (Walchli, 2007) implying congruence between the images of the partnering political brands, so that the co-brand expresses the complementarity, transferability, and substitutability of the partnering political brands (Aaker & Keller, 1990). Figure 7b makes it easy to understand this discussion.

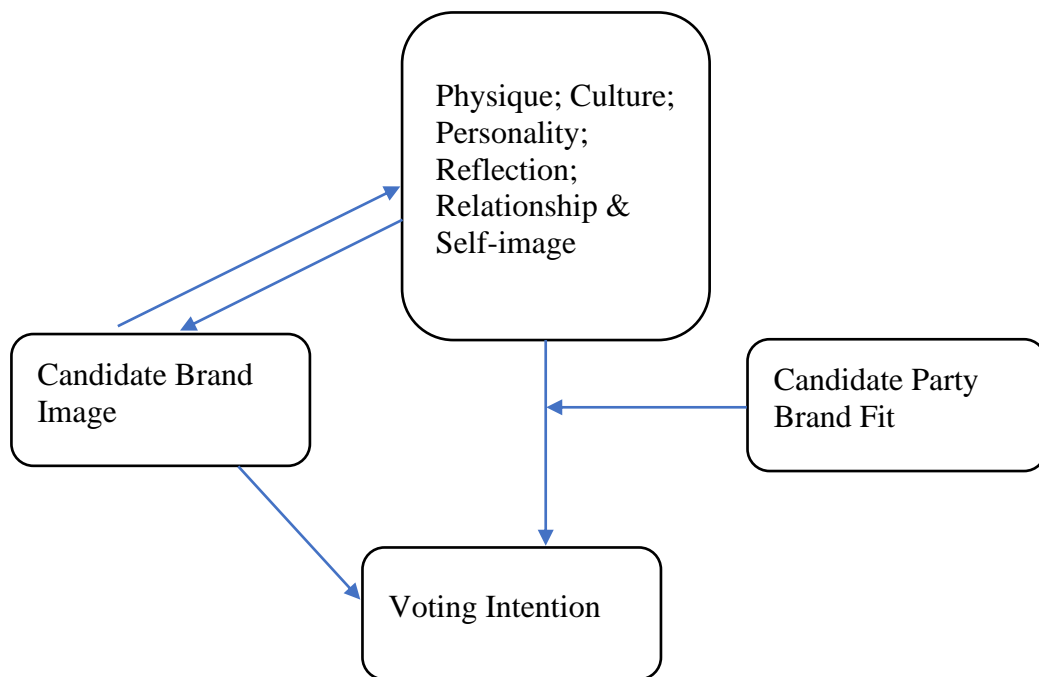


Figure 7b: Relationship Between Candidate Brand Image and Candidate-Party Brand Fit

According to research such as Phipps et al. (2010), an individual candidate's brand can compete with or strengthen the political party brand. If the candidate brand does not match electorates' perception of the party brand, the party brand is often viewed as less prominent. The qualitative research's findings show that electorate focus more on candidates. It appears that the party brand or candidate brand will only dominate until electorate can update their perceptions

about the party-candidate brand-fit via experience. And as political marketing increases their brand knowledge and influences brand positioning in their mind. Moreover, associations might vary in terms of relative strength, favourability, and distinctiveness (French & Smith, 2010; MacDonald, Sherlock, & Hogan, 2015; Nielsen & Larsen, 2014), with negative associations being more important in brand perception than positive associations (Cwalina & Falkowski, 2015; Falkowski, Sidoruk-Błach, Bartosiewicz & Olszewska, 2018). Keeping this in mind, this study investigates whether the influence of candidate brand image on voting intention via image and positioning factors is dependent on candidate-party brand-fit. If the brand-fit has a negative impact, it indicates that the image and positioning components need to be improved.

Figure 7c presents this information more clearly. This figure also represents the process when all of the variables interact for the of the formation and management of political co-brand image & positioning, at the constituency level.

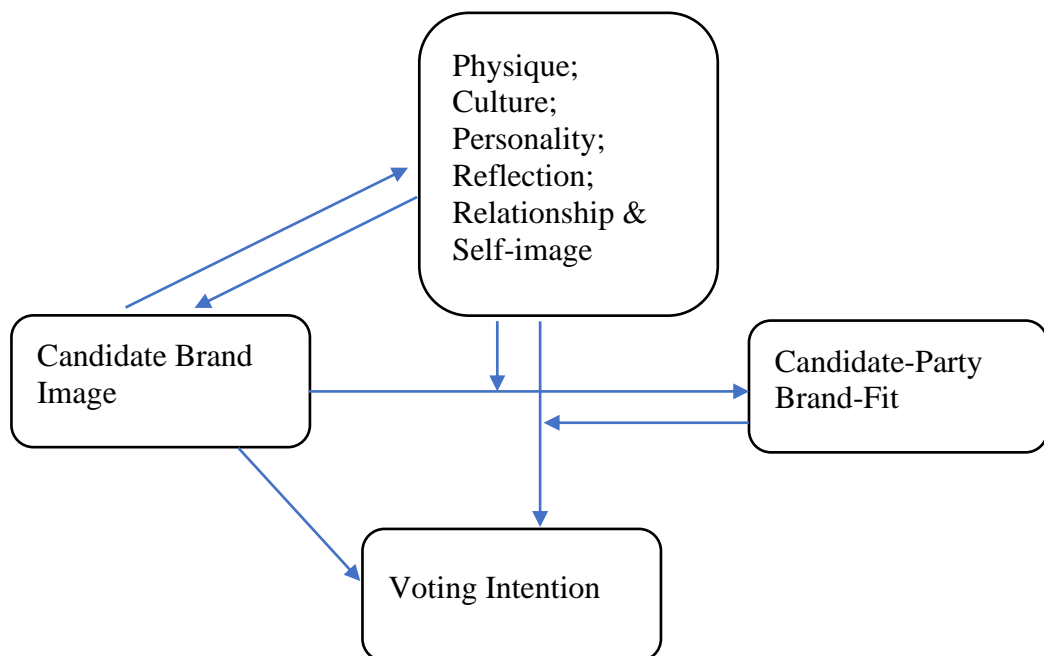


Figure 7c: Moderating Role of Political Brand Image & Positioning Factors

5.1.1. Hypotheses

The model in Figure 5c is developed in the light of qualitative findings. This model represents the process of co-brand image formation and positioning at the constituency level. This model needs to be empirically tested with a different set of respondents (as discussed in Chapter 3) to generalize the results. Hence, based on the discussion in this section, the quantitative study tests the following hypothesis,

Hypothesis 1: *Political brand image & positioning and marketing elements can be measured (quantitatively).*

Hypothesis 2: *(a) Candidate Brand Image has a direct effect on electorates' Voting Intention, (b) There is also an indirect effect of Candidate Brand Image on Voting Intention via PBPM, (c) There is a two-way relationship between PBPM and Candidate Brand Image.*

Hypothesis 3: *The effect of PBPM on Voting Intention is contingent upon the Candidate-Party Brand-Fit (i.e., Candidate-Party Brand-fit can affect the strength of the relationship between the political PBPM and the Voting Intention of the electorates).*

Hypothesis 4: *The effect of Candidate Brand Image on Candidate-Party Brand-Fit is contingent upon PBPM.*

Hypothesis 5: *The effect of Candidate Brand Image on Voting Intention through PBPM is contingent upon the Candidate-Party Brand- Fit*

The qualitative study has also suggested that the political leader's (at the corporate level) has an immense power to influence electorates' perception (at the constituency level). Political party leaders have appeared increasingly powerful electoral force in Pakistan as well as in building political brand image and positioning. In all of the six dimensions of political brand image and positioning, the role of leader has been monumental. This study is therefore testing electorates' perception about the party leader which has appeared to be a cause of image transference from the corporate level to the constituency level.

The last hypothesis investigates influence of leaders on electorates' perception. It is,

Hypothesis 6: *Political leader's (at the corporate level) management style influences electorates' perception.*

Figure 8 presents the theoretical framework for the quantitative analysis using the scales which are introduced and discussed in Chapter 3.

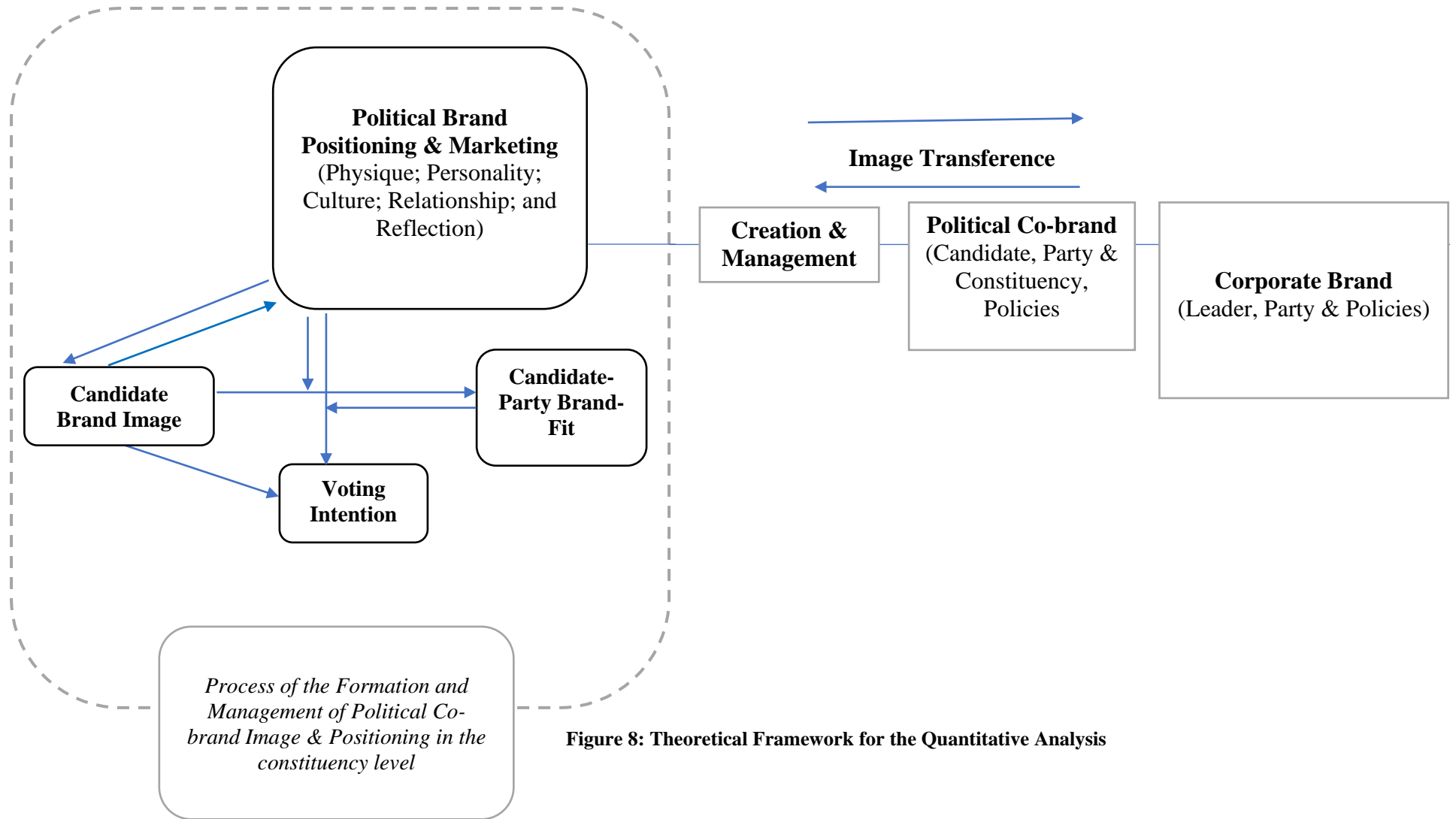


Figure 8: Theoretical Framework for the Quantitative Analysis

5.2. Analysis, Results & Findings

This section presents the analysis of the results. It begins with the construction and validation of a new construct. In the following sections, the new construct is then used in the analysis.

5.2.1. *Construction & Validation of the Political Brand Positioning & Marketing (PBPM) Scale*

To be effective and competitive in politics, both the candidate and party brands must understand, define, and employ the most efficient communication tactics to convey knowledge — through the factors within the six dimensions — to develop an accurate view of their political image and positioning in the market (Biggie, 2016; Phipps, Brace-Govan & Jevons, 2010; Smith & French, 2009). For much the same reasons, it is critical to have measurable techniques, methods and outcomes that can be compared across time (Biggie, 2016). This section tests Hypothesis 1 to answer the first quantitative research question,

Political Marketing Mix and VOTQUAL are two different scales with distinct dimensions. The items within these scales cover most of the findings of the qualitative side. Both scales look at how voters feel about different political parties. Therefore, their items/indicators can be used to assess "perceptions" about the political brands and how they are "positioned." Nonetheless, these indicators/items also signal the most important political marketing methods, which this study is attempting to quantify.

Principal Component Analysis (PCA):

This study assumes (based on the qualitative study's findings) that the Political Marketing Mix and VOTQUAL scales would assess various aspects of an overarching construct (for the concept this study is focusing on, i.e. *political brand positioning and marketing significance*). It is worth noting, though, that the VOTQUAL does not assess the candidate's image; rather, it assesses the candidate's potential. It is an assessment of a candidate's perceived potential, or her or his projected capacity to form trusting and satisfying relationships with

voters. And one of the most crucial components of political marketing strategy is creating relationships. The VOTQUAL scale, in this way, naturally correlates with the Political Marketing Mix scale, forming a larger notion. More specifically, the elements on both scales are expected to measure the six political brand positioning and marketing dimensions.

Therefore, it is expected that on a broad level, both scales represent a measure of the same construct. Political Marketing Mix and VOTQUAL scales assess several aspects of the relevance of marketing techniques that may affect voters' decision to vote for a candidate.

To verify this hypothesis, all items from both scales were subjected to Principal Component Analysis (PCA) using Varimax Rotation. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin sampling adequacy value is calculated using the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin formula. Table 20 presents the detail. The number .903 is excellent because it is closer to 1 and the sample size is bigger than 250 (Field, 2018; Kaiser, 1970; Kaiser & Rice, 1974). The significance of Bartlett's measure also indicates that the correlation matrix is not an identity matrix (Field, 2018). The communality values are shown in *APPENDIX B-III*.

Table 20: PCA - Measure of Sampling Adequacy

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.903
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	17158.576
	df	630
	Sig.	.000

36 elements appear to be the greatest indicative of a political brand's positioning and marketing factors, out of the 38 items on the Political Marketing Mix scale and the 21 items on VOTQUAL. *APPENDIX B-III* contains information on the eigenvalues, the proportion of variance accounted for by each principal component, and the total percentage of variance accounted for by the

current and all previous principal components. The varimax rotation method was utilised to improve the dispersion of loadings among components. It aims to cram as many variables as possible into each component, resulting in more interpretable factor clusters. I suppressed factor loadings of less than 0.3, which is why variables are shown in order of magnitude of factor loadings.

The PCA gave a six-factor solution, which explains 66.386 % (cumulative %) of common variance. PCA results are presented in Table 21. Factor 1 (variance explained = 15.5 percent), factor 3 (variance explained = 12.2 percent), and factor 5 (variance explained = 7.0.4 percent) are the items with the Political Marketing Mix subscales. Factor 2 (variance explained = 15.2 percent), factor 4 (variance explained = 10.5 percent), and factor 6 (variance explained = 6 percent) are VOTQUAL subscales.

Table 21: Principal Component Analysis with items from Political Marketing Mix and VOTQUAL scales

		Rotated Component Matrix^a					
Dimensions	PBPM Item/Indicators	Component					
		1	2	3	4	5	6
1.Reflection	PM25* Listening from the voters before preparing the election manifesto	.787					
	PM26* Collecting information repeatedly to detect the change of popularity	.768					
	PM27* Economic cost if the candidate is elected (tax or extortion may rise,)	.746					
	PM28* Psychological cost if the candidate is elected (insecurity, harassment)	.725					
	PM30* Past political records of the candidate	.670					
	PM31* Image of the candidate as a leader	.636					
	PM10* Ideology of the party candidate belongs to	.619					
	PM13* Showcasing remarkable achievements of the party	.532					
	PM14* Election slogan of the candidate	.518					
2.Personality	Family background**		.833				
	Looks/Physiognomy**		.822				
	Outward Appearance**		.822				
	Age**		.817				
	Charisma**		.816				
	Gender**		.813				
	Highest Previous Office**		.790				
Diplomas**		.729					
3.Physique	PM35* Candidate living in the area			.789			
	PM34* Candidate is known in the area			.769			
	PM33* Frequent public appearance			.727			
	PM36* Availability of the candidate in the area throughout the year			.714			
	PM37* Candidate's articulation power			.594			
	PM38* Candidate's modesty			.539			
	PM32* Image of the candidate as community person			.590			
4.Self-Image	Competance1** Skills in managing a critical situation.				.870		
	Competance4** Skills in managing conflicts.				.870		
	Competance2** Credibility				.847		
	Competance3** Capacity to provide security.				.837		
	Competance5** Courtesy				.792		
5.Culture	PM4* Use of national leaders (like party Chairman) in the campaigns					.697	
	PM7* Showing off muscle power by the candidate					.667	
	PM22* Use of family members in the campaigns					.634	
	PM20* Use of social media by the candidate					.630	
6.Relationship	HELPFULNESS3** Willingness to be helpful (service providing)						.832
	HELPFULNESS2** Swiftness in providing public services.						.823
	HELPFULNESS1** Swiftness in providing personal services.						.803

*Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.^a
a. Rotation converged in 6 iterations.
* Political Marketing Mix Scale Item.
** VOTQUAL Scale Item.*

The first factor in Table 21 contains 9 items/indicators which represent items/indicators which assesses the positioning and marketing related to the candidate brand and the impact it has on the electorates. These items also reflect the candidate's level of awareness of issues in their individual districts, as well as the demographics and ideology of the electorates. These items represent **Reflection**. The items included are: *Listening from the voters before preparing the election manifesto; Collecting information repeatedly to detect the change of popularity; Economic cost if the candidate is elected (tax or extortion may rise,); Psychological cost if the candidate is elected (insecurity, harassment); Past political records of the candidate; Image of the candidate as a leader; Ideology of the party candidate belongs to; Showcasing remarkable achievements of the party; and Election slogan of the candidate.*

The second factor represents positioning and marketing of the political brand based on the candidate's brand's **Personality**. Personality explains candidate/leader's *charisma; their background; outward appearance; their academic qualifications; gender; and highest office held previous*. There are 8 items in this group/dimension.

The third factor represents positioning and marketing based on the tangible and intangible characteristics of the political brand appeared within the **Physique** dimension (in the qual study). These items include *Candidate living in the area; Candidate is known in the area; Frequent public appearance; Availability of the candidate in the area throughout the year; Candidate's articulation power; Candidate's modesty; Image of the candidate as community person*. Physique expresses the candidate's concrete and intangible features, such as communication style, rhetoric, and physical presence, in the framework. Marketing methods aimed at putting the candidate on the electoral market influence these traits (Physique and Personality). There are 7 items in this dimension.

The fourth component contains items/indicators which represent **Self-image**. Self-Image refers to the corporate brand's vision, consistency in performance, reliability, and credibility as reflected in the actions of the candidate

at the constituency level. The items include *Skills in managing a critical situation*; *Skills in managing conflicts*; *Credibility*; *Capacity to provide security*; *Courtesy*. There are 5 items in this dimension.

The fifth component contains indicators/items which represent the dimension of **Culture**. Culture refers to the political brand's general legacy and the degree to which the candidate (at the constituency level) adheres to it. The indicators/items include *Use of national leaders (like party Chairman) in the campaigns*; *Showing off muscle power by the candidate*; *Use of family members in the campaigns*; and *Use of social media by the candidate*. There are 4 items in this dimension.

The sixth component indicator/items represent **Relationship** dimension. Relationship refers to the relationship between the political brand and electorates in their respective constituencies. The link between the political brand and the electorates in their different constituencies is represented by Relationship. The items include *Willingness to be helpful (service providing)*; *Swiftness in providing public services*; *Swiftness in providing personal services*. There are 3 items in this dimension.

In this way Table 21 represents the 6 dimensions of the so formed new scale for the construct. In line with the discussion in the first section of this chapter, this construct represents the perceived importance of the political brand positioning as well as political marketing. These items are marketing efforts which draw into people's "perceptions" of that political brand. These activities subtly entice the perception of the voters. This construct is therefore named as the "**Political Brand Positioning & Political Marketing**" or **PBPM**. This represents the *perception of the party's and candidate's political marketing strategy's relevance in winning the election*. To put it another way, political marketing is crucial.

The factors suggest the points of differentiation for the political brands (Latif, et al., 2015) by establishing a collective effect of associations between these elements in the voting public's memory which effects the way they perceive the political co-brands and ultimately the corporate brands. These associations

represent the *relations* (which could be strong/weak, positive/negative) and *nodes* (which signifies the associations with the brand) (Farquhar & Herr, 1993). These nodes stick to the meaning of the political brands for the voting public (Keller, 1993, 1998; Keller, Parameswaran & Jacob, 2011) and shapes the way electorates perceive the political brands. The perceptions so developed influences the way the voting public values the political brand and positions the political brand with respect to the competitors (Loureiro, 2013).

According to Smith (2009) and other authors, it is not easy to assess a “party”. But it is easy to assess the candidate based on how he/she reacts, behaves, their attire, lifestyle etc. So, people judge the party based on their assessment of the candidate (who represents the party in the constituency). Problems with public policy and its remedies are frequently complicated. Majority of electorates don't have the time, energy, or he intellect to explore the details of every subject topic. Instead, they rely on their political party which they consider a reliable source for advice. They can use the party endorsement as a cognitive shortcut when they hear that candidate from their party support a policy. There are three items (*Ideology of the party candidate belongs to (PM10)*; *Showcasing remarkable achievements of the part (PM13)*; and *Listening from the voters before preparing the election manifesto (PM25)*) on political party in the PBPM scale. Voter mostly do not read the manifesto which tells what the party stands for and the ideology of the party is reflected in candidates’ actions/words. However, candidates are the touch point which presents the achievements of the party before the electorates/voters. Therefore, most of the questions are on candidates in the PBPM scale.

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA):

For assessing the validity, model fit and to test if the constructs are consistent with the understanding of the nature of the construct, Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was used. PCA helps in exploring the structure of the scale. While CFA helps in validating the structure. CFA is a measurement model (of Sequential Equation Modelling (SEM)) and is a multivariate analysis which is commonly used in social sciences research to find the relationship between items and the

constructs (Chen et al., 2008). This test was run on the data to assess the goodness of fit for the PBPM. The path diagram of CFA representing the model and Model Fit tables are attached in *APPENDIX B-IV*.

In SEM, the root means square error of approximation (RMSEA), comparative fit index (CFI), and Tucker–Lewis index (TLI) depend on the conventional cut-off values developed under normal-theory maximum likelihood (ML) with continuous data (Xia & Yang, 2019). RMSEA (Steiger, 1990; Steiger & Lind, 1980) evaluates how far the hypothesized model is from a perfect model. CFI (Bentler, 1990) and TLI (Bentler & Bonett, 1980; Tucker & Lewis, 1973) are incremental fit indices which evaluate the fit of a hypothesized model with that of a baseline model, which in other words, a model with the worst fit. The values of these indices are dependent on a set of cut-off criteria which indicates the model's fitness.

Researchers have suggested that RMSEA value less than .05 indicates a close fit while a value less than .08 suggests a reasonable fit (e.g. Bentler & Bonett, 1980; Browne & Cudeck, 1993; Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1993). The RMSEA range of .05 to 0.1 for good fit and range of values above .1 used to be considered a poor fit (MacCallum, Browne & Sugawara, 1996). At that time, researchers believed that an RMSEA of between 0.08 to 0.10 provides a mediocre fit while below 0.08 shows a good fit. The value .01 indicated an excellent fit, .05 indicated good fit while .08 indicated mediocre fit (MacCallum et al., 1996). More recently, a cut-off value close to .06 (Hu & Bentler, 1999) or a stringent upper limit of 0.07 (Steiger, 2007) seems to be the consensus amongst authorities in this area. After few modifications (i.e. correlation of the error terms) to Reflection and Culture, RMSEA for PBPM was found to be .066. This value is within the acceptable range. The TLI, CFI and NFI value greater than .9 are considered acceptable fit (e.g. Bentler & Bonett, 1980; Browne & Cudeck, 1993; Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1993). Bentler-Bonett Normed Fit Index which is abbreviated as NFI, was found to be .872. TLI was found to be .886. Both NFI and TLI values were around .9. While CFI was found to be .900 scores. In the last 15 years, the recommendations for RMSEA cut-off points have reduced noticeably. Some prominent research (e.g. Browne & Cudeck, 1993 p. 136–162; Steiger, 1989; Xia & Yang, 2019

quoting Marsh, Hau & Wen, 2004) has also hinted that the suggested values of the indices are not based on empirical statistical justification rather on intuition and experience.

For PLS-SEM, the goodness of fit (GoF) has been created but as a general measure of model fit. However, researchers are often suggested to avoid using the GoF as a goodness of fit metric since it cannot consistently identify valid from incorrect models and its usefulness is confined to certain model settings. For instance, PLS multigroup analysis (PLS-MGA). Whilst Tenenhaus et al. (2004) presented a global goodness-of-fit metric for PLS-SEM, research reveals that the measure is inappropriate for detecting misspecified models (Henseler & Sarstedt, 2013; Sarstedt et al., 2017; Tenenhaus et al., 2005). Therefore, goodness-of-fit was tested through AMOS.

PBPM Reliability & Validity:

The PBPM reliability and validity are assessed through Consistent PLS-SEM. The PLSc-SEM method corrects the correlations between reflective components in order to produce results that are consistent with a factor model (Dijkstra, 2010; Dijkstra, 2014; Dijkstra & Henseler, 2015; Dijkstra & Schermelleh-Engel, 2014). Repeated Indicator Approach is employed for assessing the reliability and validity of PBPM (Sarstedt et al., 2019). PLSc is used in this study to identify and verify items/indicators for each of the six dimensions of PBPM. In this way PLSc eased in identifying the items from the Political Marketing Mix scale and VOTQUAL scale which matches with the qualitative findings the most. It is a bootstrapped based test for latent models to assess the overall model fit (Benitez et al., 2020).

Reflective model suited for the new construct PBPM because of the causal priority from the construct to the indicator (Diamantopoulos & Winklhofer, 2001). The PBPM construct is a characteristic that explains the combination of indicators within each of the six dimensions (Fornell & Bookstein, 1982), based on a qualitative investigation (Hair et al., 2017). The indicators within the six dimensions are mutually interchangeable (Jarvis, MacKenzie, & Podsakoff, 2003). Indicators within some of the dimensions (e.g. Reflection) represent the consequences of the causes of the respective dimensions (Rossiter, 2002). If the

evaluation of each of the six dimensions changes due to any reason (e.g. assessment in European context), it seems that indicators might also update in a similar way (Chin, 1998). Also, each of the six dimensions represents the causes of PBPM. Therefore, reflective model suits best for the PBPM construct. PBPM is treated as the second (high) order construct while the six dimensions are treated as the lower level constructs.

The reliability and validity results for the higher order reflective model of PBPM are presented in Table 22, Table 23 and Table 24. These tables present the results of the measurement model.

Table 22: PBPM Item loadings, Convergent Validity, and Internal Consistency Reliability

Construct	Indicator	Outer Loadings >0.7	Convergent Validity		Internal Consistency Reliability		Discriminant Validity HTMT confidence interval does not include 1
			Indicator Reliability >0.5	AVE >0.5	Cronbach's Alpha 0.6 - 0.9	Composite Reliability 0.6 - 0.9	
1. Physique	PM35* Candidate living in the area	0.816	0.668	0.670	0.918	0.934	Yes
	PM34* Candidate is known in the area	0.838	0.702				
	PM33* Frequent public appearance	0.866	0.749				
	PM36* Availability of the candidate in the area throughout the year	0.853	0.727				
	PM37* Candidate's articulation power	0.757	0.573				
	PM38* Candidate's modesty	0.793	0.628				
	PM32* Image of the candidate as community person	0.803	0.644				
2. Personality	Family background**	0.845	0.714	0.667	0.929	0.941	Yes
	Looks/Physiognomy**	0.823	0.677				
	Outward Appearance**	0.843	0.71				
	Age**	0.811	0.657				
	Charisma**	0.836	0.698				
	Gender**	0.812	0.659				
	Highest Previous Office**	0.806	0.649				
	Diplomas**	0.754	0.568				
3. Culture	PM4* Use of national leaders (like party Chairman) in the campaigns	0.786	0.618	0.508	0.7	0.788	Yes
	PM7* Showing off muscle power by the candidate	0.583	0.339				
	PM22* Use of family members in the campaigns	0.792	0.627				
	PM20* Use of social media by the candidate	0.669	0.447				
4. Reflection	PM25* Listening from the voters before preparing the election manifesto	0.811	0.658	0.573	0.905	0.923	Yes
	PM26* Collecting information repeatedly to detect the change of popularity	0.801	0.642				
	PM27* Economic cost if the candidate is elected (tax or extortion may rise,)	0.746	0.557				
	PM28* Psychological cost if the candidate is elected (insecurity, harassment)	0.721	0.520				
	PM30* Past political records of the candidate	0.779	0.607				
	PM31* Image of the candidate as a leader	0.789	0.623				
	PM10* Ideology of the party candidate belongs to	0.693	0.50				
	PM13* Showcasing remarkable achievements of the party	0.743	0.552				
	PM14* Election slogan of the candidate	0.704	0.496				
5. Relationship	HELPFULNESS3** Willingness to be helpful (service providing)	0.829	0.687	0.724	0.810	0.882	Yes
	HELPFULNESS2** Swiftness in providing public services.	0.876	0.767				
	HELPFULNESS1** Swiftness in providing personal services.	0.848	0.719				
6. Self-Image	Competance1** Skills in managing a critical situation.	0.880	0.774	0.731	0.908	0.928	Yes
	Competance4** Skills in managing conflicts.	0.883	0.779				
	Competance2** Credibility	0.858	0.736				
	Competance3** Capacity to provide security.	0.840	0.706				
	Competance5** Courtesy	0.813	0.661				
PBPM			0.3	0.90	0.90		

*Item of Political Marketing Mix Scale by Chowdhury & Naheed, 2019,

**Item of VOTQUAL by Abou Khalil & Aoun, 2020

The Average Variance Extracted (AVE), Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability values for each of the six dimensions are within the acceptable range. The outer loading of PM7 and PM10 are below 0.7 but are kept because removing was affecting the overall values. In social science studies, researchers commonly get weaker outer loadings (0.70), especially when using newly constructed measures (Hulland, 1999). Hair et al. (2017) suggests that instead of removing indicators when their outer loading falls below 0.7, researchers should carefully investigate the implications of item removal on the construct's composite reliability and content validity. Also, these indicators with lower outer loadings are kept because of their contribution to content validity. The Cronbach's Alpha and composite reliability values for PBPM were within the range. Also, the bootstrapping confirmed the significant for the reliability and validity values (including HTMT values). The AVE for PBPM is lower than 0.5. Fornell and Larcker stated that if AVE is less than 0.5 but composite reliability is more than 0.6, the construct's convergent validity is still appropriate (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Lam, 2012). This is the case in this study. Since the square-root of each of the six dimensions is larger than its correlations with other dimensions, discriminant validity is established (Hair et al., 2017). Additionally, no multicollinearity issues are found (Hair et al., 2010).

To assess the discriminant validity, this study used the HTMT criteria. For all combinations of constructs, the HTMT statistic's confidence interval does not include the value 1. The outer loadings of an indicator on a concept are found to be larger than all its cross-loadings with other constructs, according to classic discriminant validity evaluation methods. Table 23 presents the results based on the HTMT criteria.

Table 23: PBPM Discriminant Validity using the Heterotrait-Monotrait Method (HTMT).

	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.
1. Physique	<i>0.819</i>					
2. Personality	0.326	<i>0.817</i>				
3. Culture	0.498	0.276	<i>0.703</i>			
4. Reflection	0.861	0.276	0.568	<i>0.755</i>		
5. Relationship	0.115	0.063	0.078	0.088	<i>0.845</i>	
6. Self-Image	0.067	0.062	0.072	0.069	0.464	<i>0.850</i>

Note: The square roots of the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) are shown by diagonal and italicised characters. The HTMT values are the elements below the diagonal.

These results ensured discriminant validity and suggested that each of the constructs (Physique, Personality, Culture, Reflection, Relationship and Self-Image) is distinct from others in the PBPM model and captures phenomena that is not represented by other constructs. The cross-loadings are presented in Table 24.

Table 24: PBPM Discriminant Validity -Cross loadings

Dimension	Indicators	1. Physique	2. Personality	3. Culture	4. Reflection	5. Relationship	6. Self-Image
Physique	PM32	0.803	0.233	0.354	0.736	-0.118	-0.018
	PM33	0.866	0.299	0.478	0.684	-0.098	-0.074
	PM34	0.838	0.276	0.495	0.593	-0.080	-0.080
	PM35	0.816	0.173	0.273	0.553	-0.054	-0.024
	PM36	0.853	0.252	0.301	0.671	-0.025	0.000
	PM37	0.757	0.256	0.402	0.610	-0.089	-0.123
	PM38	0.793	0.244	0.289	0.666	-0.127	-0.023
Personality	Gender	0.215	0.812	0.196	0.197	0.006	0.050
	Age	0.219	0.811	0.136	0.190	0.020	0.100
	HighestPrevOff	0.271	0.806	0.183	0.224	0.050	0.063
	Diplomas	0.276	0.754	0.133	0.273	-0.031	0.013
	FamilyBackground	0.241	0.845	0.223	0.227	0.017	0.002
	LooksPhysiognomy	0.219	0.823	0.164	0.149	-0.025	-0.019
	Charisma	0.276	0.836	0.260	0.180	-0.012	0.032
	OutwardAppearnace	0.261	0.843	0.282	0.219	-0.032	-0.030
Culture	PM4	0.327	0.245	0.793	0.354	-0.035	-0.012
	PM7	0.060	0.064	0.451	0.066	0.040	-0.018
	PM20	0.489	0.210	0.864	0.537	-0.068	-0.092
	PM22	0.215	0.099	0.632	0.268	0.005	-0.016
Reflection	PM10	0.506	0.215	0.296	0.693	-0.061	-0.023
	PM13	0.605	0.285	0.523	0.751	-0.063	-0.102
	PM14	0.541	0.224	0.607	0.711	0.043	0.010
	PM25	0.625	0.146	0.307	0.807	-0.073	-0.068
	PM26	0.618	0.183	0.375	0.798	-0.087	-0.056
	PM27	0.549	0.157	0.334	0.741	-0.030	-0.052
	PM28	0.522	0.172	0.375	0.717	-0.047	-0.039
	PM30	0.671	0.130	0.264	0.779	-0.024	0.007
	PM31	0.707	0.218	0.354	0.791	-0.072	-0.070
Relationship	HELPFULNESS1	-0.109	-0.034	-0.084	-0.062	0.907	0.364
	HELPFULNESS2	-0.077	0.058	0.035	-0.030	0.821	0.390
	HELPFULNESS3	-0.065	0.006	-0.018	-0.055	0.803	0.261
Self-Image	Competance1	-0.047	-0.009	-0.070	-0.064	0.329	0.888
	Competance2	-0.015	0.021	-0.029	-0.028	0.328	0.847
	Competance3	0.013	0.038	0.002	0.007	0.321	0.779
	Competance4	-0.066	0.047	-0.075	-0.064	0.364	0.896
	Competance5	-0.079	0.046	-0.032	-0.051	0.347	0.833

Based on the analyses, it can be, then, assumed that both scales (i.e. Political Marketing Mix and VOTQUAL) measure PBPM. *Hypothesis 1* is accepted.

Findings: Results of Hypothesis 1 have demonstrated that political brand image & positioning and marketing elements can be measured (quantitatively). The Political Marketing Mix and VOTQUAL items are used to develop a new construct, the PBPM. Results have pointed out the most essential political marketing strategies, which this study is investigating, in the form of the PBPM indicators. These items/indicators examine the electorates' attitudes toward political brands which cover the political brand's marketing and ultimately positioning strategies. As a result, their items/indicators are used to evaluate "perceptions" of political brands and their "positioning" in the following analysis.

For quantitatively assessing the factors in Physique, Culture, and Reflection, future researchers can use 5-point Likert scale (where 1 = not at all important; 2 = less important; 3 = neither important nor unimportant; 4 = important; and 5 = most important). For assessing Personality, use 5-point Likert scale (1 = very satisfied; 2 = rather satisfied; 3 = neither satisfied nor unsatisfied; 4 = rather unsatisfied; and 5 = very unsatisfied). For assessing Relationship and Self-image factors, calculates the difference between electorate's perceived (P) and expected performance (E), i.e. P-E first.

5.2.2. Correlation

Before starting the analysis with the new scale, bivariate Pearson correlation (2-tailed) test was run on the complete data set of 697 respondents to assess the direction of relationship between the variables and to assess the degree to which changes in one cause change in the other variable(s). The mean and standard deviation (SD) values and output for Pearson's correlation of the complete data is presented in Table 25.

Table 25: Mean, standard deviations, correlation (2-tailed) scores for all variables under examination

	Mean	SD	Correlations													
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11			
1.Gender	1.4003	.49902	1													
2.Age	2.1019	.99551	-.149***	1												
3.Education	5.5208	1.18779	-.095*	-.084*	1											
4.Occupation	3.4849	2.67762	-.126**	.233***	-.047	1										
5.Ideological Opinion	3.6514	1.36578	-.090*	.041	-.017	.002	1									
6.Socio-Economic Stance	3.9469	1.45183	-.105**	.119**	-.058	-.005	.329***	1								
7.Ideological Attitude	3.6069	1.31103	-.075*	.113**	-.012	-.029	.498***	.498***	1							
8.PBPM	2.4118	.52200	-.033	.105**	.050	.047	.259***	.132***	.145***	1						
9.CBI	5.1738	1.58322	-.091*	.155***	-.026	.073	.222***	.125**	.136***	.572***	1					
10.CPBF	3.0090	1.60230	-.013	-.032	-.037	-.019	.007	-.048	-.062	-.012	.033	1				
11.VI	3.7048	1.00436	-.059	.145***	-.042	.124**	.159***	.010	.063	.472***	.639***	.036	1			

Notes: n = 697. Two-tailed. CPBF represents *Candidate-Party Brand-Fit*, CBI stands for *Candidate Brand Image*; PBPM stands for *Political Brand Positioning & Political Marketing*; and VI stands for *Voting Intention*. Significance: *** $p \leq .001$, ** $p \leq .01$, * $p \leq .05$

As a rule of thumb, 1 represents perfect positive correlation; 0 represents no correlation and -1 indicated perfect negative relationship. These values represent how good the correlation is between the variables. Generally, it is assumed that when the value of correlation coefficient (r) is between .00 – .19, the strength of correlation is considered very weak. When r is between .20 and .39, the correlation among the variables is considered weak. When r is between .4 and .59, there is moderate correlation between the variables. When it is between .69 and .79, the relationship is strong, and when it is between .8 and 1, correlation is very strong between the variables. Field, (2009) quoting Cohen (1988, 1992) writes that $r = .1$ represents small effect since .1 represents 1% variance; $r = .3$ reflects medium effect since it accounts for 9% variance; and $r = .5$ reflects large effect which could account for 25% of the variance in the dependent variable.

There is moderate and positive correlation between PBPM and the Candidate Brand Image ($r = .572$, $p < .000$) and between PBPM and the Voting Intention ($r = .472$, $p < .000$). The relationship between Voting Intention and Candidate Brand image is also significantly positive ($r = .639$, $p < .000$). It can also be seen that the relationship between PBPM with ideological beliefs, socio-economic stance and ideological attitude of the respondents are positive. However, all the three relationships are weak (showing less than 9% variation).

5.2.3. Analysis Using PBPM Scale

This section answers the second and third quantitative research question. After assessing the correlations between the main constructs, this section presents the results of the analysis carried out using the newly developed construct, PBPM.

For *Hypothesis 2, 3 and 4*, tests are run on Smart PLS. Since PLS-SEM does not facilitate moderated mediation (Hair et al., 2017). Results are presented in Figure 9 and Table 26. *Hypothesis 5* is tested following Hayes' (2015) index of moderated mediation (Hayes, 2022). Results are presented in Figure 10 and Table 27, 28 and 29.

The collinearity in each set of predictors in the structural model is assessed on tolerance (variance inflation factor or VIF) values. The PLS-SEM

results report shows the tolerance (*inner VIF*) values of each predictor construct to be higher than 0.2 and lower than 5. This confirmed that collinearity is not an issue in the model. R^2 values of the endogenous latent variables in the path model appeared between 0.031 and 0.25. For *Candidate-Party Brand-Fit*, R^2 is 0.031, $t = 2.518$ and $p < .05$. For *PBPM*, R^2 is 0.282, $t = 7.723$ and $p < .000$. For *Voting Intention*, R^2 is 0.428, $t = 10.612$ and $p < .000$. While f^2 values for the exogenous values are found between 0.02 and 0.39. In addition to that, results show SRMR value 0.014 indicating a satisfactory fit (Hair et al., 2022; Schuberth et al., 2018).

Hypothesis 2(a): The results show that Candidate Brand Image has a significant and positive affect on electorate's Voting Intention ($\beta = 0.559$, $t = 11.78$, $p < 0.000$). Hence, *Hypothesis 2 (a)* is accepted. Results are presents in Table 26a.

Hypothesis 2(b): The results of specific indirect effects (Table 26c) show that Candidate Brand Image has a substantial and positive indirect influence on Voting Intention via PBPM (such that $\beta = 0.061$, $t = 2.642$, $p < 0.001$). The total indirect effect of Candidate Brand Image on Voting Intention (Table 26b) appears to be substantial and positive (such that $\beta = 0.06$, $t = 2.631$, $p < 0.01$). The total effect of Candidate Brand Image on Voting Intention (Table 26d) is likewise substantial and favourable (such that $\beta = 0.62$, $t = 18.554$, $p < 0.000$). It appears to be a case of complementary (or partial) mediation. As a result, *Hypothesis 2 (b)* is accepted.

Hypothesis 2(c): Tests were run again on the data to assess the influence of PBPM on Candidate Brand Image. Results confirmed a two-way relationship between PBPM and Candidate Brand Image. PBPM significantly and positively influence Candidate Brand Image (such that $\beta = 0.531$, $t = 15.358$, $p < 0.000$). *Hypothesis 2c* is accepted. Results are presents in Table 26a.

Findings: The findings show that a candidate's brand image has a significant and positive influence on an electorate's decision to vote (Hypothesis 2a). The data also show that candidate brand image has a large and positive indirect influence on voting intention through all the PBPM. In the aggregate, the indirect influence of candidate brand image on voting intention appears to be

substantial and positive. The total influence of candidate brand image on voting intention is also substantial and positive. It appears to be a situation where partial (or complementary) mediation is being used (Hypothesis 2b). Findings have also shown that there is a two-way relationship between PBPM and Candidate Brand Image (Hypothesis 2c).

Hypothesis 3: PBPM has a significant and positive influence on electorate's Voting Intention (such that $\beta = 0.115$, $t = 2.623$, $p < 0.01$). The effect of PBPM on Voting Intention is however contingent upon the Candidate-Party Brand-Fit. As a moderator, Candidate-Party Brand-Fit has a significant and negative impact on the strong association between PBPM and Voting Intention (such that $\beta = -0.084$, $t = 2.127$, $p < 0.05$). Hence, *Hypothesis 3* is accepted. Results are presented in Table 26a.

Graph 1 represents the three level of moderation. The blue line represents the average level of moderation. The green line represents the high level while red line represents the low level of moderation. Graphs illustrate that when the electorates view Candidate-Party Brand-Fit to be low and average, their Voting Intention will rise as PBPM efforts increase. When they perceive the Candidate-Party Brand-Fit to be high, PBPM efforts are not required as much as when the fit is perceived to be low or average.

Findings: The findings indicate that PBPM has a large and positive impact on electorates' voting intentions. However, the impact of PBPM on voting intention is dependent on the brand-fit between the candidate and the party brand. This brand-fit, as a moderator, has a substantial negative influence on the strong relationship between PBPM and electorate's voting intentions. When voters see this brand-fit to be low or average, their intention to vote increases only as PBPM efforts improve. When they perceive the brand-fit to be high, PBPM efforts are not required as much as when the fit is perceived to be low or average. The findings also reveals that there is a two-way relationship between PBPM and Candidate Brand Image such that both complement each other.

Hypothesis 4: Results show that the relationship between Candidate Brand Image and Candidate-Party Brand-Fit is not significant (such that $\beta = -$

0.009, $t = 0.218$, $p = 0.828$). However, the effect of Candidate Brand Image on Candidate-Party Brand-Fit is contingent upon PBPM (such that such that $\beta = -0.150$, $t = 5.271$, $p < 0.000$). *Hypothesis 4* is also accepted. Results are presented in Table 26a.

Graph 2 when PBPM efforts are low, electorates perception about the Candidate-Party Brand-Fit will only increase if the Candidate Brand Image enhances. When PBPM effort are high, electorates' perceived brand-fit between the party and candidate brand will increase even when the Candidate Brand Image is deteriorating. Structural model's path relationships are presented in Table 26 and Figure 9. The PLS-SEM generated path diagrams together with the entire findings, are included in *APPENDIX B-V*.

Findings: The results demonstrate that the relationship between candidate brand image and candidate-party brand-fit is not significant. The effect of candidate brand image on brand-fit is rather contingent upon PBPM. Results show that when PBPM effort are high, electorates' perceived brand-fit between the party and candidate brand will increase even when the Candidate Brand Image is deteriorating.

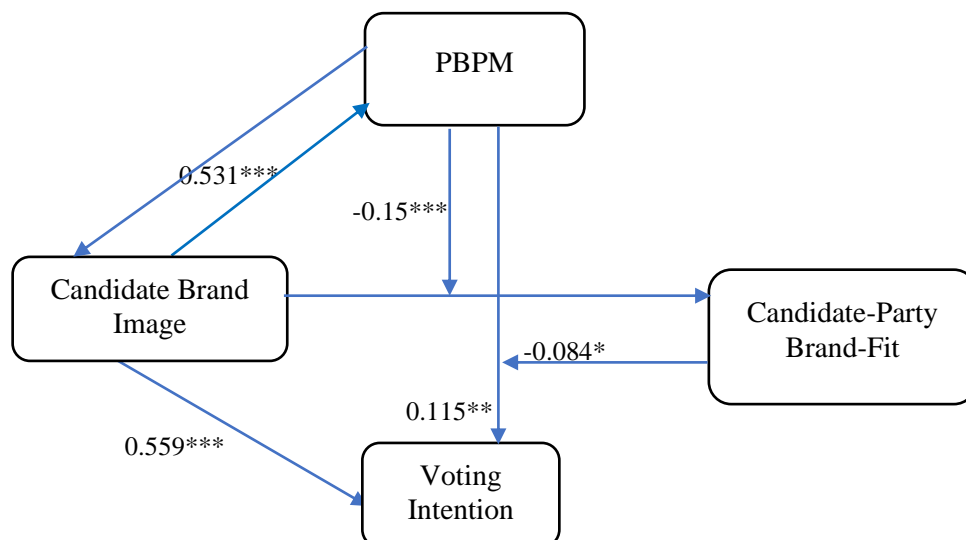


Figure 9: Formation and Management of Image & Positioning at the constituency level – Results of Hypothesis 2, 3 & 4

Note: $n = 697$. Bootstrap sample size 5,000. Bias-Corrected and Accelerated (Bca) Bootstrap. Two-tailed. Significance: $p < .05$. PBPM stands for *Political Brand Positioning & Political Marketing*.

Table 26: Analysis with PBPM - Structural Model Relationships

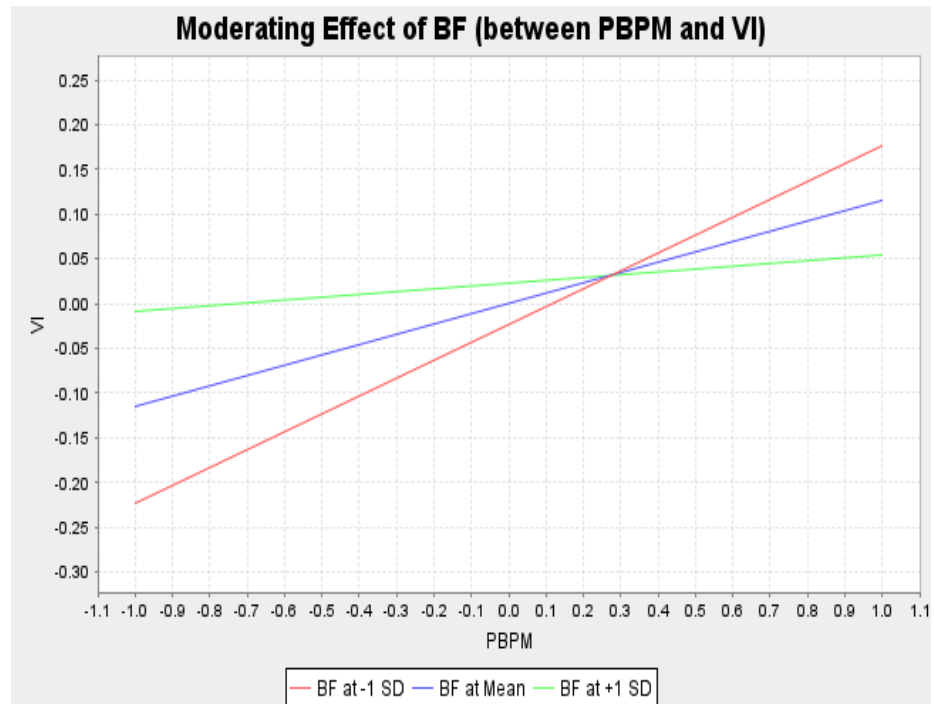
a.	Path Coefficients	Mean	STDEV	t	p	2.5%	97.5%	p<.05?
CPBF -> VI	0.023	0.023	0.030	0.779	0.436	-0.037	0.080	No
CBI ->CPBF	-0.009	-0.010	0.043	0.218	0.828	-0.096	0.074	No
CBI -> PBPM	0.531	0.530	0.035	15.376	0.000	0.461	0.596	Yes
CBI -> VI	0.559	0.562	0.048	11.718	0.000	0.466	0.654	Yes
Moderating Effect of CPBF (between PBPM and VI) -> VI	-0.084	-0.083	0.040	2.127	0.034	-0.158	-0.003	Yes
Moderating Effect of PBPM (between CBI and CPBF) -> CPBF	-0.150	-0.151	0.028	5.271	0.000	-0.206	-0.095	Yes
PBPM -> CPBF	-0.065	-0.066	0.047	1.383	0.167	-0.160	0.024	No
PBPM -> VI	0.115	0.113	0.044	2.623	0.009	0.024	0.200	Yes
PBPM -> CBI	0.531	0.531	0.035	15.358	0.000	0.464	0.597	Yes

b.	Total Indirect Effect	Mean	STDEV	t	p	2.5%	97.5%	p<.05?
CPBF -> VI								
CBI -> CPBF	-0.034	-0.035	0.025	1.352	0.176	-0.089	0.012	No
CBI -> PBPM								
CBI -> VI	0.060	0.059	0.023	2.631	0.009	0.013	0.106	Yes
Moderating Effect of CPBF (between PBPM and VI) -> VI								
Moderating Effect of PBPM (between CBI and CPBF) -> CPBF								
Moderating Effect of PBPM (between CBI and CPBF) -> VI	-0.003	-0.003	0.005	0.765	0.445	-0.012	0.006	No
PBPM -> CPBF								
PBPM -> VI	-0.002	-0.001	0.003	0.592	0.554	-0.007	0.003	No

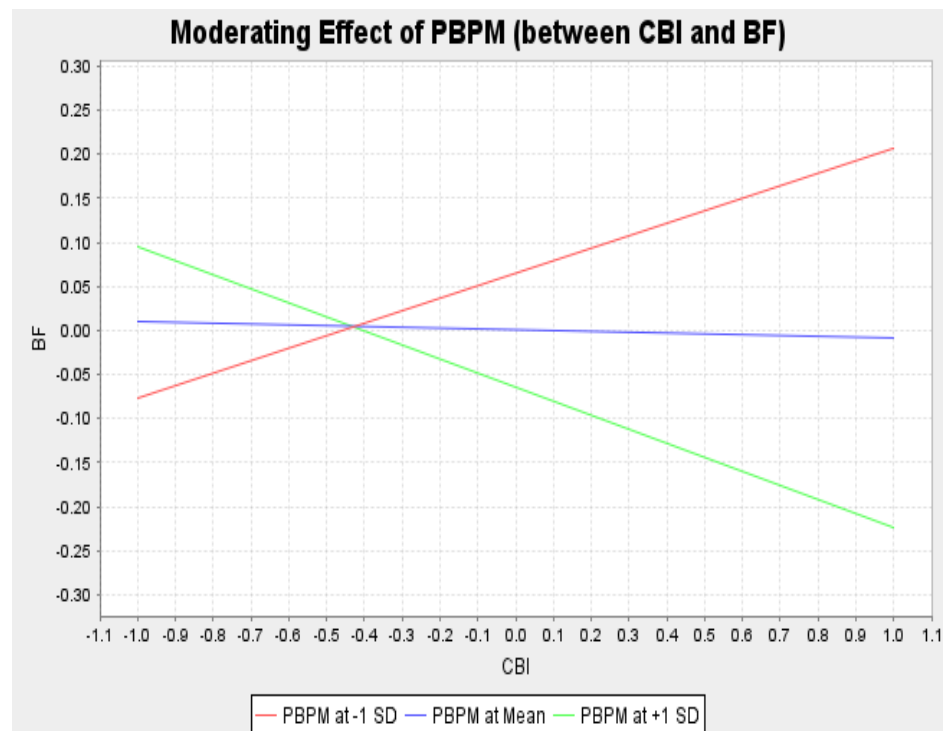
c.	Specific Indirect Effect	Mean	STDEV	t	p	2.5%	97.5%	p<.05?
Moderating Effect of PBPM (between CBI and CPBF) -> CPBF -> VI	-0.003	-0.003	0.005	0.765	0.445	-0.012	0.006	No
CBI -> CPBF -> VI	0.000	0.000	0.002	0.132	0.895	-0.004	0.003	No
PBPM -> CPBF -> VI	-0.002	-0.001	0.003	0.592	0.554	-0.007	0.003	No
CBI -> PBPM -> CPBF	-0.034	-0.035	0.025	1.352	0.176	-0.089	0.012	No
CBI -> PBPM -> VI	0.061	0.060	0.023	2.642	0.008	0.013	0.107	Yes
CBI -> PBPM -> CPBF -> VI	-0.001	-0.001	0.001	0.584	0.559	-0.004	0.002	No

d.	Total Effect	Mean	STDEV	t	p	2.5%	97.5%	p<.05?
CPBF -> VI	0.023	0.023	0.030	0.779	0.436	-0.037	0.080	No
CBI -> CPBF	-0.044	-0.045	0.041	1.073	0.283	-0.127	0.035	No
CBI -> PBPM	0.531	0.530	0.035	15.376	0.000	0.461	0.596	Yes
CBI -> VI	0.620	0.621	0.033	18.554	0.000	0.554	0.685	Yes
Moderating Effect of CPBF (between PBPM and VI) -> VI	-0.084	-0.083	0.040	2.127	0.034	-0.158	-0.003	Yes
Moderating Effect of PBPM (between CBI and CPBF) -> CPBF	-0.150	-0.151	0.028	5.271	0.000	-0.206	-0.095	Yes
Moderating Effect of PBPM (between CBI and CPBF) -> VI	-0.003	-0.003	0.005	0.765	0.445	-0.012	0.006	No
PBPM -> CPBF	-0.065	-0.066	0.047	1.383	0.167	-0.160	0.024	No
PBPM -> VI	0.114	0.112	0.044	2.608	0.009	0.024	0.199	Yes
PBPM -> CBI	0.531	0.531	0.035	15.358	0.000	0.464	0.597	Yes

Note: n = 697. Bootstrap sample size 5,000. Bias-Corrected and Accelerated (Bca) Bootstrap. Two-tailed. Significance: p <.05. CPBF represents Candidate-Party Brand-Fit, CBI stands for Candidate Brand Image; PBPM stands for Political Brand Positioning & Political Marketing; and VI stands for Voting Intention.



Graph 1: Moderating effects of Candidate-Party Brand-Fit between PBPM and Voting Intention
 Note: n = 697. BF represents *Candidate-Party Brand-Fit*. PBPM represents *Political Brand Positioning & Political Marketing*. VI represents *Voting Intention*.



Graph 2: Moderating effects of PBPM between Candidate Brand Image and Candidate-Party Brand-Fit
 Note: n = 697. BF represents *Candidate-Party Brand-Fit*. PBPM represents *Political Brand Positioning & Political Marketing*. CBI represents the *Candidate Brand Image*.

Hypothesis 5: This hypothesis assesses if the indirect effect of Candidate Brand Image on Voting Intention through PBPM is contingent upon the Candidate-Party Brand-Fit. To investigate this, second stage moderated mediation analysis is performed using Process Macro Model 14. Hair et al., (2017, Chapter 7, Exhibit 7.21) suggests using Hayes’s (2015) index of moderated mediation.

Participants' age, gender, education, ideological attitudes, political opinion, and socioeconomic stance are used as control variables. The findings suggest that the indirect influence of Candidate Brand Image on Voting Intention via PBPM is dependent on perceived Candidate-Party Brand-Fit (such that $b = -.0779$, $se = .0388$, 95% CI $[-.1541$ to $-.0017]$, $P < .05$). This indicates that the indirect effect of Candidate Brand Image on Voting Intention via PBPM becomes stronger as the Candidate-Party Brand-Fit decreases. Results are presented in Figure 10.

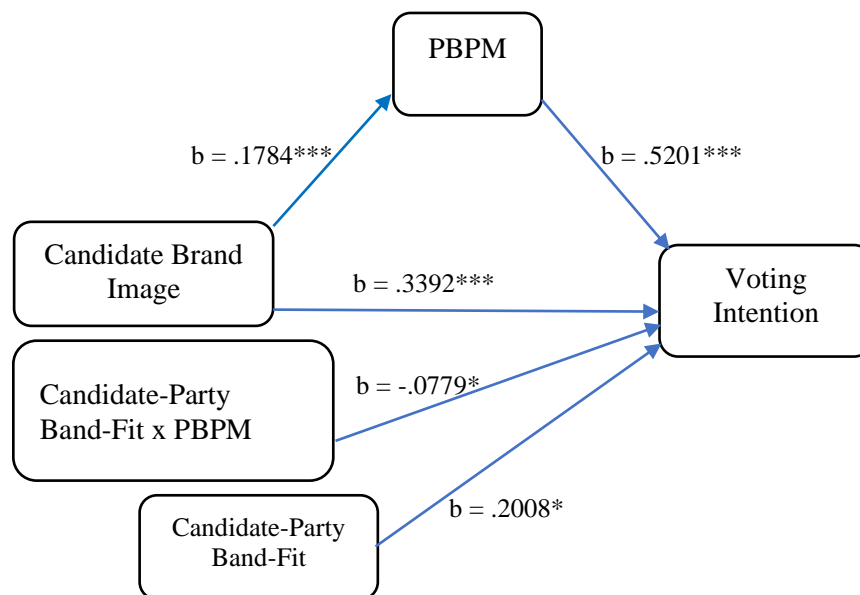


Figure 10: Results of Moderated Mediation -Hypothesis 5

Note: $n = 697$. Bootstrap sample size 5,000. PBPM stands for *Political Brand Positioning & Political Marketing*. Significance: *** $p < .000$; ** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$.

To better understand the interaction between PBPM and Candidate-Party Brand-Fit, the PBPM model is generated as a graph for the three levels: *low* (16th percentile), *moderate* (50th percentile), and *high* (84th percentile) of Candidate-Party Brand-Fit. Graph 3 illustrates this visual representation.

The slopes of the regression lines in Graph 3 show that the indirect effect of candidate brand image on voting intention through PBPM is significant for low ($b = .4422, se = .0921, p < .000, 95\% CI [.2614, .6231]$) and moderate levels of brand-fit ($b = .2864, se = .0702, p < .001, 95\% CI [.1486, .4243]$) levels of brand-fit. However, with the high degree of candidate-party brand-fit, this impact is not significant ($b = .1501, se = .1082, p = .1657, 95\% CI [-.0623, .3265]$). As a result, when electorates view a candidate and party brand to be misaligned, the necessity of marketing methods to vote for candidate grows. When this fit is moderate or high, however, the importance of marketing methods decreases. These findings provide credence to Hypothesis 5.

Results are presents in Graph 3, Table 27, 28 and 29.

Table 27. Results of Bootstrapped mediated moderation analysis examining the relationship of Candidate Brand Image; PBPM; Voting Intention; and Candidate-Party Brand-Fit

	(Template 14) Second Stage Moderated Mediation	
	PBPM b(se)	VI b(se)
CBI	.1784(.0105)***	.3392(.0226)***
PBPM		.5201(.1216)***
CPBF		.2008(.0969)*
PBPM x CPBF		-.0779(.0388)*
F	53.7604	53.9295
R²	.3532	.4401

Note: n = 697. Bootstrap sample size 5,000. PBPM stands for *Political Brand Positioning & Political Marketing*. VI stands for *Voting Intention*. CBI strands for *Candidate Brand Image*. Significance: *** p< .000 level; ** p< .01 level; * p< .05

Table 28: Effects of PBPM on VI

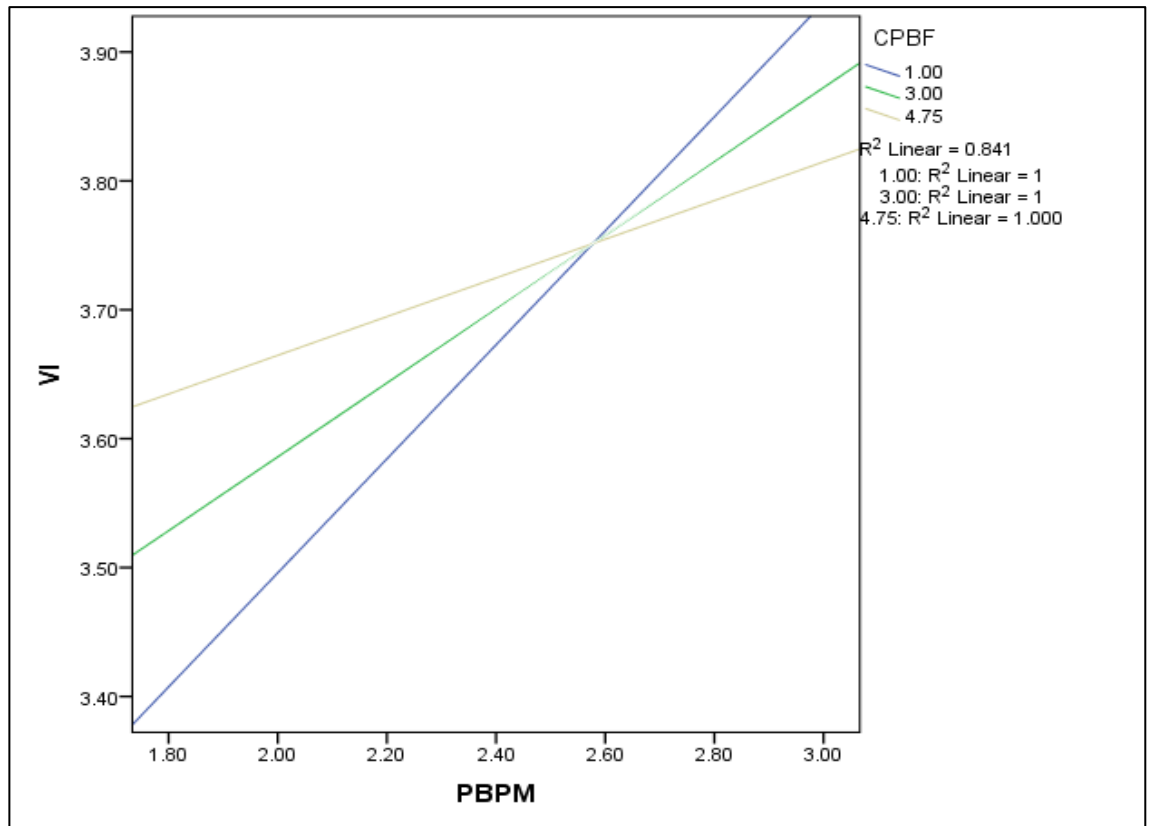
Conditional Effects of PBPM at Values of CPBF	Effect (Se)	95% CI	
		LL	UL
-1SD of CPBF	.4422(.0921)***	.2614	.6231
Mean CPBF	.2864(0702)**	.1486	.4243
+1SD of CPBF	.1501(.1082)ns	-.0623	.3625

Note: n = 697. Bootstrap sample size 5,000. PBPM stands for *Political Brand Positioning & Political Marketing*. VI stands for *Voting Intention*. Significance: *** p< .000 level; ** p< .01 level; * p< .05

Table 29: Results of Indirect effects of CBI on VI

Indirect Effects of CBI on VI via BI&P	Effect (Se)	95% CI		
		LL	UL	
-1SD of CPBF	.0789 (.0260)	.0247	.1265	
Mean CPBF	.0511 (.0149)	.0204	.0796	
+1SD of CPBF	.0068 (.0185)	-.0089	.0631	
Index of moderated mediation:				
CPBF	Index	SE	LL	UL
	-.0139	.0089	-.0303	.0047

Note: n = 697. Bootstrap sample size 5,000. PBPM stands for *Political Brand Positioning & Political Marketing*. VI stands for *Voting Intention*. CBI stands for *Candidate Brand Image*. Significance: *** p< .000 level; ** p< .01 level; * p< .05



Graph 3: Conditional Effects of PBPM at Values of CPBF

Note: n = 697. CPBF represents *Candidate-Party Brand-Fit*. PBPM represents *Political Brand Positioning & Political Marketing*. CBI represents the Candidate Brand Image.

- line represents the low level of moderation (16th percentile)
- line represents the moderate level of moderation (50th percentile).
- line represents the high level of moderation (84th percentile)

Findings: According to the findings, the indirect impact of candidate brand image on voting intention via PBPM is reliant on perceived candidate-party brand-fit. This means that as the candidate-party brand-fit falls, the indirect influence of candidate brand image on voting intention via PBPM gets stronger. The results show that when voters believe a candidate's and party's brands are misaligned, the need for marketing strategies to get electorates to vote for that candidate increases. When this brand-fit is moderate or good, however, marketing strategies become less important.

5.2.4. *Influence of the Leader (Corporate Level)*

This section answers the fourth research question. In order to demonstrate how close party leaders are to the electorate's ideal leader perception, this section presents findings on a perceptual space for party leaders (at the corporate level).

The intention is to see if the party leader has a substantial impact on the voters, influencing how they view the linked political co-brands. This section tests the last hypothesis which assesses if the political leader's (at the corporate level) management style can influence electorates' perception:

Hypothesis 6: Political leader's (at the corporate level) management style influences electorates' perception.

The qualitative studies have shown that the image of the leader (corporate level) also is utilised as a cognitive shortcut to evaluate the candidate and the party brands at the constituency level. Goleman's typology was used to verify the leader's competency and dependability as well as their effect on the electorates. On ideal political leadership styles assessments, exploratory principal component analysis (PCA) with varimax rotation is undertaken for all respondents (in SPSS). In both agency and communion, it resulted in a one-factor solution. This could be observed in the scree plot, where the eigenvalue for a one-way solution was larger than 1. This suggests that when two variables are present, the second does not account for much of the variance.

With a two-factor solution, however, the quartimax rotation produced clearer results. Each leadership style has factor loadings that allocated it to only one factor. Factor1: authoritative, affiliative, democratic, pacesetting and coaching; while Factor 2: coercive (just one style). In this way quartimax rotation yielded two factor solutions explaining 80% of the total variance (see Table 30), such that:

Factor1 (*communion*) covered affiliative, democratic, pacesetting, coaching and authoritative styles (68% of explained variance).

Factor2 (*agency*) encompassed coercive leadership style only (12% variation explained).

Table 30: Perceptual Dimensions of Ideal Leadership Styles. Results of a Principal Component Analysis

	Factor 1 (Communion)	Factor 2 (Agency)
Affiliative_1Ideal	.894	
Democratic_1Ideal	.887	
Coaching_1Ideal	.887	
Pacesetting_1Ideal	.831	
Authoritative_1Ideal	.821	
Coercive_1Ideal		.784
Percentage of Variance Explained	68%	12%
	80%	
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.		
Rotation Method: Quartimax with Kaiser Normalization.		

These two factors stand for two dimensions: *communion* (integrity, collaboration, and support) and *agency* (competence, ambition, and control) (Cwalina & Drzewiecka, 2019). It is customary to name these elements. That is, the name that they can be covered can be identified by looking at the characteristics (styles). Because coercive style falls in the agency, Factor 2 is named Agency while Factor 1 is named Communion.

According to Goleman (2000)'s categorization between positive and negative influence on the group environment, the authoritative, affiliative, democratic, and coaching styles have a positive influence. On the other hand, leaders who are coercive or set the pace have a negative impact on the group's atmosphere. In this study only the coercive approach is increasing Factor 2. In this sense, Pakistan differs from Poland and Georgia in terms of leadership style perception (please compare results with Cwalina & Drzewiecka, 2019 and Drzewiecka & Cwalina, 2020).

¹⁸To determine where political leaders fit into a two-dimensional (communion vs. agency) perceptual space, means of evaluations were calculated

¹⁸ How Means Were Calculated: For each participant, the style ratings for each factor were averaged, for each politician, separately. Thus, each politician is described with two factor scores. In the research. For example, for Ideal leader, average for communion was calculated (in SPSS) with 5 styles: (authoritative + affiliative + democratic + pacesetting + coaching)/5. And, for agency, coercive style was considered. So, altogether 14 new variables were calculated in the data set (i.e. for each of the 7 participant we calculated means for the 2 factors (communion and agency

independently for each political leader for each style building every factor. These findings are used to create a map with communion (X-axis) and agency (Y-axis) dimensions. Graph 4 is a perceptual map with 697 responses. It depicts politicians' perceptual maps based on assessments of their leadership styles, such that,

--High concentrate on agency (*directive and pacesetting methods*) and little concentration on communion (*cold and without focus on others*) are represented by the left upper quadrant.

--The right upper quadrant reflects a strong focus on agency (*competence, authority*) as well as a strong focus on communion (*building bonds and harmony*).

--Leaders who are neither highly competent nor very warm are represented in the left bottom quadrant.

--The bottom right quadrant is seen as non-directive and has a beneficial influence on the group climate (Ibid).

The following table makes it easy to understand the four quadrants:

(+Agency, -Communion)	(+Agency, +Communion)
High concentrate on agency (directive and pacesetting methods) and little concentration on communion (cold and without focus on others)	a strong focus on agency (competence, authority) as well as a strong focus on communion (building bonds and harmony).
(-Agency, -Communion)	(-Agency, +Communion)
Leaders who are neither highly competent nor very warm	non-directive and has a beneficial influence on the group climate

The Ideal Leader position on the perceptual map (Graph 4) shows that the electorates anticipate an ideal leader to have both communion (integrity, reliability, and trust) and agency (competence, ambition, and control). While all the political leaders appear deficient in communion.

mean)). After calculating the means for each of these variables, data represented each of the seven politicians described by two means: one for communion and one for agency. These means are the coordinates in the Graphs. This figure was made in the Excel file shared by Dr. Wojciech Cwalina (<https://umcs-pl.academia.edu/WojciechCwalina>) for which I am extremely grateful to him.



Graph 4: Perceptual Map of Ideal and Real Political leaders

Because the qualitative strand revealed three important political brands in Pakistan, respondents in the quantitative study were asked to fill out the questionnaire by selecting one of these three political brands. The analysis is therefore not conducted based on the party to which respondents are emotionally attached, since this would have resulted in biased judgments with their emotions influencing the results, but rather on intellect. Also, it's possible that these three brands may not be their favourite or preferred brands. Respondents were rather asked to select one brand from a list of three key political brands (identified during the qualitative study) to fill the questionnaire for this study (for questions on the party and the candidate). Out of the 421 men, 43% filled the questionnaire for PMLN; 8.3% filled for PPP, and 49% filled for PTI. Among women respondents, 39% filled for PMLN; 8.3% for PPP and 55% filled the questionnaire for PTI. Table 31 presents the age-wise frequency of men and women respondents according to the political brand they chose to fill the questionnaire.

Table 31: Political Brand (Party & Its Candidates) For Which the Questionnaire Is Filled

Gender	Age	Political Brand	Frequency	Percentage
Male	18-25	PMLN	30	29.1
		PPP	6	5.8
		PTI	67	65.0
		Total	103	100.0
	26-35	PMLN	68	37.2
		PPP	20	10.9
		PTI	95	51.9
		Total	183	100.0
	36-45	PMLN	54	60.0
		PPP	4	4.4
		PTI	32	35.6
		Total	90	100.0
	46-55	PMLN	20	71.4
		PTI	8	28.6
		Total	28	100.0
	56-60	PMLN	6	42.9
		PPP	4	28.6
		PTI	4	28.6
		Total	14	100.0
	60 & above	PMLN	2	66.7
PPP		1	33.3	
Total		3	100.0	
Female	18-25	PMLN	22	21.2
		PPP	8	7.7
		PTI	74	71.2
		Total	104	100.0
	26-35	PMLN	54	50.5
		PPP	8	7.5
		PTI	45	42.1
		Total	107	100.0
	36-45	PMLN	26	46.4
		PPP	4	7.1
		PTI	26	46.4
		Total	56	100.0
	46-55	PMLN	4	66.7
		PPP	2	33.3
		Total	6	100.0
	56-60	PMLN	2	100.0
	60 & above	PPP	1	100.0

As can be seen in Graph 5 (PMLN) and Graph 6 (PTI), the leadership of PMLN and PTI are viewed as being near to the respondent's ideal leader, respectively. Leaders who rank high on communion are more successfully positioned (Cwalina & Drzewiecka, 2019). This indicates that leaders have a tremendous amount of power over the electorate. Based on these evidence, *Hypothesis 6* is accepted.

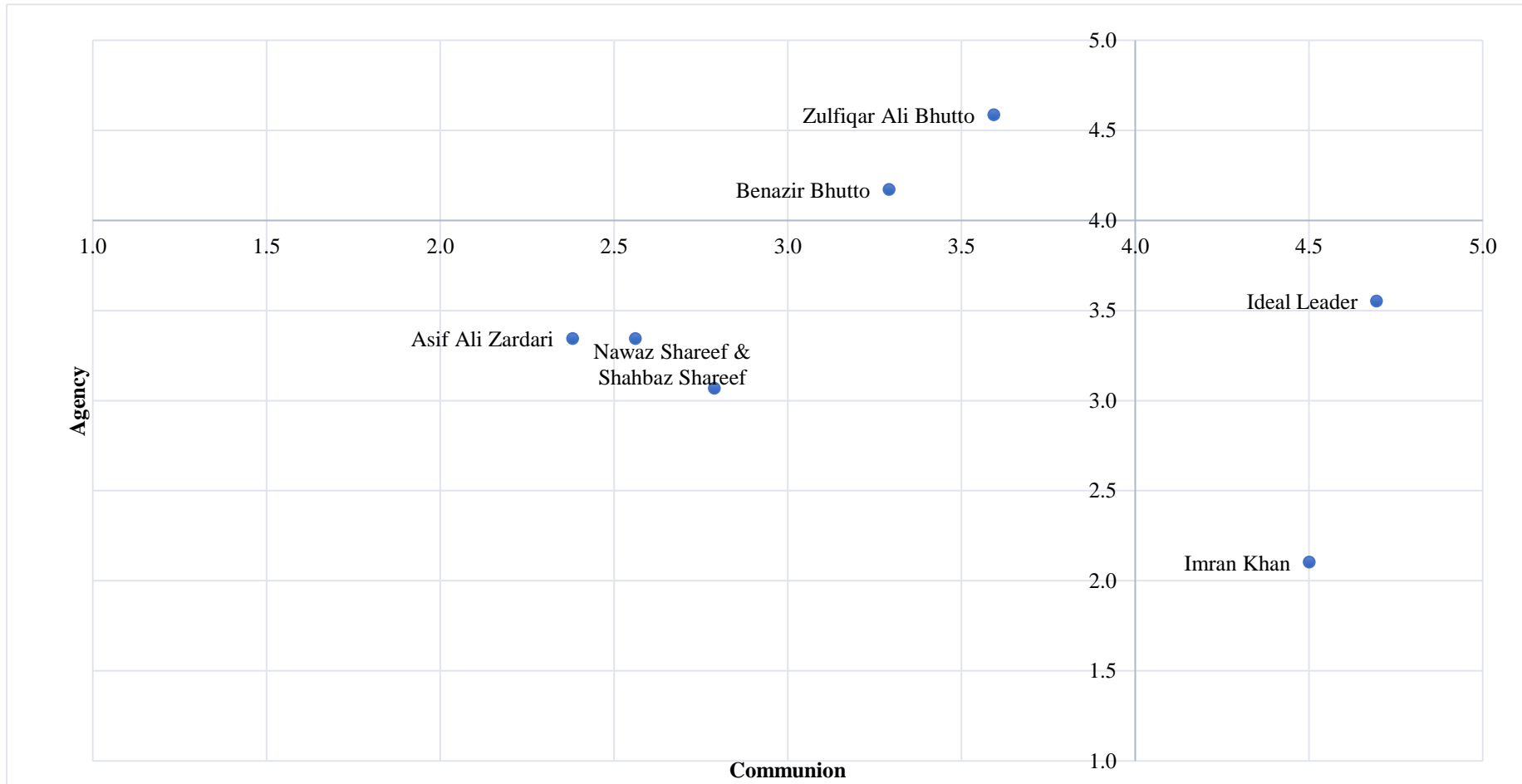
The results for the PPP leadership, on the other hand, were unexpectedly different perhaps because of the smaller number of people filled the questionnaire for PPP. The results suggest that for the respondents who filled the questionnaire for PPP, ideal leader is positioned in the fourth quadrant. Imran Khan (Chairman PTI) is positioned close to their ideal leadership style. They have positioned the PPP founder, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto (late) and his daughter Benazir Bhutto (late) in the upper left quadrant reflecting their preference for Agency (competence).



Graph 5: Perceptual Map of Ideal and Real Political leaders- PMLN



Graph 6: Perceptual Map of Ideal and Real Political leaders- PTI



Graph 7: Perceptual Map of Ideal and Real Political leaders- PPP

Goleman's Typology is employed to see if the party leader has a substantial impact on the voters, influencing how they view the linked political co-brands. Results of the analysis suggests that the leadership of PMLN and PTI are viewed as being near to the respondent's ideal leader. Results have also demonstrated that electorates expect an ideal leader to have both communion (integrity, reliability, and trust) and agency, according to the Ideal Leader position on the perceptual map (competence, ambition, and control). All of the political leaders appear to be lacking in communion.

5.3. Summary of the Chapter

Quantitative study looked at the reality from a different ontological position and offered justification of the model for the quantitative analysis and for the hypothesis formed in the light of the quantitative analysis. Built on the findings of qualitative study, quantitative strand complements the qualitative findings. This study offered a quantitative model which presents the process of political co-brand image and positioning formation. It also helps in measuring the influence of political co-brand image and positioning factors on the electorates' voting intentions and the brand-fit between the candidate and the party at the constituency level.

While evaluating the application of the Political Co-brand Identity Framework for co-brand image and positioning by studying perceptions of political analysts, the qualitative strand elaborated how the reputation of co-brand and corporate political brands have an influence on each other outside Europe. The findings suggests that the elements within the six dimensions of the framework (i.e. Physique, Personality, Culture, Relationship, Reflection and Self-Image) are the factors which are crucial for image and positioning political brands at the constituency level. Depending upon how they are managed, these factors can influence the political co-brand's image and positioning, just the like the independent variable(s) would in a dependent variable(s) (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016).

This study has created a "new" theoretical construct, the PBPM. It is original and defined by this study. However, this study has not created the scale using traditional classical style of scale development. This research did not invent all

the items. This "new" scale (PBPM) is based on the existing scales which were developed to measure variables other than *PBPM*. This study has verified them and deleted items that are not related to PBPM. In simple words, items from these scales are mixed up in this to develop PBPM. Thus, its structure and dimensions do not coincide with the "old" scales which are used to develop this new scale. This study has also endeavoured to introduce another construct, the "Candidate-Party Brand-Fit".

DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

6.0. Introduction

The sequential exploratory mixed method study design has endeavoured to generalise the qualitative results to the population (Creswell, 2003, 2014). It has sought to triangulate the qualitative findings in this way. While the *qualitative strand* helps in exploring the elements which play a crucial role for a political co-brand's image formation and in the positioning of the co-brand, the *quantitative strand* looks at the reality from a different ontological perspective. The integration of both qualitative and quantitative findings has resulted in the formation and refinement of the Political Co-brand Image and Positioning Framework (Figure 10). In this way this study has contributed to the body of knowledge which a single method of inquiry would not have been able to produce (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2011). Table 32 presents the summary of this study. It elaborates how quantitative study is built on the qualitative study's findings and how the sequential exploratory mixed method study design has endeavoured to generalise the qualitative results to the population (Creswell, 2003, 2014).

This chapter represents the integration level of the sequential exploratory mixed method research design employed in this study. It presents the details on how the two strands integrate. It sheds light on the findings (formation and management of political co-brand image and positioning) in the light of the available research. This chapter is structured as follows:

Section 6.1 presents the discussion on the findings of the two strands. Following the order of the research objectives (in Chapter 1), Section 6.1.1 and 6.1.2 address the first research objective. Section 6.1.1. discusses the six key dimensions (of *Political Co-brand Image and Positioning Framework*) which play a crucial role in the formation and management of political co-brand image and positioning, in the light of available literature. This is followed by the discussion on the formation and management of the co-brand image and positioning in Section 6.1.2. Section 6.1.3 addresses the second research objective. It discusses the image transference between

the partnering brand (in a political co-branding relationship), and, between the political co-brand and the corporate brand, are discussed.

Section 6.2 presents the conclusion, limitations, and recommendations for further research. Section 6.3 presents the contributions of this research. And section 6.4 presents the implications of this research.

Table 32: Detail of the Sequential Exploratory Mixed Method Study Design Fundings

Research Objectives	Qualitative Research Questions	Qualitative Findings	Quantitative Research Questions	Hypothesis	Quantitative Findings
Explore and investigate the political co-brand image and positioning from an external perspective.	How does political co-brand image and positioning get created in the mind of the electorate mind, at the constituency level?	<p>The exploratory study resulted in the formation of a new framework, <i>The Political Co-Brand Image and Positioning Framework</i>, with the following dimensions and factors/elements:</p> <p>Physique (Slogans and Political Rhetoric; Candidate Availability) Personality (Popularity & Charisma) Culture (Political Culture) Reflection (Issues in Constituencies & Electorates Characteristics) Relationship (Performance, Governance & Democracy) Self-Image (Vision, Credibility, Consistency & Reliability) The image transfers between co-brand and the corporate level through factors in the six dimensions.</p>	<p><i>Can political brand image and positioning be reliably measured quantitatively?</i></p> <p><i>Do political brand image and positioning factors impact the electorates' voting intention?</i></p>	<p>Hypothesis 1: Political brand image & positioning and marketing elements can be measured (quantitatively).</p> <p>Hypothesis 2: (a) Candidate Brand Image has a direct effect on electorates' Voting Intention, (b) There is also an indirect effect of Candidate Brand Image on Voting Intention via PBPM, (c) There is a two-way relationship between PBPM and Candidate Brand Image.</p> <p>Hypothesis 3: The effect of PBPM on Voting Intention is contingent upon the Candidate-Party Brand-Fit (i.e., Candidate-Party Brand-fit can affect the strength of the relationship between the political PBPM and the Voting Intention of the electorates).</p>	<p><i>Hypothesis 1 is Accepted:</i> Identifies a method to measure Political Co-brand Image and Positioning.</p> <p><i>Hypothesis 2 is Accepted.</i></p> <p><i>Hypothesis 3 is Accepted:</i> When the voters view Candidate-Party Brand-Fit to be low and average, their Voting Intention will rise as PBPM efforts increase.</p>
Explore and examine the image transference between corporate political brands and political co-brands from an external perspective	How does image (negative/positive) transfer between the political co-brand (at the constituency level) and the corporate political brand?	<p>It is mostly based on the performance of the candidate brand and the leader at the corporate level. This can be seen in Figure 4. The two-ways arrows represent the image transference between the Co-brand and the Corporate Brand.</p>	<p><i>Does the brand-fit (between candidate brand and the party brand) impact the relationship between the political brand image and positioning factors and voting intention of electorates?</i></p> <p><i>Does the political leader at the corporate level influence the electorate?</i></p>	<p>Hypothesis 4: The effect of Candidate Brand Image on Candidate-Party Brand-Fit is contingent upon PBPM.</p> <p>Hypothesis 5: The effect of Candidate Brand Image on Voting Intention through PBPM is contingent upon the Candidate-Party Brand- Fit</p> <p>Hypothesis 6: Political leader's (at the corporate level) management style influences electorates' perception.</p>	<p><i>Hypothesis 4 is Accepted:</i> When PBPM efforts are low, voters' perception about the Brand-Fit will only increase if the Candidate Brand Image enhances.</p> <p><i>Hypothesis 5 is Accepted:</i> When voters view candidate and party brand to be misaligned, the necessity of marketing methods to vote for candidate grows.</p> <p><i>Hypothesis 6 is Accepted:</i> Both Communion and Agency are important to Pakistanis.</p>

6.1. Discussion

6.1.1. *Political Co-Brand Image, Positioning & Marketing*

To satisfy the first objective, this study has explored and investigated political co-brand image and positioning from perspective of those who do not work for or support or have an inclination towards any of the political brands. By developing the *Political Co-Brand Image & Positioning Framework*, this study demonstrates how political co-brand image and positioning are built and maintained. This framework has six dimensions, which are *Physique, Personality, Culture, Reflection, Relationship* and *Self-image*.

Qualitative study identified the political marketing elements/factors within each of these six dimensions. These factors/elements are strategic tools in political marketing which effect and shape a political co-brand's image. *Quantitative study* adjusted the factors that fit into appropriate dimension of the framework and calculated their cumulative impact on voter intentions. The quantitative strand has also identified how these factors can be measured by introducing a new construct, the PBPM. The indicators/items in this construct describe political marketing initiatives that influence people's "perceptions" of a political brand. These actions have the power shape how electorates think about the political brands. This study not only presents a method for gauging the effect of political brand image and positioning, it also informs about the intersection between the six key dimensions (or the pillars) of Political Co-brand Image and Positioning framework. Consequently, this mixed method study has managed to develop and explain the formation of political co-brand image and the process of positioning a co-brand in electorates' mind.

This section discusses the six dimensions and their respective factors, in the light of available literature.

Physique

The first dimension, *Physique* characterizes the appearance and style of communication a political co-brand uses to position itself and build an image.

Both qualitative and quantitative strands confirm that the primary characteristics within this dimension include qualities/aspects related to the candidate brand. These are the candidate's availability in the area; candidate's being known; and candidate's frequent appearance in the constituency; candidate's modesty; image as a community leader; and his/her communication abilities, which include politically rich rhetoric, are among the intangible elements.

In line with the existing scholarship, candidates from various parties frequently used richly symbolic political rhetoric which is heavily reliant on populism and populist communication strategies everywhere on the media. (Brown & Mondon, 2021; Brubaker, 2017; Chadwick, 2017; Dai & Kustov, 2022; Ernst et al., 2019; Hawkins & Selway, 2017; Van Aelst et al., 2017). Candidates have adopted vocabulary and writing styles that are appropriate for the media. Political rhetoric uses language and style which offers best fit for the media. In line with the existing literature, this study confirms that when political news is combined with entertainment, political discourse becomes more acceptable and appealing to the target market (Bracciale & Martella, 2017). It appears to be successful in connecting with people and creating a lifelong association between the brands and the electorates. In order to achieve a strong and pervasive presence at the grassroots level, populism is commonly used as a persuasive strategy and a guerrilla method for dealing with competitors (Lees-Marshment, 2011; Yousaf, 2016). Candidate brands do this on television to establish a strong positioning for their respective political co-brand and corporate brands (Lees-Marshment, 2011; Yousaf, 2016). This is in line with the research, which suggests that candidates ought to champion the critical roles branding and image-making play alongside carefully considering positioning strategies utilizing the power and capabilities of media (Lees-Marshment, 2011). These attributes are favourably and strongly associated to candidate brand, which in turn influences the voting intentions of educated electorates (Barrett, 2018; Jain et al., 2017c). Throughout in this manner, the party brand image is developed and strengthened (Antil & Verma, 2020; Nimijean, 2018), and the co-brand is regarded and positioned as prominent, reliable, and trustworthy in comparison to rivals (Coe, 2016; Krebs & Jackson, 2007). Quantitative research confirms the importance of political rhetoric which the qualitative study's findings have identified and explained (related to the appearance of candidates on political talk shows). The

mediatization/political brands media logic appears to have transformed television into a powerful tool for shaping the political environment to position the brand (Deacon & Stanyer, 2014; Strömbäck, 2011; Scammell, 2016a).

The findings related to the availability/known in the media as a community person conforms to the published research (e.g. Abou Khalil & Aoun, 2020). It aids in strengthening the image of the candidate and position the candidate and the partnering party better than its competitors (Antil & Verma, 2020; Coe, 2016; Krebs & Jackson, 2007; Nimijean, 2018). The availability of the candidate brand among the people is interpreted by electorates as a sign of sincerity and seriousness in resolving their problems and keeping promises made during the election campaign (Shahid et al., 2021). Every action taken by the party's leader/political candidates represents what the party stands for and how it differs from rival brands (Aaltio-Marjosola & Takala, 2000). These intangible symbols have appeared to affect electorates' perceptions of the candidates (and ultimately the leader) as being trustworthy, competent, and honest in comparison to their competitors. This contributes to creating a positive perception of the political brand, which includes the party brand that candidates are associated with and, ultimately, the electorates perception (Hoegg & Lewis, 2011; Shanks & Miller, 1990; Valgardsson et al., 2020) about the co-brand.

Difference Between the Two Studies: The difference between the qualitative study and quantitative study is that in the qualitative analysis, modesty and articulation power of the candidates appeared as Personality dimension factors. Furthermore, unlike qualitative study where slogan appear as a Physique element, quantitative study shows and confirms it as a Reflection factor.

Personality

Personality is a representation of the leader and the co-brand figureheads' (i.e., candidate brands') personalities within the constituency. The popularity and charisma of the party leader affects how well co-brands are positioned in their respective districts (Antil & Verma, 2020; Yousaf, 2016; Valgardsson et al., 2020). This dimension focuses on how leader's personality influences electorates' impressions of the co-brand's image and positioning, as well as how they compare to

competitors. Both qualitative and quantitative studies, in line with the already published research, have confirmed that this dimension covers factors like gender, charisma, age, educational qualifications, looks, etc. (Agomor & Adams, 2014; Antil & Verma, 2020; Guzman & Sierra, 2009; Little et al., 2007; Yousaf, 2016). Political mediatization also makes it possible to learn more about the characteristics of the leaders (Valgardsson et al., 2020). Research suggests that the physical qualities play an important role in grabbing electorates' attention (Abou Khalil & Aoun, 2020 quoting Dickson & Ginter 1987; Jackle, Metz, Wenzelburger & König, 2020; Pich & Armannsdottir, 2018) and influence candidate evaluation and electorate's voting decisions (Jackle et al., 2020; Guzman & Sierra, 2009; Little et al., 2007; Stockemer & Praino, 2015, 2017). These candidate brand traits serve as a political marketing strategy, influencing informed electorates' voting intentions (Barrett, 2018; Jain, Pich, Ganesh & Armannsdottir, 2017c).

Despite published research suggesting that electorates with low levels of competence and significant distractions fail to account for physical appearance prejudice and favour handsome candidates, the educated electorate appears to be much the same (Devine, Holmes & Wang, 2020; Frevert & Walker, 2014; Hart, Ottati & Krumdick, 2011; Stockemer & Praino, 2015, 2017). It seems that electorates evaluate the candidates on criteria like the past records, image as a leader and as a community leader (Medveschi & Frunza, 2018). This is in line with published research (e.g. Acuna-Duarte, & Salazar, 2021; Chowdhury & Naheed, 2019) study of the Bangladeshi electorates (urban educated lot) for whom, factors like past record of the candidate and his/her image as a leader and a community person is important for making electoral decision. Even the leaders who have passed away, this is true (Steffens et al., 2017). Overall, the findings complement a body of work that contends that personality characteristic interpretations influence the image and position of a political party (e.g. Hoegg & Lewis, 2011; Todorov, et al., 2005).

Difference between the studies: The difference between the two studies is that the quantitative study has identified age and gender to be important factors within the Personality dimension. These did not emerge in the qualitative study.

Culture

The political brand's guiding ideas and legacy are symbolised by Culture. It also represents the values that the co-leader/figurehead brand emphasises when creating and sustaining its brand image and positioning in Pakistan. Individual values and perspectives must be consistent with what is valued at the corporate level in order to position the co-brand favourably. Both qualitative and quantitative study confirm that use of leader or party chairman name; candidate's showing off muscle power; use of his/her family members; and social media usage by the candidate aid in establishing a favourable image for the political co-brand. Aramansdottir et al., (2019) suggests that political leaders use party funds for the political activities. In contrast, in this study candidates' economic wealth and candidate's muscle power (Babeiya, 2011; Vaishnav, 2011); leader-centric politics (Kobby, 2007; Thoroughgood et. al., 2018), and candidates' relationships to significant political personalities/government higher ups (Pedersen, Dahlgaard & Citi, 2019) are prevalent in Pakistani, Indian and Bangladeshi political culture (Chowdhury & Naheed, 2019). The findings have shown that the candidate brands are judged on their devotion and dedication to the party leader. Electorates interpret and associate candidate's power with his/her caste/clan, affluency, popularity, and having a strong political background (Chandra, 2007; Cheema et. al., 2013; Cwalina et al., 2011; Haider & Ali, 2020; Hussain, 2020; Liaqat et. al., 2019; Martin, 2020; Raven, 1990, 2008; Ruud & Neilson, 2018, Yousaf, 2016). These characteristics have an influence on their voting intentions and help candidates establish a brand image and obtain election seats (Hussain, 2012).

The quantitative analysis (PCA) reveals that candidate's social media usage is more of a Culture factor (than Physique) as a designer politics tool for portraying a perfect image and positioning for the political co-brand (Acar, 2013; Avidar, 2009). It appears that in current democratic political system, political salesmanship has become more important than ideology and manifestos. As a common and regular practise and analytical tool, political salesmanship or designer politics has emerged among the cultural variables as a party-specific factor and a tactic used by the candidates to promote a positive image and positioning for the co-brand. Candidates use media deliberately to position themselves and play an influential role in

branding, image creation, and marketing (Lees-Marshment, 2011). This political salesmanship appears to have altered the political behaviour, worldview, policies, governance, and communications (King, 1996; Scammell, 2016). Together with electorates, political co-brand image and positioning is co-created. Electorates also play a critical role in disseminating information they get on the social media while interacting with other consumers/electorates. Influencers are hired who produce material that is current, entertaining, and fascinating to consumers and engage with them to influence their intentions (Bentley et al., 2021).

These findings are consistent with the body of political literature which implies that social media has emerged as one of those mass media platforms that enhances electorate's political knowledge and influences electorate perceptions of political brands (Goyanes, Ardèvol-Abreu & Gil de Zúñiga, 2021; Ndavula & Mueni, 2014; Park & Gil de Zúñiga, 2020; Stromback & Shehata, 2010). The practice of political salesmanship (or designer politics) demonstrates the extent to which commercial salesmanship in politics has acquired traction in this region, and how this tactic impacts political culture allowing politics to be moulded to fit into the marketing process (Scammell, 2016). In this way, besides television, social media is a strong tool that can alter and reshape the political environment (Crow & Boykoff, 2014; De Wilde, Rasch & Bossetta, 2022; Kathne & Middaugh, 2012; Wolfsfeld, Segev & Sheaffer, 2013; Zhou et al., 2021), and can influence on the strategic positioning of the political co-brands through the news management, commercial marketing techniques, and targeting electorates (after carrying out surveys to understand them and their needs) with political messages and advertisements (Scammell, 2016b).

Difference between the studies: The difference between the two studies is related to the candidates' usage of social media and the political ideology of the party brand. Quantitative study (PCA) confirms that social media usage is more related to Culture than to Physique. It also confirms that the political ideology is a part of Reflection. Additionally, the qualitative analysis demonstrates that candidates' financial resources allow them to maintain the same political position even though the literature reveals that political leaders in the West are recommended

to use party funds for their political activities. A quantitative analysis was unable to evaluate this.

Reflection

Reflection dimension refers to the external stakeholders' awareness of the internal variables that they rely upon to judge/assess a political co-brand. These factors/elements are co-brand specific and especially focus on the candidate brand's understanding of electorates in their respective districts. The factors which both qualitative and quantitative studies confirm. For this dimension with respect to political co-brand image and positioning, include electorates' demographic characteristics and political ideology of the party and the candidate. This dimension also covers factors like political brand's manifesto, their understanding and knowledge about the changes in the constituency; popularity surveys; psychological and economic cost which the electorates pay when the co-brand (specifically, candidate's) is elected; the past records, party achievements; and the political slogan.

While these points are in line with the published research (e.g. Chandra, 2007; Chowdhury & Naheed; 2019; Hussain, 2020; Kobby, 2007; Liaqat et al., 2019; Martin, 2020; Nazar & Latif, 2015), this is the first study where these points have emerged as crucial factors for co-brand image and positioning in this study. These factors develop associations in electorates' minds and create a positive image for political brands by positioning candidates, parties, and, ultimately, the co-brand in the best possible light. Also, a psychological understanding between the co-brand and the electorates is established (Harrison, Yoo, Thelen & Ford, 2023; Farhan & Omar, 2021). The findings are consistent with the research which represents variables that aid in determining if political parties are aware of and understand the needs of their constituents (Szczerbiak, 2010). Published research suggests that it is critical to consider these factors because candidates' awareness of these factors reflects his/her responsibility, reliability, honesty, and trustworthiness to the electorate (Liaqat et al., 2019; Valgarsson et al., 2020) and creates favourable associations in the electorates' minds (Cwalina et al., 2011). The quantitative side enhanced the qualitative findings by suggesting the importance of employing of appropriate strategies and sophisticated systems for data management. This

improves candidate's brand image which ultimately influences the electorate's voting intentions (e.g. Chowdhury & Naheed, 2019; Van Klingeren, Trilling & Moller, 2020) in favour of the brand for the next election (e.g. Chowdhury & Naheed, 2019; Edlin, Gelman & Kapln, 2007; Nwagwu, 2016; Wogu et al., 2020).

Aligned with the published research, findings have shown that electorates are so attached to their values and morals that they will refuse to accept an idea, if it conflicts with their values and morals, even if the brand offers good product/service quality (Carrington et al., 2015; Tal et al., 2017). Research suggests that political ideology is essentially a filter by which electorates perceive the brands, and it can elicit strong reactions, which is why individuals frequently reject brands (Crockett & Wallendorf, 2004; Ding & Tseng, 2015; Gromet et al., 2013; Jost et al., 2009; Sandikci & Ekici, 2009). It's a vital aspect of electorates identity that might influence how they desire to be distinguished from everyone else (Ordabayeva & Fernanadas, 2018). Therefore, to stimulate political engagement with the brands (Beckman, 2018), it is absolutely critical for political brands to keep their electorates in mind and understand their needs and desires. In line with the existing research, this study confirms that the party and candidates' brands need to utilise political marketing strategies to inform the public about their policies and programs, as well as the party's ideology since it is a crucial political marketing element which has a strong influence on the electorates' voting decision (e.g., Jain et al., 2017c; Grima, 2016, Kobby, 2007; Schafferer, 2004, etc.).

Both qualitative study confirms that when slogans are prepared after understanding of electorates' problems and needs, they are more effective in building and improving the image and positioning since they persuade the electorates of the slogan's promise. This is in line with the existing published research (e.g. Aguirre & Hyman, 2015; Aziz, 2020; Coleman & Brogden, 2020; Cwalina & Newman, 2011; Dass, Khohli et al., 2014; Kohli, Leuthesser, & Suri, 2007; Mensah, 2007; Niffenegger, 1988; Silveira & Galvao, 2020; Zeng, 2020a, 2020b). Slogans work because of the low literacy level in Pakistan in the rural areas where a vast majority is in dire need of basic necessities (Ahmad et al., 2017; Ashraf & Hafiza, 2016; Kalhoro, 2020; Rehman, Jingdong & Hussain, 2015). When slogans are founded on issues which the electorates find crucial, slogans assist the political

co-brand in gaining a unique place in their minds, due to their cognitive inability to assess the slogan (Mercier, 2017; Yeung, 2022). These short statements provide an instantaneous snapshot of what the political co-brand considers to be significant to electorates (Kohli, Leuthesser & Suri, 2007; Dahlén & Rosengren, 2005). This has an impact on electorate's perceptions of the candidate brand's ability to meet the requirements of the people (Koc, & Ilgun, 2010). In line with the published research (e.g. (Khan, 2020; Shafiq et al., 2017), this study has confirmed that even for co-brands, slogans given by leaders who are respected as a political phenomenon enthruse the public and draw crowds, creating a perfect setting for image and acceptability among the people.

Difference between the studies: Quantitative research confirms that slogans fit in the Reflection dimension.

Relationship

Relationship is a measure of how strongly the political brand is connected to the electorate in the mind of external stakeholders. Additionally, it shows how corporate brand and political co-brand are related to one another. This dimension covers factors which are related to the performance, governance, and democracy. Both qualitative and quantitative studies confirm that the political co-brand are assessed by the external stakeholders on the bases of how the political handles responsibilities in a professional style. It is related to co-brand's willingness to be helpful as well the swiftness in providing both personal services and public services (Abou Khalil & Aoun, 2020). These have appeared critical for establishing a positive brand image for both the candidate and the party. Democracy and good governance complement each other (Fukuyama, 2013; Yannas, 2008). Published research suggests that if the level of governance is good, performance is high (Baniamin, 2021; Epstein, 2011; Fukuyama, 2013; James & Van Ryzin, 2017; Zaslove et al., 2020). According to existing research, if electorates are satisfied with the performance, they regard the political brand as competent and working in their best interests. This increases the political brand's trustworthiness because electorates begin to trust the brand and believe the brand will not deceive them (Levi & Stoker, 2000). Candidates are judged traits like being helpful (which is a form of cooperation (Staub, 2013)),

disposition, and whether or not they are driven to serve others (Daniel et al., 2015). Political brands provide services, and the opinions of those services are evaluated over time and reassessed on a regular basis depending on the experiences of the public (Abou Khalil & Aoun, 2020). Electorates appraise brands in their mind based on all of their prior and current experiences (Anderson, Fornell & Lehmann, 1994). This has an impact on how political brands are seen in comparison to their competitors.

Political consultants can create the most favourable images which can be positioned through media platforms, however how electorate's assessment of performance will always remain a challenge. A good brand image influences electorates perception and, ultimately, their voting decisions in the brand's favor (Landtsheer et al., 2008; Weiß et al., 2020). Consistent with the literature on political psychology and political science, this study has demonstrated that democracy provides voters not only the opportunity to select freely and without fear of deceit, but also the power to exercise control over the political brands they elect (Ostwald & Rimbau, 2023; Caselli & Morelli, 2004). One area where political marketing and democratic theory overlap is with electorates' perceptions, opinions, and views. (Yannas, 2008). Through media outlets, the candidates/politicians with the best brand perceptions and impressions can be positioned like this, however how good they are performing their duties is dependent on electorates' assessment (Landtsheer et al., 2008; Weiß et al., 2020). Also, the how the co-brand fulfils the functional, symbolic, and experiential promises, aid in building healthy relationships with the electorates (Cwalina & Drzewiecka, 2022). Otherwise, if political marketing and branding tactics lack an ethical basis, they can weaken the democratic procedures that give it meaning (Lilleker & Moufahim, 2022). In the future, more data from both urban and rural populations may be valuable in evaluating this component.

Self-Image

The sixth dimension, Self-image encompass external stakeholders' perceptions of the political co-brand based on the leader's (at the corporate level) competence (skills), vision, credibility, and reliability. Skills, vision, consistency, reliability, and credibility of the candidate have appeared crucial for positioning the political brands

(Valgardsson et al., 2020) and in influencing the electorates' voting decisions. Leaders are hubs around which superficial aspects are organised. These factors may not be of any importance and negligible to electorates but are an essential part of the leader's image which ultimately enhances political co-brand's image (Cwalina et al., 2011).

Electorates appears to value the leaders' personalities, visions, and credibility far more than the party's ideas. The results are consistent with previous studies that claim competence is a key factor in predicting assessments of a political personality (Shanks & Miller, 1990) and leaders and candidates are judged and assessed on the basis of their task-relevant traits and abilities (Funk, 1997). Aligned with the recently published research, both studies confirm that more often than not, positioning is focused on political personalities rather than party policies. And perceptions about candidates and leaders are influenced by how they respond to problems in a variety of constantly changing situations (Abou Khalil & Aoun, 2020).

When a leader's or candidate's oratorical abilities measure up to the perception of their personality, charisma and performance, their image of being dependable, and capable builds in electorates mind. Their wisdom, abilities, the manner in which they are portrayed on media, emotional bonds that which the electorates have developed with them, leader's competence in dealing with economic challenges, and capacity to deliver change, etc. are some of the factors that influence how external stakeholders see them (Downer, 2016). The quantitative findings complement the qualitative findings and confirms that when the leader and co-brand deliver what they promised, the leader's and co-brand's image get reinforced and appear coherent (with respect to each other) to electorates (Cwalina et al., 2011). Ultimately the co-brand in this way is not only perceived as sincere, competent, and trustworthy, but its credibility also grows within the constituency (Lees-Maarsment, 2011).

The factors within each of the six dimensions of the framework represents the not just the perception of electorates about the political brands but also the importance of the party and the candidate's political marketing strategy for winning the election. In other words, these factors highlight the importance of political

marketing. Employing statistical procedures, this study has introduced a new construct, the *PBPM* (presented in Section 5.2.1). In this way this study has suggested a way to measure political brand's positioning and effectiveness of the marketing strategy.

6.1.2. Formation & Management of Political Co-brand Image and Positioning

In light of the relevant literature, this chapter explains how political brand image and positioning are formed. This section integrates the contents of Figure 5 (Chapter 4) with Figure 7 (Chapter 5) and proposes a framework for assessing the image of a political co-brand as well as the process of positioning a co-brand. Quantitative strand of this study has refined the framework. Refined framework is presented in Figure 11.

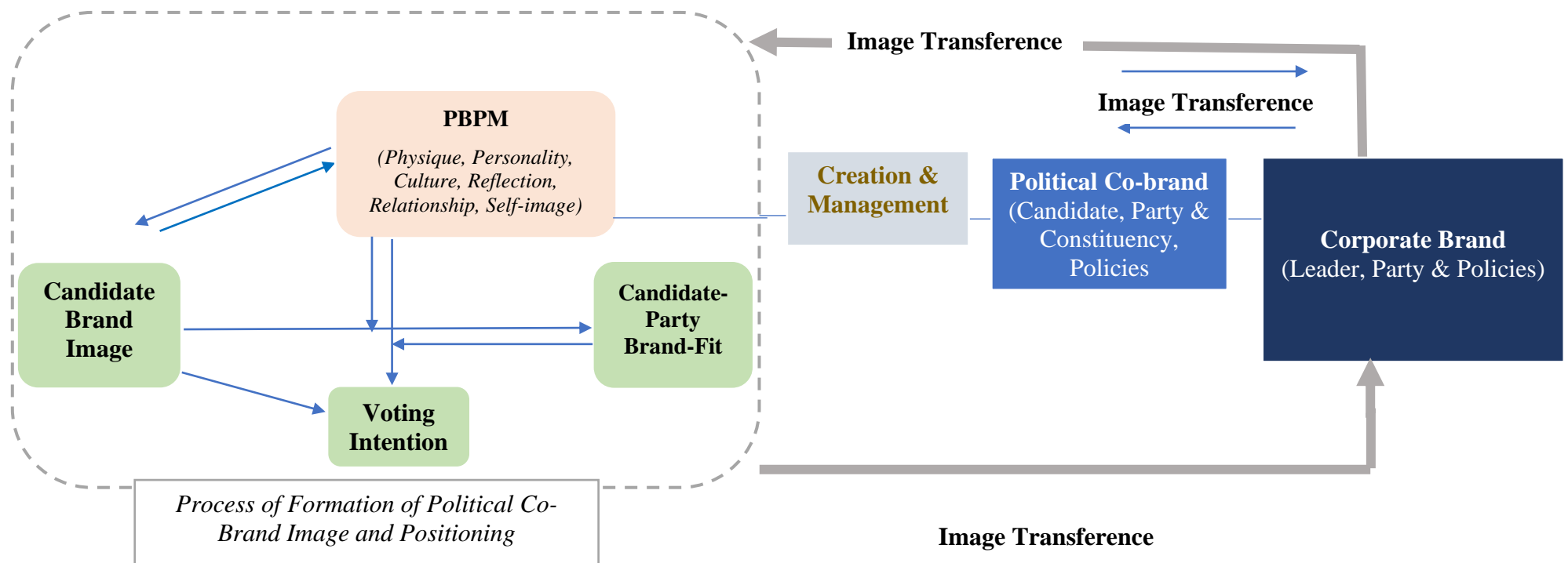


Figure 11: Refined Political Co-brand Image & Positioning Framework

The region enclosed in the dashed-line square, represents formation of political co-brand image and positioning, in Figure 11. This figure explains the process of formation of the political co-brand image and positioning at the constituency level, and image transference between co-brand and the corporate brand. The gray arrows show the influence of leader on the electorates within the constituencies. The image develops on the basis of co-brand's performance ultimately positively or negatively influences the positioning of leader in electorates' mind. In this way, this study is not only triangulating the findings of the qualitative study, but also identifying what the electorates expect from the candidate brands (Chowdhury, Naheed & Zinnia, 2020), it has also sought to estimate how image transference occurs between partnering brands and between co-brands and their corporate political brands.

The PBPM factors are the political marketing strategies which impart knowledge and offer information to the electorates. This political brand positioning is mostly determined by how brand knowledge is presented to electorates. Brand knowledge is viewed as a brand node in memory to which a range of connections are linked, in line with Anderson's (1983) associative network memory model in cognitive psychology (Keller, 1993). Nodes carry information and are connected with each other though weak or strong links. The degree of memory retrieval is determined by a spreading activation process from node to node. Depending upon on how well all connected all nodes are linked to the current node, specific information that can be recovered from memory. Political brand, according to this definition, is an associative network of interconnected political knowledge and attitudes, maintained in memory and available when provoked from a electorate's memory (Smith & French, 2009).

On the basis of the political entities' impact on their minds, electorates judge the political brand either positively or negatively (Barrett, 2018; Cosgrove, 2014; Landtsheer et al., 2008; French & Smith, 2010; Guzman & Sierra, 2009; Smith, 2009; etc.). This is one of the reasons why, contrary to the conventional marketing, which seldom elicits strong emotions, politics usually elicits powerful emotions (Biggi, 2016). Electorates' views toward voting may be influenced by how information is presented to them through political marketing. Because they impact

what comes to mind when a electorate thinks about a brand, it's also crucial to comprehend the substance and structure of brand information supplied through political marketing strategies (Cwalina & Falkowski, 2015), i.e. the PBPM factors.

The results demonstrate that interactions with the candidate through touch points affect the candidate's brand image, which is consistent with previous studies (Van Steenburg & Guzman, 2019). Electorate who are cognitive misers (Crocker, Fiske, & Taylor, 1984) rely on the candidate's brand image to evaluate a political co-brand. Candidate's brand image has a considerable and positive effect on an electorate's voting decision. Overall, it seems that candidate brand image has a considerable and positive indirect impact on voting intention. The results have also demonstrated that candidate brand image has a significant and positive indirect influence on electorates' voting intention through all of the PBPM indicators. According to the extant literature, electorates utilise candidate image as a shortcut to make the voting decisions (e.g. Barrett, 2018; Cosgrove, 2014; Guzmán & Sierra, 2009; Schneiker, 2018; Speed et al., 2015; Van Steenburg & Guzman, 2019). By merging the candidate's personality attributes, the candidate's brand image supports electorates in navigating the intricate cognitive, logical, and emotional aspects (Caprara et al., 2002). These emotional rationing features lead to brand loyalty (or lack thereof). Affinity is important for marketers and practitioners who want to understand voting intentions (i.e., the intention to vote for the candidate and the party with which he or she is affiliated) and behaviour (Van Steenburg & Guzman, 2019).

As a result of qualitative study, candidate brand image has emerged as a variable which impacts the overall political brand image and positioning (Khan and Razzaque, 2015; Sagar et al., 2011). Therefore, in the quantitative study, electorates perception is based on their recognition of and knowledge about the political candidate brands. It examines candidate's brand image influences electorates' voting decisions since this discloses if the brand is positioned positively or negatively. In line with the published research, findings have once again proved that the public's perception about the political brand, as well as their general attitude toward it, is reflected in their voting intentions (Warshaw, 1980; Yalley, 2018).

As per the available literature, the fundamental purpose of any marketing efforts is to change electorates' perceptions and voting intentions in the political brand's (party and/or candidate) favour (Spears & Singh, 2004; Yalley, 2018). As can be seen, one critical observation in all the results of this study is that PBPM positively influence the candidate brand image. And candidate brand image is a strong and effective source of PBPM factors (Abou Khalil & Aoun, 2020; Chowdhury & Naheed, 2019). There is a two-way relationship between PBPM and Candidate Brand Image such that both complement each other.

The candidate-party brand-fit and the part it plays in the entire process are two of the study's distinctive contributions. While the findings clearly demonstrate that PBPM has a considerable and positive impact on voters' intentions to vote, this impact is dependent on the candidate-party brand match. The results also show that marketing techniques to influence electorates to support a candidate are more crucial when electorates believe that a candidate's and their party's brands are incompatible. On the other hand, political image, positioning, and marketing tactics become less significant when the brand-fit is good or moderate. According to literature, electorates use the same cognitive mechanism that governs their behaviour toward businesses and social groupings to evaluate and organise their support, for candidates (Bennet et al., 2019). A halo effect, in which electorates have preconceived conceptions about a candidate's objectives and skills in the event that he or she is elected to public office, may play a role in the relationship between competency and voting intentions (Bennet et al., 2019; Evans & Ivaldi, 2021; Miller & Grubestic, 2021). Electorates regularly employ these time-saving heuristics and generalised perceptions, which influence their views and behaviours (Keller, 1998; Smith, 2009). Candidates are human brands who belong to different social groupings in society. Therefore, electorates often judge candidate brands from both commercial and stereotyped (societal) viewpoints (Bennet et al., 2019; Farwell & Weiner, 2000). In a similar vein, electorates attach meaning to the party brand in their mind and in this way a network of association is formed in their minds (Smith & French, 2009). This concept of association networks is consistent with the notion that candidate and party brands are nodes in the memory (evidence is provided by Milton Lodge's theory of candidate assessment). Most modern candidate evaluation models are memory-based in that they consider the direction and strength of evaluation to be a

function of the blend of positively and negatively valued (valanced) knowledge recalled from memory (Lodge, McGraw & Stroh, 1989; Lodge, Steenbergen & Brau, 1995). However, despite the fact that memory influences judgement, none of the primary models investigates the mechanisms by which electorates retain information and how that evidence is absorbed into a summary view (Lodge Stroh & Wahlke, 1990).

It appears from the finding that electorates place more weight on the candidates' personality attributes (Gorbaniuk et al., 2015) and in this way the associations developed in their mind for the candidates, are transferred to the party brand. According to Phipps et al. (2010), an individual candidate's brand can compete with or strengthen the political party's brand. The party brand is deemed less relevant if the candidate's brand doesn't match electorates' preconceptions about the party brand. Instead, their attention is drawn to the candidate brand. The party brand appears to be dominant until electorates have the opportunity to update their perceptions through experience, and political marketing improves their brand knowledge and influences their perception about the brand. Besides that, associations can differ in terms of their relative strength, favourability, and uniqueness (French & Smith, 2010; MacDonald, Sherlock, & Hogan, 2015; Nielsen & Larsen, 2014), Research suggests that negative associations have a greater impact on brand perception than positive associations (Cwalina & Falkowski, 2015; Falkowski, Sidoruk-Bach, Bartosiewicz, & Olszewska, 2018). This could be one of the reasons candidate-party brand-fit changes the direction of the effect of PBPM on voting intention. As a moderator, this brand-fit has a significant detrimental impact on the robust link between PBPM and electorate voting intentions. Findings show that electorates' willingness to vote grows only as PBPM efforts improve when they perceive this brand-fit to be low/medium. When people perceive a high level of brand-fit, PBPM efforts are not as important as when they perceive a low or average level of brand-fit. Similarly, the indirect impact of candidate brand image on voting intention via PBPC (moderators) is dependent on perceived candidate-party brand-fit, according to the findings. As the candidate-party brand fit decreases, the indirect impact of candidate brand image on voting intention via PBPM becomes stronger. When electorates perceive a candidate's and party's brands are misaligned, the necessity for marketing techniques to persuade electorates to vote for that candidate

increases, according to the research. Marketing methods, on the other hand, become less crucial when the brand-fit is moderate or good.

In order to build competitive strategies, political co-brands require information and need learning about the aspects that influence electorates' perceptions (DasGupta & Sarkar, 2021). In the light of this discussion, it becomes clear that in order to develop an accurate perception of their political image in the market, both the candidate brand and the party brand must understand, define, and apply the most effective communication tactics and marketing (Newman, 2002) to transfer knowledge and information to the electorates (Biggie, 2016; Phipps, Brace-Govan & Jevons, 2010; Smith & French, 2009).

Not only has the magnitude of political marketing management increased in the last 35 years, but also the belief that political actors not only act out, but also reason in marketing terms. They employ marketing management techniques, and they try to integrate their use of marketing instruments into a coherent marketing strategy (DasGupta & Sarkar, 2021; Newman, 1994). The electorates' association with the brand is what allows them to claim ownership of the political brands (both party and the candidates). Since electorates are cognitive misers who have little motivation to digest vast amounts of political data, evaluate the merits of policy actions, or keep up with current events, they gather selective information that aids them in forming an opinion about political brand (DasGupta & Sarkar, 2021). Here, the PBPM strategies support electorates. PBPM delivers value to the electorate by improving the interpretation/processing of information about the party and/or electorate perception, resulting in enhanced confidence in the voting decision, just as brand image is important in producing consumer value (Smith, 2001). It also serves as a heuristic for determining a political party's market orientation (Lees-Marshment, 2001) and political orientation (O'Cass & Voola, 2011).

6.1.3. Spillover Effects Between Corporate Brand & Political Co-brand

This section discusses image transference and alignment between partnering brands in the co-branding relationship. Additionally, it covers how the corporate political brand and the political co-brand operate to influence perceptions in their favour. It

also illustrates how corporate political brand affects the development of the political co-brand's image and the process for positioning the co-brands.

To satisfy second research objective, this study has explored and examined the image transference between corporate political brands and the co-brands. While the first two hypothesis cover the co-brands, the last hypothesis assesses the influences of party leader (at the corporate level) through the way they are perceived at the constituency level. Based on the findings of both qualitative and quantitative strands, this section presents discussion on the political co-brand image and positioning and image transference between the brands in the co-brand alliance, which ultimately influence the corporate brand.

This research adds to the existing body of knowledge on image transference by focusing on negative image transference across partnering brands in co-brand relationships, as well as between the co-brand and the corporate brand. According to the literature, co-branding is strategic in nature, resulting in the transfer of associations and impressions to the newly formed brand (Armannsdottir et al., 2019). The "spillover effect" or "image transference" is the term used to explain this process (Ibid; Baumgarth, 2018; Helmig et al., 2008; Leuthesser et al., 2002; Washburn et al., 2000) in the literature. The connections that form in the minds of voters influence their perceptions on the basis of whether or not the partnering brands are in sync (Wason & Charlton, 2015). When image transference from the corporate brand to the co-brand is positive, it helps co-brands build their identity within their respective districts (Grebosz-Krawczyk & Pointet, 2017; Leuthesser, Kohl & Suri, 2002). A sensed or seen inconsistency in the performance of the partnering brands might have a detrimental impact on the electorate's perception of the co-brand (Lafferty et al., 2004). This feeling of inconsistency between the partnering brands ultimately impacts the corporate brand image, just as positive image transference from the corporate brand can have an impact on any political co-brand. This study emphasises that negative image transference might obstruct co-branding and corporate brand alignment, as well as impair constructed image and positioning, particularly in the post-election period. This research endeavours to add to the scarce literature on the electorates' wants in the South Asian democracies

(Chowdhury et.al., 2020) and to the literature on image transference and brand alliance (Su & Kunkel, 2019).

To understand the electorates' perception about the political leaders' image and positioning, Goleman's typology is employed for the quantitative strand of this study to understand how leaders are positioned. The leadership styles which play a crucial role. Each of the leadership style concentrates on the way directions are delegated, plans are executed, how people are encouraged and inspired.

This study assessed the preferred styles of leadership and plotting position of real political leaders on the perceptual map to understand how their image influence (both negatively and positively) the co-brands associated with them. One prominent finding is that only coercive style appears to be building up the second factor (agency). This suggests that the dimension of the leadership style perception in Pakistan varies from Europe (e.g. Cwalina & Drzewiecka, 2019 and Drzewiecka & Cwalina, 2020). This is probably because of the differences in the culture, social awareness, and maturity among the masses (Drzewiecka & Cwalina, 2020).

Pakistani electorates perceive an ideal leader to have both communion (integrity, reliability, and trust) and agency (competence, ambition, and control). In addition, according to the analysis using Goleman Typology, the leadership of the PMLN and the PTI are considered as being close to the respondent's ideal leader. Therefore, in-line with the qualitative study, it is safe to assume that political co-brands benefit from the positive image transference from the corporate brands in their constituencies (Grbosz-et al., 2017; Leuthesser et al., 2003).

Spillover Effects Between the Co-brand and the Corporate Brand

Leaders/founders of political parties in Pakistan project a larger-than-life image and have a strong hold and influence on the electorates. Candidates who endorse and support the political leader are preferred by electorates. Such candidates are positioned in a favourable manner in electorates' minds (Sekhon et al., 2014). Leaders are revered for their integrity, trustworthiness, strength, and ability, which is why candidates who endorse and support the political leader electorates prefer are positioned in a favourable manner. One of the factors that appeared to positively

influence the candidate's brand image and the electorate's voting inclinations in favour of the co-brand was trustworthiness. Competence, extraversion, composure, and sociability all contribute to the political brand's legitimacy (McCroskey & Jenson, 1975; Nesler, Aguinis, Quigley & Tedeschi, 1993; Wiener & Mowen, 1986).

According to the researchers (e.g. Sullivan et al., 1990), the way people judge political personalities, is mostly based on two classes of an individual's perception, which are morality (in other words, *integrity*) and competence (or *agency*) (Abele & Wojciszke, 2007; Abele et. al., 2016; Drzewiecka & Cwalina, 2020; Fiske, Cuddy, & Glick, 2007; Wojciszke, 2005a). Both communion and agency are central traits and characteristics of candidates' image which can positively and strongly affect electorates' behaviour toward them (Cwalina et al., 2011; Druckman, Jacobs, & Ostermeier 2004; Drzewiecka & Cwalina, 2020). In Graph 4, all the political leaders are perceived in the fourth quadrant, except for Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto (late). Another important finding of the study was that PPP's leadership was found to be high on agency (except for Asif Ali Zardari, Graph 7). While the PMLN leadership appeared high on communion (Graph 5). PTI appears to be maintaining both agency and communion while the rest of the brands are perceived in the fourth quadrant (Graph 6). The published research professes that electorates are more interested in communion than agency when interpreting any political personality (Drzewiecka & Cwalina, 2020; Wojciszke 2005b).

Results depict that the leaders high on agency encompass competence, while the leadership high on communion cover moral qualities like integrity, reliability, and charisma. *Integrity* is related to the political personality's trustworthiness; honesty; sincerity, and any reference to corruption in government. *Reliability* is related to the political personality's being a person who is reliable and dependable; is strong and decisive; aggressive but stable. *Competence* describes a political personality's experience; his/her ability as a statesman; understanding of and grasp on the political issues, realism, practicality, and intelligence. *Charisma* refers to the political personality's leadership abilities, self-respect, dignity, modesty and humility, patriotism, and ability to get along and communicate with the electorates. *Personal aspects of a political leader/personality* include his/her appearance, age, religion, wealth, former occupation, family, etc. (information is

based on the studies like Wattenberg, 1991 and Miller, Wattenberg, & Malanchuk, 1986 as quoted by Drzewiecka & Cwalina, 2020).

Agency is an inner self-profitable trait and is considered important for the owner mostly. While communion is perceived as other-profitable trait or a perceived evaluative dimension of other people (Drzewiecka & Cwalina, 2020 quoting Peeters, 1992; Wojciszke, 2005b). Communion encompasses positive traits and leaders for whom people have positive feelings and opinions and are considered easy to approach compared to those whose moral qualities are questionable. Even in the negative context, these traits remain positive and do not change. This means that if a leader is perceived as honest, he/she will remain honest even in the negative context/settings and will be considered better than any leader who is perceived as dishonest. In addition to that, the evaluative value related to communion (social characteristics) is absolute and the value of agency characteristics is relative and contextual (Drzewiecka & Cwalina, 2020).

Communion and agency in this way have appeared to be a source of positive image transference, in Pakistani context. Co-brands are preferred by the electorates if the leader (at the corporate level) has qualities represented by communion. Leaders high on agency traits have appeared to be judged based on their performance and competence, in this mixed method research. The absence or lack of agency traits, good performance and competence appears to be source of negative image transference towards the co-brand. Both agency and communion are important to the electorates. It was evident when the perception about the ideal leadership style was compared with the leadership of each of the three brands, they appeared in the first quadrant. Electorates' goal is to select the safest political leader and party from among the available choice to run the government. The quality of a political personality, specifically the leader, suggest the non-political traits which can be observed in his/her behaviour which hints facts about his integrity and competence (Drzewiecka, & Cwalina, 2020). It can be assumed that the electoral system works as filtration tool where electorates try to increase the quality of their chosen political personalities. In this way, who do not appear as per the quality expectations of the electorates, are not elected (Ibid).

This study adds to the body of knowledge on image transference, specifically the quantitative analysis on the negative image transference between the co-brand and the corporate brand.

Spillover Effects Between the Partnering Brands in a Co-branding Relationship

To gauge the transference of image between the partnering brands, candidate-party brand-fit is used. It symbolizes the perceptual fit between the candidate brand and the party brand, which form the co-branding alliance (Ahn & Sung, 2012; Armannsdottir et. al., 2019b; Besharat & Langan, 2014; Ronzoni et al., 2018; Roswinanto, 2015) between both brands' intangible and tangible elements (Besharat, 2010; Grębosz-Krawczyk & Pointet, 2017), at the constituency level. For the political co-brands, consistency, cohesiveness, and brand image fit between the partners in the alliance is vital (Ibid; Baumgarth, 2004; Bouten et al., 2011; Gammoh, Voss & Chakraborty, 2006; Helmig et al., 2007; Simonin & Ruth, 1998; Pruppers, Ouwersloot & Dawar, 2007). These aspects influence the co-brand and ultimately the brand image of the corporate brands. Extant literature on co-branding and brand-fit suggests that when the brand image is high, the brand-fit is sufficient to generate favourable attitudes about the co-brand. However, things are not the same when any of the partnering brands has a neutral image (Geuens & Pecheux, 2006). Instead of a similar image, brands should link up with a brand that has a high product fit and/or a favourable image (Van der Lans, Van den Bergh & Dieleman, 2014). Also, appraisal of a brand alliance is influenced by pre-existing attitudes about the partnering brands. This brand alliances have the capacity to affect views toward partnering brands, resulting in either a boost or a damage to the partnering brands as a result of the partnership (Baumgarth, 2004; Simonin & Ruth, 1998).

Integration of the results of both the strands suggests that the candidates' brand image plays an important role in influencing the brand-fit (which is deemed essential for the success (Bottomley & Holden, 2001; Volckner & Sattler, 2006)) between the partnering brands in the alliance. Candidate's brand image signifies the grouping of mental, emotional, and cognitive representations which electorates assign to a candidate' (Pich & Armannsdottir, 2015 quoting Mengxia 2007). It is how a candidate is perceived by the electorates (Bosch et al., 2006; Chen, 2010;

Einstein, 2008). When a co-brand fails to live up to the standards set forth in its slogans, this has a detrimental impact on the partnering brands' image among voters and ultimately the corporate brand's positioning (Cwalina et al., 2011; Fazendeiro, 2020).

The thought process of the electorates cannot be regulated or controlled, that is why managing the external imagery is quite a challenge for the political brands (Pich & Armannsdottir, 2015). The complexity attached with the concept of candidate's brand image is one of the reasons that researchers have indicated a need for the exploration of external political brand image and further research (Pich & Armannsdottir, 2015; Schneider, 2004; Smith, 2001; Smith & French, 2011). This is one of the reasons researchers have called for more research on the negative spillover effects and on the image transference which can dilute or have a negative influence on the co-brand (Armannsdottir et al., 2019b; Besharat & Langan, 2014; Besharat, 2010; Ronzoni et al., 2018).

It has become a challenge for the co-brands to maintain good quality relationship with the electorates in these complex and comparatively the modern times (Farhan & Omar, 2021). In addition to that, candidate brands while reaping the advantage of mediatization, when adopt political vocabulary and behaviours that are seen as crucial key requirement for the media (Bracciale & Martella, 2017), turn the political rhetoric into a discourteous and impolite communication between competitors (Goovaerts & Marien, 2020). Because brand image is associated with electorates' perception and their voting intention, it seems from the data that it is a technique to undermine the opponent's brand image and to enhance the chances of gaining power through elections in future (Antil & Verma, 2020; Axford & Huggins, 2002). While the evidence proposes that it works, in the long run the candidate brands erode the electorate's belief in the legitimacy of the political structure and system (Bump, 2018; Goovaerts & Marien, 2020; Heath & Heath, 2007). In this way, candidates can smear the image of the co-brand and the corporate brand is also seen in the same light.

In addition to that, candidate brand's absence or unavailability generates a node of linkages or association (positive/negative) in the target market's mind

reflecting candidate's seriousness in satisfying the pledges and assurances promised during the election campaigning (Cwalina et al., 2011). Findings show that the candidate's absence or unavailability in their respective constituencies can adversely affect the co-brand image in their respective constituency. Because co-brands serve as the ambassadors the corporate brands, co-brand's negative image adversely effects the corporate brand image and positioning. Published research suggests that the creation of a successful co-brand which can reflect the qualities of the corporate brand, especially the leader at the corporate level, involves localized presence in both before and after elections settings/contexts (Leuthesser et al., 2002; Silveira et al., 2013). The candidate's nonappearance in the constituency arose as an crucial factor of negative image transference between the partnering brands (in a co-branding relationship).

Also, a political co-brand's poor performance inadvertently communicates about the leader's vision, direction, political perceptiveness and acumen, and team-building abilities (Antil & Verma, 2020). This subpar performance may prevent the generated brand image from successfully complementing substance (Franklin, 1994). This is how the unfavourable negative image travels from the co-brand to the corporate brand. To comprehend the perception about the political leaders' image and positioning, Goleman's typology was employed in the quantitative strand. The analysis' findings demonstrate that voters place a high value on criteria connected to the party leader. On the basis of these criteria, electorates evaluate, assess, and perceive the co-brand in their constituency and corporate brand at the national level (Smith, 2009). The electorate's trust in a brand depends on its performance targets and standards, stewardship, governance, deliverance, sincerity, reliability, consistency, and credibility (Scammel, 1995). Media manipulation and mediatization may help a brand project an image of a charismatic, visionary leader who is skilled in public speaking. Electorate's perception will always hinge on the extent to which the political brand manages to meet their expectations through their performance. The election pledges and promises (especially the ones which the electorates find most relevant) made during the election campaign aid electorates in developing the favourable perception about the political brand's performance (Dupont et al., 2019). Also, the brand personality of the leader (and also of the

candidates) makes it easier to understand what a co-brand represents and what problems the co-brand actively resolves (Kaur & Sohal, 2018).

Both studies confirm that the marketing and promotional strategies positively influence the brand-fit (e.g. results with people & evidence and persuasion as predictors) while the competence of the candidate brand negatively effects the brand-fit, in Pakistan. In most of the relationships, candidate brand appeared to have an undesirable influence on the brand-fit (between the candidate and the party brand), especially as the factors within the dimensions of the Political Co-brand Image and Positioning Framework increase. These results are aligned with the existing published research on consumer brands (e.g. Arslan & Altuna, 2010) which suggests that the strength of the brand-fit can influence the electorate's attitude (just like the case in the mainstream marketing and consumer branding e.g. Arslan & Altuna, 2010) and the corporate brand, positively. Research presents brand image as a key element for the political brand's success (Bors, 2019) or failure. This perceived fit between the brands in the political co-brand alliance represents the perception and attitude of the electorates. It reflects if electorates like the brand, they remain loyal to the brand.

This study has proved that it is not necessary that the candidates from political backgrounds will bring about the best performance and policies (Antil & Verma, 2020). They can rather become a source of unfavourable influence on the overall brand image and positioning if they fail to meet the expectations of the electorates. Analysis has also revealed that the role of media as image-maker is quite essential in persuading perceptions. However, in countries like Pakistan when the intended brand image is developed through mediated and personalized communication, there are chances that it becomes a bad substitute of substance (Archetti, 2014). Performance and competence are crucial for any co-brand's success. The communication fashioned around the political personalities to build their image as charismatic, and caring (Antil & Verma, 2020) will only work if the co-brands and corporate brands perform well.

The results indicate that the spill-over effects do not complement or contribute towards generating positive outcomes as well as in projecting and

identifying prospects, for partnering brands in the co-branding relationship (Baumgarth, 2018; Helmig et al., 2008; Leuthesser et al., 2002; Washburn et al., 2000). This suggests an inconsistent fit between the partnering brands (Thomson, 2006). Also, the sense of complementarity which facilitates the partners in the alliance to acquire the necessary qualities of each other and value exchange for each member (Baumgarth, 2018; Besharat & Langan, 2014) appears missing. If the purpose of the political co-brand is to transfer appealing associations, perceptions, and imagery to the new composite brand from the two existing brands (Grebosz-Krawczyk & Pointet, 2017; Helmig et al., 2008; Washburn et al., 2000), the candidates' brand image needs to be improved in terms of performance and competence.

The political brand image of the leader and candidates can be distinguished from that of the party when electorates are aware of and have information about the co-brand's performance. When political offerings align with the electorate's beliefs, attitude, ideologies, devotion towards their clan and preferences, it is safe to anticipate that consumers will support the brands (Gjoneska et al., 2019, Grossback et al., 2005). A poor or damaged perception of the political personality can decrease the electorate's trust in the corporate brand (Hetherington, 1998) and become a source of discouraging the electorates from voting for the brand (De Vreese & Boomgaarden, 2006). Perhaps this is one of the reasons researchers consider converting the vision, words, and action of the political brand into electorates' aspirations, hopes and dreams as the major challenge of political marketing (Cwalina, Falkowski, & Newman, 2011).

6.2. Conclusion

In the light of both the analyses, it is safe to assert that positioning for political brands, just like mainstream marketing, is based on points of differentiation and parity with competitors (Bains, 1999; Downer, 2016). The optimal method for presenting the candidate brand and the related party brand to the electorates in their particular constituencies is crucial to political brand positioning. This study suggests that the factors within the six dimensions of the framework are basically the marketing strategies or tools which can be managed to form the co-brand image and

positioning. In the form of PBPM (*Hypothesis 1*), this study offers a procedure to measure these factors quantitatively. Political marketing methods that convey knowledge and provide information to electorates are referred to as PBPM factors in this study. The way in which these methods and techniques are used to convey brand knowledge to the public including electorates, are largely responsible for the political brand positioning. According to associative network memory model (e.g. Anderson, 1983) in cognitive psychology, brand knowledge forms a node in memory to which a variety of connections are associated (Esch et al., 2006; Keller, 1993). According to the literature on political brand management (Jain et al., 2017c), the use of these political marketing tools strengthens the electorates perception about the candidate's image. In this way, PBPM (which represents marketing initiatives) has a direct influence on the electorates voting intentions (*Hypothesis 2*).

Analysis of both strands of this research suggest that a two-way relationship between PBPM and Candidate Brand Image exists (*Hypothesis 3*). Most of the PBPM indicators are related to the personality and behaviour of the candidate brand. The political brand image and positioning factors (or the PBPM) function because most electorates employ cognitive shortcuts inadvertently to understand political party brand by observing the candidate brand, owing to their intellectual limitations (Converse, 2006; Fernandes et al., 2018; Fiske & Taylor, 1991; Sohlberg, 2019). The findings confirm that every act of candidate brand communicates what the co-brand stands for and how it differs from competing brands. In line with the existing research, PBPM along with the candidate's personality attributes and impression, impact electorates' perceptions related to the candidate being reliable, competent, and sincere. Bearing the results in mind, therefore, it is safe to assert that the PBPM factors supplement the candidate's brand image (Aaltio-Marjosola & Takala, 2000; Valgardsson et al., 2020) and the candidate brand image supplements the PBPM factors.

Aligned with the published research, the findings confirmed that voting intentions are true reflection of electorates perception about the candidates and their attitude toward the party brand (Spears & Singh, 2004; Warshaw, 1980; Yalley, 2018). The electorate's perception is influenced by the degree of self-congruity they feel with the candidate's brand image (Guzmán et al., 2015). As long as the

candidate's statements, policies, and campaigns are relevant and appealing to electorates, the candidate's image will boost and positively influence electorates' voting intention (*Hypothesis 2*) (Falkowski & Jabłonska, 2020). This is why it is crucial for the candidates and parties to focus on fostering a favourable image through campaigns which enhance and strengthen their image as competent, honest, capable and reliable (DasGupta & Sarkar, 2020; Pich & Dean, 2015).

Based on the findings of this research study, it is safe to admit that we are living in an era of manufactured images (Golan & Martini, 2020). Political candidate's image is heavily reliant on the impression management strategies. This includes an understanding of the psychological nuances and dynamics involved in image formation on a personal level (Harlow, 2018). For instance, a political candidate's capacity to translate their words and deeds into the goals, aspirations, and wishes of the electorate (Cwalina, et al., 2011). The personality of a political candidate and the issues that he or she addresses, create an image for them (Garzia, 2013). At the constituency and national levels, this brand image serves as a source of competitive advantage that is credible, consistent, and clearly expressed for the candidates and the party with which they are linked. In this sense, they are positioned in the eyes of the electorates (positive or negative feelings) (Lees-Marshment, 2011).

In accordance with the published research, electorates unconsciously utilise candidates' personality traits and physical characteristics as shortcuts to learn more about them to make an opinion about their associated party (Bruckmüller, & Methner, 2018; Caprara et al., 1997; DasGupda & Sarkar, 2020; Smith, 2009). This is how the image transfers between the partnering brands in a co-branding relationship and personalities (of candidate brand and of the party brand) reinforce each other (either positively or negatively), and are viewed as one (Downer, 2016). Both the candidate and the party brands build a network of association (negatively or positively) in the electorate's mind about the political brand (Cwalina et al., 2011; Smith, 2009) and influence positioning of the political co-brand. Political marketing is crucial. Even if the candidate's image is waning, electorates' perceived brand-fit between the party and candidate brand will improve when political marketing efforts are high (*Hypothesis 4*). Electorates perceive the importance of candidates'

personality attributes (Gorbaniuk et al., 2015). It appears that a candidate's associations are transferred to the party brand (DasGupta & Sarkar, 2021). When voters believe a candidate's and party's brands are mismatched, marketing strategies to get voters to vote for that candidate become increasingly important. When this fit is moderate or good, however, marketing strategies become less important (*Hypothesis 5*). When electorates see a high level of brand-fit between the candidate and the party, political marketing initiatives are not as necessary as when they perceive a low/average level of brand-fit. When electorates perceive the brand-fit to be low/average, they will be more likely to vote as political marketing activities increase (*Hypothesis 3*).

The analysis of both studies suggests that the use of political marketing tools strengthens the link between voters and political parties. This finding is aligned with the literature on political brand management (Jain et al., 2017). It is important to consider brand building as a continuous relationship-building exercise rather than a one-time election-winning activity (Dean, 2014). The associations that develop in the minds when the image of a political co-brand aligns with the requirements, needs, and wants of the electorates, supplements the partnering brands (Downer 2016; Lees-Marshment, 2011) in a co-branding relationship. This is especially true when this image is better than the competitors, and when the partnering brands are regarded and perceived as being related to one another (Dower, 2016; Lees-Marshment, 2011). The findings show that the quality of performance and promulgation information through marketing is a driver of brand knowledge which engages electorates. When electorates are given knowledge, they are more brand involved and they may become resilient to negative information ((Elsharnouby et al., 2021). This is how this research study highlights the importance of marketing strategies and communication in politics.

6.2.1. *Limitations and Direction for Future Research*

This research provides useful insights regarding the image formation and positioning of political brands, however there are some limitations in the study. While mixed method study designs provided methodological flexibility and facilitated in collecting rich data and building the quantitative strand on the qualitative strand's

conclusions, also raised the complexity of the research (Wisdom & Creswell, 2013). It is believed that they would provide researchers with new opportunities. To begin with, because this study used data obtained after the election, it is restricted by the context's generalizability (Delmar, 2010) with just 12 interviews. Only 12 respondents consented to be interviewed in four months, despite the fact that the respondents were skilled political analysts and the interviews provided rich data that aided in getting a thorough grasp of the major topics. Due to their busy schedules and the political character of the study, it was difficult to approach political analysts and organise meetings with them. Nonetheless, qualitative research plays a critical role in investigating concepts and deepening knowledge rather than making generalised assertions (Riege, 2003). The qualitative research led to the quantitative investigation which produced a new framework and has contributed to the study's generalizability (Hussain et al., 2020). Triangulation led to the development of a theoretical framework for evaluating the qualitative findings using a separate data set from a different sample for the quantitative analysis. This improved the model's validity and generalizability, particularly in the Sub-Continent region. However, due to the challenging circumstance produced by the COVID-19 epidemic, quantifiable data from the rural population and those without access to the internet, was not possible to obtain.

Furthermore, analysis (particularly moderation) revealed a need for more data, from the rural population, in order to have a grasp on the issue and for better understanding of the situation. More data will aid in verifying the recently designed scales' (which are used in this study) reliability and validity. In addition to that, by gathering additional data, future repercussions that were only marginally noticeable in the past can be managed.

Third, while the sample matched national surveys, there were more ideological left-wingers among the respondents. They were also a well-educated group with university degrees, internet access, and an understanding of English. (The survey was written in English.) Furthermore, frequency analysis indicated that the electorates who filled out the questionnaire for each significant brand were

unequally represented¹⁹. The analysis and results might have been hampered by these shortcomings. When respondents are equally represented, it enhances the research's social relevance and scientific quality. Future research can take precautions to prevent these problems while checking and comparing political business branding (nationally and globally).

Fourth, political experts emphasised the relevance of ideology; nevertheless, discussion on religion, influence of civil rights and environmental movements, etc., did not appear in any of the interviews. And no evidence on religion, civil rights, environmental movements, business leaders etc. was discovered. Religion and ideology often go hand in hand and supports political actions and processes. Religion can emotionally compel electorates to look at political brands with a certain lens. This is important because research (e.g. Cwalina, Falkowski & Newman, 2012) identifies religious groups, public figure (e.g. newspaper editor, expert, or media personality), leaders (of labour union, civil rights groups, for-profit, environmental movements, etc.), as *influentials*. This is because they can be the *opinion leaders*. Their influence are directly felt through organised media or power structures. Despite not being 'leaders' in the traditional sense, opinion leaders exercise influence on others by the actual, suggested, or fictitious presence or activities of others in their immediate area (Latané, 1981). They do, however, also rely on data from other sources. Ideas frequently circulate through media and opinion leaders and then from them to the less engaged segments of the community (Katz & Lazarsfeld, 1955, 2017). The social network then has certain users who act as personal transmitters for other users. Without these relay people, messages from the media might not get to people who would not normally be exposed to them (Cwalina et al., 2012).

Besides this, opinion leaders provide a reinforcing role when a mass media influence and an interpersonal communication occur at the same time. As a result, they are a component of a larger, more complex source of social impact (Ibid).

¹⁹ Out of the 421 men, 43% filled the questionnaire for PML-N; 8.3% filled for PPP, and 49% filled for PTI. Among women respondents, 39% filled for PML-N; 8.3% for PPP and 55% filled the questionnaire for PTI. *Table 22* (Chapter 5) presents the age-wise frequency of men and women respondents according to the political brand they chose to fill the questionnaire.

Because influentials play such a significant role in influencing public opinion, politicians who wish to use them to strengthen their campaigns are drawn to them. On the other hand, they steer their direction and show the ideas and opinions of politicians from a particular angle. Moreover, lobbying strategies can be used to represent them which is related to "stimulating and transmitting a communication, by someone other than a citizen acting on his or her own behalf, directed at a governmental decision-maker with the goal of influencing his or her choice" (McGrath, 2007, p. 273). It deals with exerting and influencing pressure on the government by focusing public and media attention on a specific issue (Harris & Lock, 1996). In this way, lobbyists and influentials play a significant role in the micro level of political marketing due to their social role and influence on citizens' and politicians' decisions (Cwalina et al., 2019). Future researchers can therefore investigate the impact of religious beliefs and other influentials on the image and placement of political co-brands in other countries.

Fifth, this research study was unable to inspect the function and effect of political advertisements on the development of brand image and positioning (Hussain et al., 2020). The role of political advertisements in terms of image and positioning needs to be investigated, especially when political brands are facing problems and are trying to maintain their voter base.

Sixth, longitudinal research studies can be carried out to gather information both before and after the elections, in different countries to examine variations in public/electorates responses. They may compare and assess the difference in the responses of candidates and electorates (urban/rural) while trying to understand perception about the political brands. They can also examine the impact of online/offline media consumption on the image and positioning of political co-brands. In addition to that, future researchers can assess the validity and reliability of the PBPM scale in different regions and political cultures. This will aid in establishing the strength of the scale. This will not only aid in identifying more brand image and positioning factors, but also establishing if the factors are grouped in the right categories. Future researchers can also test the Political Co-Brand Image and Positioning framework in different settings and context to assess its strength and capability.

In addition to that, this study could not quantitatively assess the party brand image at the constituency level. Future researchers can design studies to measure the effect of party brand's influence at the constituency and the national level.

Furthermore, political discourse/rhetoric, strategies of political salesmanship via media have emerged as key moves of shaping electorates' perception, weaken and discredit rival brands' moves. This relevance and complexity of communication media calls for more MMR in this domain to understand and examine the influence of adverse effects on the formation, management and maintenance brand image in various settings, regions, and cultures. Such studies will encourage the development and use of powerful and influential messaging. More research is also needed to assess the development and assessment of a scale for measuring political co-brand image and impact of marketing strategies on the brand image.

Future researchers can try to assess if there exists a direct relationship between the "availability of the candidates..." and the Brand-Fit. They can also try to explore the possibility of the presence of some other variables, e.g., emotions (Falkowski & Jabłońska, 2020). Since majority of the respondents reported to have college/university degrees, more data, especially from the rural areas, would be helpful to assess a clearer situation.

Finally, this research can be utilised as a foundation work for research on the interplay of brand identity aspects and how they affect a political brand's image. Since politics is a dynamic field and political scenarios change frequently, more research is required which can offer fresh information and identify the most important aspects of political brand image.

6.3. Contribution

This section highlights the major contributions and the managerial implications of this study.

6.3.1. Theoretical Contribution

The theoretical contribution of this study is centred on offering a new framework with some logic and evidence. Through mixed method research design, this study has primarily concentrated on the topic of political co-brand image and positioning.

One of the major theoretical contributions of this study is the importance given to revisiting the existing frameworks and the development of the Political Co-brand Image and Positioning Framework. This framework helps in deconstructing and operationalizing the notion, conception and idea of political brand image and positioning. In addition to that, this study identifies the key political brand image and positioning elements that are sensitive to the participants, context, and settings.

One of the unique contributions of this study is related to the candidate-party brand-fit and the role it plays in the entire process. While the results have clearly shown that PBPM has a significant and beneficial impact on electorate's voting intentions, the impact (of PBPM on voting intention) is determined by the candidate-party brand-fit. Also, it can be seen in the results that when electorates perceive a candidate's and party's brands are incompatible, marketing strategies to persuade electorates to vote for that candidate become more important. Political image, positioning, and marketing strategies, on the other hand, become less crucial when the brand-fit is moderate or good. Literature suggests that electorate evaluate and mobilize their support for candidates using the same cognitive mechanism that drives their behaviour toward businesses and social groups (Bennet et al., 2019). The relationship between competency and voting intentions may include a halo effect, in which electorates may form preconceived notions about a candidate's goals and abilities if he or she is elected to public office (Bennet et al., 2019; Evans & Ivaldi, 2021; Miller & Grubestic, 2021).

While literature confirms that the political leaders in the West are advised to use party finances for their political activities (e.g. Aramannsdottir et al., 2019), the qualitative study shows that in this region candidates' financial resources enable them to maintain the same political status.

Leader centric politics (Kobby, 2007; Thoroughgood et. al., 2018) appears to be more significant than the dynastic politics, in this region. This finding is not aligned with the published research on Pakistani politics and culture.

Another interesting finding is related to the concept of designer politics which works well in the West. The qualitative study findings have shown that adherence to party ideology works more than designer politics in Pakistan.

Lastly, while using the Goleman's Typology, quantitative study confirms that in Pakistan Coercive style of leadership is the only agency factor, unlike the studies carried out in the West.

6.3.2. *Methodological Contribution*

This research is based on a strong methodology. Only a reliable approach yields reliable results and add to the worth of the results. Based on the research objectives and research questions, this study has used mixed method sequential exploratory research design.

By going beyond merely describing thematic analysis, descriptive and inferential statistics, this study has tried to help researchers in generalising the key elements of political co-brand image and positioning. This study has tried to make concepts and variables easier to understand in accordance with the available literature and contributes to new knowledge by validating and contesting theoretical presumptions.

6.3.3. *Contextual Contribution*

This study contributes to the limited research on political co-branding, particularly in the area of image, positioning, and negative transference of image (between political brands which function at two different levels). Even though previous research on claims that brand image is an important facet of a brand's interaction with the public, political co-branding has remained an understudied topic/concept. This study has also tried to address the gaps which indicate a need for studying co-brands in different settings and circumstances. Most of the research in this area has been

carried out in the West. This study has focused on Pakistan in a post-election context.

The idea of co-brand image is an understudied subject that begs to be researched further and is ripe for scholarly examination. Lack of studies on the political co-brandings hints that more research is needed to explore and investigate the concept's formation, administration, management, and marketing communication. While published research highlights brand identity, there has been only few studies carried out on political brand positioning and image. As a result, current study explores and investigates political co-brand image and positioning and offers a critical perspective. This study helps in deconstructing and operationalizing the concept as well as in identifying/developing key elements that are sensitive to the participants, context, and settings.

6.3.4. *Practical Significance*

This study has tried to reduce the gap between academic research and its application to practitioners (Brennan 2004) by placing emphasis on problems relevant to political brand managers and practitioners (Green 2005; Hubbard & Norman 2007; Johnson 2005). The six dimensions of the framework and their respective elements are the parameters on which political brand's image and positioning can be assessed. Moreover, the framework which is developed in this study will help candidates, political campaign managers, and political strategists in designing political campaigns and assessing the pre- and post-alliance positioning effects.

6.4. *Implications*

Political campaigns are basically the ongoing activities which necessitate the evaluation and examination of the marketing activities. It also involves trying to comprehend how electorates view political brands (Tenpas & McCann, 2007; Ormrod, 2017b; Strömbäck, 2007). The goal of this research is to present a fresh perspectives to the body of knowledge on political marketing. The findings are anticipated to be used by practitioners including political campaign managers, media consultants, policymakers, and researchers as a form of strategic guidance establishing healthy relationships with electorates. Political branding, for example,

demands image management in order to operationalize the ideology and the process of policy development (Pitch et al., 2019). This study is likely to be useful in this respect as it will assist in comprehending the concepts of image and positioning ideas from the standpoint of political co-brand formation.

The Political Co-brand Image & Positioning Framework is expected to assist the political brands in the evaluation of their image constructions and positioning strategies for the political brands. It is expected that it will help in enhancing contact with voters and the general public in order for increasing and improving the quality and effectiveness of campaigns which are designed especially for the elections. This will also aid in determining whether the image and electorates' perception are compatible with the message and outcome that are planned. The framework will also make it easier to spot any inconsistencies and discrepancies between the corporate brand image and the co-brand's image. In addition to that it will aid and assist in resolving and fixing problematic areas in order to prevent co-brands from being associated with an unfavourable negative image. This is critical because awareness and knowledge about the political brand is based on these titbits of data which form an association network in the electorates' memories (Lees-Marshment, 2011). The findings are intended to aid in aligning the brand's image with the electorates' perception about the performance standards and their expectations from the brands (Baines & Harris, 2011; Speed et al., 2015). In the light of the findings of this study, it is clear that Pakistani political brands can develop a favourable image and can reposition themselves favourably if they rethink their communication strategies (including the communication styles of the political candidates). They should use ethical and sophisticated language and political rhetoric to persuade the people. In addition to that, leaders should not hesitate in taking the much-needed unpopular decisions to solve major issues. Also, preparing a strong unbeatable strategy will enable them to do better in the next election (Lees-Marshment, 2008).

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Appendix

A. Qualitative Study

A-I. Interview Guide

Respondent Information:

Name: _____

Age: 29-38, 39-48, 49-50, 51 and above

Gender: Male Female

Education: _____

Occupation: _____

Nature of Job: _____

Job Responsibilities: _____

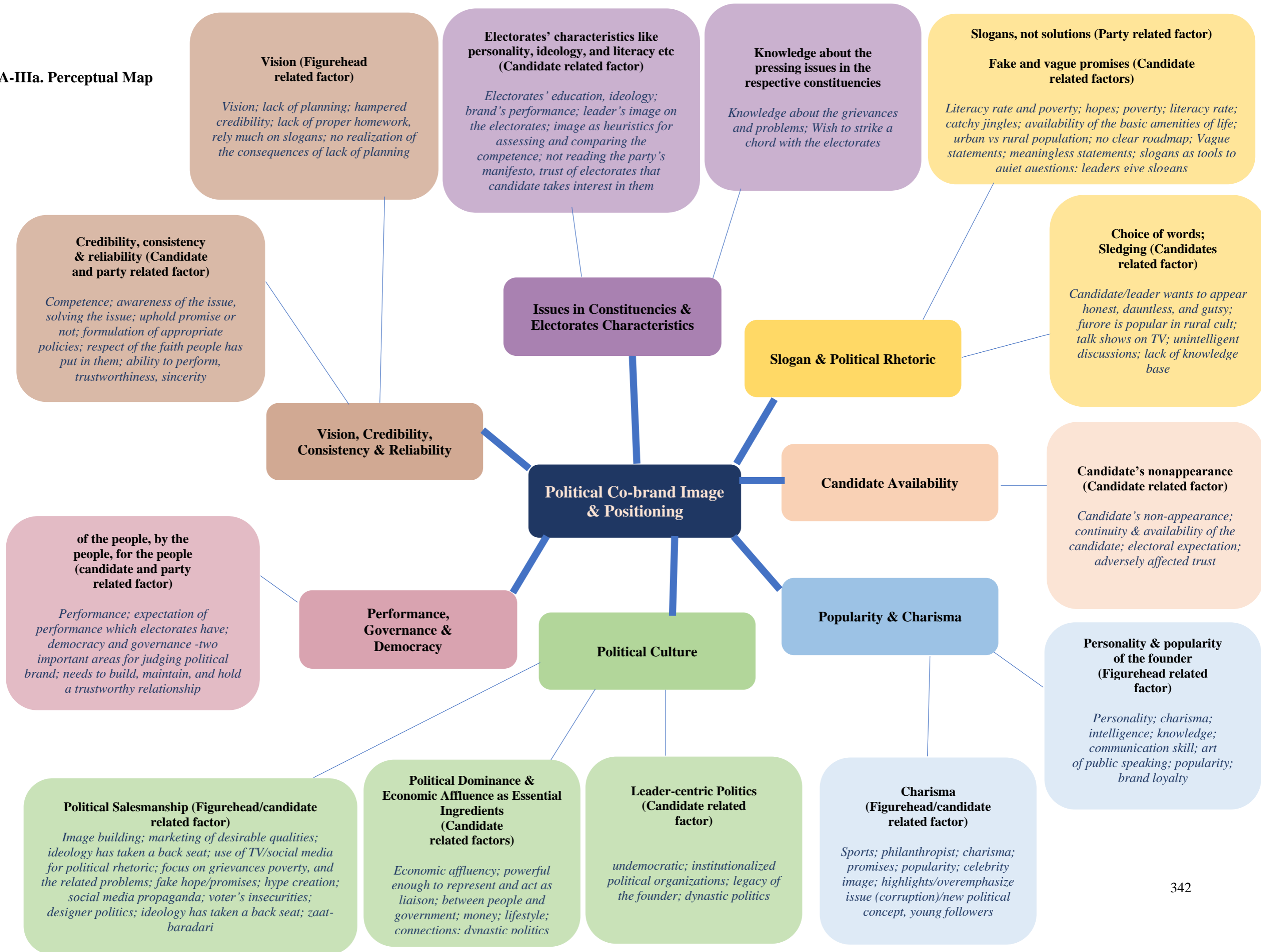
Start of the interview: _____

End of the interview: _____

Key Questions Included:

1. How do you describe our political culture?
2. Please share your pre- election opinion about the political brands.
3. What is your opinion about political parties' candidates and leaders' GE 2018 election campaign?
4. What is your opinion about the different ways through which politicians and their partnering parties mobilize people? (Including the role their personality and charisma play)
5. How do political parties position themselves in our country?
6. Do you think political candidate and partnering brands are very clear in their communication?
7. What is your opinion about the role social media and electronic media is playing Culturein politics?
8. Please share your opinion about the communication strategies of the candidates and their parties, especially their political slogans.
9. What characteristics should a candidate and a party have to be considered trustworthy and reliable, in your opinion?
10. Do you think candidates of different parties have unwavering tenacity, reassuring public demeanour, and deliver inspiring public speeches?
11. Please share your opinion about the parties manifestoes.
12. Do you think political parties, candidates and leaders are concerned and sensitive about the people? What is your opinion about their performance?
13. Is there any political brand which has been able to live up to your expectations in Pakistan?
14. Has your opinion about the political parties and political candidates changed after election? Why?
15. What is your opinion about the current party, candidate, and leadership in power?
16. Who is your favourite political personality (nationally or internationally) and why?

A-IIIa. Perceptual Map



A-IIIb. Themes, Sub-themes & Codes – Co-brand Image and Positioning Creation & Management

Themes	Sub-themes	Codes	Quotes (<i>examples from the data</i>)	Corporate brand the Political Co-brand is representing
Slogans and Political Rhetoric	Slogans, not solutions (<i>Party related factor</i>)	Literacy rate and poverty; hopes; poverty; literacy rate; catchy jingles; availability of the basic amenities of life; urban vs rural population; no clear roadmap; Vague statements; meaningless statements; slogans as tools to quiet questions; leaders give slogans	We are looking at a mostly illiterate and semi-literate society... I think jingles, catchy slogans still sell because there is lack of awareness, education, understanding of things [cognitive skills]. So, they are very important. (H2)	PPP, PTI
	Fake and vague promises (<i>Candidate related factors</i>)		... "New Labour, New England [Britain]". What does it mean? How you will define it? ... You can phrase catchy things but can't deconstruct when you explore the slogans little deeper... it is a contentless discourse. No substance. We will create a Naya Pakistan. What does Naya Pakistan mean? (Z1)	
	Choice of words; Sledging (<i>Candidates related factor</i>)	Candidate/leader wants to appear honest, dauntless, and gutsy; furore is popular in rural cult; talk shows on TV; unintelligent discussions; lack of knowledge base	Slogans are very important... when coming from a grand leader, people really follow it. Sometimes it is the fundamental denominator of success of any political party..(Q5).	PTI, PPP
Candidate Availability	Candidate's non-appearance (<i>Candidate related factor</i>)	Candidate's non-appearance; continuity & availability of the candidate; electoral expectation; adversely affected trust	In our society, if you go to villages, there is a furore, there is a story, "this guy is great! today he insulted the boss!" That kind of tradition trickled down to our talk shows. Political vocabulary has deteriorated because of television. (Z1)	PTI, PPP, PMLN
			...they [candidates] detach themselves from the public and then they don't even visit them [electorates]. They rarely visit [their constituencies after elections].in the last election we saw the candidates who had been contesting...when visited [their constituency] again [for their GE2018] campaign, they were pelted with stones and eggs...They hadn't visited their constituencies [after GE2013], They hadn't done anything for their areas. (A10)	

Popularity & Charisma	Personality & popularity of the founder (<i>Figurehead related factor</i>)	Personality; charisma; intelligence; knowledge; communication skill; art of public speaking; popularity; brand loyalty	Personality of the leadership appeals more to the electorates when it comes to voting... Pakistan Tehreek e Insaaf is Imran Khan. Muslim League Noon is Nawaz Shareef. Another party [PPP] is Zardari. Nobody besides them...there are political workers who accept that my political party is corrupt, and my leader is corrupt...[When you ask them] who will you vote for? Same party!...this is because of factors like affiliation with the leader... People associate themselves with the leader. (A10)	PTI, PPP, PMLN
	Charisma (<i>Figurehead/candidate related factor</i>)	Sports; philanthropist; charisma; promises; popularity; celebrity image; highlights/overemphasize issue (corruption)/new political concept, young followers	There is nothing wrong in being charismatic personality as long as you are not violating the constitutions and as long as you are not crossing the lines of public servant. As a government servant, your charisma should not out-grow your constitutional legal mandate and jurisdiction. (J5)	PTI
Political Culture	Power & Economic Affluency as Essential Ingredients (<i>candidate related factors</i>)	Economic affluency; powerful enough to represent and act as liaison; between people and government; money; lifestyle; connections; dynastic politics	...people are willing [accept] the extravagant lifestyle of political leaders and others because that goes with the culture. They are expecting that person to play an extraordinary role in terms of being powerful enough to act as an intermediary...conduits of interface between different government officers...their desire that some government resources should be applied to their region, some of their you know basic standards are improved so this is how people expect them to actually act. People want them to be a liaison actually between government in terms of redirection of resource, redirection of others.” (M2)	PTI, PPP, PMLN
	Leader-centric Politics (<i>Candidate related factor</i>)	undemocratic; institutionalized political organizations; legacy of the founder; leader-centric dynastic politics	In PMLN, N [stands] for Nawaz. [without] Nawaz ...it doesn't exist. Peoples' Party has the legacy of having these Bhuttos. So, they are not really democratic or institutionalised political organisations. And that's the same case in the whole [Indian] Sub-Continent, not just in [Pakistan], even in Nepal, in India of course. (M5)	PTI, PPP, PMLN
	Political Salesmanship & Strategies to Shape Electorates'	Image building; marketing of desirable qualities; ideology has taken a back seat; use of TV/social media for political rhetoric; focus on grievances, poverty, and the related	I think towards the end of the 20th century and beginning of 21st century when this cyber spaces, satellite television came then a new notion started which is called “designer politics” that you market your design, you develop a product, you	PTI, PPP, PMLN

<p>Perception (<i>Figurehead/candidate related factor</i>)</p>	<p>problems; fake hope/promises; hype creation; social media propaganda; voter's insecurities; designer politics; ideology has taken a back seat; zaat-baradari</p>	<p>market the leader [and candidates]...Now it is no more battle of ideas and we have more emphasis on good governance that invariably produces good managers, not the people who have passion or ideology. Same happened in Pakistan. Initially when designer politics started, we had media cells. Own photographer will magnify the crowd, send the images which give a pleasant impression of a leader. Then we also had spin doctors here... Then came private channels and talk shows gave a very different view of a leader. Media, if it was print, maybe if leader said something naïve, the sub-editor edited it. If it was being manufactured by your own propaganda machine, then again you had the liberty to release the contents which please you or which you privilege. But now this television debates, these live-debates, they expose the leadership in their real format. So, again ideology is missing. It is more like asserting your will, your enthusiasm, and things like that. Ideologies have taken a back seat...with the advent of televised debates, designer democracy emerged. Earlier maybe not every citizen had the opportunity to listen to the leadership. They had the mediated image of the leader. But now here the leader is sitting on TV you can watch... Even in societies where educational, cultural capital is high, you end up producing couch potatoes and Trump is the classical example who became the beneficiary of that process. (Z1)</p>	
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Issues in Constituencies & Electorates Characteristics

<p>Knowledge about the pressing issues in the respective constituencies</p>	<p>Knowledge about the grievances and problems; Wish to strike a chord with the electorates</p>	<p>...the reason of this brand loyalty can be attributed to the voter's grievances, insecurities, crises, identity crisis, helplessness, compulsions, anticipation, and expectation of getting protection from the party, he maybe from a rural background.... For instance, in every single election or in every single debate, they use or pronounce the same conditions...if you presume for a while that if these conditions do not exist in a certain time and space, they will have nothing to sell. The way they mobilise the people is certainly not based on kind of strategic issues. It is just the grievances, short comings or issues which are being dealt or face by the individuals at a very micro level, and they need these conditions remain as it is to ensure the legitimacy. It is absolutely not in their interest to for instance eliminate or</p>	<p>PTI, PPP, PMLN</p>
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			<p>overcome the poverty or these other conditions, educations [etc.]... because the moment they are gone, there is nothing else to sell or nothing else to mobilise, so couple of things in addition to this, they do rather project a sense of collectively, identity based cleavages and identity based groups that will keep on enclosing the groups or the constituency ...Whatever political organisation there are, they have no deepness, no depth in them. (M5)</p>	
	<p>Electorates' characteristics like personality, ideology, and literacy etc.</p> <p><i>(candidate related factor)</i></p>	<p>Electorates' education, ideology; brand's performance; leader's image on the electorates; image as heuristics for assessing and comparing the competence; not reading the party's manifesto, trust of electorates that candidate takes interest in them</p>	<p>Pakistan is a very ideologically forward state...this is not something which most people try to term Pakistan as. But if you talk to ordinary Pakistanis, they want progressive approach towards religion, they want equal participation in different programs, and they are vocal about it... sometimes yes radicalized in certain things... but majority of the Pakistanis believe that they need progressive development. And that's where most of these leaders infringe upon...fall in expectations is the fall in deliverance. (M2)</p>	<p>PTI, PPP, PMLN</p>
<p>Performance, Governance & Democracy</p>	<p>of the people, by the people, for the people <i>(candidate and party related factor)</i></p>	<p>Performance; expectation of performance which electorates have; democracy and governance -two important areas for judging political brand; needs to build, maintain, and hold a trustworthy relationship</p>	<p>... election process is one phase in democracy. Second phase is how do you intend bringing reforms? What are your policies? ... They [voters] want to know is it about them? is it for them? Is it by them? So, these three things are extremely important to the people of Pakistan and the voters of Pakistan..... the testing of people [candidates] will always be on the governance related issues. People are interested in issues, like corruption, but if it is not translating into their daily lives and the governance is not committing to it, we have seen political parties being eliminated...All [of the] political parties unfortunately are not at the same level as our voters are... We need to recognise the fact that for an ordinary voter most important factor of his life is whether or not he is getting democracy implemented in his daily life. (M2)</p>	<p>PTI, PPP, PMLN</p>
<p>Vision, Credibility, Consistency & Reliability</p>	<p>Vision <i>(figurehead related factor)</i></p>	<p>Vision; lack of planning; hampered credibility; lack of proper homework, rely much on slogans; no realization of the consequences of lack of planning</p>	<p>You can't give slogans which you can't realise. You can't give principles which you can't uphold. If you have given the principle, then you must stand by that principle. It can't be that your principle stance will include passages of the past. It must then be principle! Only then you will have a leader of national calibre. Otherwise, you will have icons, images,</p>	<p>PTI, PPP</p>

mirror images, but not leaders. You will have star value but not leaders. We need to differentiate between political leaders and iconic representation of political class. We have an iconic representation of political class but absence of political leaders. (M2)

Credibility, consistency & reliability
(candidate and party related factor)

Competence; awareness of the issue, solving the issue; uphold promise or not; formulation of appropriate policies; respect of the faith people has put in them; ability to perform, trustworthiness, sincerity

PTI, PPP

Some columns of this table are submitted as a supplementary material for Shahid, Hassan and Sadaf (2021)

B. Quantitative Study

B-I. Questionnaire

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey about the political brands (candidates at the constituency level and the party) and their positioning in Pakistan. This study is undertaken solely for research purposes. The survey takes approximately 15 minutes to complete.

The survey is completely anonymous, and your response will be treated in confidence and will only be used for academic purposes. Your help is much appreciated.

Please choose and check the suitable answers:

1. Gender: **Male; Female, Other**
2. Age: **18-25; 26-35; 36-50; 51-60; 60 and above.**
3. Education: **Less than primary; Primary passed; SSC passed; HSC passed; Honor's passed; Master's passed; Above Master's degree, PhD; Post Doc**
4. Occupation:

Student	Gov. service	Private job	Business	Self-employed	unemployed	Housewife	Other:
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5. How active an interest do you have in current affairs and politics? **(Cwalina & Drzewiecka, 2019)**

Not at all	Almost not	Rather not	Hard to say	Rather yes	Pretty strong	Very strong
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6. How do you find out about the political life in your country? **(multiple answers possible) (Cwalina & Drzewiecka, 2019)**

- a. **Talking to friends;**
- b. **Newspapers**
- c. **Radio**
- d. **Watching TV**
- e. **Internet**
- f. **I am not looking for the political news in the media**

7. To what extent do you trust the political reports in the media (press, radio, television, internet)? **(Cwalina & Drzewiecka, 2019)**

Not at all	Almost not	Rather not	Hard to say	Rather yes	Pretty strong	Very strong
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8. How much time do you spend each day watching the political issues in the media? **(Cwalina & Drzewiecka, 2019)**

Less than 30 minutes	30 minutes – 1 hour	more than an hour
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9. Are the opinions of major political journalists relevant to you? **(Cwalina & Drzewiecka, 2019)**

Not at all	Almost not	Rather not	Hard to say	Rather yes	Pretty strong	Very strong
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10. How would you describe your political opinion? **(Cwalina & Drzewiecka, 2019)**

Very left-wing oriented	Leftist	Rather left-oriented	Centre	Rather right-oriented	Right oriented	Right-wing oriented
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11. How would you describe your stance on socio-economic issues? **(Cwalina & Drzewiecka, 2019)**

Very liberal	Liberal	More Liberal	Partially liberal, Partially social	More Social	Social	Very social
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12. What is your ideological attitude / belief? **(Cwalina & Drzewiecka, 2019)**

Very liberal	Liberal	More Liberal	Partially liberal, Partially conservative	Rather conservative	Conservative	Very conservative
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13. Have you been a member of a political party? **(Cwalina & Drzewiecka, 2019): YES or NO**

14. Which of the parties listed below are closest to you? **(Alphabetical order) (Cwalina & Drzewiecka, 2019)**

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Pakistan Muslim League- Nawaz (PMLN) ○ Pakistan Peoples' Party (PPP) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Pakistan Tehrik e Insaaf (PTI) ○ Other: _____ ○ I do not support any party. |
|---|--|

15. I always vote to my preferred candidate because he/she usually provides me with satisfaction (VOTQUAL by Khalil & Aoun, 2020) ---DEMOGRAPHICS

Totally disagree	Rather disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Rather agree	Totally agree
1	2	3	4	5

16. Please choose one of the parties from the following three prominent Pakistani political brands and fill the next questions for the party you have selected. (list is in the alphabetical order)

PMLN; PPP; PTI

17. Please circle one of the five categories (1-5) which in your opinion reflects the extent to which the item is important for a candidate to win the election. (Political Marketing Mix by Chowdhury & Naheed, 2019)

Indicators	Not at all important	Less important	Neither important nor unimportant	Important	Most important
PMM1. Election gates of the candidate	1	2	3	4	5
PMM2. Large sculptures with election symbol	1	2	3	4	5
PMM3. News clippings in favour of the candidate	1	2	3	4	5
PMM4. Use of national leaders (like party Chairman) in the campaigns	1	2	3	4	5
PMM5. Use of celebrities in the campaigns	1	2	3	4	5
PMM6. Use of national icons in the meetings	1	2	3	4	5
PMM7. Showing off muscle power by the candidate	1	2	3	4	5
PMM8. Candidate's connection with the local administration	1	2	3	4	5
PMM9. Political party of the candidate	1	2	3	4	5
PMM10. Ideology of the party candidate belongs to	1	2	3	4	5
PMM11. Symbol of the party candidate supports	1	2	3	4	5
PMM12. Connection of the party with the outer world	1	2	3	4	5
PMM13. Showcasing remarkable achievements of the party	1	2	3	4	5
PMM14. Election slogan of the candidate	1	2	3	4	5
PMM15. Election music of the candidate	1	2	3	4	5
PMM16. Use of posters of the candidate	1	2	3	4	5
PMM17. Billboards of the candidate	1	2	3	4	5
PMM18. Rallies by the	1	2	3	4	5

candidate					
PMM19. Direct postal mail by the candidate	1	2	3	4	5
PMM20. Use of social media by the candidate	1	2	3	4	5
PMM21. Financial charity made by the candidate	1	2	3	4	5
PMM22. Use of family members in the campaigns	1	2	3	4	5
PMM23. Collecting information about the voters of the area	1	2	3	4	5
PMM24. Popularity survey before applying for the candidacy	1	2	3	4	5
PMM25. Listening from the voters before preparing the election manifesto	1	2	3	4	5
PMM26. Collecting information repeatedly to detect the change of popularity	1	2	3	4	5
PMM27. Economic cost if the candidate is elected (tax or extortion may rise,)	1	2	3	4	5
PMM28. Psychological cost if the candidate is elected (insecurity, harassment)	1	2	3	4	5
PMM29. Gender viewpoint of the candidate	1	2	3	4	5
PMM30. Past political records of the candidate	1	2	3	4	5
PMM31. Image of the candidate as a leader	1	2	3	4	5
PMM32. Image of the candidate as community person	1	2	3	4	5
PMM33. Frequent public appearance	1	2	3	4	5
PMM34. Candidate is known in the area	1	2	3	4	5
PMM35. Candidate living in the area	1	2	3	4	5
PMM36. Availability of the candidate in the area throughout the year	1	2	3	4	5
PMM37. Candidate's articulation power	1	2	3	4	5
PMM38. Candidate's modesty	1	2	3	4	5

18. For the following attributes of your preferred candidate, please indicate the degree of satisfaction by circling the appropriate number (**VOTQUAL by Khalil & Aoun, 2020**)

Code		Very unsatisfied	Rather unsatisfied	Neither satisfied nor unsatisfied	Rather satisfied	Very satisfied
A	Gender	1	2	3	4	5
B	Age	1	2	3	4	5
C	Highest previous political office	1	2	3	4	5
D	Diplomas	1	2	3	4	5
E	Family Background	1	2	3	4	5
F	Looks (Physiognomy)	1	2	3	4	5
G	Charisma	1	2	3	4	5
H	Outward appearance (clothes)	1	2	3	4	5

19. For the following attribute of your preferred candidate, please indicate the degree of expectation and achievement by circling the corresponding numbers (**VOTQUAL by Khalil & Aoun, 2020**)

	Very low expectation	Low expectation	Medium expectation	High expectation	Very high expectation	Very low achievement	Low achievement	Medium achievement	High achievement	Very high achievement
Respect of promises	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5

20. For the following attributes of your preferred candidate, please indicate the degree of expectation and performance by circling the corresponding numbers (**VOTQUAL by Khalil & Aoun, 2020**)

Code		Very low expectation	Low expectation	Medium expectation	high expectation	Very high expectation	Very low performance	Low performance	Medium performance	High performance	Very high performance
A	Willingness to be helpful (service providing)	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
B	Swiftness in providing public services	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
C	Swiftness in providing personal services	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5

21. For the following attributes of your preferred candidate, please indicate the degree of expectation and performance by circling the corresponding numbers (VOTQUAL by Khalil & Aoun, 2020)

Code		Very low expectation	Low expectation	Medium expectation	high expectation	Very high expectation	Very low performance	Low performance	Medium performance	High performance	Very high performance
A	Skills in managing critical situations	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
B	Skills in managing conflicts	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
C	Credibility	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
D	Capacity to provide security	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
E	courtesy	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5

22. For the following attributes of your preferred candidate, please indicate the degree of expectancy and performance by circling the corresponding numbers (VOTQUAL by Khalil & Aoun, 2020)

Code		Very low expectation	Low expectation	Medium expectation	high expectation	Very high expectation	Very low performance	Low performance	Medium performance	high performance	Very high performance
A	Understanding voters' needs	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
B	Knowing the voters personally	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
C	Availability	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
D	Skills to communicate with the voters	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5

23. To what extent do you believe the following adjectives describe each of the candidates and yourself? (*Candidate Brand Image (Guzman & Sierra, 2009)*)

Adjectives	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. Hard-working	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. Intelligent	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. Leader	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. Successful	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. Constant	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. Responsible	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. Dynamic	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8. Energetic	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9. Enterprising	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10. Sharp	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11. Creative	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12. Innovative	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13. Modern	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14. Original	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
15. Cheerful	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
16. Sentimental	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
17. Friendly	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
18. Cool	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
19. Young	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
20. Generous	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
21. Loyal	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
22. Sincere	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
23. Reliable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
24. Glamorous	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
25. Good looking	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
26. Charming	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

24. To what extent do you agree with the following statements about the candidate (in your constituency)?

Voting Intention Scale (from Van Steenburg & Guzman, 2019)

Items	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Agree	Strongly agree
1. I would vote for that candidate.	1	2	3	4	5
2. I would seek out more information about that candidate.	1	2	3	4	5
3. I would like to investigate that candidate's stance on the issues.	1	2	3	4	5

4. It is unlikely that I would vote for that candidate. (reversed)	1	2	3	4	5
5. Given the opportunity, I predict I would vote for that candidate.	1	2	3	4	5

25. Please think about the candidate in your constituency and respective party for a moment and answer the following questions. Brand-Fit adapted from Roswinanto, 2015

	Strongly Disagree	2	3	4	5	6	Strongly Agree
1. I think these two brands ("party" and "candidate") are consistent with each other	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. I think these two brands ("party" and "candidate") are complementary to each other	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. I think these two brands ("party" and "candidate") fit each other	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. I think these two brands ("party" and "candidate") are related to each other	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

26. Below are six different strategies of political leadership and governance. Please choose how much (if at all) the respective leadership strategy fits the respective political leader (leader on the left side of the Table). Please use the scale values from **1 (does NOT fit the leader at all)** to **7 (fits the leader very strongly)**. (Cwalina & Drzewiecka, 2019)

Leader	1	2	3	4	5	6
Strategy followed by leadership/ Strategy management	He is focused on achievement. He is performance oriented. Takes initiative and requires all to obey his decisions. All mistakes are ascribed to subordinates/others. His motto: "Do what I command you." His manner of leadership harms/disturbs the in-group climate. He, however, is effective and capable of responding to crisis situations and competition, quickly.	He is self-sufficient, confident, and empathetic. He is able, can deal with challenges and convince others. His motto is "Come on with me". Mobilize people towards vision and works very well when new direction is required. He knows how to get the maximum out of others. On the one hand, this leader gives free hand, but other times he is dominant, shows authority and even authoritarianism. He has a negative influence on the community feeling.	He can build relationships and take good care of the interpersonal relations. His motto is "People come first". He knows how to raise moral standards in group and how restore mutual trust. His management style positively affects members of the party. However, if he does not define and articulate goals, they do not work effectively.	He knows how to create atmosphere of trust to achieve compromises/agreements and involve members in activities. Avoids adopting decisions that may cause hostile reactions. His motto is: "What is your opinion on this account? What do you think?" He is willing to listen to others/people and often arranges meetings which, however, rarely cause tangible results.	He is successful if the results are easily and quickly achievable. Set high standards for performance. He, however, lacks trust in people. He wants to work with cooperative and competent people who can work efficiently and quickly. His motto is: "Do it as I do, now".	He is empathic and knows how to support others. His management style brings good results if group members competent. Gives feedback. Everyone knows what is asked from them and what place they have in the party strategy. People and development of people are more important to him than tasks. His motto is, "Try this". He is unsuccessful when others do not want to learn, develop skills and grow.
1.Ideal Political leader						
2.Imran Khan, current PM Pakistan, Chairman PTI						
3.Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto (late), former President Pakistan and founder PPP						
4.Benazir Bhutto (late), former PM Pakistan, co-chairman PPP						
5.Asif Ali Zardari, former President Pakistan, current president & co-chairman, PPP						
6.Nawaz Shareef, former PM Pakistan, Founder PMLN						
7.Shahbaz Shareef, current President PMLN						

27. You have learned about six different leadership styles from political leaders (the numbers at the top of the table). What kind of style would you prefer for the government / party leadership? (Cwalina & Drzewiecka, 2019)

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6

Thank you very much for your time!

B-II. Six Styles of Leadership Proposed by Goleman

Leadership style	Main characteristics	The style in phrase
Coercive	Demands immediate compliance, has overall negative impact on climate in organization, works good in time of crisis or in case of problems with workers	"Do, what I tell you"
Authoritative	Mobilizes people toward vision, works especially good, if new vision or new direction is required	"Come with me"
Affiliative	Concentrates on harmony and builds emotional bonds, works good, when people face difficult circumstances	"People come first"
Democratic	Forges consensus through participation and works successfully, if there is a need to built buy-in or in consensus, or to get input from valuable team members	"What do you think"
Pacesetting	Style sets high standards for performance, works effectively with motivated and competent people, knowing, how to get quick results from them	"Do it, as I do, now"
Coaching	Develop people for future, works especially good if there is a need to help others improving performance or setting long term strengths	"Try this"

Source: Based on Goleman [2000, pp. 82-83]

B-III. PCA – Communalities, Total Variance Explained and Scree Plot

Communalities

	Initial	Extraction
PM32	1.000	.695
PM33	1.000	.765
PM34	1.000	.764
PM35	1.000	.706
PM36	1.000	.738
PM37	1.000	.568
PM38	1.000	.640
SATISFACTION_Gender	1.000	.675
SATISFACTION_Age	1.000	.693
SATISFACTION_Highest PrevOff	1.000	.660
SATISFACTION_Diploma s	1.000	.585
SATISFACTION_FamilyB ackground	1.000	.718
SATISFACTION_LooksP hysiognomy	1.000	.700
SATISFACTION_Charis ma	1.000	.733
SATISFACTION_Outwar dAppearnace	1.000	.731
PM4	1.000	.570
PM7	1.000	.456
PM20	1.000	.608
PM22	1.000	.451
PM10	1.000	.463
PM13	1.000	.583
PM14	1.000	.619
PM25	1.000	.699
PM26	1.000	.672
PM27	1.000	.610
PM28	1.000	.591
PM30	1.000	.677
PM31	1.000	.657
HELPFULNESS1	1.000	.718
HELPFULNESS2	1.000	.767
HELPFULNESS3	1.000	.718
Competance1	1.000	.774
Competance2	1.000	.734

Competance3	1.000	.715
Competance4	1.000	.784
Competance5	1.000	.663

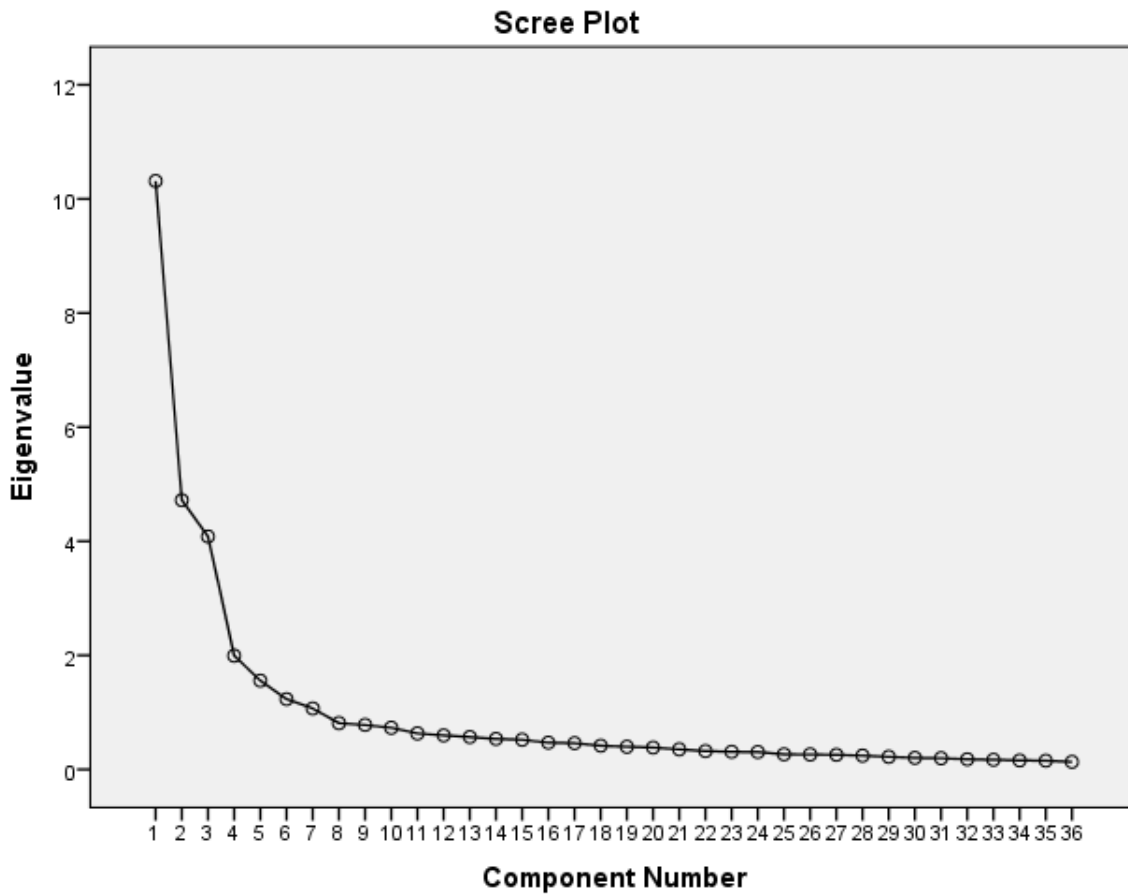
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Total Variance Explained

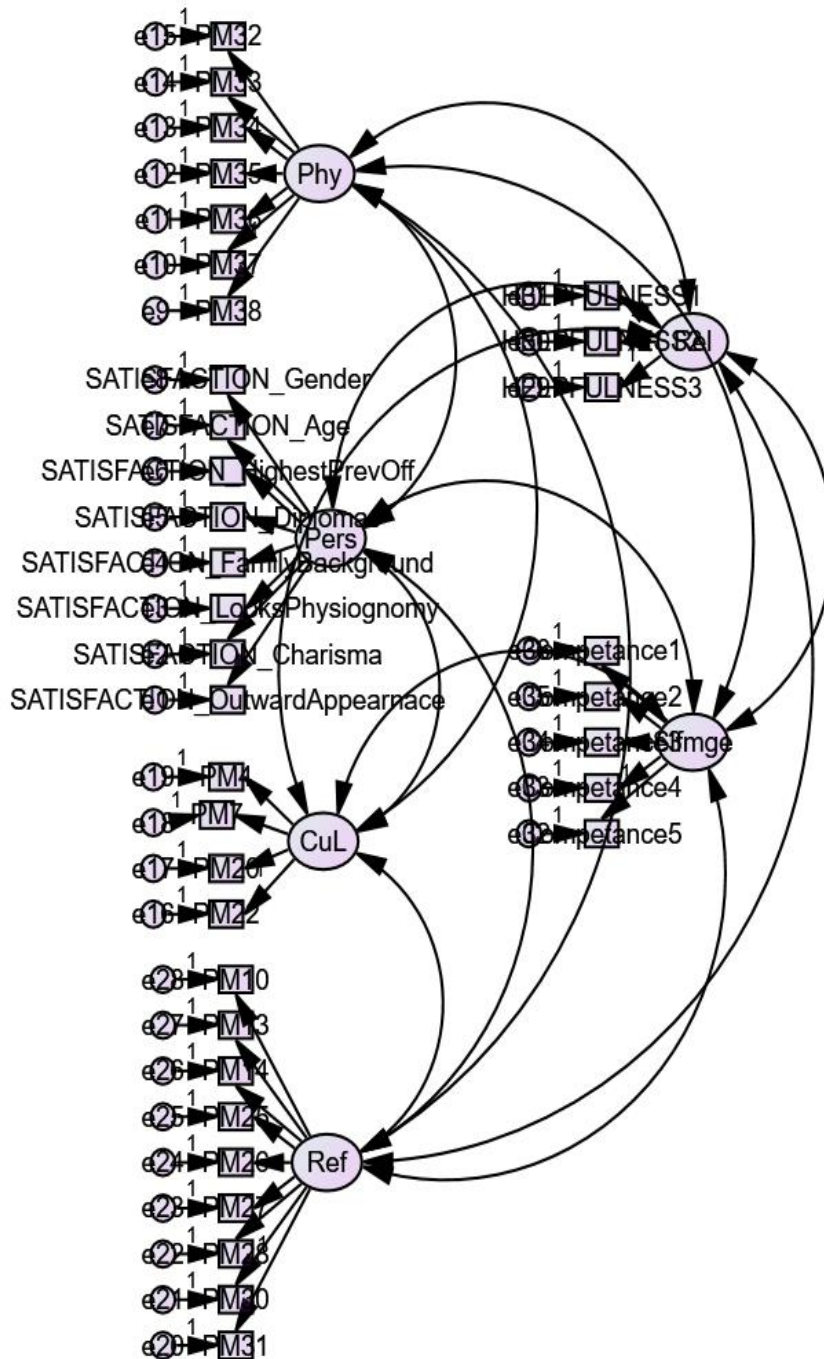
Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	10.313	28.647	28.647	10.313	28.647	28.647	5.578	15.495	15.495
2	4.720	13.111	41.758	4.720	13.111	41.758	5.469	15.191	30.686
3	4.083	11.341	53.099	4.083	11.341	53.099	4.398	12.218	42.904
4	1.993	5.537	58.636	1.993	5.537	58.636	3.776	10.490	53.394
5	1.557	4.324	62.960	1.557	4.324	62.960	2.535	7.041	60.434
6	1.233	3.426	66.386	1.233	3.426	66.386	2.143	5.952	66.386
7	1.069	2.970	69.356						
8	.812	2.255	71.611						
9	.780	2.167	73.778						
10	.730	2.028	75.805						
11	.632	1.755	77.560						
12	.597	1.660	79.220						
13	.569	1.580	80.800						
14	.535	1.487	82.287						
15	.520	1.445	83.732						
16	.468	1.301	85.033						
17	.460	1.278	86.311						
18	.417	1.159	87.470						
19	.398	1.107	88.576						
20	.384	1.067	89.643						
21	.352	.979	90.622						
22	.322	.894	91.515						
23	.309	.859	92.374						
24	.304	.846	93.220						
25	.266	.738	93.958						
26	.263	.729	94.687						
27	.257	.714	95.401						
28	.241	.670	96.071						
29	.221	.614	96.685						
30	.204	.566	97.251						
31	.196	.545	97.796						

32	.179	.496	98.292					
33	.169	.470	98.762					
34	.159	.442	99.204					
35	.154	.427	99.631					
36	.133	.369	100.000					

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.



B-IV. CFA Diagram & Model Fit Summary



Model Fit Summary

CMIN

Model	NPAR	CMIN	DF	P	CMIN/DF
Default model	114	2230.046	552	.000	4.040
Saturated model	666	.000	0		
Independence model	36	17480.901	630	.000	27.747

RMR, GFI

Model	RMR	GFI	AGFI	PGFI
Default model	.066	.845	.813	.700
Saturated model	.000	1.000		
Independence model	.427	.225	.181	.213

Baseline Comparisons

Model	NFI Delta1	RFI rho1	IFI Delta2	TLI rho2	CFI
Default model	.872	.854	.901	.886	.900
Saturated model	1.000		1.000		1.000
Independence model	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000

Parsimony-Adjusted Measures

Model	PRATIO	PNFI	PCFI
Default model	.876	.764	.789
Saturated model	.000	.000	.000
Independence model	1.000	.000	.000

NCP

Model	NCP	LO 90	HI 90
Default model	1678.046	1536.336	1827.265
Saturated model	.000	.000	.000
Independence model	16850.901	16423.072	17285.086

FMIN

Model	FMIN	F0	LO 90	HI 90
Default model	3.204	2.411	2.207	2.625
Saturated model	.000	.000	.000	.000
Independence model	25.116	24.211	23.596	24.835

RMSEA

Model	RMSEA	LO 90	HI 90	PCLOSE
Default model	.066	.063	.069	.000
Independence model	.196	.194	.199	.000

AIC

Model	AIC	BCC	BIC	CAIC
Default model	2458.046	2470.848	2976.380	3090.380
Saturated model	1332.000	1406.786	4360.159	5026.159
Independence model	17552.901	17556.943	17716.585	17752.585

ECVI

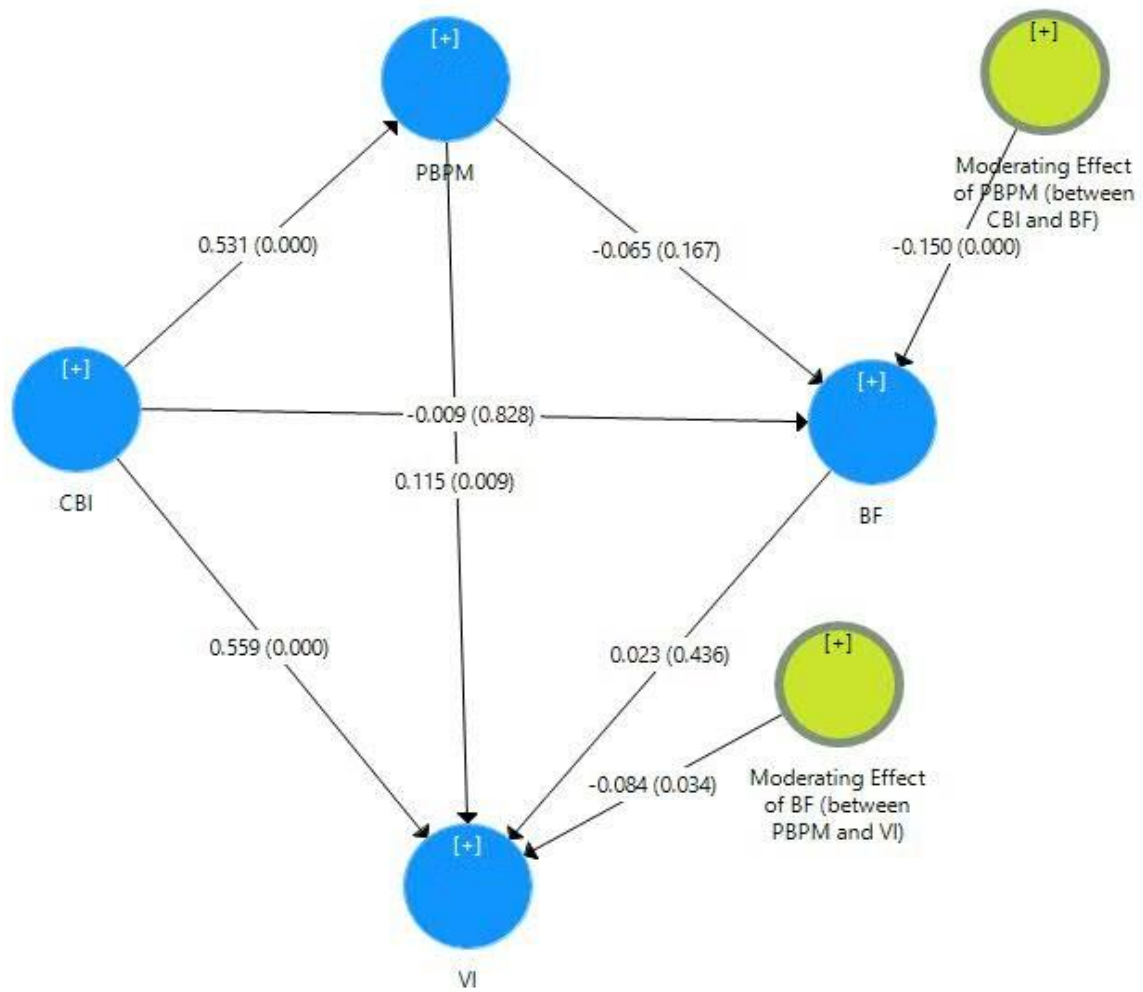
Model	ECVI	LO 90	HI 90	MECVI
Default model	3.532	3.328	3.746	3.550
Saturated model	1.914	1.914	1.914	2.021
Independence model	25.220	24.605	25.844	25.225

HOELTER

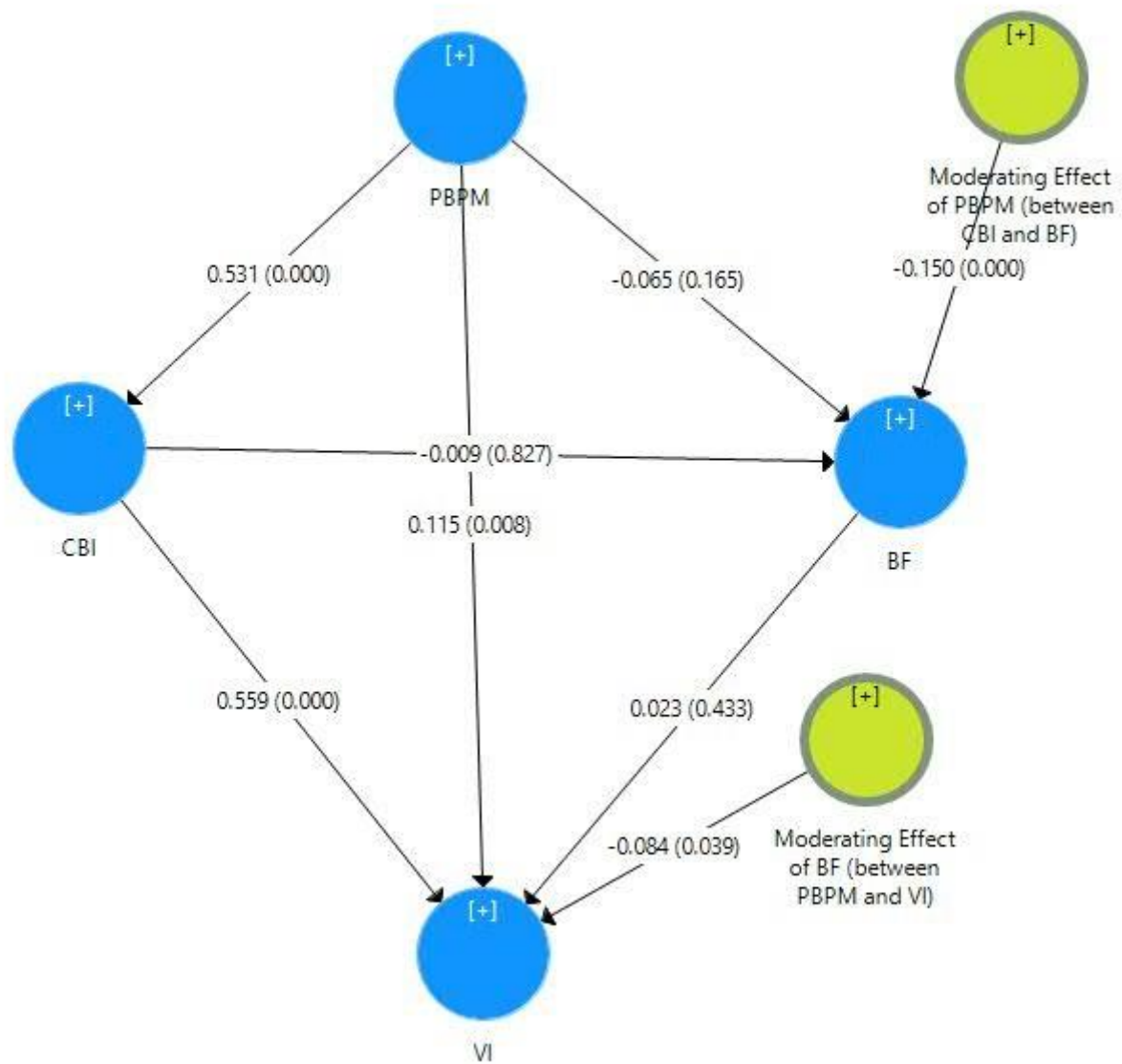
Model	HOELTER .05	HOELTER .01
Default model	190	198
Independence model	28	29

Minimization: .062
 Miscellaneous: 2.781
 Bootstrap: .000
 Total: 2.843

B-V. PLS-SEM Path Diagram



Note: n = 697; Models represents the influence of CBI on PBPM. Path coefficient values are presented along with the p values (in parenthesis). BF represents the *Candidate-Party Brand-Fit*, CBI represents *Candidate Brand Image*; PBPM represents the *Political Brand Positioning & Political Marketing*; and VI represents *Voting Intention*.



Note: n = 697; Models represents the influence of PBPM on CBI. Path coefficient values are presented along with the p values (in parenthesis). BF represents the *Candidate-Party Brand-Fit*, CBI represents *Candidate Brand Image*; PBPM represents the *Political Brand Positioning & Political Marketing*; and VI represents *Voting Intention*.