

Factors in Shaping Political Human Brand Equity in Pakistan

Qazi Fahad

Department of Business Management, IQRA University, Karachi, Pakistan.

Corresponding: gazi.fahad@bosch-pharma.com

ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
<p><i>Article History:</i> Received: 12 March, 2024 Revised: 01 April, 2024 Accepted: 16 May, 2024 Available Online: 28 June, 2024</p> <p><i>DOI:</i> https://doi.org/10.56536/ijmres.v14i2.573</p> <hr/> <p><i>Keywords:</i> Political human brand, Political engagement, Perceived leadership quality, Political Branding, Brand Personality, Pakistan's Local Body Elections</p> <hr/> <p><i>JEL Classification:</i> M30, M31</p>	<p>Current research is divided into two parts first is to study the direct impact of political engagement on political brand knowledge and political brand loyalty. The second is to study the relationships among the dimensions of voter-based political brand equity grounded on the customer base brand equity model. Even though the model has been presented in the past the relationship among the variables was missing. This study fulfills not only this gap but goes one step ahead to provide the strength of significant relationship among the variables in this model. The research informants were recruited from 15 different cities in Pakistan. Quantitative data were obtained through direct and online surveys from 1151 voters; the stratified sampling method is used. Data were analyzed using SPSS 23 and AMOS 23 structural equation modeling software. Results show that Political engagement is the stimulus factor that directly influences the constructs of political human brand knowledge indirectly influences political human brand loyalty. It also demonstrates that political engagement is a direct predictor of political human brand loyalty. The finding of this study is valuable as a reference for mapping political perception, helping marketing managers to invest in engagement activities and brand knowledge programs during the voting season to improve voters' perceptions. The political candidates and their parties should emphasize creating, developing, and maintaining brand engagement activities for brand awareness and brand associations. This could increase the voter's loyalty towards the political party in the elections. Researchers can gain an understanding of how political engagement relates to dimensions of the voter-based political human brand equity model and how dimension in the model relates to one another to build strong brand loyalty.</p>

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INTRODUCTION

Political marketing is crucial for electoral success, requiring effective engagement and communication strategies to build awareness and loyalty among voters (Bastian et al., 2020; Gutiérrez-Rodríguez et al., 2023). Political marketing leverages marketing tools to understand voters' needs and develop targeted strategies (O'Cass, 1996). Studying voter behavior allows tailoring messages to specific segments (Lees-Marshment, 2001; Henneberg, 2004). Popular leaders can translate to high voter turnout (Bastian et al., 2020; Kausar et al., 2022; Hassan et al., 2023). Scholars view leaders as "brands" of their parties (Cwalina & Falkowski, 2015; Guzmán & Sierra, 2009). Popular candidates are often recruited by powerful parties (Smith & French, 2009; Speed et al., 2015). Similar to businesses, parties "sell" candidates to "customers" (voters). Voter loyalty translates to political brand equity (Parker, 2012; Asep et al., 2019; Bastian et al., 2020; Kausar et al., 2022). Effective political marketing, employing communication and engagement strategies, is crucial for electoral success (Bastian et al., 2020; Kausar et al., 2022). Ultimately, the goal is to build brand awareness, positive associations, and voter loyalty.

Despite consistently low voter turnout in Pakistan, attributed to insufficient political engagement (Youth Parliament Pakistan, 2021, Kausar et al., 2022), negative political brand knowledge and low-credibility information can demobilize voters (Dawson, 2022; Ansolabehere and Iyengar 1995). Pre-election polling negatively impacts electoral campaigns and voter perception, contributing to low turnout (de Vreese and Semetko 2002; de Vreese and Elenbaas 2008; Capella and Jamieson 1997; Krupnikov 2011; Khan et al., 2024; Hassan et al., 2023). While advertisement plays a significant role in the USA, electronic media's effectiveness in Pakistani electoral campaigns is debated (Freedman et al., 2004; Noshina et al., 2015; Kausar et al., 2022; Asadullah & Shams, 2023). Political marketing, combining marketing and political science theories, helps leaders address voters' needs through analysis, planning, control, and implementation (O'Cass, 1996; Lees-Marshment, 2001; Henneberg, 2004). Popular political leaders are considered the brand of their party, influencing party ticket allocation (Cwalina and Falkowski 2015; Guzmán and Sierra 2009; Needham 2006; Nielsen 2017; Smith and French 2009; Speed et al. 2015; Khan et al., 2024).

Negative media framing may not directly impact voter turnout (Hassan et al., 2023). Broader distrust in institutions and a sense of powerlessness seem more influential. Distrust in traditional media is rising, while social media's influence, particularly among youth, is increasing (IFES, 2022; Asadullah & Shams, 2023). However, concerns about misinformation exist. Youth voter turnout remains low due to limited political (Gallup Pakistan, 2023; Hassan et al., 2023). Targeted awareness campaigns and youth-friendly communication are needed. Civic political awareness, particularly for marginalized groups, can improve political knowledge (IDS, 2022). Digital tools have the potential to mobilize voters and combat misinformation, but equitable access and digital literacy are crucial (CPDI, 2022). Balanced media coverage during elections is crucial for fostering trust and informed participation (Asadullah & Shams, 2023). Western models of political advertising may not be effective in Pakistan. Culturally relevant and issue-based campaigns are recommended (Noshina et al., 2015; CPP, 2022).

Atzger, B., Sá, E. S., & Silva, J. (2020) explored the impact of political engagement on voter-based political human brand equity. This model covers the variables of brand awareness, brand association, perceived leadership quality, and brand loyalty. Speed et al. (2015) emphasized awareness as a crucial dimension in assessing political human brand significance. Sun et al. (2023) suggest that social media engagement significantly impacts both brand awareness and positive brand associations. Pich & Armannsdottir (2022) propose a multi-layered "sub-brands" approach, arguing that different aspects of a leader's image contribute to overall brand perception. Wu et al. (2022) highlight the importance of ethical leadership and crisis communication in shaping positive perceptions. Wang et al. (2023) link high engagement to increased trust in political institutions and reduced political cynicism. Singh & Singh (2022) explore the role of "political brand experience" in shaping voting intention, emphasizing positive emotional connections.

Current research is divided into two parts first is to study the direct impact of political engagement on political brand knowledge and political brand loyalty. The second is to study the relationships

among the dimensions of voter-based political brand equity grounded on the customer base brand equity model (Bastian et al., 2020; Kausar et al., 2022; Gutiérrez-Rodríguez et al., 2023) and develop a pathway model from political engagement to political human brand loyalty (Gutiérrez-Rodríguez et al., 2023). The research will study the relationships of different political engagement activities on developing voters' loyalty towards political human brands in such context following questions will be answered in this research work

RQ1: How does political engagement affect political human brand loyalty?

RQ2: How does political engagement affect political human brand knowledge?

RQ3: How does brand human brand knowledge affects the perceived leadership quality?

RQ4: How does perceived leadership quality affect Political human brand loyalty

LITERATURE REVIEW

The credit for using political marketing terms for the first time goes to Kelley (1956). The use of marketing tools in the analysis of election campaigns was initially used by Kotler and Levy (1969). Political marketing theory was presented by Kotler in 1975 under the name exchange theory which mentioned that promises of political parties and voters' responses are exchangeable like economic goods, through the communication process voters seek information to choose the vote while political candidates use the information for a political strategy in resource allocation and properly communicate with the target audience. In the recent past attributes like an investigative press, decline in party loyalty, and change in the political electoral system were studied in the field of political marketing (Newman, 1994; Gutiérrez-Rodríguez et al., 2023). Followed research suggested electronic media like television also had a significant impact (Kavanagh, 1995; Scammell, 1995; Asadullah & Shams, 2023). Political marketing helps better communication between political human brands and voters (Newman, 1994). Such type of marketing is a combination of consumer behavior and political sciences (Newman and Sheth, 1985). Even the knowledge provided during political marketing campaigns provides significant awareness (Norris and Sanders, 2003). Political brand engagement activities are a high source of creating awareness about political human brands among the voters (Norris and Sanders, 2003; Eleni et al., 2010).

Scholars also studied consumer behavior as voters' behavior and political candidates as political human brands with an effect on election outcomes as voter loyalty in different voters segments (Schneider 2004; Bastian et al., 2020; Maria, et al., 2020; Parker, 2012; Asep et al., 2019; Kausar et al., 2022; Gutiérrez-Rodríguez et al., 2023). After the start of the 21st century, voters' behavior and political branding got attention from scholars that cover how branding is used to differentiate between political parties (Smith and French, 2009), or establish brand loyalty (Phipps et al., 2010). In respect of political brand equity research work has been done to analyze political brand image (Pich and Armannsdottir 2018; Mochla et al., 2023), the brand equity of parties (French and Smith

2010), and the community brand equity of politicians (Phipps et al. 2010), but using commercial marketing brand equity theories are still in developing stage (Bastian et al., 2020; Kausar et al., 2022; Gutiérrez-Rodríguez et al., 2023). Given such concerns, this study applies the brand equity theory of voter-based political human brand equity grounded on the customer based brand equity model. Prior research on political human brand loyalty has focused on exploring the factors (Bastian et al., 2020). This research explains the relationships of factors influencing political human brand loyalty using the conventional marketing model on political human brands.

This model was recently worked on by Bastian Atzger, Elisabete S. Sá, and Joaquim Silva in the year 2020, and Gutiérrez-Rodríguez et al., 2023. It is grounded on Aaker’s (1991, 1996) customer-based brand equity (CBBE). The brand CBBE model includes five primary dimensions, namely, brand engagement, brand awareness, brand associations, perceived quality, and brand loyalty (Aaker, 1991; Keller, 1993). Table I contains the summary of research done by the scholars based on CBBE. In the political context, and the quality dimension is adapted to reflect the perceived leadership quality of the political leader. (Weber 1947; Conger and Kanungo 1987; Klein and House 1995; Yukl 1999; Ghazal 2019; Grabo et al. 2017).

Table I: Literatures based on Keller’s Customer Based Brand Equity Model

Past Studies On CBBE Model	References
Social media engagement -----> Brand knowledge (Awareness)-----> Loyalty	Cheung et al., (2020)
Brand Engagement Experience -----> Brand Knowledge (brand associations) -----> Brand Loyalty	Eng and Jarvis (2020)
Online engagement -----> Brand Knowledge -----> Loyalty	Aditya (2019)
Social Media Engagement ----> Perception ---> Loyalty	Umar et al., (2023)
Brand Engaement -----> Brand Loyalty	Saad et al., (2023)
Brand association (Brand Image) + Brand awareness (Brand recognition + brand memory)-----> Brand loyalty	Chengchen et al.,(2018)
Experience of engagement----> Brand Knowledge (Brand awareness + Brand association) ----> Brand Loyalty	Maria et al.,(2018)
Experience of engagement -----> Brand knowledge (awareness + association) -----> Brand Loyalty	Atefeh et al., (2016)

The marketing theory by Aaker (1991) is directly applicable to political marketing (Bastian et al., 2020). The perceived leadership quality can be influenced by knowledge of political attributes (Asep et al., 2019). The formation of perception stimuli is a step-by-step process that starts with exposure through engagement activities or brand experience. This leads to brand awareness and interpretation through brand association (Solomon, 2004; Bastian, 2020; Kausar et al., 2022; Gutiérrez-Rodríguez et al., 2023). Hence deciding to select a political candidate, voters are influenced by the perception of its leadership quality (Assael, 1995; Asep et al., 2019; Khan et al., 2024). This perception leads to voters’ loyalty (Khan et al., 2024); and voting intention (Gutiérrez-Rodríguez et al., 2023). This was initially studied by Chang and Wildt (1994) in conventional

marketing and further, elaborated by Asep et al (2019) in terms of political marketing that indicated brand knowledge leads to perception resulting in the decision-making of selecting a political candidate and loyalty toward it (Khan et al., 2024; Gutiérrez-Rodríguez et al., 2023). This research analyzes the effect of perceived leadership quality on political candidates' loyalty. Figure 1 shows the working model on which the following hypotheses are checked.

Research Hypotheses

Political Human Brand Knowledge (association and awareness) and Perceived Leadership Quality

Knowledge can be divided into two parts; information stored in the memory and the perception the consumer has about that brand, these can be called objective and subjective knowledge respectively (Rao and Monroe, 1988). Experience brand usage or engagement supports the acquisition of new knowledge (Park and Lessig, 1981). Brand knowledge also influences the perception-making process (Micheal et al., 2010; Khan et al., 2024). The perceived product quality is influenced by knowledge stored in the consumer's mind (Blair and Innis, 1996) so educating the consumer through engagement activities enhances the brand knowledge which then improves the perception of that brand in the consumer's mind (Eisingerich and Bell, 2008; Khan et al., 2024; Gutiérrez-Rodríguez et al., 2023).

Political Human Brand Association and Perceived Leadership Quality

A brand that has significant symbolic associations with the self helps in brand reinforcement on a perception level (Dwivedi et al., 2015). Consumers pertain to human brands in positive perception when they have relevance with associated characteristics with their self (Dwivedi et al., 2015). In earlier studies, the physical appearance and attractiveness of human brands were considered to be the reason for positive perception (Till and Busler, 2000; Khan et al., 2024). Research then broadens its boundaries from physical attractiveness to psychological and cognitive judgment (Dwivedi et al., 2015). Scholars found that there are various mental explanations by consumers to have associations between self and human brand traits. Expanding this further this trait group matching provides a positive perception sense to the perceiver (Dwivedi et al., 2015; Khan et al., 2024)

Brands are considered to be important because they help simplify consumer decision-making by providing a signal of quality and performance (Keller, 2008). This can be understood by the traits which are associated with the brand. These associations are based on the experience that guides the perception and preferences (Ilicic and Webster, 2015; Khan et al., 2024; Gutiérrez-Rodríguez et al., 2023) that are linked to that brand (Aaker, 1991; Chang and Chieng, 2006; Romaniuk and Gaillard, 2007). It is considered that brand information has nodes of associated experiences that are linked together to form brand memory in consumers' minds (Ilicic and Webster, 2015; Gutiérrez-Rodríguez et al., 2023).

H1a: Political human brand association is associated with perceived leadership quality

Political Human Brand Awareness and Perceived Leadership Quality

The attitude of consumers toward human brands depends on the experience of that human brand in online and offline engagement activities which include social media pages and communities, and public gathering speeches and seminars (Ilicic and Webster, 2015; Mochla et al., 2023). The nodes in consumers' minds are linked together to form the overall structure of brand knowledge through brand awareness which then maps the perception (Ilicic and Webster, 2015; Khan et al., 2024). A high level of awareness and strong brand association helps in building positive perception (Atilgan et al., 2005; Khan et al., 2024). As per Aaker (1991), brand awareness is being recalled and recognized by the consumer. The same has been endorsed by Keller (1993) that it reflects recall and recognition.

H1b: Political human brand awareness is associated with perceived leadership quality

Perceived Leadership Quality and Political Human Brand Loyalty

Initial research on the relationship between perception and loyalty was done by Chang and Wildt (1994) highlighting the attributes of brand knowledge, perception, and decision of loyalty toward the brand. This research was conducted in the field of conventional marketing. Later on, in the year 2004 researcher Brennan used the application variable of perception in the field of political marketing. Perceived quality and perception values by politicians include the political marketing mix and the decision of voters to whom they vote (Asep et al., 2019; Khan et al., 2024). The perceived quality of a political candidate has been a significant influence on a voting decision (Tsiotsou, 2005; Gutiérrez-Rodríguez et al., 2023) also perceived quality has a positive influence on voters' decisions regarding their loyalty towards political candidates (Asep et al., 2019; Gutiérrez-Rodríguez et al., 2023).

H2: Perceived leadership quality is associated with political human brand loyalty

Political Engagement and Political Human Brand Loyalty

Researchers found that engagement is strongly associated with loyalty (Brodie et al., 2011; Hapsari et al., 2015; Omar et al., 2020). So, it is very significant for a political candidate and their parties to have recurrent, vigorous, conversations and interactions with voters, embedded in the engagement process (Omar et al., 2020). This also seconds the results of previous studies that considered customer engagement as a vital element of loyalty (Hapsari et al., 2015; Bowden, 2009; Brodie et al., 2013). Voters as political brand consumers varying in interest in political engagement activities; may have comparable share in their mind in terms of political human brands. The same has been proven by Spratt et al., (2009) in their studies on conventional marketing of goods who mentioned that higher levels of interest in brand engagement activities will be associated with greater loyalty towards the brand and greater voting preference (Gutiérrez-Rodríguez et al., 2023). This suggestion is parallel with Keller's (1993) model which recognizes brand engagement as a significant characteristic to affects brand loyalty. The change in brand-related engagement

activities changes the understanding of brands, perceptions, and loyal behavior of voters toward political brands (Samla et al., 2019; Khan et al., 2024).

H3: Political engagement is associated with political human brand loyalty

Political Engagement and Political Human Brand Knowledge

Political brand knowledge is also considered as the ability to recall and recognize a particular political brand and associate it with the required need (Aaker, 1991). This is also considered as preconditioning for decision-making by consumer/voters for selecting a particular political brand (Langaro et al., 2018; Su, 2016). Knowledge related to political brands comprise of political brand awareness and association (Keller, 2016). Where awareness is the result by repeated engagement with brand exposure (Aaker, 1991; Kim et al., 2018). Similarly to that, Brodie et al. (2013) and Hanna et al. (2011) found that repeated exposure to a brand is generated by brand engagement activities.

Political Engagement and Political Human Brand Awareness

Brand Recall and brand recognition are considered two dimensions of brand awareness (Keller, 2009) where recall is retrieving a brand from memory in a process of decision-making to associate it with a product or usage (Keller, 2009). While recognition is the ability to identify a brand that was stored in a consumer's mind as a result of prior exposure, experience, or engagement (Keller, 2019; Cheung et al., 2020). Sharing of (political) brand information, and its recall are enhanced due to (political) engagement activities (Brodie et al., 2013; Hanna et al., 2011; Keller, 2013; Langaro et al., 2018; Cheung et al., 2020).

Participation of people in election camping of political party significantly enhances awareness about political human brand (Dimitrova, et al., 2014; Wright, e2008; Gutiérrez-Rodríguez et al., 2023). Political engagement covering direct contact with voters has been found to be most effective in creating awareness about the ideology and marketing message of political party (Kahne, Middaugh, and Allen, 2015). Most recently Diana and Suzaane (2015), found that there is a significant association between political knowledge and digital political engagement.

H4a: Political engagement is associated with political human brand awareness

Political Engagement and Political Human Brand Association

Brand association is referred as the brand image in the mind of consumers which comprises brand attributes, benefits, and attitudes (Keller, 1993). Hence how a voter thinks about the political human brand characteristics and separates them from competitors' attributes (Webster and Keller, 2004; Cheung et al., 2020; Gutiérrez-Rodríguez et al., 2023). The value that consumers/voters think it gains from the brand in terms of functional, symbolic, and experiential means is considered a (political) brand benefit (Keller, 2013; Cheung et al., 2020) while the evaluation and judgment of these values as benefits representing all (political) brand-related engagement experiences and (political) brand elements are combined considered as (political) brand attitudes (Keller, 2010;

Cheung et al., 2020). Therefore, (political) engagement affects (political) brand association (Keller, 2010; 2013; Cheung et al., 2020). (Political) Engagement activities influence the (political) brand association in consumers’/voters’ minds (France et al., 2016; Cheung et al., 2020).

A (political) brand association can be created through the information directly from (political) brand marketing messages or the information circulating in the environment in response to the experience of (political) engagement activities (Keller, 1993). Moreover, the experience of the (political) brand and its related engagement activities creates (political) brand knowledge through associative learning (Keller 1993).

H4b: Political engagement is associated with political human brand association

Theoretical Framework

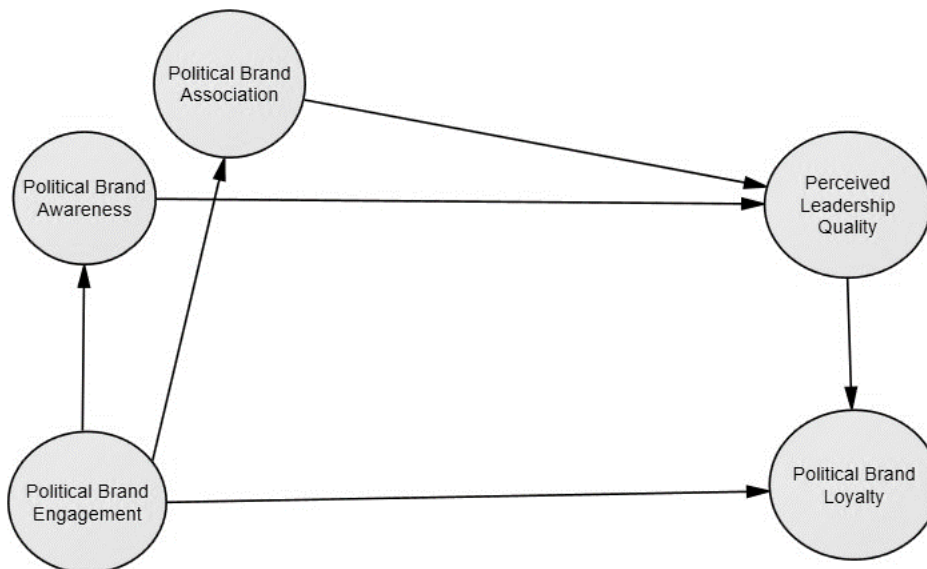


Figure 1. Theoretical Framework

DATA AND METHODOLOGY

All the cities of Pakistan are targeted for this research where political candidates have been selected more than five times in general elections. In the table II populations of those cities are mentioned. All respondents were above 18 years old. The criteria of sample size are adopted from literature for structural equation modeling, recommended for similar type of complexities (Fabrigar et al., 2010; Bagozzi and Yi, 2012). After reviewing literatures on political branding and brand equity model, sample of 1000 to 25000 is appropriate for country- wide research. Since the current study is conducted on country level therefore to avoid the non-normality of data and

achieve a significantly higher sample could be collected (Hair Jr et al., 2008). Thus, the data has been collected from sample size of 1151 voters.

A cross-sectional survey is castoff in this research. Taking a sample from the population and results are generalized. Research conducted in near past on engagement, loyalty and perceived quality, cross sectional, survey was conducted to check the respond towards their favorite brand (Trudeau and Shobein, 2016a; Kruger, 2018). The targeted population into geographical strata where repeat selection of same candidates. There ratio of number of samples collected from each geographical location is similar to the population ratio of locations with one another. Sample strata representing population size ratio is mentioned in table II.

Table II: Targeted Population (Cities of repeated winners in general elections)

City	Pakistan Bureau of statistics (2017 Census)	No. of Samples Collected
Karachi	15 million	193
Lahore	11.13 million	161
Faisalabad	7.9 million	127
Rawalpindi	5.41 million	92
Gujranwala	5 million	96
Multan	4.75 million	90
Sialkot	3.9 million	63
Gujrat	2.76 million	62
Bahawalnagar	3 million	67
Tando Muhammad Khan	0.677 million	34
Sukkur	1.5 million	31
Mansehra	1.56 million	36
Jamshoro	1 million	30
Zhob	0.31 million	36
Nankana Sahib	1.35 million	33
Total		1151

However, sampling is done from each of these strata using convenience sampling. It is preferred because of its easy implementation in research design, and it is also less costly and less time-consuming during a situation of lockdown. Data for this research is collected through cross-sectional technique using close-ended questions. Questions were design in both English and in national language of Pakistan i.e., Urdu: mentioned in table III. The participants were asked to consider their favorite politician then answer the questionnaire needed to asses a respondent.

Table III: Survey questions in both English and Urdu language

English ("X" means your favorite politician)	Urdu "X" کا مطلب ہے آپ کا پسندیدہ سیاستدان
My personality and politician X personality have common traits	میری شخصیت اور سیاست دان X شخصیت میں مشترک خصوصیات ہیں۔
I have a contact with someone in government who is a representative of politician X	میرا حکومت میں کسی ایسے شخص سے رابطہ ہے جو سیاستدان X کا نمائندہ ہے۔
I have participated in political activities such as protests or marches with politician X.	میں نے سیاست دان X کے ساتھ احتجاج یا مارچ جیسی سیاسی سرگرمیوں میں حصہ لیا ہے۔
I use social media (Facebook, WhatsApp, YouTube, Instagram etc.) to share your views with others about politician X	میں سوشل میڈیا (فیس بک، واٹس ایپ، یوٹیوب، انسٹاگرام وغیرہ) استعمال کرتا ہوں تاکہ سیاستدان X کے بارے میں دوسروں کے ساتھ آپ کے خیالات کا اظہار کیا جا سکے۔
I mostly talk to people about voting for politician X	میں زیادہ تر لوگوں سے سیاستدان X کو ووٹ دینے کے بارے میں بات کرتا ہوں۔
I vote in general elections for politician X	میں عام انتخابات میں سیاستدان X کو ووٹ دیتا ہوں۔
I believe that Politician X has successful past personal job experience	مجھے یقین ہے کہ سیاست دان X کا ماضی کا کامیاب ذاتی ملازمت کا تجربہ ہے۔
I am always aware of politician X 's political activities	میں سیاستدان X کی سیاسی سرگرمیوں سے ہمیشہ باخبر رہتا ہوں۔
I get the information about politician X on TV appearance	مجھے ٹی وی پر سیاست دان X کے بارے میں معلومات ملتی ہیں۔
Politician X has integrity and a good character	سیاست دان X دیانت داری اور اچھے کردار کا حامل ہے۔
Politician X acts accordingly what he/she says	سیاست دان X اس کے مطابق عمل کرتا ہے جو وہ کہتا ہے۔
Politician X has attractive appearance	سیاست دان X پرکشش شکل رکھتا ہے۔
I believe Politician X cares for his/her followers	مجھے یقین ہے کہ سیاستدان X اپنے پیروکاروں کی پرواہ کرتا ہے۔
I believe Politician X has good past work success	مجھے یقین ہے کہ سیاست دان X کے پاس ماضی کی اچھی کامیابی ہے۔
I believe that politician X has good situational knowledge	مجھے یقین ہے کہ سیاست دان X کے پاس حالات کا اچھا علم ہے۔
I value politician X because he/she has the right beliefs and acts	میں سیاست دان X کی قدر کرتا ہوں کیونکہ وہ صحیح عقائد اور اعمال رکھتا ہے۔
Politician X speaks in my language, therefore I support him	سیاست دان X میری زبان میں بات کرتا ہے، اس لیے میں اس کی حمایت کرتا ہوں۔
I'm very attached to politician X	میں سیاست دان X سے بہت منسلک ہوں۔
Activities of Politician X makes me very happy	سیاست دان X کی سرگرمیاں مجھے بہت خوش کرتی ہیں۔
Politician X is authentic person	سیاست دان X مستند شخص ہے۔
Politician X is honest	سیاستدان X ایماندار ہے۔
I love X as a politician	میں بطور سیاست دان X سے محبت کرتا ہوں۔
I trust on Politician X	مجھے سیاست دان X پر بھروسہ ہے

Instrument of Data Collection

Questionnaire is use as the instrument of data collection, filled through survey on sample of relevant population. For each construct of this study measurement scale has been adopted. For political engagement scale is adopted from research work of Diana and Suzaane (2015). As this is the research work to explain the variable and dimensions explored by Bastian et al., (2020) rest of the constructs will be measure through adaptation of Bastian et al., (2020). Likert scale with five points, endpoint of strongly disagree (=1) to strongly agree (=5) will be used to assess each item. Harmon's one factor test will be used to avoid CMV (common method variance), which might

occur by the collection from single questionnaire (Podsakoff et al., 2003) and possibility of dominant single factor emergence (Podsakoff and Organ 1986)

Statistical Technique

SPSS version 23 was used to calculate descriptive statistics. While AMOS version 23 was used to measure reliability and validity through confirmatory factor analysis. It is identified that data is fulfilling the requirements of normal distribution, which is check through the values of Skewness and kurtosis (Hair et al., 2010). When the data shows normal distribution in such a scenario, the Covariance-based SEM approach can be used (Hair et al., 2014; Hair et al., 2017). Therefore, AMOS has is the choice because this approach does need the normally distributed data for analysis.

AMOS is considered as more user-friendly. AMOS adopts a graphical interface, which helps in working directly from a path diagram, produces readily output diagrams and display estimates graphically. It checks the significance of the relationship between the latent constructs. Bootstrapping test is used and was conducted to calculate the t-values (Kristensen & Eskildsen, 2010).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Data was collected in Nov 2023. The respondents were a total of 1151 voters. 72% of respondents identify themselves highly politically affiliated as a supporter of a particular party. The male-to- female ratio was 76% to 34%. Of the total respondents, 29% belong to the age group of 18-24, 58% belong to 25-34, 9% belong to 35-44, 3% belong to 45-54, and 1% belong to 55 above age brackets, 58% were married, and 42% were unmarried, 68% were employed, and 32% were unemployed.

Findings

The study uses SPSS version 15 is used for factor analysis and reliability testing. 23 variables' indicators have factor loadings that meet the sufficient criteria: factor loadings above 0.5 (Hair et al., 1998; Avkiran & Ringle, 2018; Garson, 2016). All 23 variable indicators have loadings that meet the sufficient criteria as depicted in Table IV. Confirming the loadings of factors individually in the AMOS is likewise mentioned as confirmatory factor analysis. All the loadings should be positive and in the same direction (Mohamad et al., 2014; Shek et al., 2014). The values of composite reliabilities of this research construct surpass the recommended value of 0.7 shown in Table VI. "Average Variance extracted" (AVE), is the measure for Convergent validity, which shows that selected indicators are reliable for measurement of construct (Fornell & Lacker, 1981; Bagozzi & Yi, 1994). The results show that the convergent validity of the variables of this research within the recommended range; represented in Table VI. Figure 2 shows the measurement of the research models. Discriminant validity measures whether each construct is dissimilar from one another in a significant manner (Fornell & Lacker, 1981). It is used to check the uniqueness of construct rendering to which the square root of the AVE, AVS and MVS Fornell & Lacker's

(1981). For current research values of AVE for all the constructs are greater than values of MVS; presented in Table VI.

Table IV: Factor loadings

Latent variables	Observed variables	Factor Loadings
Political Brand Loyalty	PBL1	0.857686
	PBL2	0.745574
	PBL3	0.746705
	PBL4	0.793023
	PBL5	0.79462
	PBL6	0.761733
	PBL7	0.789607
	PBL8	0.788974
Political Engagement	PE1	0.758231
	PE2	0.647803
	PE3	0.698301
	PE4	0.654227
	PE5	0.740283
	PE6	0.618779
Political Brand Association	PBAS1	0.743401
	PBAS2	0.848935
	PBAS3	0.717611
Perceived Leadership Quality	PLQ1	0.655144
	PLQ2	0.791283
	PLQ3	0.875817
Political Brand Awareness	PBA1	0.594545
	PBA2	0.853325
	PBA3	0.917439

Table V: Descriptive values

Latent Variables	Observed Variables	Mean	Std. Error of Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance	Skewness	Kurtosis
Political Brand Association	PBAS1	3.49	0.03	1.12	1.25	-0.77	-0.18
	PBAS2	3.40	0.03	1.13	1.29	-0.66	-0.40
	PBAS3	3.49	0.03	1.16	1.34	-0.74	-0.33
Political Engagement	PE1	3.73	0.03	1.14	1.29	-1.20	0.73
	PE2	3.71	0.03	1.16	1.34	-1.08	0.45
	PE3	3.85	0.03	1.05	1.10	-1.44	1.82
	PE4	3.17	0.04	1.38	1.90	-0.16	-1.25
	PE5	3.42	0.04	1.26	1.59	-0.59	-0.78
	PE6	3.23	0.04	1.30	1.69	-0.22	-1.13
Brand Awareness	PBA1	3.34	0.04	1.22	1.49	-0.49	-0.94
	PBA2	3.17	0.04	1.27	1.60	-0.25	-1.27
	PBA3	3.19	0.04	1.29	1.67	-0.34	-1.26
Perceived Leadership	PLQ1	3.31	0.03	1.18	1.40	-0.39	-0.94
	PLQ2	3.38	0.03	1.18	1.40	-0.67	-0.47
	PLQ3	3.40	0.03	1.18	1.40	-0.59	-0.60
Political Brand Loyalty	PBL1	3.82	0.03	1.03	1.06	-0.83	0.20
	PBL2	3.46	0.03	1.13	1.28	-0.22	-0.96
	PBL3	3.44	0.04	1.24	1.53	-0.38	-1.05
	PBL4	3.07	0.04	1.25	1.56	0.24	-1.25
	PBL5	3.88	0.03	1.07	1.15	-1.13	1.01
	PBL6	4.06	0.03	1.04	1.09	-1.09	0.65
	PBL7	3.67	0.03	1.09	1.20	-0.45	-0.59
	PBL8	3.84	0.03	0.99	0.98	-1.01	0.72

Table VI: Reliability and Validity

Latent Variables	Observed Variables	Estimate	AVE	CR	AVS	MVS
Political Engagement	PBE1	0.66	0.55	0.93	0.38	0.48
	PBE2	0.77				
	PBE3	0.71				
	PBE4	0.75				
	PBE5	0.74				
	PBE6	0.80				
Political Brand Awareness	PBA1	0.81	0.64	0.90	0.23	0.36
	PBA2	0.81				
	PBA3	0.77				
Political Brand Association	PBAS1	0.68	0.57	0.87	0.17	0.28
	PBAS2	0.77				
	PBAS3	0.80				
Perceived Leadership Quality	PLQ1	0.87	0.70	0.93	0.29	0.48
	PLQ2	0.85				
	PLQ3	0.78				
Political Brand Loyalty	PBL1	0.90	0.67	0.97	0.26	0.38
	PBL2	0.80				
	PBL3	0.83				
	PBL4	0.72				
	PBL5	0.80				
	PBL6	0.83				
	PBL7	0.85				
	PBL8	0.79				

Table VII: Hypothesis results of direct relationship

	Direct Relationship		Estimate	P-Value	Hypothesis
Political Engagement	---->	Political Brand Association	0.50	0.001	Accepted
Political Engagement	---->	Political Brand Awareness	0.54	0.001	Accepted
Political Engagement	---->	Political Brand Loyalty	0.47	0.001	Accepted
Political Brand Association	---->	Perceived Leadership Quality	0.19	0.001	Accepted
Political Brand Awareness	---->	Perceived Leadership Quality	0.34	0.001	Accepted
Perceived Leadership Quality	---->	Political Brand Loyalty	0.28	0.001	Accepted

Table VIII: Indirect pathway from political engagement to political human brand loyalty

					Standardized Estimate	P-Value		
Indirect Path								
Political Engagement	---	Political Brand Association	---	Perceived Leadership Quality	---	Political Brand Loyalty	0.094	0.001
Political Engagement	----	Political Brand Awareness	----	Perceived Leadership Quality	----	Political Brand Loyalty	0.183	0.001

Descriptive statistics were calculated in this study to ascertain the normality of the data. As a rule of thumb, a coefficient of variation greater than 1 considered as high variation, and less than 1 indicates low. Data collected of all the variables has a coefficient of variation value less than 1 hence depicting low variance. Table V contains mean, variance, standard deviation, and coefficient of variation values of all the observed variables. Standard deviation values are not considered "acceptable" or "rejected". They show data spread out. If distribution is centered or spread out around the mean then data is normally distributed. That can also be indicated by the values of Skewness and Kurtosis. Results of the descriptive analysis are mentioned in Table V to depict the rationale behind using the AMOS approach.

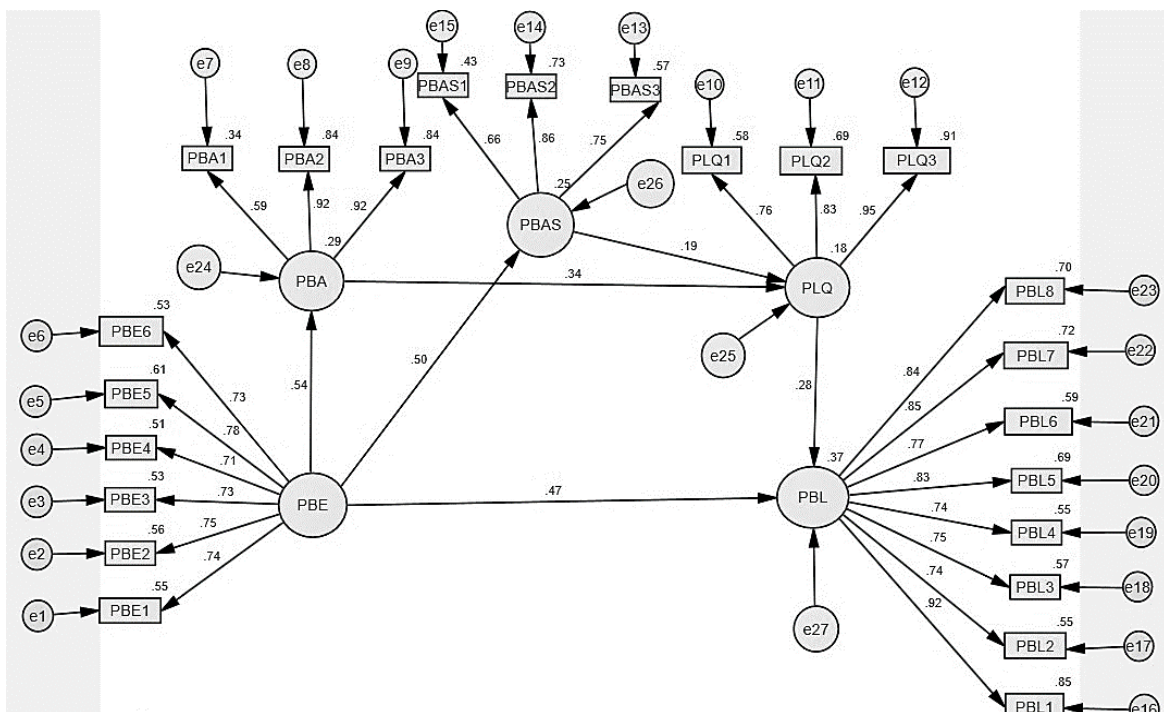


Figure 2. Model Measurement

As Skewness values lie between +2 and -2 while Kurtosis lie between +7 and -7. Therefore, the data is normally distributed. TLI (Tucker-Lewis index) and CFI (Comparative fit index) should be 0.80 or higher for satisfactory results (Bagozzi and Yi, 1988). RMSEA (Root Mean Square Error of Approximation) is considered acceptable when its value ranges up to 0.08 (Van de Schoot et al., 2012). Table VII mention the results of direct relationships that is hypotheses in this study are all significant. Where the effect of political engagement with political brand awareness is strongest and the effect of political brand association on perceived leadership quality is the weakest. Similarly, table VIII shows indirect pathway from political engagement to political brand loyalty is significant where political brand awareness helps in achieving better political brand loyalty in comparison of political brand association.

Discussion

In Pakistan's political scene, engagement through rallies, marches, and public speeches creates positive behavioral associations among followers, as indicated by conventional marketing studies (Baldus et al., 2015; Roy et al., 2018). Activism and traditional political activities, highlighted in past research (Blake et al., 1997; Lubell et al., 2007; Ribeiro et al., 2016), enhance the quality of behavioral associations with political leaders. Direct contact positively influences followers' perceptions of a leader's appearance, emphasizing the cultural relevance of outfits (Khan et al., 2024). One-on-one meetings help leaders enhance their appealing appearance for local connections (Faiz et al., 2022).

In the Western world, social media serves as a primary and reliable information source (Yogesh et al., 2021; Mochla et al., 2023). Political candidates engage followers on social media, fostering discussions on voting and political issues. Information on social media, is crucial for understanding political human brands. Voting behavior influences word-of-mouth on social media that can shape perceptions of political candidates (Bittner et al., 2018; Mochla et al., 2023; Khan et al., 2024; Gutiérrez-Rodríguez et al., 2023). Appearance of political leader in developed western word countries correlates with perceived competence (Paul, 1995; Cherulnik et al., 1978). In a South Asian third-world country, a political candidate's appearance significantly shapes perceptions of leadership quality, with voters forming positive impressions based on cultural alignment (Paul et al., 1990; Khan et al., 2024).

Perceptions of situational awareness in leaders are shaped by information from social circles or mass media. Leadership styles discussed on social media create positive perceptions through electronic Word of Mouth (eWOM), forming strong positive impressions in like-minded social media groups (Sarol et al., 2021; Norhidayu et al., 2019; Mochla et al., 2023).

People closely observe political leaders' decisions for followers' well-being, fostering loyalty. The correlation between perceived quality, brand loyalty, and political leadership is emphasized in developing countries. This study focuses on marketing political human brands, finding that a leader's competence and effective handling of tough situations enhance people's attachment to their ideology (Tsiotsou, 2005; Asep et al., 2019; Gutiérrez-Rodríguez et al., 2023). Previous studies

explored varied relationships between constructs in conventional marketing and leadership management (Emily and Mark 2020, Kinder et al. 1980; Popkin et al. 1976; Stewart and Clarke 1992; Greene 2001; Johnston 2002; Bittner 2011).

CONCLUSION AND POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

The findings show that the majority of respondents strongly agree that when they are engaged with a political human brand through voting in the election, they positively associate a political human brand's behavior and appearance with consistency in their work and visually pleasing look respectively. The majority of the respondents also agree that they get political brand knowledge from interpersonal and non-personal sources of information during the time of local and general elections and political campaigns in the region and on social media platforms. Engaging voters in political brand proportion activities results in the enhancement of brand knowledge that creates a valuable perception about that political human brand and ultimately enhances loyalty.

Managerial Implications

Political Brand engagement theoretically describes a high deal of consumer/voter decision-making, so brand managers are interested in why consumers/voters select or follow the brands. This study specifies that loyal voters may have a positive attitude toward a political human brand that is likely to be attractive. The findings of this study are also valuable as a reference for mapping political perception through political knowledge created by digital and campaign engagement activities. The political candidates and their parties should emphasize creating, developing, and maintaining brand engagement activities for brand awareness and brand associations. This could increase the voter's loyalty towards the political party in the elections. Consequently, a political party should invest in engagement activities and brand knowledge programs during the voting season to improve voters' perceptions related to leadership style, competence, and situational awareness traits of the political leader.

Contribution to the Academics

The current research contributes to the literature on political branding. The study has used construct from the field of political science and found its effect on the variables related to the marketing field. Researchers can gain an understanding of how political engagement relates to dimensions of the voter-based political human brand equity model and how dimension in the model relates to one another to build strong brand loyalty. Even though the model has been presented in the past the relationship among the variables was missing. This study fulfills not only this gap but goes one step ahead to provide the strength of significant relationship among the variables in this model

Limitations of the Study and Future Research

Another area of investigation in this field relates to political human brand alliances. For example, greater levels of brand engagement self-concept may lead to more voter confrontation with new politicians with brand identifications other than those of likable political human brands. Testing these brand strategies is a promising way for added research involving the Brand engagement self-concept (BESC) construct. The effect of the sub-division of digital engagement and campaign engagement on brand knowledge can also be the field of study in the future. It is also suggested to find a deeper relationship among the sources of a dimension of the voters-based brand equity model to get more specified in strategy to apply for political branding.

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