REVIEW

Political Marketing Lessons from Brand Trump: Unleashing the Future Amplitude of Research

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Abstract

A bandwagon of confederation of various disciplines has been witnessed these days. One such anarchical marketing innovation is a proliferating arena of Political marketing. Besides, one of the most topical brand that has caused insurgence in the political market with his revolutionary political marketing strategies is the present, 45th President of the US–Donald Trump. Despite being naive to the political sphere compared to the competitors, being straight forward and speaking out his mind, even castigated for this approach, he emerged out victorious. Hence, the objectives of this study encompass analysis of the political marketing strategies deployed by brand Trump; and to explore the areas of future research in the field of political marketing by taking lessons from these strategies. The methodology adopted for the study is qualitative and quantitative content analysis of the texts by various authors who had analyzed the political marketing strategies of brand Trump. The key success factors of his victory found are his right selection of target market, understanding them well and creating a right positioning. Despite he was straightforward in communication; his messages were clear and consistent. His major focus was emphasizing on his personality aspects and existing image rather than policies; which he implemented using more of free media rather than paid media; and focusing on creating a personal touch with the electorate. From these findings, the main outcome of the study focuses on the identification of potential avenues of research in the sphere of political marketing.

Key words: Politics, Marketing, Branding, Political Marketing, Political Branding, Content Analysis

INTRODUCTION

A bandwagon of confederation of various disciplines has been witnessed these days. One such anarchical marketing innovation is a proliferating arena of Political marketing, a cross fertilization of commercial marketing discipline with political science (Ediraras et al., 2013). Latently, the application of marketing in politics remains since ages (Wring, 1997), however, not as sophisticated and advanced as in the contemporary scenario. According to Wring (1997), the theoretical development of the subject of political marketing was initiated in 1970s majorly by scholars such as Shama (1974; 1976) and Kotler (1975).

The extensive application of political marketing is observed in the developed democracies especially in the US and the UK (as evident from various literatures reviewed for this study). Apart from many political leaders, Past President of the US, Barack Obama had been widely praised for his political marketing maneuvers (for instance by Moufahim and Lim, 2010; Lewandowski, 2013). It has also permeated into Indian Politics with its pervasive application by brand Bhartiya Janta Party (BJP) and brand Modi in Indian General Election 2014. With the colossal use of political marketing and emphasis on brand Modi in the same, the BJP/ Modi campaign had become synonymous to and

was often cited as "Presidential style campaign". However, the most topical brand that has caused insurgence in the political market with his revolutionary political marketing strategies is the present, 45th President of the US–Donald Trump. Donald Trump indeed was a renowned American business tycoon and a popular television persona; but was naive to the politics. He was even castigated often by the political consumers as well as analysts for abrupt and offensive attitude; speaking out his mind; and unfiltered communication. Still he not only nominated himself as the Presidential candidate against the politically well-experienced candidates, but even emerged out victorious now holding the esteemed oval office in Washington, D. C.

Hence, many political analysts have endeavored to study the political marketing maneuvers deployed by him and derive lessons from them. Extending that further, it would be a value addition to the existing literature in the field of political marketing to draw future scope of research from these lessons.

Hence, the objectives of this study are:

-       To analyze the political marketing strategies deployed by brand Trump

-       To explore the areas of future research in the field of political marketing by taking lessons from these strategies.

Identifying the future scope of research in the arena of political marketing and add to the existing stream of literature which can be beneficial to political practitioners, researchers, academicians and students, forms the main purpose of this study.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This section provides a brief overview of the conceptual framework for this study to demonstrate the appositeness of marketing principles in politics.

Kotler et al. (2013) quoted marketing as recognizing needs of the customers profitably by crafting, exchanging, communicating and delivering the offering (value) by satisfying them. Hence, it can be said that political marketing strategies encompasses strategies pertaining to selection of target markets (customers whose needs to satisfy), creating value (product strategy), exchanging value (pricing strategy), communicating value (promotion strategy) and delivering value (place strategy); and create a strong, favorable and unique associations/ image with the political consumers (positioning). Further as Kotler et al. (2013) also stated that whether it be physical goods, ideas, services, people,

organizations, or properties, everything can be marketed. Hence, commercial marketing doctrine when applied to political process can be termed as political marketing.

This can even be evident in the definition of political marketing given by Hughes and Dann (2009) who quoted political marketing as the group of processes, activities, or political institutions deployed by political parties, candidates and political practitioners to create, exchange, deliver and communicate value propositions with the political consumers, party stakeholders and community at large.

Further, due to political convergence most democracies are facing declining party identification (Dalton, 2002; Mair, 1997; Mair and van Biezen, 2001; Luck and Chapman, 2003; Mensah, 2011); leading to the need to differentiate parties from each other. Besides, several other challenges faced by political organizations encompass:

• need for relationship building with voters to create and enhance loyalty (Dean and Croft, 2001; Peng and Hackley, 2009);

• focus on image reinforcement during and between the campaigns (Sparrow, 2001; Dean, 2001);

• political consumers becoming more skeptical towards political communication (Luck and Chapman, 2003; Adolphsen, 2009);

• role of media has become more powerful these days (Adolphsen, 2009);

• consumer lives are greatly influenced by brands in the contemporary era and the manner voters select political parties has similarities to how they base their choices about brands (Upadhyaya and Mohindra, 2012);

• these political changes can be ascribed to various macro environmental factors (Butler and Harris, 2009), like, Information Technology (IT) has played a vital role in transforming the facet of contemporary politics. For instance, Agre (2002) discussed the amplifying role of Internet in political process.

Hence, systematic application of commercial marketing and branding principles to politics can aid the political organizations address the issues mentioned above. The relevance of marketing principles in politics calls for a further understanding of what a political product should include; what is to be exchanged; how should it be communicated, and delivered. Such inquests are addressed further.

The foundation of marketing is recognizing and satisfying customers (voters) needs, can also be inferred as voters-orientation (Newman, 1994a; Lees-Marshment,

2001, 2003); hence, the first stage in political marketing should include sophisticated segmentation techniques (Smith and Hirst, 2001). Hooley and Saunders (1993) furnished the principle of first-order and second-order segmentation. Dividing the market on the basis of their demographic and geographic characteristics can be said as first-order segmentation; whereas segmenting the voters on the basis of image perception, ideological, psychographics and class basis is second-order segmentation. Besides, remaining in tune with the popular culture in the society to gain competitive benefits is known as cultural branding (Smith and Speed, 2011). Positioning, an act of designing a unique image in the minds of customers (Kotler, 2009), was emphasized by Lock and Harris (1996) in political marketing.

In milieu of the political products that can be marketed may include parties, ideologies, issues, policies and personalities of candidates as brands. Pricing encompass fulfilling the promises to satisfy the voters needs in exchange of their votes, donations and support; and the set of all benefits that a brand promises to provide to the customers to satisfy their needs is known as value proposition (Kotler et al., 2013) in marketing context. Promotion strategy includes selecting appropriate message and media strategies to effectively reach and persuade voters. Place strategy is to deliver the promise to the voters like party at the grassroots level and local electioneering (a summary derived from various literatures reviewed as listed in the 'References' section).

The ultimate aim of any brand is to establish long-term harmonious relationship with its customers, which is same for the political brands. Hence, Kotler et al. (2013) provides three set of brand equity drivers to achieve this stature of relationship which encompass: selection of right blend of brand elements and marketing programs, as well as taking the advantage of secondary associations. According to Kotler et al. (2013), brand's name, its logo, symbol, character, slogan and Uniform Resource Locator (URL/ web link) can be said as brand elements for example "lotus" as BJP's brand logo, "Make America Great Again" as brand Trump's slogan, mission of BJP in General Election 2014 in the form of URL "india272.com".

Hence, the review of literature indicates that the principles of commercial marketing and branding can be very well translated for the political sphere.

METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

As discussed earlier that the political marketing strategies of Donald Trump in his run for the US Presidential election 2016 was much analyzed by various scholars.

Hence, this study endeavored to bring under one roof the perspectives of various scholars pertaining to brand Trump's marketing strategies.

The methodological approach adopted for this study is quantitative as well as qualitative content analysis of articles analyzing and discussing the political marketing strategies adopted by Donald Trump in his run for the US Presidential election 2016.

Berelson (1952) defined content analysis as a research technique for the objective, systematic, and quantitative description of apparent content of communications. It is used to find out the occurrence of certain themes, concepts, words, phrases, characters, or sentences within texts or sets of texts and to quantify this occurrence in an objective manner. Texts can be defined largely as books, book chapters, essays, interviews, speeches, conversations, informal conversation, discussions, newspaper headlines and articles, advertising, historical documents, theater, or in fact any presence of communicative language.

Detailed methodological approach is as under:

- **Units of Analysis:** Articles written by various scholars analyzing the political marketing and branding strategies of Donald Trump in his campaign for US Presidential Election 2016.
- **Sample Size:** 45 articles
- **Sampling Technique:** Convenience sampling
- **Coding Frame:** Discussed in detail underneath. 69 literatures were reviewed to develop the coding frame (schema)
- **Content Analysis:** Quantitative analysis of the content in milieu of the coding frame as well as qualitative justification of the same.

The coding schema had been framed by detailed review of 69 literatures by analyzing the studies done by various scholars in context of theories of political marketing and branding as well as those practiced by political organizations, candidates and leaders across several countries. The literatures analyzed for developing the coding schema are listed in references.

Coding Schema
Category 1: Voter-orientation
This category focuses on the type and extent of targeting strategies adopted by brand Trump.

Category 2: Product Highlighted
This category investigates the political product more highlighted by brand Trump. The various political products encompassed: political party brand Trump represented, ideology of the party, issues addressed by

him, policy measures to solve the addressed issues and the candidate (brand Trump) himself.

Moreover, candidate as a political product included sub-categories like: past success of the candidate, his ability to serve as the President of the country, his personality and celebrity image.

Category 3: Pricing Strategies

Here, the study tried to identify the promises made by brand Trump to the voters in exchange of their support and the tactics adopted by him to raise campaign fund (donations).

Category 4: Communication Strategies

Here, the study tried to identify various tools of promotions used by brand Trump, type of message appeal emphasized by him, consistency and clarity of his communication, as well as the use of negative campaign and provocative messages.

Category 5: Usage of Brand Elements

The study also tried to identify the brand elements strategies used by brand Trump in context of brand name, logo, slogan, and Uniform Resource Locators (URLs).

Further, in the analysis section, the study attempts to identify the frequency of occurrences of various keywords in context of the above discussed coding schema. The concept may be repeated in one article more than once, but to know that out of 45 articles, in how many number of articles was the concept repeated, it is considered once per article. Then the implications are derived from the frequencies taking qualitative justifications of his strategies from the articles and that from the literature review. This is finally used to draw the future scope of research for the political practitioners, researchers, academicians and students.

The scope of the study is limited to the analysis of the articles written on brand Trump's political marketing strategies by various scholars and not the direct political communication material of brand Trump's campaign. Analysis of political communication materials of his campaign may encompass the future scope of study. Besides, the place as a strategy in political marketing is not much referred even in literatures reviewed as well as discussed by the authors in articles pertaining to brand Trump. One of the possible reasons can be that the actual product (promise) is delivered by the candidate when he/she gets elected and serves his tenure; this continuous work during the entire incumbency period is also known as permanent campaigning. As here, pre-election branding strategies are discussed; this type of place

strategy may not be much relevant. Besides, local canvassing by the candidate is not much used in the contemporary scenario. However, this limitation of study may provide a scope for future research on "Placement" as a political marketing strategy.

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

The perspectives of various scholars pertaining to political marketing strategies of brand Trump were analyzed from the lens of the above discussed coding schema and following analysis had been made regarding above discussed categories and sub-categories (concepts).

Voter-orientation

As discussed earlier that the foundation of marketing is recognizing and satisfying voters needs profitably, which applies to political brands also. This voter orientation of brand Trump's campaign was depicted in 42% of the articles. Rather, in most of the articles, authors have admired brand Trump for his right selection of target market and understanding them effectively. He targeted Republican voters (evangelicals, steel manufacturers, miners and people decimated from military–cited by Atkins, 2016 in Washington Monthly). He identified a huge segment of voters who felt unattended by the then existing government (Taylor, 2017 in blog "How marketing won the white house"); targeted the Dreamers (longing for the American Dream), Prestige Seekers (who need America to maintain its super power position in the world, which they threaten to be under attack by China and others across the globe), and Lower Middle Class (who assume the country is not safe due to increasing crimes and illegal immigrants) as cited in: http://www.prweb.com/releases/gop-primary/donald-trump/prweb12982295.htm.

Cultural branding, that is remaining in tune with the popular culture and what majority of people in the society wants, was evident in 11% of the articles, where he targeted a large section of white, working and rural people who felt excluded of political priorities of then incumbent government.

Thus, he tried to incorporate market-centrism in his political marketing strategies.

Product Strategy

In milieu of his product strategy, the Presidential candidate (brand Trump) was projected maximum number of times (100%), which was followed by the issues (44%), party (33%). Least projected were policies (7%) and party ideologies (7%).

Further, the characteristics of brand Trump that were highlighted were his personality (62%), past success (40%), celebrity image (36%), competence (20%), and authenticity/trust (16%) times.

As discussed by various authors that compared to brand Hillary Clinton, brand Trump had focused more on the transformational appeal rather than rational/informational appeal. This was even evident in his emphasis on candidate himself and his personality aspects. In his personality aspect, he tried to project and leverage secondary association with his existing celebrity image being a popular TV persona and a renowned business magnet. This was even projected to reflect his competent personality show casing his competence being an affluent business magnet managing a conglomerate of business portfolio successfully; as well as the incidences where he could bring several of his business back to track from bankruptcy. This indirectly could create associations and trust in voters pertaining to his competence to handle several issues of the country using his business acumen if he gets into power. The authentic facet of his personality was shown only in 16% of the articles; however, the qualitative analysis of the referred texts showed that he was considered more authentic than brand Clinton despite of his harsh, blunt, and straight forward approach. It may be as voter may perceive him as a person who at least does not camouflage and is brave enough to speak out his mind, whatever he thought was right. He even was cited as being stuck to his same message since the inception to end of the campaign, making voters perceive him more authentic.

The brand personality of Donald Trump addressed in the referred texts were authentic, outrageous, unexpected, disruptive, non-conventional, controversial, distinctive, confrontational, funny, harsh, lacking temperament, audacious, fearless, independent, self-confident, risk averse, adaptable, flexible, energetic and exciting.

Apart from more focus on the Presidential candidate and his personality aspects, his inclination towards peripheral route to persuade voters was also evident in his emphasis on his personality and image dimensions more than the party policies and issues; in contrast to brand Clinton, where she was said to be focusing more on policy aspects. The concept of peripheral route to persuasion is derived from Elaboration Likelihood Model (Petty and Cacioppo 1981) which states that the consumers can use left brain (logic, rationality) as well as right brain (emotions) to make decisions. Hence, consumers can be persuaded targeting either their left brain, by giving logic (central route to persuasion) or by targeting their right brain/ emotions (which is known as

peripheral route to persuasion/using cognitive shortcuts). This is again the base of transformation and informational appeals in promotion; where informational appeal is more of central route to persuasion and transformational appeal as peripheral route to persuasion.

Price Strategy

Exchange is one of the most important aspects of the marketing strategy, where both the buyer as well as seller deals something in return from each other. All the value propositions which brand Trump addressed in the form of issues can be inferred as the promises in exchange of votes and support. In 56% of articles his projection of brand promise was addressed by the authors; for instance his brand slogan itself highlighted his brand promise "Make America Great Again".

Another important strategy for non-profit organizations like political parties is to gain support from the political consumers in the form of donations and campaign funds. Funding and donation aspect has been cited in 13% articles only. In certain incidences, brand Trump was found to be boasting of self-funding his campaign. Besides, in some incidences it was quoted that crowd sourcing of fund was made using the website to seek donations, selling of campaign merchandise and presidential shirts, as well as usage of paid search advertising to channelize donations.

Promotion Strategy

Despite, tools of promotion as a marketing strategy of brand Trump was discussed 26% times, it was often credited as one of the prime success factors of his triumph. The tools of promotion highly used by brand Trump as described by the authors were publicity and public relations (relation, publicity, word-of-mouth, and free media attention) – 58% articles, and internet and interactive marketing especially Facebook and Twitter (58% articles). It was said that he focused to have more of personal touch in communication along with wide reach and less expense incurred. This may potentially be the reason of his high reliance on social media and especially Twitter compared to other mass media tools.

Hence, advertising as his promotional strategy was addressed only in 5% of the texts. Despite he also came up with advertising campaigns, his overall spending on advertisements were cited as comparatively less than brand Clinton. In fact even in advertisements on TV, he emphasized more on editorial portion rather than paid portion. Again this was in contrast to that of brand Clinton. Despite he had to confront more on editorial portion, he opted for it may be because of it was paid

less; maybe he intended to reach directly to the mind and hearts of the people by his straight forward communication; or maybe to create a buzz with his unexpected communication to be on top of minds of the electorates and thus further get free-media attention and unpaid publicity. He was quoted as so unexpected that people awaited his next move, can be inferred as a teaser campaign. Seeking free-media attention irrespective of good or bad reasons had been discussed as one of the signature strategies of brand Trump. He had faced several debates and addressed numerous rallies in different regions (29%), which can be inferred as his strategy to confront his electorate directly; wherein at certain instances he had been cited delivering five speeches a day.

Besides, like any of the political brands across any democracies, negative campaigning remains one of the popular strategies. Brand Trump had also used negative campaign and provocative messages to create anti-incumbency behavior in the electorate (67%). His negative attacks were many times direct and relatively outrageous for which he was criticized several times. This helped to create a buzz and remain in electorates' top of mind, however, to neutralize any negative effect on him because of it, he would talk something of interest and benefit to the voters in his next move.

Also, as discussed earlier, he used more of transformational appeal rather than rational/informational appeal, which can be said as a peripheral route to persuasion as per Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM). As far as message clarity and consistency is concerned he was again admired to remain stick to his position and stand throughout his campaign; which he reinforced with message repetitions in clear and straight forward way (addressed in 42% articles).

Usage of Brand Elements

Brand name of the candidate was used 100% times with brand name of the party projected 33% times. His brand slogan very well articulated his brand promise in the form of "Make America Great Again" which was also appreciated for its right positioning for the right target market with clarity, simplicity and high recall. The website (4%) and logo (1%) had been discussed by authors the least number of times as key brand elements. In certain instances symbols in the form of red base ball cap with the slogan of "Make America Great Again" was been used to create brand association.

Hence, various political marketing and branding strategies of brand Trump which can be attributed for his

triumph in the US Presidential Elections 2016 can be summarized as underneath:

• *Selection of right target market, understanding their needs well, and creating a right positioning/ image in their mind*

He identified and selected the voter segment as discussed earlier who felt they were left out in terms of the political priorities of the then existing government; and channelized his entire marketing efforts centered to that. He positioned himself as a change agent by promising to make America great again; a rich, successful and competent business persona; a famous celebrity and TV persona; still one among them (one among the voters, for instance, he was cited as calling himself as a blue-collared businessman.

• *Making the best use of secondary associations* (like his past business success, business competence, and celebrity image).

• *Being clear, consistent and authentic in communication no matter being straightforward*

Although brand Trump was quite straight forward in his communication unlike what political brands are suggested to be, his message was clear and he was often cited as remaining stick to the same message consistently; for which even he may be perceived as authentic.

• *Wide use of publicity, public relation, word-of-mouth, free media attention, internet and interactive marketing communication*

In many instances it was found that brand Trump endeavored to gain free media attention, and create a buzz, which enabled him to remain in top of the mind of the electorate. Rather than deploying more of paid media tools, he was found to be emphasizing more on getting unpaid publicity, viral marketing and reaching out directly to the customers making use of events as well as modern technologies. He was cited as heavily relying on social media promotion especially on Twitter.

• *Creating personal touch in communication with more emphasis on transformational appeal than informational appeal*

Brand Trump was cited as believing more on using interactive tools of communication to create a personal touch with the voters. Besides, focusing more on personality aspects and maneuvers to get free media attention, compared to policy aspect highlighted his extensive use of transformational appeal rather than emotional message appeal.

Thus, it can be inferred that brand Trump had used a wide array of political marketing strategies which were in

line with the political marketing trends, however few were perilous for a politician and were insurgent. The detailed implications of his various strategies are discussed in the next section.

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

After performing the content analysis, the study endeavored to discuss the implications of the strategies used by brand Trump and draw the future scope of research in the field of political marketing.

Despite brand Trump was not as experienced in politics as competing candidates he seemed to use the right blend of political marketing strategies, however, some of them seemed to be risky requiring more investigation before its usage. He had very well understood the needs of the voters and their issues; hence selecting a larger sector of voters who lead him to the victory.

Besides, brand Trump himself had been found to be highlighted the maximum compared to other political products which can be inferred as the brand personification (personalization) strategy where political leaders are the focus of the entire campaign and political process (Holtz-Bacha et al., 1998). The same strategy was also witnessed in BJP's campaign in Indian General Election 2014, where brand Modi was the anchor of the entire campaign and hence, his campaign was cited as "Presidential Style Campaign". This is in context of what Smith and Worcester (2001) believed that image is a bigger constituent of voting behavior compared to the parties' issues and policies. The policies may be projected later on if the party holds the office and structure the policies for the issues it had promised to resolve. This was even supported by a market research in UK which inveterate that the images of party and leaders were more significant in appealing voters than their policies (MORI 2005). Besides, it was also cited in few articles that brand Hillary Clinton was found to be emphasizing more on policy aspects compared to brand Trump; whereas, brand Trump's emphasis was more on issues and personality aspects. One of the reasons for this can be that brand Clinton had more political experience compared to brand Trump dealing with policy issues, which can be a point of difference for her. However, for a politically naive but a popular business and TV persona, capitalizing on these existing strengths and associations could be more effective.

Besides, the celebrity image of brand Trump as a renowned business magnet and popular TV persona could further help build desired associations with the voters.

He had even tried to prove his competence with his successful persona in all his endeavors. He even showed his competence by many a time boasting that majority of his campaign was self-funded. However, this over emphasis on one person may prove to be risky for the party brand at large in the long run; for instance, Needham (2005, 2006) said that this may create leadership succession issues in the party in the future.

Brand Trump had been found to be emphasizing more on personality aspects compared to policies, contrary to brand Clinton who emphasized more on policies. Hence, a study can be conducted to know the application of Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM); that is the impact of peripheral versus central route in persuading voters to support a particular party. Besides, a very contrasting and broad range of personality dimensions were showcased by brand Trump, which proved successful in his context but may confuse the voters in other contexts. It may be possible that a large number of voters can correlate with this wide array of personality traits, whereas in certain context it may be possible that it may look more like mass marketing and voters get confused whom the brand is meant for. Hence, an investigation can be made pertaining to the impact and usage of wide variety of personality traits by political parties and candidates.

In context of fund raising, it was said that brand Trump's campaign was highly self-funded, with some raised by selling t-shirts, caps and such from his website. Celebrity endorsement was not much discussed in context of brand Trump; however, brand Clinton was cited as marking her presence in a star-studded fundraiser in Los Angeles, which was followed by big money events in Laguna Beach. Hence, a study can be conducted on possible methods of fund raising and their effectiveness. Further, as brand Clinton has been witnessed leveraging secondary associations with celebrities; the impact of celebrity endorsement in influencing voters can be studied.

While brand Clinton's campaign was quoted as state-of-the-art and massive, brand Trump's campaign was quoted as a guerilla operation. Brand Trump's selection of promotional medium was highly based on its ability to create personal touch with the voters. He relied more on interactive medium as well as publicity and public relations. Where brand Clinton emphasized more on advertisements, brand Trump's spending on advertisements were very less. Brand Trump relied more on taking the advantage of free media by various communication and maneuvers which always made him the center of attraction. A highly level of message consistency had been found which is good as per the principles of Integrated Marketing Communications

(IMC). Besides, brand Trump was many times straight forward, harsh, and unfiltered, and spoke out his mind. This strategy worked out in his case and voters perceived him as authentic; but this could even prove to be risky in another country or set of voters. Again it was quite an insurgent and risky strategy to portray as so transparent, unfiltered, unpredictable and rude where politicians are supposed to be well composed, diplomatic and filtered. Being unpredictable may have interested his target voters by acting as a teaser and creating the buzz; leading to top of mind awareness in voters, but this may even back fire. Hence, the positives and negatives of social media and such a transparent persona in politics can be a topic of future investigations.

Further, in light of the analysis in the above section, the potential investigations may encapsulate below discussed themes and works from the perspectives of (a) political practitioners' perspective (b) voters' perspective (c) competing party(ies) perspective (d) in general

(a)   Political practitioners' perspective (as respondents)

• An in-depth interview can be conducted with political practitioners of various parties to identify the parameters they consider while selecting their target political consumers; as well the level of importance given to each of these factors.
These parameters may include factors internal to the organization as well as of the external environment.
For instance, one of the parameters can be ideologies of the parties, like in case of brand Trump, he was representing the Republican Party, and hence, he had to base his target voters on the basis of party ideologies. Similarly, several issues and policies may be interrelated with the party ideologies.
These parameters may also include the vision of the founders, leaders and candidates; issues faced by majority of the political consumers; competing parties stand; loyal customer base handled by the party; to name a few. Similar factors can be identified by review of literature as well as through exploratory research techniques like case study research or in-depth interview of the politicians; which can then be used for quantitative research.
• Which political products are highlighted by the political parties and their perceived level of influence on the voters can be investigated.
• What value propositions should the political brands promise to their target voters?
• What are the perceived types of characteristics of various political products which parties try to find or

develop in the political products with an intention to influence voters?
• What are the risks associated with projecting the negative personality traits of the candidate or the party?
• What are political party's perception, opinion and strategies to gain voters' trust, loyalty, support and donation?
• What is the perception of political parties for effectiveness of various tools of promotion; opinions and strategies pertaining to selection of message objectives, media, budget allocation, message characteristics, repetition and the ways to measure promotional effectiveness?
• What are the strategies used by political brands to select brand elements and how do they attempt to convey brand meanings through these brand elements. What characteristics of these brand elements are perceived more effective by the political parties and candidates?
• Which secondary associations do political brands take advantage of and consider more effective in influencing the voters?

(b)   Political consumers' perspective (as respondents)

• An in-depth understanding of the targeted voters can be done by the political parties before their campaign to know their stated, real, unstated, hidden and delight and secret needs.
• What is the opinion of the targeted voters towards a particular political party having selected it to solve its issue? What is the level of influence created by these opinions on voters? This may help the party to establish right brand association and positioning during the campaign. Any mismatch between the party ideologies or past actions with the targeted voters can be resolved at the early stage.
• The opinion of voters regarding the level of impact and influence created by various political products on them could be investigated.
• What are the desired characteristics expected by electorates in various political products to influence them towards a particular political party?
• How do voters react to the negative personality traits of the candidates or the party (as in the case of brand Trump)?
• The influence of emotional appeal versus transformational appeals on voters towards a particular party (impact of peripheral route to persuasion compared

to central route to persuading voters/ impact of Elaboration Likelihood Model on voters).

• What are the factors driving the trust, support, donation and loyalty of voters towards a political party?
• What is the level of influence created on voters by various tools of promotion, message characteristics especially negative campaigning?
• What is the opinion and level of influence of brand elements on voters?
• What is the level of influence created by the secondary associations of political brands on voters?

(c)   Competing political party(ies) perspective (as respondents)
• What will be the competing party's reactions and responses towards various political marketing strategies of political parties/ brands?

(d)   In general
• Impact of political interest and political affinity of voters towards the politics and various political parties can be investigated.
• A comparison can be made between massive and state-of-the-art campaign versus guerilla campaign strategy.
• A comparative analysis of political marketing strategies of different parties can be made.
• A comparison can be made between competing parties, competing candidates, same party over a period of time, same party under different leaderships, parties across different regions/countries; and similar permutations and combinations.
• Case study research, content analysis, in-depth interviews, focus group discussions or survey methods can be adopted as relevant.

Hence, the content analysis of brand Trump's political marketing strategies unleashes a wide range of opportunities of research and investigation in the arena of political marketing and branding for political practitioners, researchers, academia and students.

CONCLUSION

Donald Trump, the incumbent President of the US despite was new to the field of politics compared to his competitors; but emerged victorious. There may be several factors responsible for his triumph; however, one of the imperative factors attributed for his success quite often discussed was his political marketing strategies.

Hence, this study endeavored to perform quantitative and qualitative content analysis of the texts that analyzed and discussed the pre-election political marketing strategies of brand Trump for his campaign for US Presidential Election 2016.

In nutshell, it was found that although brand Trump, a renowned business magnet and popular TV persona was naive to politics, he could very well deploy his business acumen to translate commercial marketing principles in his political marketing campaign. He even had used his existing business success, competence and image to leverage secondary associations. In context of targeting and exchange strategy, he had voter-centric orientation. From the perspective of product strategy he emphasized more on his personality aspects followed by issues compared to party ideologies and policies. However, few controversial and wide range of personality facets were reflected which was criticized but had prove to be successful in his case.

Similarly, in context of message strategies he was found to be relying more on transformational appeal than informational appeal. This implies that brand Trump targeted more of right brain for persuading voters compared to left brain. Besides, a major part of his campaign was self-funded; he had very well used IT (website) for generating donation by selling presidential merchandise, shirts and similar. IT was not only visible in his exchange strategy, but rather he relied majorly on social media especially Twitter to reach out to his target market while creating a personal touch. Besides IT, brand Trump relied more on publicity and public relations compared to paid advertisements and similar channels of communication. The signature strategy of negative campaigning in politics was also identified in brand Trump's case. However many a times his communication was found to be unfiltered, harsh, outrageous and straight forward for which sometimes he was criticized while on the other hand was perceived as authentic; hence, a careful research need to be taken on implication of various strategies before its implementation.

Few of his strategies were quite insurgent, risky as well as challenge to the implicit political code of conduct; but brand Trump emerged victorious. However, the modern management principle and social sciences are based on contingency approach. A strategy that may work well in one case may prove to be ineffective in another case. This generates a need of consistent research in any field including political marketing and branding in different contexts. Various political marketing researches can be conducted from the perspectives of different regions; countries; political parties; political consumers;

competing political parties; as well as comparative studies for exploring new avenues.

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Disclaimer: Honorable President of the US has been cited in the study as Donald Trump or Brand Trump or Trump, which is in milieu of marketing and branding; researchers have no purpose of breaching his revered decorum and thoroughly respect his dignity. The other Presidential candidate such as Respected Hillary Clinton was also addressed as brand Clinton in context of marketing, as a brand and not intending to breach her well-regarded decorum. The brand image, personality and other information about the Presidential candidates had been obtained from the existing texts and not created by the researchers. In case of referencing any negative personality traits or strategies of the candidates, it is purely from the marketing terms, and the researchers thoroughly respect the dignity of the distinguished figures addressed in the paper. The admiration of the candidates is again purely appreciation of their marketing strategies and no political move of the researchers. Researchers express gratitude and sense of dignity for all the persons addressed in this paper – Donald Trump, competitors of Donald Trump, his voters; as well as various authors cited in the references. The analysis of the paper is as per the researchers understanding of the subject and does not intend to hurt anyone's sentiments; if so is been apologized. This is a work for purely academic research purpose only.

Conflict of interest

Authors have none to declare

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