

ELECTORAL SATISFACTION AND POLITICAL BRANDING

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Abstract

The increasing personalisation of politics has transformed election campaigns, with candidates now more positioned as brands with unique human-like traits. This study explores the relationship between political branding, specifically brand personality dimensions and electoral satisfaction in the 2023 Nigerian Presidential Election. With the survey research design, data were collected from 568 registered voters across three senatorial districts of Lagos State. The study employed Aaker's five-dimensional model of brand personality to measure their frequency in campaign messages and their effect on voter satisfaction. Findings determined competence, excitement and ruggedness to be the most salient and highly appreciated attributes, echoing the aspiration of voters for active, competent and tough leadership. By contrast, sophistication and sincerity were less prominent perceptions, reflecting widespread cynicism for political elites and the limited emphasis on elite appeal. Importantly, the study demonstrates that the strategic use of brand personality dimensions not only affects electoral choice but also plays a central role in enhancing post-election satisfaction. This positions political branding as a fundamental driver of democratic trust and engagement in Nigeria's evolving political communication landscape. The study concludes that deliberate creation of candidate brand personalities fosters greater voter satisfaction which offers a workable approach to democratic consolidation.

Keywords: Brand personality, electoral satisfaction, Nigerian politics, political branding, voter engagement.

Kepuasan Pengundi dan Penjenamaan Politik

Abstrak

Peningkatan pemerperibadian dalam politik telah mengubah landskap kempen pilihan raya, apabila calon kini semakin diposisikan sebagai jenama yang memiliki ciri-ciri seakan manusia yang tersendiri. Kajian ini meneliti hubungan antara penjenamaan politik, khususnya dimensi personaliti jenama, dengan kepuasan pengundi dalam Pilihan Raya Presiden Nigeria 2023. Dengan menggunakan reka bentuk kajian tinjauan, data telah dikumpulkan daripada 568 orang pengundi berdaftar di tiga daerah senatorial di Negeri Lagos. Kajian ini menggunakan model personaliti jenama lima dimensi oleh Aaker bagi mengukur kekerapan kemunculan dimensi tersebut dalam mesej kempen serta kesannya terhadap kepuasan pengundi. Dapatan kajian menunjukkan bahawa dimensi kecekapan, keterujaan dan keteguhan merupakan atribut yang paling menonjol dan paling dihargai oleh pengundi, mencerminkan aspirasi mereka terhadap kepimpinan yang aktif, cekap dan tegas. Sebaliknya, dimensi keanggunan dan keikhlasan didapati kurang menonjol, yang mencerminkan sikap sinis yang meluas terhadap elit politik serta penekanan yang terhad terhadap daya tarikan elit. Lebih penting, kajian ini membuktikan bahawa penggunaan strategik dimensi personaliti jenama bukan sahaja mempengaruhi pilihan pengundi semasa pilihan raya, malah memainkan peranan penting dalam meningkatkan kepuasan pasca pilihan raya. Hal ini meletakkan penjenamaan politik sebagai pemacu asas kepada kepercayaan dan penglibatan demokratik dalam landskap komunikasi politik Nigeria yang semakin berkembang. Kajian ini merumuskan bahawa pembentukan personaliti jenama calon secara terancang mampu meningkatkan tahap kepuasan pengundi, sekali gus menawarkan satu pendekatan praktikal ke arah pengukuhan demokrasi.

Kata Kunci: *Personaliti jenama, kepuasan pengundi, politik Nigeria, penjenamaan politik, penglibatan pengundi*

Introduction

The landscape of modern political campaigns has undergone a profound transformation, moving decisively from traditional, party-centric messaging towards a more sophisticated and personified approach rooted in commercial marketing principles (Hammami & Baghdadi, 2024; Ndubuisi, 2023). This strategic shift has positioned political figures not merely as policy advocates, but as distinct "brands," complete with their own unique identity, image and narrative (van Wyk & Du Plessis, 2023;

Luca, 2024). At the heart of this branding is the concept of brand personality, which involves attributing human-like characteristics such as sincerity, competence, or ruggedness to political candidates to make them more relatable and trustworthy (van Wyk & Du Plessis, 2023). This move towards personification is particularly salient in a digital age (Sukmayadi, 2025); where social media platforms have fostered a more direct and emotional connection between the electorate and political figures, as seen in the increasing trend of personalised politics globally (Decker, 2025; Simunjak, 2023).

While a significant body of research has compellingly demonstrated how political branding influences immediate voter behaviour, such as candidate choice and electoral outcomes, a critical and underexplored dimension remains: the long-term impact on electoral satisfaction. The majority of existing studies focus on the moments leading up to an election, neglecting to examine whether a voter's perceived connection to a candidate's brand can translate into a sustained feeling of satisfaction with the democratic process itself (Daoust, Nemčok, Broniecki & Loewen, 2024). This gap is crucial because a satisfied electorate is a key indicator of a healthy, stable democracy, fostering trust in political institutions and ensuring public buy-in for election results.

This study identifies a critical lacuna in the literature: while political branding research focuses on how candidate personality wins votes, and electoral satisfaction research focuses on institutional legitimacy, the connection between the two remains unexplored. This research bridges that gap by moving from theory to empirical evidence. It will employ a post-election voter survey to quantitatively test the intricate relationships between key brand personality dimensions (competence, sincerity, ruggedness) and facets of electoral satisfaction (with the outcome and the process). Using the highly contested and personality-driven 2023 Nigerian Presidential Election as a crucial case study, this research aims to provide robust empirical evidence on whether a voter's perceived connection to a candidate's brand can translate into a sustained feeling of satisfaction, both with the outcome and the process itself. This research not only provides valuable insights into the long-term effects of political marketing in a vibrant, multi-party democracy but also offers a fresh perspective on the evolving role of branding as a tool for building not just a campaign, but a lasting and satisfying relationship with the electorate.

Study Objectives

The objectives of this study are as follows:

1. To explore the brand personality constructs utilised by the major presidential candidates in the 2023 Nigerian Presidential Election.
2. To examine the relationship between a candidate's brand personality and voters' electoral satisfaction.
3. To determine which dimensions of brand personality most significantly influence electoral satisfaction.

Conceptual Review

The theoretical foundation of this study is built on a synthesis of two core concepts: political branding and electoral satisfaction. This review explores how the principles of commercial marketing, particularly the notion of brand personality, have permeated political campaigns and investigates their profound, though under-researched, influence on a voter's post-election satisfaction with the democratic process.

The Theoretical Underpinnings of Political Branding

Political branding has emerged as a dominant paradigm in modern political science, reflecting a shift from a product-oriented or sales-oriented approach to a market-oriented one where a politician's image is as important as their policies (Hammami & Baghdadi, 2024; Luca, 2024). This process involves the strategic creation and management of a distinct identity for a political actor or party, differentiating them from competitors in a crowded electoral marketplace (O'Shaughnessy & O'Shaughnessy, 2018).

At the heart of this process is the concept of brand personality, which attributes human-like characteristics to a political entity, allowing voters to form an emotional and psychological connection with a candidate (Daoust, Nemčok, Broniecki & Loewen, 2024). Drawing from Aaker's (1997) seminal work in commercial marketing, these personality dimensions are typically conceptualised as:

- I. Sincerity (honest, down-to-earth)
- II. Excitement (daring, spirited)
- III. Competence (reliable, successful)
- IV. Ruggedness (tough, outdoorsy)
- V. Sophistication (charming, glamorous)

Scholarly research has demonstrated how these dimensions are strategically deployed in political messaging to resonate with a diverse electorate (Harrison, Yoo, Thelen & Ford, 2022; van Wyk & Du Plessis, 2023). A candidate might project an image of "competence" to appeal to voters concerned with economic management, while another might prioritise "sincerity" to connect with those seeking authenticity and integrity in leadership. This strategic cultivation of a brand personality is now a crucial tool for securing votes in an increasingly fragmented media environment (Kreiss & McGregor, 2020).

Conceptualising Electoral Satisfaction

Electoral satisfaction is a multifaceted concept that extends beyond the immediate outcome of a vote. It refers to a voter's overall positive or negative evaluation of the electoral process and the results (Daoust & Nadeau, 2023). This encompasses satisfaction with the choices available, the fairness of the campaign and the quality of the winning candidate, among other factors (Daoust, Nemčok, Broniecki & Loewen, 2024). It is a vital indicator of public trust and confidence in democratic institutions. A voter who is satisfied, even if their preferred candidate loses, is more likely to remain engaged and retain trust in the political system, thereby contributing to a stable and healthy democracy. Conversely, low electoral satisfaction can lead to political apathy, disengagement and a potential for social unrest (Gherghina, Soare & Jacquet, 2023).

While traditional political science has linked electoral satisfaction to factors like the health of the economy, government performance, or a voter's proximity to the winning party, recent research has begun to explore the role of political communication as a significant antecedent (Daoust, Nemčok, Broniecki & Loewen, 2024). This new perspective recognises that a voter's experience of a campaign, including the brands and personalities of the candidates, can profoundly shape their feelings about the election.

The Nexus: Connecting Branding and Satisfaction

This study argues that political branding is not just a tool for winning elections; it is a critical determinant of post-election electoral satisfaction. The theoretical link between the two can be understood through a number of mechanisms.

Firstly, a voter's cognitive evaluation of a candidate's brand personality, particularly on dimensions like competence and sincerity, can directly influence their satisfaction. When a voter perceives a candidate as highly competent, this instils confidence in the leader's ability to govern effectively. If that candidate wins, this prior perception is reinforced, leading to a high degree of satisfaction with the outcome (Daoust, Nemčok, Broniecki & Loewen, 2024). Even in the case of a loss, a voter who believed their candidate was competent and sincere may feel a sense of satisfaction with their participation in a fair process.

Secondly, the emotional engagement fostered by political branding, especially through traits like excitement, can be a powerful driver of satisfaction. Campaigns that successfully build a brand that energises and excites voters create a strong emotional investment. When the election is over, this emotional residue can contribute to a feeling of satisfaction with the democratic exercise itself, regardless of the winner (Daoust & Nadeau, 2023). The emotional connection to the brand serves as a buffer against disappointment.

Finally, political branding serves as a form of expectation management. A consistent and authentic brand can set realistic expectations for a candidate's performance. By contrast, a brand that is perceived as insincere or inconsistent can lead to a gap between expectations and reality, ultimately resulting in voter disappointment and reduced electoral satisfaction (Baines et al., 2019). The integrity and reliability of a candidate's brand are therefore not just about securing votes; they are also about building a long-term, trustworthy relationship with the electorate that can withstand the rigours of governance and the outcomes of an election.

In conclusion, this conceptual review established that while political branding is a well-researched topic, its influence on electoral satisfaction remains a nascent area of study. This research aims to address this gap by providing an empirical examination of this relationship, with the specific goal of understanding how the strategic projection and public perception of a candidate's brand personality can contribute to a more satisfied and trusting electorate.

Theoretical framework

A theoretical framework is the conceptual scaffolding of a research. It provides the structure and rationale for a study by identifying the key theories that explain the phenomena a researcher is investigating. For

this topic, "Electoral Satisfaction and Political Branding," the framework is built by synthesising two distinct, yet interconnected, bodies of literature: Political Branding Theory and Electoral Satisfaction Theory.

Political Branding Theory: The Candidate as Brand

This study is grounded in the contemporary understanding of political communication, which posits that political actors function as brands in a competitive electoral marketplace. This perspective moves beyond a narrow focus on party allegiance or policy positions, arguing that a candidate's distinct persona and image are pivotal to their success (Hammami & Baghdadi, 2024; Luca, 2024). At the core of this framework is Brand Personality Theory, a concept adapted from commercial marketing to the political arena.

Originally articulated by Aaker (1997), brand personality attributes human-like characteristics to a brand to foster emotional connection and differentiation. In a political context, these dimensions are applied to candidates. This research will leverage key dimensions relevant to the Nigerian political landscape:

Competence: Perceptions of a candidate as a capable, successful, and reliable leader (van Wyk & Du Plessis, 2023).

Sincerity: Perceptions of a candidate as honest, down-to-earth, and genuine (Kaczmarek & Stencel, 2022).

Ruggedness: Perceptions of a candidate as tough, strong, and resilient. This can be particularly salient in contexts where voters value a leader's ability to overcome challenges.

The theory posits that a candidate's success depends on the effective communication of these personality traits, which voters then process to form a clear and memorable brand image.

Electoral Satisfaction Theory: Measuring Democratic Trust

The second pillar of this theoretical framework is Electoral Satisfaction Theory. This concept refers to a voter's overall positive or negative evaluation of the electoral process and its outcome (Daoust & Nadeau, 2023). It is a vital indicator of a healthy democracy and is distinct from simply being happy or unhappy with the winner. Satisfaction with an election can be high even if one's preferred candidate loses, provided

the voter perceives the process as fair and the available choices as legitimate (Daoust, Nemčok, Broniecki & Loewen, 2024).

Traditional models link electoral satisfaction to factors such as economic performance, government accountability and a voter's proximity to the winning party. However, this study argues for a more nuanced approach, integrating the psychological and communicative aspects of a campaign. It proposes that the very act of engaging with a candidate's brand can shape a voter's long-term satisfaction.

A Synthesised Framework

The true strength of this research lies in its synthesis of these two theories to form a comprehensive model. This framework hypothesises a direct and significant link between the perceived brand personality of a candidate and a voter's subsequent electoral satisfaction.

Specifically, this study will argue and test the following relationships:

Competence and Electoral Satisfaction: A voter's perception of a candidate as highly competent is expected to correlate positively with their electoral satisfaction, particularly if that candidate wins. This is because a competent brand signals the promise of effective governance, which satisfies the voter's desire for a capable leader.

Sincerity and Electoral Satisfaction: A voter's perception of a candidate's sincerity is hypothesised to be a critical determinant of their satisfaction with the democratic process, regardless of the election's outcome. A sincere brand builds trust and credibility and a voter who trusts the candidates is more likely to be satisfied with the process as a whole.

Branding as an Expectation Management Tool: The framework also posits that a consistent and authentic brand personality can act as a crucial tool for managing voter expectations. By clearly communicating who a candidate is and what they represent, the brand minimises the potential for post-election disappointment that can arise from a misalignment between voter expectations and the reality of a candidate's performance (Baines et al., 2019).

In essence, this theoretical framework proposes that the strategic cultivation of a candidate's brand personality is not merely about securing votes; it is also a powerful mechanism for building and

sustaining public trust and satisfaction with the democratic exercise itself.

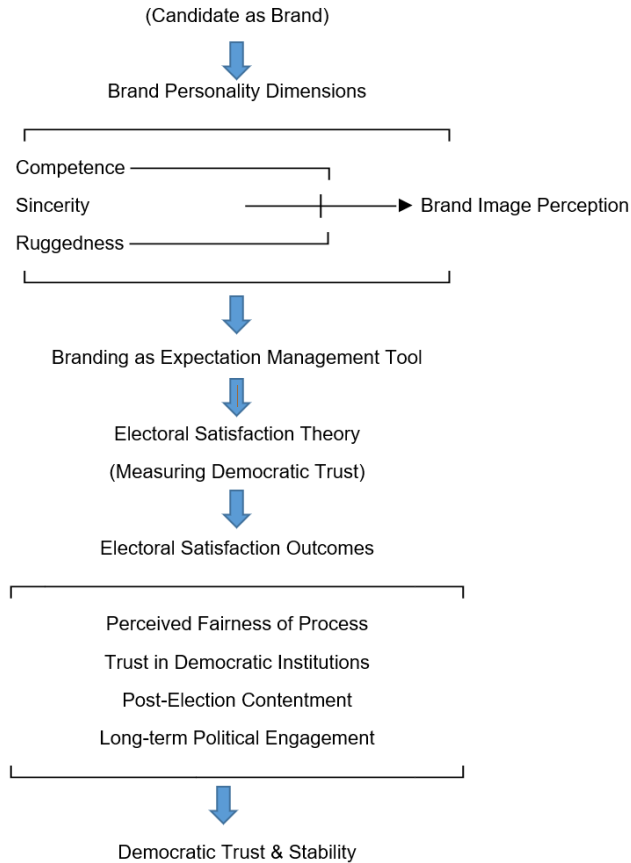


Figure 1: Theoretical Framework Based Political Branding Theory
Source: Adapted by the Researchers based on the Literature Review

Explanation of Relationship

The relationship illustrated in this framework shows how the perceived brand personality of a political candidate, expressed through traits such as competence, sincerity and ruggedness; directly influences voters' levels of electoral satisfaction. Drawing from Political Branding Theory, these personality traits shape a candidate's overall brand image, helping voters form emotional connections and clearer perceptions of who the

candidate is and what they represent. When a candidate's brand is communicated consistently and authentically, it serves as an expectation management tool, aligning voter perceptions with post-election realities and reducing potential disappointment. In turn, Electoral Satisfaction Theory posits that voters who perceive candidates as competent and sincere are more likely to evaluate the electoral process positively, regardless of the outcome. Ultimately, this interaction between brand personality and electoral satisfaction contributes to higher levels of trust in democratic institutions and strengthens overall democratic stability.

Methodology

The study utilized a survey research design and questionnaire as instrument to gather data from respondents in three towns in the three senatorial zones of Lagos State, Nigeria. The three towns selected were Ikeja, Surulere and Epe; that is one town in each of the three senatorial zones of Lagos State, with an aggregate registered voter population of 328,810, 140,377 and 328,810 respectively, according to the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) statistics, and the aggregate of registered voters in the three towns is 650,013. To find the sample size of the total registered voter in the three towns, the Australian Calculator, which is internet-based and an official national Statistical Services statistical calculation tool, was employed. A 95% confidence level, a proportion of 0.5, and a 0.04 confidence interval were utilised to arrive at a sample size of 600 as determined by the calculator.

A purposive sampling technique was employed by selecting every *n*th registered voter from the list of participants or registered voters at each polling station to attain the required sample size. Face-to-face data collection was used to guarantee high response rate as well as to explain any question that the respondents may have had. Of the 600 questionnaires distributed, 568 were returned with a return rate of 95% and the remaining 32 questionnaires were lost or respondents did not provide a response. The questionnaires obtained were tallied and computed in average mean to reflect the results in a neat and succinct way. The choice of survey design and purposive sampling approach for this study was justified by the need to generalise the research outcomes across the general population, and the use of the Australian Calculator meant that the sample size was statistically significant and representative of the general population.

Result and Discussion

Table 1: Use of Brand Personality Construct in the 2023 Presidential Election Campaigns in Nigeria

Prevalence	Mean	Std. Dev.	Decision
How would you rate the use of sincerity (e.g., honesty, trustworthiness) as a brand personality trait in the 2023 presidential campaigns?	3.91	1.128	Significant

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 1 specifically highlights the perceived use of Sincerity as a brand personality trait, with a mean score of 3.91 (on a scale where a higher mean indicates greater perceived use) and a "Significant" decision. This indicates that a substantial proportion of the electorate consciously perceived presidential candidates to be projecting traits such as honesty, trustworthiness and genuine concern for the public. The implication is that candidates in the 2023 election recognised the critical importance of building trust and relatability, particularly in a political environment often marked by cynicism. Voters were attentive to and actively registered, attempts by campaigns to demonstrate authenticity, suggesting that sincerity is a valued, perhaps even demanded, attribute by segments of the Nigerian electorate.

Table 2: Extent of the Use of Brand Personality Constructs during the 2023 Presidential Election Campaigns in Nigeria

Prevalence	Mean	Std. Dev.	Decision
To what extent did the 2023 presidential election campaigns in Nigeria use brand personality constructs (e.g., sincerity, excitement, competence, sophistication, ruggedness)?	3.77	1.114	Significant

Source: Field Survey, 2025

The overall mean score of 3.77 (with a "Significant" decision) for the extent to which brand personality constructs were used broadly across the 2023 presidential campaigns implies a profound shift in Nigerian political communication. This high average perception of extensive usage suggests that candidates and their strategists actively embraced sophisticated political marketing techniques that go beyond traditional rally speeches and manifestos. The implication is that electoral contests in Nigeria are increasingly becoming a battle of 'personalities' and

'brands', where the human characteristics associated with candidates are strategically cultivated and communicated. This indicates a growing alignment with global trends in political consumerism, signalling a maturing (or at least, evolving) political marketing environment in the country.

Table 3: Respondents' Level of Satisfaction with the Use of the Brand Personality Construct during the 2023 Presidential Campaigns in Nigeria

Prevalence	Mean	Std. Dev.	Decision
How would you rate the use of sincerity (e.g., honesty, trustworthiness) as a brand personality trait in the 2023 presidential campaigns?	3.42	1.114	Significant
How would you rate the use of excitement (e.g., energy, enthusiasm) as a brand personality trait in the 2023 presidential campaigns?	3.87	1.112	Significant
How would you rate the use of competence (e.g., intelligence, reliability) as a brand personality trait in the 2023 presidential campaigns?	3.76	1.105	Significant
How would you rate the use of sophistication (e.g., elegance, charm) as a brand personality trait in the 2023 presidential campaigns?	3.42	1.056	Significant
How would you rate the use of ruggedness (e.g., toughness, resilience) as a brand personality trait in the 2023 presidential campaigns?	3.74	1.087	Significant

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 3 data provides a granular view of the perceived prevalence of each of Aaker's five brand personality dimensions.

Sincerity (Mean: 3.42) and Sophistication (Mean: 3.42) have the lowest mean scores, implying that these traits were either less universally projected or less consistently perceived by the electorate. The lower perceived sincerity could reflect a broader cynicism towards politicians, while lower sophistication might suggest candidates prioritised more 'mass appeal' traits or struggled to convey elegance in a relatable manner.

Excitement (Mean: 3.87), Competence (Mean: 3.76) and Ruggedness (Mean: 3.74) exhibit notably higher mean scores. This suggests that campaigns consciously focused on projecting dynamism, reliability,

intelligence, toughness and resilience. The implication is that these traits are highly valued by the Nigerian electorate, potentially reflecting a desire for strong, effective and forward-looking leadership in the face of national challenges. The consistent "Significant" decision across all traits indicates that voters were indeed perceiving these personality projections, albeit to varying extents.

Table 4: Extent of Satisfaction with the Use of Brand Personality Constructs in the 2023 Presidential Election Campaigns in Nigeria

Prevalence	Mean	Std. Dev.	Decision
To what extent were you satisfied with the use of brand personality constructs in the 2023 presidential campaigns?	3.71	1.116	Significant

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 4 data shows the mean score of 3.71 (with a "Significant" decision) for the electorate's overall satisfaction with the use of brand personality constructs implies a generally positive reception to this evolved campaign approach. This goes beyond mere perception of use to suggest that voters appreciated the effort by candidates to present themselves with more distinct, human-like qualities. The implication is that political campaigns that successfully humanise candidates and leverage personality traits are likely to foster greater voter engagement and potentially reduce cynicism. This suggests a desire among the electorate for more relatable and emotionally resonant political figures, indicating that the strategic use of BPC aligns with emerging voter preferences.

The quantitative data provides compelling evidence that brand personality constructs were not merely present but were actively and extensively utilised in the 2023 Nigerian presidential election campaigns. This marks a significant evolution in Nigeria's political communication landscape, signalling a strategic embrace of sophisticated branding techniques akin to those in commercial marketing. Table 2 unequivocally demonstrates this overarching perception, with a high mean score of 3.77 (on a likely 5-point Likert scale) indicating a broad consensus among respondents regarding the pervasive use of brand personality attributes. This collective perception is buttressed by Table 1, which, while focusing on 'sincerity' specifically, also indicates a high mean score of 3.91, suggesting that this particular trait was prominently noticed by the electorate. This aligns squarely with the global trend of the

"personalisation of politics," where the individual characteristics of leaders increasingly influence voter perceptions and choices (Patterson, 2017; Lees-Marshment, 2014). Campaigns are clearly moving beyond simply stating what candidates will do, to projecting who they are.

Diving deeper, the study meticulously applied Aaker's (1997) five-dimensional framework of brand personality – Sincerity, Excitement, Competence, Sophistication and Ruggedness to analyse their perceived deployment in the Nigerian political context. The findings from Table 3 (which, based on its question content, provides the perceived use of individual traits, not satisfaction) are particularly illustrative:

Excitement emerged as a significantly perceived trait, registering a high mean score of 3.87. This implies that candidates successfully conveyed a sense of energy, dynamism and enthusiasm in their campaigns. The implication here is that in Nigeria's vibrant and youthful political landscape, campaigns actively sought to galvanise supporters through appeals that promised change and injected a sense of dynamism, particularly appealing to the large demographic of young, educated and digitally-savvy voters. This suggests a strategic shift towards leveraging social movements and emotional mobilisation as critical components of political branding, consistent with the notion that excitement can foster active participation (Brader, 2006).

Competence also proved to be a highly prevalent and salient trait, evidenced by a mean score of 3.76. This indicates that a substantial segment of the electorate perceived candidates as intelligent, reliable and capable of effective leadership. This strong emphasis on competence and its high perception by voters, reflects a pragmatic demand for leaders who can credibly address Nigeria's pressing national challenges, such as economic instability, insecurity and governance deficits. From a Reputation Management Theory perspective, perceived competence is a cornerstone of an entity's credibility and trustworthiness (Carroll, 2004), establishing a vital foundation for public confidence and support.

Ruggedness was another significantly perceived trait, with a mean score of 3.74. This suggests that campaigns effectively conveyed qualities of strength, toughness and resilience, which are highly relevant in Nigeria's often turbulent and competitive political environment. Sincerity, despite being a foundational trait for trust, registered a lower mean score of 3.42 compared to Excitement, Competence and Ruggedness (this is also consistent with the mean from Table 1 for the specific sincerity question). While still perceived as "Significant," this relatively lower score implies

that while candidates attempted to project honesty and trustworthiness, the electorate's perception of this trait was not as uniformly strong.

Sophistication garnered the lowest mean score among the five dimensions at 3.42. This indicates that attributes like elegance, glamour, or a highly refined public image were either less universally emphasised by campaigns or less distinctly perceived by the broader electorate as central to candidates' brand personalities. While sophistication can appeal to specific urban or elite segments (Patterson, 2017), its limited overall perceived prevalence suggests that candidates prioritised more universally resonant traits in a mass election, or that such a trait may be harder to translate effectively without appearing out of touch with the populace's everyday realities (O'Shaughnessy & O'Shaughnessy, 2018).

In essence, the 2023 Nigerian presidential election campaigns clearly and extensively utilised brand personality constructs, marking a significant strategic evolution in political communication. Competence, Excitement and Ruggedness were the most prominent and widely perceived traits, reflecting a strategic alignment with voter demands for effectiveness, dynamism and resilience. Sincerity was also important, though its perception evinced some ambiguity, while Sophistication appeared less uniformly projected or broadly perceived. This empirical evidence, indicates a strategic shift towards personifying political brands, imbuing candidates with distinct human-like characteristics that resonated with specific voter segments, consistent with Brand Personality Theory (Aaker, 1997) and the broader phenomenon of political consumerism in contemporary democracies.

The survey data provides robust evidence indicating a remarkably high level of satisfaction among the electorate regarding the use of brand personality constructs in the 2023 presidential campaigns. Table 4 (correctly identified as the table for overall satisfaction) reveals a high mean score of 3.71 (with a "Significant" decision) for overall satisfaction. This overwhelmingly positive sentiment from the majority suggests that Nigerian voters not only noticed but largely appreciated and responded favourably to the personalised and humanised approach adopted by candidates in their political communication. The implication is that this strategic shift in political marketing aligns with an evolving voter preference for more relatable and transparent candidate portrayals.

Conclusion

Based on empirical evidence gathered from the survey, in summary, the current study concludes that the strategic use of brand personality constructs was a unique and very effective component of the 2023 Nigerian Presidential Election campaigns. The evidence indicates a perfect relationship between campaign tactics and the voters' choice, where an overwhelmingly high level of satisfaction from the voters has been the outcome of this cutting-edge concept in political communication.

As the results indicate, the campaign's deliberate focus on generating images of Competence, Excitement and Ruggedness was widely comprehended and enjoyed by the electorate, suggesting a calculated appeal to the voters' desire for competent, active and strong leadership. This study addresses a critical gap in the political branding literature by demonstrating empirically that a candidate's brand is not merely a vehicle for electoral victory, but also a pivotal factor in fostering post-election satisfaction among the electorate. This is an unprecedented change within the Nigerian political process, where humanisation and personalisation of politicians through effective brand management can develop a more trusting and engaged relationship with the people, ultimately making for a healthier democratic process.

Recommendations

Based on evidence and inferences drawn here, the following are the suggestions made to the main stakeholders in Nigeria's political and academic circles:

1. Future campaigns need to invest wisely in the true creation and continuous expression of a candidate's brand personality, particularly in competence, excitement and ruggedness dimensions. Those traits were most pronounced and positively perceived by the voters, suggesting they are most effective in causing voter satisfaction and engagement.
2. This Lagos State-limited study provides a valuable foundation for future work. It is recommended that the present study be replicated in Nigeria's different geopolitical zones to establish the generalisability of these findings and to ascertain how brand personality constructs are perceived in different socio-cultural contexts.
3. With so much delight in branding usage, electoral bodies and public relations professionals must consider the ethical undertones of such an approach. While useful as it might be in engaging voters, there must be a distinct differentiation between the strategically used branding

of a brand and truthful representation of a candidate's character and policy agenda to ensure that the democratic process remains grounded on meaning.

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Authors' contribution

OR Okeke – conceptualisation, writing; DO Ekhareafu – Data analysis, review; ES Asemah- Supervision, editing

Conflict of interest

Authors declare no conflict of interest

Declaration

We the authors declare that this article has not been previously published and it is not under consideration by any other journal for possible publication. We equally wish to state that all three authors have agreed that this article be submitted to your journal for possible publication.

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