

Factors Influencing Political Brand Preference Among First-Time Thai Voters in Bangkok and Metropolis Areas

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Abstract

The growing level of rivalry among political party brands highlights the importance of connections between voters and political parties, particularly in Thailand's evolving landscape. In recent years, there has been a significant increase in political parties in Thailand, alongside a peak in new voters, creating a relatively unknown political environment. This study, therefore, aims to explore the influences of various factors on political brand preference and seeks to determine the impact of political brand preference on voting intention. Using a quantitative approach and an anonymous online questionnaire (n = 469), the study identifies significant influences on political brand preference, including political brand trust, political brand love, political brand loyalty, extroversion, friendliness/agreeableness, emotional stability/neuroticism, conscientiousness, openness to experiences, political party leadership, party manifestos or policies, political brand authenticity, social norms, local roots, and electronic word-of-mouth ($p < 0.05$). The findings also show that political brand preference and perceptions of the prime ministerial candidate significantly influence voting intention.

Keywords: Political brand, Political brand trust, Political brand love, Political brand loyalty, Political brand preference, voting intention

Introduction

Voting behavior plays a crucial role in political decision-making and brand development, yet analyzing voting choices remains complex and dynamic. One key element influencing voting

behavior is the preference for a particular political brand, shaped by a wide range of factors. The growing interest in political branding reflects concerns about valence issues (Thomassen, 2005), electoral volatility (Dalton, 2012), and the adoption of marketing strategies by political parties



(Nielsen, 2012). These factors encourage researchers to examine politics through the lens of branding (Nielsen & Larsen, 2014; Smith & Speed, 2011). Branding enables political parties to understand voter preferences and choices, helping them develop targeted political messages, advertising, and manifestos to increase support. It also provides voters with tools to evaluate political parties before making electoral decisions.

Political brands are often likened to commercial brands (Almohammad, 2014; Brennan & Henneberg, 2008; Peng & Hackley, 2009), deepening our understanding of the relationship between brands and voter behavior. Branding aligns political brands with voter needs, aiming to achieve favorable outcomes. In politics, branding holds practical and theoretical significance. Practically, it addresses the economic and social costs of electoral choices, as government policies impact national growth. Theoretically, it encourages scholars to explore the factors that shape voter behavior, guiding them toward specific political choices (O'Cass & Pecotich, 2005).

In Thailand, the relationship between voters and political parties has gained relevance due to the rise of new political parties, which has intensified competition. The 2019 general election, following a period of military rule, marked a major shift in Thailand's political landscape. Established parties like Prachatipat (Democrat Party) and Pheu Thai Party have faced competition from new parties appealing to younger generations who oppose military influence. Additionally, the dissolution of older parties has added to the uncertainties in Thai politics. Understanding political brand preferences among Thai voters is thus essential for

gaining insights into the Thai political system and for comprehending the evolving dynamics of voter-party relationships.

Literature review

Political marketing employs marketing strategies to support political parties in achieving organizational goals (Ingram & Lees-Marshment, 2002). This approach encompasses three orientations: selling (focused on promoting party programs), instrument mix (aligned with voter needs), and connection building (addressing broader societal needs) (Vankov, 2013). A political brand can be viewed as an intangible bundle of values, requiring voters to assess candidates and parties based on an overall impression (Lock & Harris, 1996; Smith, 2005). Influential factors for political brand knowledge include a party's values, policies, leadership, candidate profiles, and service delivery (O'Cass, 2003; O'Shaughnessy & Henneberg, 2007). The relevance of a political brand often shifts in response to competition, leadership changes, and the party's ability to fulfill commitments (Smith & French, 2009). Branding helps build preference and loyalty by providing reassurance and a promise of quality (Feldwick, 2002), enabling political parties to differentiate themselves and influence voter choices (Banerjee & Ray Chaudhuri, 2016).

Intangible emotion

Emotional factors such as trust, love, and loyalty are integral to building strong political brand preference.

Political brand trust: Trust is crucial in relational marketing, fostering commitment and reducing perceived risk



(Garbarino & Johnson, 1999). In the political context, trust involves confidence in political institutions and brands, shaped by a party's leadership and its adherence to promises (French & Smith, 2010). Trust is often influenced by the credibility of information sources, with educational institutions generally perceived as more trustworthy than government-controlled media (Saarinen et al., 2019). Trust in political brands varies across demographics; younger voters prioritize competence, while older individuals and men tend to value integrity (Vagorosson et al., 2020).

Political brand love: Political brand love reflects a deep emotional connection between a voter and a party, often grounded in shared values, cultural ties, and positive experiences (Ahuvia, 2005). This love can manifest as "love for country" or "love for party," influencing loyalty and enhancing brand preference (Zmora, 2004). Recent studies suggest that strong affection for a political brand can increase both voter trust and preference, playing a crucial role in political loyalty (Banerjee & Goel, 2020).

Political brand loyalty: Brand loyalty simplifies voter choices and offers consistency, which is valuable in an evolving political environment (Needham, 2005). Despite the growth of political parties in Thailand, voters often remain loyal to familiar brands, underscoring the importance of loyalty in securing voter support. In the current Thai political context, where multiple new parties are emerging, maintaining strong brand loyalty is crucial for retaining voter preference (Thai PBS, 2023). **H1:** Political brand trust has a positive influence on political brand preference. **H2:** Political brand love has a positive

influence on political brand preference. **H3:** Political brand loyalty has a positive influence on political brand preference.

Personality characteristics

Understanding personality traits provides insights into political behavior. Early research linked traits like authoritarianism to extreme political identification (Adorno et al., 1950) and conservatism to dogmatism (Eysenck, 1954). The Five-Factor Model (FFM) now serves as a dominant framework, describing traits such as extroversion, agreeableness, emotional stability, conscientiousness, and openness to experiences (Digman, 1990; Wiggins, 1996). Research suggests these traits influence political brand preference. For instance, Italian voters high in energy and conscientiousness often support center-right parties, while those high in friendliness and openness favor center-left coalitions (Vittorio & Barbaranelli, 1999).

H4: Extroversion influences political brand preference.

H5: Friendliness/agreeableness influences political brand preference.

H6: Emotional stability/neuroticism influences political brand preference.

H7: Conscientiousness influences political brand preference.

H8: Openness to experiences influences political brand preference.

Perceived political party image

A party's image, encompassing its leadership, policies, and authenticity, significantly impacts voter preferences.

Political party leader: Political leaders shape a party's brand through symbolism, slogans, and personal attributes. Leaders use media to build public credibility, with



their performance and personal image playing a key role in influencing brand preference (Jain & Fanesh, 2020; Surya & Jha, 2021).

Party manifestos and policies: Manifestos, outlining party promises and goals, are vital for voter satisfaction. Well-crafted manifestos tend to attract greater voter support and improve brand perception (Bara, 2005; Boonrat, 2019).

Political brand authenticity: Authenticity, which emphasizes consistency and a genuine connection with voters, enhances brand trust and loyalty, especially in crises. Authentic brands fulfill promises and uphold values, establishing a reliable relationship with voters (Beverland, 2006; Grohmann, 2016).

H9: The political party leader has a significant influence on political brand preference.

H10: Party manifestos and policies have a significant influence on political brand preference.

H11: Political brand authenticity has an influence on political brand preference.

Social influence

Social identity, local connections, and online discourse play critical roles in shaping political brand preference.

Social identity and norms: Voting often reflects social identity, with individuals supporting parties aligned with their social groups. Social norms, shaped by family, peers, and education, influence political behavior by establishing expectations within communities (Langner et al., 2013; Kleef et al., 2019).

Local roots: Candidates with strong local ties are often seen as better representatives of community interests. Local roots enhance credibility and are valued across different cultural contexts (Key, 1949; Arzheimer & Evans, 2012).

Electronic word of mouth (eWOM): eWOM, shared on social media and forums, influences voter perceptions and brand assessment. As eWOM is perceived as credible, it plays a direct role in shaping voter attitudes (Chu & Kim, 2011; Gensler et al., 2015).

H12: Social norms have a significant influence on political brand preference.

H13: Local roots have a significant influence on political brand preference through perceived political party image.

H14: Electronic word of mouth has a significant influence on political brand preference.

Political brand preference and intention to vote

Brand preference, strongly tied to brand identity, plays a key role in voting intention. Voters gravitate toward brands that resonate on sensory, emotional, and symbolic levels, translating preference into voting behavior (Sääksjärvi & Samiee, 2011; Ebrahim, 2013).

H15: Political brand preference has a significant influence on intention to vote.

Prime minister candidate and intention to vote

The 2023 Thai general election underscored the impact of prime ministerial candidates on voting intention. For instance, reactions to Pita Kimjaroenrat's disqualification and Pheu

Thai's nomination of Srettha Thavisin illustrate how candidate image and circumstances influence voter sentiment. Public protests against Pheu Thai's coalition with military-linked parties further demonstrate how candidate perceptions impact voting decisions (Ahler et al., 2017; Kotzaivazoglou et al., 2018).

H16: The prime ministerial candidate has a significant influence on voting intention.

Research framework

The framework for this study builds on political marketing and branding literature to identify factors influencing political brand preference. This model seeks to explore the root causes of political brand preference, establishing a foundation for analyzing the relationships between branding elements and voter behavior.

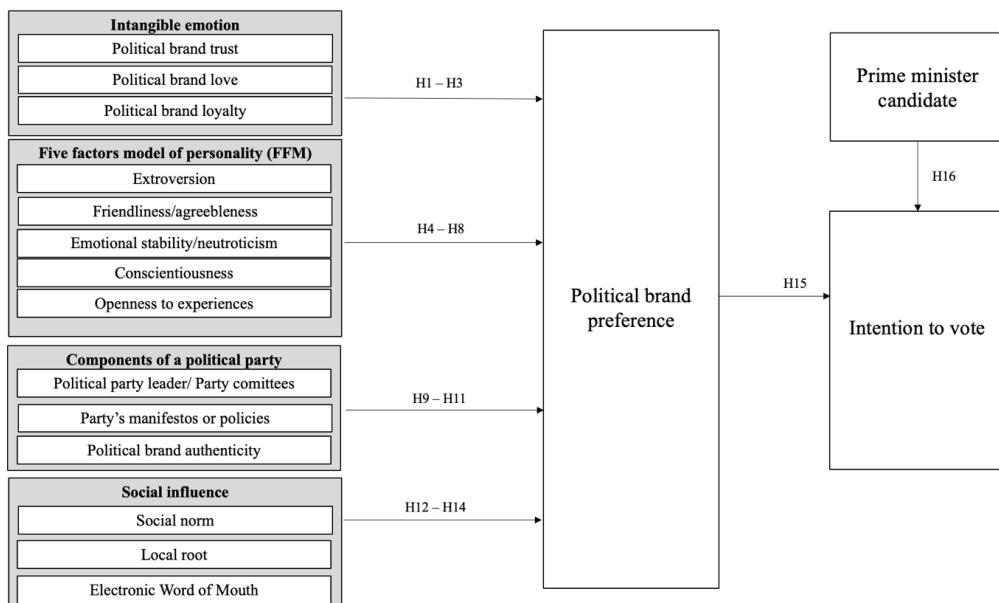


Figure 1 The Conceptual Model of Factors influencing political brand preference

Methodology

Research instrument

This study utilized a structured questionnaire as the primary research instrument to gather data on the political brand preferences of Generation Z voters in Thailand. The questionnaire was

carefully developed based on a comprehensive review of existing literature on political marketing, branding, and voter behavior to assess key factors influencing political brand preference, including trust, love, loyalty, personality traits, and social influences.

The questionnaire was organized into several sections:



Demographic information: This section collected demographic data such as age, gender, education level, and income, ensuring respondents met the criteria for the target population and allowing for analysis of demographic influences on political brand preferences.

Political brand preference: Questions in this section measured respondents' preferences for political brands, including support level, loyalty, and perceptions of various political parties. Responses were captured on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), to quantify levels of political brand preference.

Personality traits: This section assessed respondents' personality traits according to the Five-Factor Model (FFM), which includes extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, emotional stability (neuroticism), and openness to experience. The objective was to determine how these traits might influence political brand preference.

Social influences: Items in this part of the questionnaire examined the impact of social norms, local connections, and electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) on political brand preference, capturing the extent to which social factors influenced political decisions.

Political brand trust, love, and loyalty: Questions in this section focused on the emotional and relational dimensions of respondents' political brand preferences, measuring the degree of trust, affection, and loyalty felt toward their preferred political brands.

Voting intention: Finally, this section assessed respondents' intention to vote for their preferred political brands in

upcoming elections, providing insights into the link between political brand preference and actual voting behavior.

The questionnaire was pre-tested with a small group of respondents to ensure clarity, reliability, and relevance. Feedback from the pre-test was used to refine the instrument before broader distribution. The finalized questionnaire was administered online to facilitate easy access for the target demographic and ensure a prompt response rate.

Sample and data collection

The target population for this study comprised Generation Z voters in Thailand, specifically individuals aged 18 to 26 years, who represent a large proportion of new voters with emerging political preferences. According to Thai PBS, this demographic includes approximately 7.67 million eligible voters. To determine an appropriate sample size, the Taro Yamane formula was applied with a 5% margin of error and a 95% confidence level, resulting in an estimated sample size of 400 respondents. This sample size was considered sufficient to provide reliable insights into the target population.

Due to time constraints and the need for efficient data collection, the study employed a non-probability sampling method. The initial phase used convenience sampling to gather responses from the researcher's immediate network, including family, friends, and colleagues. The questionnaire was distributed via online platforms such as social media, where the researcher shared a survey link on their personal Facebook page and sent direct invitations to contacts within their network.



To increase diversity and reach a broader demographic, snowball sampling was subsequently employed. This chain-referral method enabled respondents to refer others within the Generation Z voter group to participate. By encouraging participants to share the survey within their networks, this approach expanded the sample and enhanced representativeness.

The combination of convenience and snowball sampling allowed the study to efficiently gather a robust sample within a short timeframe. While non-probability sampling presents some limitations, it provided a reflective view of the target demographic's political brand preferences and yielded valuable insights into Thai voters' behaviors.

Data analysis procedure

Data analysis began with initial data cleaning and coding to ensure accuracy. Descriptive statistics, such as means and frequency distributions, were calculated to provide an overview of demographic trends and general patterns in political brand preference.

To assess the reliability of survey items, Cronbach's alpha was used, with values exceeding 0.70 indicating acceptable internal consistency. Convergent and discriminant validity were established through Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA), confirming that the instrument measured the intended constructs accurately.

Following this, Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was conducted within a Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) framework to evaluate model fit and examine critical indices, such as the Comparative Fit Index (CFI) and Root

Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA). These indices ensured that the proposed model adequately represented the observed data.

Hypothesized relationships among variables were tested using SEM path analysis, with path coefficients evaluated for statistical significance to validate the relationships posited in the conceptual framework.

Lastly, multicollinearity was checked by examining Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values, which remained within acceptable limits, indicating that the model's predictors did not exhibit high multicollinearity. The results were then interpreted in alignment with the research objectives, offering detailed insights into the factors influencing political brand preference and voting behavior in Thailand.

Data analysis

The data analysis for this study commenced with a detailed summary of basic data collection, focusing on a diverse sample of 469 valid responses from new voters aged 18-26 in Bangkok and surrounding areas. This robust sample set the stage for subsequent analyses.

Reliability analysis

Reliability analysis was conducted using Cronbach's alpha, revealing all constructs had values above 0.7, confirming internal consistency. This indicated that the survey effectively measured the intended constructs. The high reliability suggested that the items within the questionnaire were well-aligned and contributed cohesively to the overall measurement.

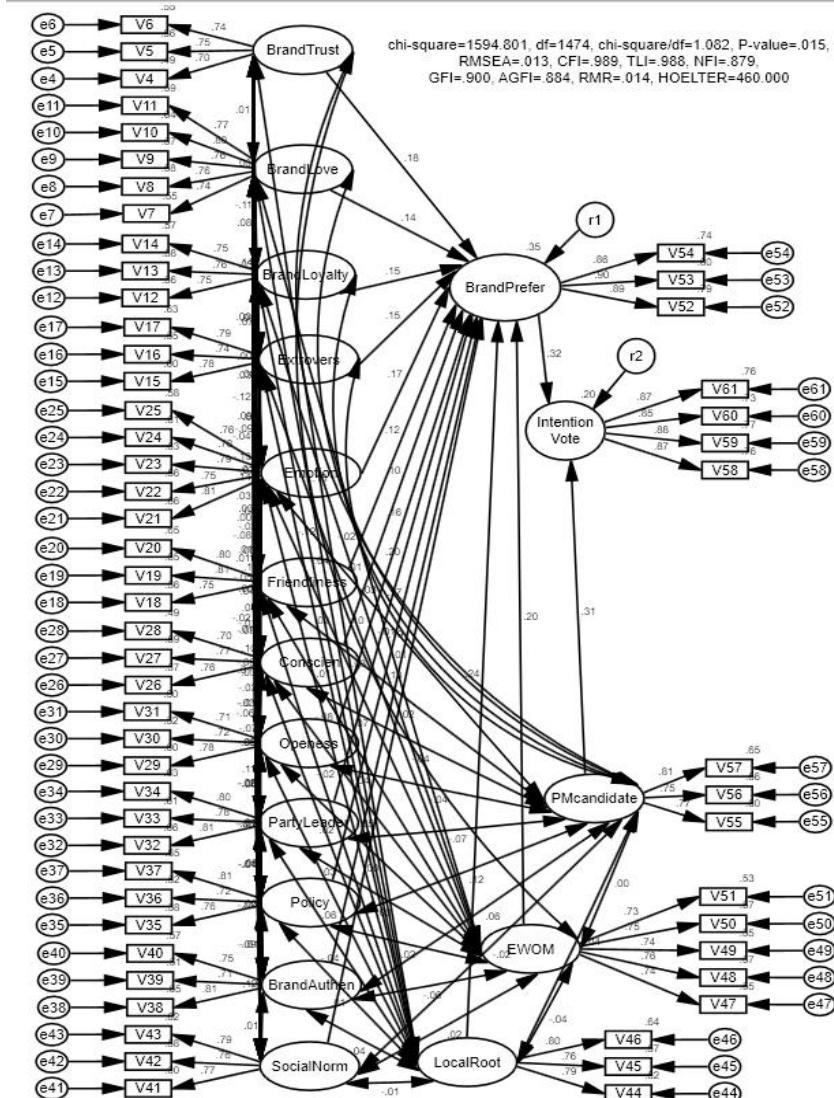


	CR	AVE	MSV	MaxR(H)	Int	PBT	PBL	PBLO	Extro	Emo	Friend	Cons	EWOMs	Prefer	Open	PPL	Poli	PBA	SoNorm	LoRoot	Prime
Int	0.925	0.756	0.112	0.925	0.869																
PBT	0.775	0.534	0.023	0.776	0.081	0.731															
PBL	0.878	0.590	0.020	0.879	-0.025	0.004	0.768														
PBLO	0.797	0.567	0.030	0.798	0.017	-0.001	0.083	0.753													
Extro	0.815	0.596	0.013	0.817	0.087	-0.113†	0.033	-0.001	0.772												
Emo	0.887	0.611	0.048	0.889	0.160**	0.138*	0.066	-0.003	0.019	0.782											
Friend	0.826	0.613	0.009	0.829	0.034	0.005	0.017	-0.009	-0.070	-0.030	0.783										
Cons	0.784	0.548	0.012	0.787	-0.031	-0.002	0.089	-0.014	0.043	0.112*	-0.031	0.740									
EWOMs	0.860	0.552	0.019	0.861	0.091†	-0.124*	-0.010	0.100†	-0.032	-0.071	-0.033	-0.051	0.743								
Prefer	0.912	0.775	0.112	0.913	0.335***	0.150**	0.140**	0.174**	0.098†	0.219***	0.084	0.095†	0.138**	0.880							
Open	0.779	0.540	0.016	0.782	0.009	-0.117†	-0.125*	0.027	-0.004	0.067	-0.093	-0.012	0.002	0.099†	0.735						
PPL	0.839	0.635	0.045	0.840	0.007	-0.038	0.030	0.011	0.039	0.102†	-0.033	-0.047	0.002	0.211***	0.002	0.797					
Poli	0.808	0.584	0.041	0.813	0.076	0.138*	-0.083	0.001	-0.085	-0.026	0.086	-0.064	-0.015	0.204***	0.012	0.085	0.764				
PBA	0.803	0.577	0.019	0.809	-0.003	0.000	-0.051	0.010	0.026	-0.071	-0.017	-0.073	-0.059	0.136*	-0.041	0.001	-0.012	0.759			
SoNorm	0.815	0.595	0.017	0.815	0.129*	0.014	-0.024	-0.004	-0.061	0.097†	-0.019	-0.002	0.022	0.130*	-0.022	-0.092	0.116*	0.008	0.771		
LoRoot	0.825	0.611	0.035	0.826	0.084	-0.041	0.014	-0.011	-0.081	-0.020	0.022	0.036	-0.040	0.187***	-0.061	-0.044	0.007	-0.037	-0.008	0.782	
Prime	0.819	0.602	0.107	0.822	0.327***	0.099†	-0.012	0.029	-0.017	0.006	0.026	-0.038	-0.008	0.052	-0.044	-0.071	0.125*	0.064	-0.024	-0.049	0.776

Validity analysis

Validity analysis was carried out to ensure that the constructs accurately reflected the concepts being measured. Content validity was achieved through careful selection of survey items, drawing on extensive literature reviews and expert

input. Construct validity was tested using Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA), which showed all factor loadings exceeded the acceptable threshold of 0.5. This validated that the items were appropriate indicators of their respective constructs, ensuring the credibility of the data collected.



Structural equation modeling (SEM)

Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was employed to test the hypothesized relationships between variables, allowing for a comprehensive analysis of both direct and indirect relationships. The model fit was evaluated using indices

such as Chi-square (χ^2), Comparative Fit Index (CFI), and Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA). The CFI values were above 0.9, and the RMSEA values were below 0.08, indicating a well-fitting model. These findings suggest that the proposed model was robust and supported the relationships hypothesized in the study.



The analysis also explored the structural paths within the SEM model to determine the significance and strength of relationships between constructs. Each path coefficient was scrutinized for statistical significance, providing insights into the influence of various factors on

political brand preference. The analysis confirmed that constructs such as political brand trust, brand love, and brand loyalty were particularly impactful, consistent with existing theories in political marketing.

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
Prefer	<---	PBT	0.285	0.083	3.433	***
Prefer	<---	PBL	0.187	0.064	2.901	0.004
Prefer	<---	PBLO	0.228	0.074	3.092	0.002
Prefer	<---	Extro	0.217	0.068	3.185	0.001
Prefer	<---	Emo	0.213	0.061	3.49	***
Prefer	<---	Friend	0.186	0.073	2.552	0.011
Prefer	<---	Cons	0.141	0.07	1.997	0.046
Prefer	<---	Open	0.224	0.072	3.116	0.002
Prefer	<---	PPL	0.263	0.063	4.187	***
Prefer	<---	Poli	0.243	0.07	3.463	***
Prefer	<---	PBA	0.263	0.068	3.858	***
Prefer	<---	SoNorm	0.183	0.069	2.642	0.008
Prefer	<---	LoRoot	0.314	0.064	4.914	***
Prefer	<---	EWOMs	0.28	0.069	4.083	***
Int	<---	Prefer	0.3	0.044	6.825	***
Int	<---	Prime	0.41	0.067	6.121	***
V61	<---	Int	1.04	0.041	25.153	***
V60	<---	Int	0.996	0.041	24.582	***
V59	<---	Int	1.044	0.041	25.265	***
V4	<---	PBT	1			
V5	<---	PBT	1.069	0.088	12.118	***
V6	<---	PBT	1.062	0.09	11.86	***
V9	<---	PBL	0.949	0.06	15.745	***
V10	<---	PBL	1.023	0.062	16.6	***
V11	<---	PBL	0.984	0.061	16.173	***
V12	<---	PBLO	1			
V13	<---	PBLO	0.993	0.076	13.151	***
V14	<---	PBLO	0.988	0.075	13.175	***
V15	<---	Extro	1			
V16	<---	Extro	0.919	0.065	14.212	***
V17	<---	Extro	1.044	0.072	14.54	***
V23	<---	Emo	0.974	0.052	18.64	***
V24	<---	Emo	0.933	0.05	18.492	***
V25	<---	Emo	0.892	0.05	17.747	***
V22	<---	Emo	0.86	0.05	17.229	***
V21	<---	Emo	1			
V18	<---	Friend	1			
V19	<---	Friend	1.128	0.075	15.058	***
V20	<---	Friend	1.091	0.072	15.142	***
V26	<---	Cons	1			
V27	<---	Cons	0.99	0.077	12.828	***
V28	<---	Cons	0.841	0.068	12.366	***
V51	<---	EWOMs	0.923	0.063	14.696	***
V50	<---	EWOMs	0.978	0.064	15.356	***
V49	<---	EWOMs	0.955	0.064	14.87	***
V48	<---	EWOMs	0.984	0.065	15.104	***



V47	<---	EWOMs	1				
V54	<---	Prefer	0.973	0.039	24.639	***	
V53	<---	Prefer	1.028	0.039	26.53	***	
V52	<---	Prefer	1				
V29	<---	Open	1				
V30	<---	Open	0.901	0.074	12.206	***	
V31	<---	Open	0.907	0.074	12.204	***	
V32	<---	PPL	1				
V33	<---	PPL	0.993	0.061	16.194	***	
V34	<---	PPL	0.982	0.06	16.314	***	
V35	<---	Poli	1				
V36	<---	Poli	0.887	0.064	13.754	***	
V37	<---	Poli	1.068	0.075	14.208	***	
V38	<---	PBA	1				
V39	<---	PBA	0.889	0.067	13.266	***	
V40	<---	PBA	0.927	0.068	13.574	***	
V41	<---	SoNorm	1				
V42	<---	SoNorm	0.995	0.07	14.304	***	
V43	<---	SoNorm	0.998	0.068	14.687	***	
V46	<---	LoRoot	0.97	0.064	15.191	***	
V45	<---	LoRoot	0.934	0.063	14.951	***	
V44	<---	LoRoot	1				
V57	<---	Prime	1.05	0.07	15.033	***	
V56	<---	Prime	1.003	0.069	14.503	***	
V55	<---	Prime	1				
V58	<---	Int	1				
V8	<---	PBL	0.977	0.061	15.926	***	
V7	<---	PBL	1				

In summary, the data analysis procedures validated the measurement tools and supported the proposed model. The study offers critical insights into the factors driving political brand preference among Thai voters, especially the younger demographic. This analysis provides actionable recommendations for political parties to enhance their appeal and effectiveness in elections. By systematically addressing reliability, validity, and model fit, the study offers a comprehensive understanding of the complex dynamics influencing political brand preference and voting intentions in Thailand.

Discussion

This study provides valuable insights into the complex dynamics of political brand preference and its impact on voting behavior among Thai voters. **Trust in a**

political brand emerges as a crucial factor, fostering stronger voter-brand connections by reducing uncertainty and enhancing confidence. This relationship, shaped by the party's overarching brand, its leaders, and candidates, aligns with prior research on the importance of trust in relational marketing and its ability to enhance voter loyalty (French & Smith, 2010).

Political brand love is also highlighted, suggesting that voters can form an emotional bond with a political party or candidate, often rooted in shared values and perceived benefits. This bond becomes a powerful driver of loyalty and can significantly impact voting behavior, creating a long-term commitment. Political brand loyalty, though potentially variable over time, consistently proves impactful on brand preference, supporting existing research that connects loyalty to



sustained voter support and brand resilience (Banerjee & Goel, 2020).

In addition, the study explores personality traits through the **Five-Factor Model (FFM)**, demonstrating that traits such as extroversion, agreeableness, and conscientiousness influence political brand preference. Extroverted individuals are drawn to brands that facilitate social engagement, while voters with high agreeableness prefer brands that embody unity and harmony. Conscientious voters, who value diligence and ethical responsibility, show a preference for parties with clear commitments and practical policies, which further validates previous findings that personality traits shape political preferences (Digman, 1990).

The study also addresses **party components**, including the credibility and image of political leaders, which significantly impact brand preference. Effective branding by leaders, if aligned with voter expectations, strengthens the political brand, while **party manifestos and policies** play a pivotal role in reinforcing this preference. Voter satisfaction is closely tied to the practicality and appeal of a party's policy offerings, confirming the importance of substantial, realistic manifestos (Bara, 2005).

Social influences, such as social norms and local roots, emerge as powerful determinants of political brand preference. Social norms, shaped by familial, educational, and communal ties, guide voter behavior by providing a sense of social identity and belonging. Local roots enhance candidate appeal by connecting them to local interests, reinforcing their authenticity as representatives. Additionally, **electronic**

word-of-mouth (eWOM) amplifies these social influences by allowing online engagement to shape voter perceptions directly, making digital interactions critical in political brand management (Chu & Kim, 2011).

Finally, the study affirms that **political brand preference** plays a significant role in voting intentions, as voters tend to support brands that resonate with their personal values. The image of the prime ministerial candidate also substantially impacts voting behavior, with voters preferring candidates who exhibit qualities such as competence, integrity, and reliability. These findings highlight the essential role of leadership perception in voter decision-making, supporting the assertion that relatable, trustworthy political brands are pivotal in modern politics.

Conclusion

This study contributes to a deeper understanding of the factors shaping political brand preference and voting behavior among Thai voters, particularly in Bangkok and its metropolitan areas. The results underscore the importance of fostering a strong political brand that builds emotional and trust-based connections with voters. With an increasing level of competition among political brands, parties face heightened challenges in securing their voter base while appealing to new supporters. Effective political branding requires a nuanced understanding of voter behavior, particularly among younger demographics.

The research findings underscore that a well-developed political brand, characterized by trust, loyalty, and



positive emotional connections, can strengthen voter allegiance. By prioritizing these factors, political parties can develop strategic, targeted campaigns that resonate with voters' psychological and social needs. This study thus offers a valuable framework for understanding and enhancing political brand appeal in the evolving Thai political landscape.

Implications and recommendations

This research offers critical insights and practical recommendations for political parties aiming to strengthen their brand preference and voter engagement.

Building trust and emotional connections: Trust remains foundational to political brand preference. Political parties should focus on transparency, consistency, and ethical conduct to maintain voter trust. Regular communication, transparent updates on party activities, and community-driven projects are effective means to reinforce trust. Political brand love can be cultivated through shared values, personal storytelling, and engagement in community events, which help in building long-term voter loyalty.

Tailoring campaigns to voter personalities: Understanding the personality traits of voters—such as extroversion, agreeableness, emotional stability, conscientiousness, and openness—is crucial for effective campaigns. Campaign activities should be tailored to appeal to these traits, for instance, by hosting lively events for extroverted voters or emphasizing unity for those high in agreeableness. This approach allows political parties to create

more resonant, personality-aligned messaging.

Leadership and authenticity: The image, credibility, and competence of political leaders are critical to political brand preference. Political parties should invest in leadership development to ensure leaders embody party values and maintain a positive public image. Authenticity in leadership and messaging is essential, as voters are more likely to trust leaders who demonstrate consistency between their words and actions.

Leveraging social influence and local roots: Social norms and local connections significantly shape political brand preference. Political parties should align their campaigns with the social values of their target demographics and promote candidates with strong local ties. Emphasizing these connections can increase perceived authenticity and voter trust.

Managing online reputation: In today's digital landscape, eWOM has a considerable influence on political brand perception. Parties must actively engage online to encourage positive discourse, address negative feedback promptly, and leverage social media to amplify their message. Effective online engagement can significantly enhance brand reputation and foster voter trust.

Prime ministerial candidates and voting intentions: The perception of prime ministerial candidates plays a decisive role in voting behavior. Political parties should carefully select candidates who demonstrate strong leadership qualities, appeal to the public, and embody a vision aligned with voter expectations. Aligning the candidate's



public image with the party's brand values can enhance voter support.

These recommendations offer a strategic foundation for political parties to enhance their brand appeal and connect meaningfully with voters. By prioritizing trust, emotional connections, and social influence alignment, political campaigns can more effectively navigate the competitive landscape and strengthen voter engagement.

Limitations and future research

This study presents important findings, yet it also has limitations that future research can address.

1. Interactions between variables: The study confirmed relationships between individual variables and political brand preference but did not examine possible indirect or interaction effects among variables. Future research should explore how these factors might interact to provide a more nuanced understanding of political brand dynamics.

2. General overview of variables: This research provides a broad overview of

independent variables influencing political brand preference. Future studies might focus more closely on specific factors, such as social norms or party loyalty, to gain detailed insights into how these elements differ across demographic segments, particularly age.

3. Moderator relationships: Due to time constraints, the study did not consider potential moderator effects between variables and voting intention. Examining moderator relationships could reveal deeper insights into the conditional impacts of factors like personality traits on political brand preference and voting behavior.

4. Timing of data collection: Conducting the study post-election may have introduced recall bias in participants' responses. Future studies could use longitudinal designs or time the data collection closer to election dates to reduce potential bias.

Future research in these areas would provide a more comprehensive perspective on the factors shaping political brand preference and deepen the understanding of voter behavior in different contexts.

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