ADOPTION OF BRANDING PRACTICES BY SELECTED POLITICAL PARTIES IN KENYA

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DECLARATION

This research project is my original work and has not been submitted for examination or award of degree in any other University or Institution of Learning.

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This research project has been submitted for examination with my approval as the University Supervisor.

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This paper is dedicated to my husband Gad and our children Ted, Florrie and Alva, for the endearing love always. My family is my strength.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AMA   American Marketing Association

ANC   Amani National Congress

BE   Brand Equity

CBBE Customer Based Brand Equity

CRM   Customer Relationship Management

EFF   Economic Freedom Fighter

ICT   Information Communication Technology

IEBC   Independent Electoral Boundaries Commission

IMC   Integrated Marketing Communications

ODM   Orange Democratic Movement

PBE   Political Brand Equity

UK   United Kingdom

US   The United States of America

ABSTRACT

Branding is growing globally as a priority for every provider of a service, product or an idea. Political branding which is a core facet of Political Marketing has become part of the political culture for most democracies. Kenya for instance held a general election in August 2017, following an intense electioneering period characterized by a variety of marketing activities, political party realignments and campaigns. Evident during this season were major political rallies, colourful road shows and attires, social media campaigns and advertisements to promote the different parties and their candidates. The marketing strategies of the political parties in Kenya, especially as related to branding had not been studied before. This study, therefore, sought to explore the branding practices adopted by political parties in Kenya as a contribution to the growing literature on political branding which is a new frontier in political marketing. The objective of the study was to determine how the branding practices manifest in selected political parties. A descriptive research design was deployed, with a sample of 9 the bigger political parties. Primary data was drawn from questionnaires administered to party officials and interviews with key stakeholders. Party web sites, advertisements and social media pages provided sources of secondary data. Thematic analysis of the qualitative data enabled the identification, analysis and reporting of patterns within the data generated in the study around application of branding concepts, strategies and frameworks. The study established that the political parties had implemented key aspects such as brand elements, positioning and communication to a great extent. It was further established that although political party executives generally understood the concept of branding, the focus was on implementing selected aspects, citing resource constraints, knowledge and information gaps. The findings also indicated that most branding was done during electioneering and campaign period and not as a continuous, long term strategy. The study concludes that a successful party brand must develop strategies for the brand management while building a united brand image on voter issues, party policies, party leaders, candidates and other services based on the core values of the party. All these must be correctly positioned and communicated in a consistent message to the electorate to meet the different target needs. Recommendations for future studies include studies to measure the individual parties brand equity from the customer perspective; this would be useful to build, leverage and sustain brand equity for electoral success. Additionally on the party branding, further research on separate components of the branding practices would reveal the performance and adoption level of individual political parties with an in-depth understanding to address challenges and strategies for efficient delivery of the parties brand promise which is the key premise of branding.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Worldwide and over time, branding is undeniably growing as a high priority topic. Branding is everywhere (people, places, firms, organizations, sports); very little remains unbranded in today´s world. Every provider of a service, product or an idea is not only differentiating themselves in order to stand out from the competition but striving to create an emotional connection and long term relationships with the customers. This has led to the development and research on the concept of branding for products and services (Kapferer, 2012). Keller contends that across diverse sectors where consumer choice of some kind is involved, branding principles have been applied without exception (Keller, 2002). As observed by Needham (2006) the purpose of brands in the marketing environment is to reduce complexity due to proliferating choice and information. Ultimately consumers use political brands and commercial brands in the same manner; to simplify choice. The implementation in politics is however relatively new with calls to investigate the utility of applying branding to politics. Given this diversity of the settings where branding is applied, Keller concludes that there is need to refine the brand theory and best practice guidelines to meet the unique realities of those settings (Keller, 2002).

Political marketing is the bedrock on which political branding finds its origin, which has become part of the political culture of most democracies including Kenya. Successful political marketers must strive to build a strong brand for the party and its candidates in order create competitive advantage and as a result win the most possible votes. In commercial markets, companies market their products/services to consumers; political candidates must also create an appeal to potential voters (Nwosu, 1992).

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Political marketing involves segmentation and positioning of voter markets, candidates positioning, political communication, campaigns and rallies, public opinion and political realignments. Cwalina et al. (2011) adds that maintaining and enhancing relations with the voter is also paramount. Parties and candidates have adopted different marketing strategies in this regard, including branding (Asema & Edegoh, 2012). Political marketing and branding is comparable more to service marketing and not products given the intangible nature of the "exchange' and as such its application should be more to influence the scope than to replicate the activities (Cwalina et al., 2011). Political marketing and branding therefore creates a new way of understanding modern politics.

This study will be anchored in the adoption and brand equity theory to provide a theoretical framework for the study. Adoption theory finds its origin in the diffusion theory developed by Rogers (1995). The theory outlines the process of adoption by individuals or organizations (accepting or rejecting) a new innovation and its attributes. Along with the factors that affect the rate of adoption, the spread of new ideas and concepts typically through communication and influence. Brand theory posits that suppliers will strive to produce and market a real or perceived quality attribute or characteristic of a product to capture a larger market share. Aaker (1991) defines "brand equity as a set of brand assets and liabilities linked to a brand, its name and symbol that add to or subtract from the value provided by a product or service to a firm/or to that firm's customers''. In Keller's (1993) interpretation, brand equity is the differential effect of brand knowledge on consumer response to the marketing of the brand given by the difference between consumer response to the marketing of the branded and unbranded product. The two theories will supplement each other as brand equity theory is concerned with how political parties have to focus on creating voter preference by shaping the consumers (voters) opinion and attitude towards themselves.

While adoption theory is necessary to interpret the process of diffusion of a new concept such as branding for political parties. The success and failure of a new concept depends on the rate of adoption. Innovation and branding creates effectiveness and competitive advantage; this has to be communicated over time through a social system.

Kenya is among developing countries in the world which is democratic and exercise multi-party with the element of political tolerance since 1992. This has seen numerous parties coming up which are ethnic and regional in nature. To enhance their national outlook, political parties in Kenya have entered in pre-election pact through alliances and coalition with various parties.

In the run up to the elections, these political outfits have been found to increase their visibility through marketing strategies. And with the growing numbers and intense competition, it is evident that the parties are constantly looking for ways to better their position. Some of the political parties in Kenya with sound financial base have invested heavily on this front and hired international public relations firms from the UK such as BTP Advisers (Mathenge, 2013).

1.1.1 Concept of Branding

The concept of branding has been applied extensively across diverse sectors. The early origin of branding was reflected in the AMA (1960) definition which can be said to be the starting point of branding, focusing more on the tangible attributes and differentiation; defining a brand as a name, term, design, symbol, or any other feature that identifies and differentiates one seller's goods or service from those of other sellers. From a technical view as observed by Keller, a brand therefore is created from the onset when a marketer creates a name, term, symbol for a product or service (Keller, 2007).

The concept of branding however has developed over time covering more aspects including the intangible attributes such as emotions, culture, image and relationships to the meaning of a brand.

Far more than a name, a brand is a promise to the customer to deliver what the brand stands for (Aaker, 2014). A brand can also be termed as a name with a specific set of values instilled in a product a service or behaviour which with a long-term commitment which makes the organization, product or person standout from their peers. Strong and favourably evaluated brands from the consumer perspective is derived from the personality, relationship and experience with the brand. Kapferer (1992) (as cited in Marsh 2010); highlights that the four important characteristics of a brand are attributes, benefits, values and personality. The choice of a brand name and favourability of brand association are equally critical. Needham (2005) sums it up; a successful brand must not only be clearly differentiated from those of opposition but be simple and aspirational.

From a practitioner's perspective, branding is a cyclical process starting from the firms input to the brand then to the consumer perspective (de Chernatony & Riley, 1998). The key to success in branding is to first understand the needs of consumer, the market and the competition by the help of market research. This helps to create a clear vision of the role the brand will play in the market which should match a particular need; functional, psychological or emotional better than competing brands. It is imperative therefore for practitioners to interrogate what makes a brand successful and to apply concepts and tools as a conscious strategy (Keller, 2002).

1.1.2 Branding Practices

Branding practices are initiatives undertaken by brand owners in an effort to develop and promote their brands. The main initiatives are; identification, communication, or classification practices which depends on the branding task objectives. The brand manager must be clear on the role of the brand to the firm and to the customer. For identity creating practices; Bitterman (2008) describes branding as a process, starting from the product name where the consumer can identify the product and use other brand elements to aid recall (repeat purchase) and enhancing the knowledge about the product. Kotler and Keller (2009) have identified the key brand identity elements as the brand names, brand slogans and other brand elements.

Another category of branding practice consists of activities meant to communicate brand offerings to target customers. Marketing communications represent the voice of the brand (Kotler & Keller, 2009) and therefore should be integrated across various channels to establish dialogue and build relationships with consumers. A third branding practice is geared towards classifying the brands and focuses on where to apply the new and existing brand elements or whether to create brand extensions. These branding options are referred to by Kotler and Keller (2009) as branding strategies.

Heding, Knudtzen and Bjerrre (2009), have identified the practices to involve deciding whether to develop generic, family, individual, transnational, local, fighter, producer or private/retailer brands and whether the brands should adopt descriptive, associative, symbolic, or alpha-numeric brand names. For the branding practises to be successful there has to be consistency, clarity, continuity and authenticity (Kotler & Pfoertsch, 2006).

1.1.3 Political Parties

Political parties are the hallmark of democratic systems worldwide. These can be multi – party or two party systems such as the UK, the US and Canada with smaller third active party. Obikaeze and Udalla (2015) highlights that "Political parties are defined as associations that are formally organized with the paramount goal to acquiring and/or maintaining political power either singly or in coalition with other similar associations, over the personnel and the policy of the government of an actual or prospective state'' (Dowse & Hughes, 1972).

The three key points to note is that the parties are formally organized; with the primary objective to gain control state power and lastly to implement party policies. As brands simplify consumer choice in commercial marketing; party labels equally simplify the voter's load of information to familiarize themselves with all the policies and help voters to identify candidate position (Needham, 2006). Several roles of political parties have been identified which include policy making and political information, recruiting party leaders and candidates, carrying out political education, articulating and representing societal interests.

Many parties however best serve as electoral vehicles only to be active to mobilise turn out during elections and are usually not about membership (Farrell, 2006). As observed by Downer (2013) the key role is the formation of government which underpins the social economic development of the societies. As organizations therefore, parties need branding throughout the electoral process both in campaigns and in office. Needham (2006) highlights the concept of branding of parties as the "permanent campaign''.

1.1.4 Political Parties in Kenya

The concept of political party formation in Kenya has been growing ever since Kenya adopted Multi-party system. Political parties, like the centralized state, are relatively new phenomena in Kenya. Currently there are 77 political parties registered under the registrar of political parties. The parties are majorly defined by ethnic and regional inclination indicating that some parties are unknown beyond the constituency of the founder. This fragmentation of political parties with tribal tag is a threat to national cohesion and integration (Kenya Human Right Commission, 2015).

Jonyo (2013) observes that a majority of these political parties are formed during electioneering period and immediately after general election, they cease to exist. In this sense, political parties are termed as vehicle for grabbing power at any particular electioneering period and after that, they dissolve or merge with other parties for the same purpose. Those who formed these political parties remain the sole party owners and they have sole decision on which candidate to be given party certificate to vie for various political positions during general election.

1.1.5 The Political party brand

There have been several studies accepting political parties and or politicians as brands (Scammell, 2007; Schneider, 2004; Harris & Lock, 2001; White & de Chernatony, 2002; Needham, 2005, 2006; Reeves et al., 2006; Kavanagh, 1995; Smith, 2001). French and Smith (2010) argue that parties are brands because consumers (voters) treat them as such, first consumers attach meaning to party names and symbols over time that which enable them to differentiate and vote for one party over another.

Secondly, to be able to process complex mass information and cope with the increased competition customers develop knowledge of the political parties and to learn and decide whether to buy or not to buy (vote or not vote) as they do with commercial brands (French & Smith, 2010).

Political party as a brand is complex and intangible, which means literally everything that a party does (Lock & Harris, 1996) including active promises made during elections. To unbundle this from a party perspective, O'Cass (2003) enumerates six key components of political products namely: the political party, policies, issues, leaders, candidates and services. The combinations of these elements form the premise of the political party brand. To succeed in the political arena, brand positioning is crucial within the party framework; which is in essence creating a unique identity for the political entity in the eyes of the consumer. Harrop (2010), (as cited in Bigi, 2016) notes that while there are several important marketing aspects in political arena, positioning is crucial and cannot be ignored. Positioning the party policy and ideas that are central and permanent to the party distinguishes the party from the competition; this has to be effectively communicated while aligning messages and emotions across various channels.

1.2 Research Problem

Political parties branding is critical in any democracy where different political parties have to sell themselves (policy/candidates) to win the electorate. Given that parties are fragmented with near and similar manifestos, party policy itself may no longer be a differentiator. Candidates and politicians on the other hand are increasingly portraying their own values and traits not consistent with party labels.

The choice of branding practices however will depend on the objective of the user; this ranges from segmentation and positioning of voter markets, positioning of a candidate's image, political campaigns and maintaining enhancing relations with the voters through a unified brand image.

A closer look at the membership and origin of political parties in Kenya, it is evident that the parties are largely dominated by ethnicity and regionalisation. The constitution requires that political parties should have a national outlook and a winning presidential candidate should have garnered 50%+1 of vote casts and have more than 25% in more than half of the 47 counties.

This has seen colossal amount of money invested in campaigns of these political parties with one of the strategies being branding. Therefore, political parties in Kenya need to up their game and find a way of branding their respective political parties and shed off the ignominy of tribal tags so as to have a national outlook for the purpose of national cohesion and integration. The average Kenyan voter needs to have an affinity and the parties need to cultivate brand values like stellar brands in commercial branding.

Various studies have indicated that political parties branding, both in developed and developing countries have significant outcome in elections. In the United States of America, Ditsch (2012) found that the influence of the Obama campaign in 2008 showed that the graphics and branding played a vital role in making candidates memorable and appealing to voters. In Australia, Hughes (2013) found that the Green Party of Australia is well positioned against their competitors over the years by use of the brand name. A study into the use of political branding in the 2005 UK general election concluded that the different colours of the three main parties each carried brand equity, which demonstrated the longevity of the brands with voters' associations from past elections (Lloyd, 2006).

In Latin America, Noam (2012) suggests that brand dilution alone is one of the sufficient conditions for party breakdown, fundamentally it is about the voter and their attitude as there is decline in partisan attachment (Noam, 2012).

In Nigeria, Worlu (2010) revealed that Nigerian political parties were essentially product and sales-oriented in their approach, applying marketing mix strategies based on the 7Ps (product, price, place, promotion, people, process and physical evidence). In Ghana, Tweneboah-Koduah et al. (2010) findings suggest that the existence of political brand association is enough to offer the party brand equity, as there are in the consumers' minds similar to commercial brands. In South Africa, the EFF party in a very short time from the formation garnered over one million votes in the 2014 elections to become the 2nd largest opposition party in South Africa. This has been attributed to successfully branding of the political party (Horwitz, 2016).

In Kenya, Ndavula and Mueni (2014) found that marketing of political parties in Kenya was relevant as all parties that participated in 2013 general election which included branding. Ombongi (2016) established that politicians in Kenya employ marketing strategies including political branding, political advertising and political realignments. Ohiwerei (2002) highlights that the political party, the party ideologies and manifestos can be likened to a company, its mission statement, the marketing strategic plans respectively and the candidates likened to a brand. This study therefore seeks to answer the following research question; what are the branding practices adopted by political parties in Kenya?

1.3 Research Objective

The objective of the study is to determine the adoption of branding practices by political parties in Kenya.

1.4 Value of study

The rational behaviour in political branding dictates that a political entity wins more votes from all the voters compared to the opponent. This research is relevant in Kenya today when most political parties are performing far below expectations in a 'democratic environment' to the extent that some parties did not win even one seat in the 2013 general elections and some only confined within a particular region or ethnicity. Therefore, political parties will be able to use the results of this study to adopt branding practices that will enable them to achieve their objectives.

The research problem for this study is developed based on the adoption and brand equity theories, within the confinement of politics although the theories have been applied in marketing by many researchers. The nexus of the two theories and politics would add knowledge and valuable reference material to scholars and academicians in the field of marketing, political science, sociology and management. This would also add value for other specialised areas on political campaign management, model building and political brand communication.

Electioneering period in Kenya has witnessed intense competition and violence due to the way political parties position themselves and communicate with the electorate. This has serious repercussion on socio-economic development. Therefore, the Government, its agencies such as registrar of political parties and policy makers may use the results to find ways to counter the effect of political branding. This tied to key issues such as national security and social stability would support the formulation of sound policies to govern what political marketing strategies politicians use to ensure neat conduct during elections and to the wider practice of political marketing.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter highlights the theoretical foundation of the study, brand elements, brand management and brand communication.

2.2 Theoretical Foundation

The following theories will be discussed, Adoption and Brand Equity Theory.

2.2.1 Adoption Theory

Adoption theory has been applied across many disciplines including Marketing. The theory describes the process through which new ideas, practices or technologies are disseminated throughout a social system. This theory gave rise to the theory – Diffusion of innovation. Rogers (2003) defines diffusion as " the process through which an innovation is communicated over time among the members of a social system through various channels ". An individual or organisation "adopts an innovation upon the decision to acquire the innovation, implements the innovation by putting it into practice and testing it and institutionalizes an innovation by supporting it fully and incorporating it into typical practice routines" (Murray 2009, 110). As pointed by Dubouloz (2014) adoption is a sequential process starting at the initiation stage where an organization recognises their need and begins to search for solutions. This then is followed by the decision stage evaluating different perspectives (financial, human resources) and adoption of a solution. Finally, this moves to the implementation of the solution and continued use (Damanpour and Schneider 2006). The four key elements of the diffusion process as stated by Rogers (1983) consists of; the innovation, which impacts a social system and is communicated over various channels of that social system, over time.

Wisdom et al. (2014) observes that the adoption process on an organizational level is more complex despite the similarity to individual level adoption. Individual within organizations may be affected by organizational factors such as hierarchy, culture and values even when they have the knowledge and can select appropriate innovations to solve particular problems (Aarons et al. 2011). According to O'Connor (2008) the properties of an innovation itself affect its rate of adoption in the society regardless of the individual nature and characteristics. Rogers's innovation diffusion theory characteristics suggest that an innovation rate of adoption is dependent on; the relative advantage, compatibility, complexity, trialability and observability to the user. Organizations like individuals; regardless of the innovation of interest can be classified as innovators, early adopters, early majority, late majority and laggards (Rogers 2003).

Greg (2003) outlines that innovation follows as a 5 step process 1) Knowledge, where individual/ organization is aware of an innovation and how it functions 2) Persuasion – from mass media and influencers, user forms an attitude towards the innovation whether favourable or unfavourable. 3)   Decision – the stage where the user engages in activities that lead to a choice to adopt or reject the innovation 4) Implementation – user puts an innovation into use 5) Confirmation – where individuals/organizations evaluates the results of an innovation-decision already made.

2.2.2 Brand Equity Theory

Keller (2002) defines brand equity as that added value endowed to products or services. Simply put, BE is the value that a brand name adds to a product or service. Brand equity theory was first developed in the late 80s as one of the key philosophies in brand management theory and practice (Gonul & Srinivasan, 1996). At this early stage the brand equity was not specifically defined but meant the financial assets of a firm (Tuominen, 1999).

David Aaker (1991) developed this further into Brand Equity model where it was distinctly defined and generated the value for more studies.

In his study Aaker and Joachimsthaler identified a set of four major categories of brand equity referred to as brand equity assets: brand loyalty, name awareness, perceived quality, brand associations and other intellectual properties like trademarks (Aaker & Joachimsthaler, 2000). These are the outcome resulting from the past investments and marketing activities (as opposed to if the product or service was unbranded). Brand Equity measurement would be assessed from three outcomes; consumer knowledge, product performance and shareholder value (Keller, 2002).

Keller (1993) approached BE study from the customer perspective. Developing the customer-based brand equity (CBBE); defined as the differential effect brand knowledge (recognition and recall) the consumer response to the marketing of that brand. In his model, Keller (2013) proposes that customers will be asking themselves four critical questions which must be answered to create that deep connection with the customers. 1) What's your brand identity 2) What is the brand meaning 3) What are your brand responses and 4) What kind of association and how much of a connection would I like to have with you? These form the brand relationships. Mirroring from a leading global brand Coca- cola to this model underpins its applicability. A point worth noting quoting from deChernatony and McDonald (2000) is the brand effect, on a blind test when the brand is not revealed customers favoured Pepsi to Coke and overwhelmingly the reverse when the brand is revealed (Smith, 2009).

Brand Equity can be built from; the brand elements; brand identity and positioning; other brand associations; and through brand commination (Keller, 2013). These are discussed later on the paper. BE can also be bought by forming alliances and co-branding. And by leveraging on the secondary associations BE can be grown.

Borrowing from the brand equity literature to politics, PBE model has been proposed. McDonald et al. (2015) state that, political brand equity is the effect that can be attributed to a particular political party, those political connotations that are uniquely associated with a party's name, symbols and personnel. Political parties/candidates should understand the importance of providing a united brand image to their constituents (Cwalina et al., 2010; Smith, 2001; Parker, 2012; Hermanto et al., 2014). Hence creating the political brand requires the antecedent and application of brand equity theory.

2.3 Brand Elements

Brand elements define the identity of a brand (Elliott, 2007). The primary brand elements such as name, logo, symbols, slogan, design, packaging; all have similar criteria for building a strong brand (Keller, 2005). The choice of brand elements should comply with six criteria namely; memorability, meaningfulness, likability, transferability, adaptability, and protectability in order to build, leverage and hold brand equity. In building brand equity, each element has a different effect and therefore it is important to not only choose brand elements but integrate them as well (Keller, 2003). Brand managers must develop brand elements and leverage the associations, build a strong network for all associations. All of the primary brand elements have different advantages, so it would be necessary to focus on developing more than one type of brand element (Keller et al, 2008).

According to Kapferer (2008), a brand is a name that influences buyers. This in essence is the foundation of a strong brand and the brand image. However, it is not only a question of the chosen brand name itself but considerations should include connotations associated with the brand and relevance to the product. The brand name is one of the most visible parts of a brand; and therefore it has to reflect the company's value positioning (Kotler, 2007).

Creating an effective brand name can be challenging (Kohli & LaBahn, 1995). Several basic rules in the name creation process have been identified; this includes consideration for names that are easy to pronounce, have a particular association with another word and should avoid names that have another meaning in a different language (Kotler, 2007). As highlighted by Rageviciusa (2014), the choice of a brand name can also be based on some person's name, a place, a life style or any other commonly used words, hybrid words or acronym words (Moderere, 2009).

Slogans or taglines are short phrases that are used to pass persuasive information about brand and it is usually a combination of words that identify the product (Keller, 2008). Slogans should be short, memorable and motivating and must reflect the essence of a brand. These must be repeated constantly in advertisements and other representative materials and communications tools (Kotler, 2007). Yushchuk and Dzyaba (2012), point out that a slogan is crucial in order to build a stronger bond between a brand and a customer. A successfully managed slogan can live in the peoples' minds for a long time; the Obama 2008 campaign slogan, 'change we can believe in' or Nike 'Just do it' are good examples across diverse areas. As suggested by Hemani (2012), in order to build a strong relation between a brand and customers, slogans should be catchy, relate to people's emotions and apply to their everyday life.

The use of colours in branding, built in meaning and symbolism when used strategically can be a strong element of the brand. Colours align well with the brand personality and can create connection and build identity. According to Bottomly and Doyle (2006), today most brands are associated with colours hence communicating meaning to customers. On the other hand, symbols and brand designs are reflected on packaging, websites and other graphic style such as fonts.

These are visual elements and are differentiated from a brand symbol that combines the visual element, tells a story and holds an emotional connection with the product (Healy, 2008).

Brands are also built through songs and jingles which give consumers emotion. Because of the musical nature, they are able to connect the consumer and the brand through non direct abstract fashion. Jingles enhance product awareness (Keller, 2008). Songs have also been used as an essential part for shopping for most of the customers in retail outlets consumers (Fiore & Kelly, 2007). It is a good form of communicating the brand message. Consumers want to feel something when they use product or service; they mentally rehearse the catchy phrase for the brand hence achieving memorability.

2.4 Brand Management

Branding is defined as the process of designing, planning, communicating and managing the brand (Anholt, 2007). Brand management includes effectively managing the tangible and intangible aspects of a brand. According to Kapferer (2008), it is the intangible that should guide the tangible. The intangible aspects such as emotional connections, customer experience and communication shape the perception of the brand in the mind of the customer. A brand should be the embodiment of everything a company represents and stands for (Kotler & Pfoertsch, 2006). This includes the promise and overall perception. In a holistic approach brand management is the DNA of any organization; its values, leadership, reputations, people are the essence of branding.

2.4.1 Brand Identity

Aaker (1996) postulates that brand management starts with developing a brand identity; which constitutes the core values and provides direction, purpose and meaning of brand. Brand identity is how the brand seeks to be portrayed in the minds of the customers (Aaker, 1996). Brand identity provides the whole organization direction and purpose. According to Rooney (2015), a brand can create more opportunities and yield maximum success if it has a recognizable identity. The company can control the identity that is sent out but not the image as it is perceived. Several brand identity frameworks have been developed. Kapferer (2008) model creates a good basis towards building brand identity to brand image. Suggesting that brand identity involves many dimensions and any communication from the brand; whether it is verbal or non-verbal, formal or informal and all should be sync with its brand identity. In his earlier work, the brand identity prism model, Kapferer (2004) identify 6 facets of brand identity namely; physique, relationship and customer self-reflection as external components while personality, culture and self-image as internal components that can be used to develop brand identity. Brand identity development starts with the characteristics and values of the brand which is then communicated to convey the core message towards the audience.

Aaker and Joachimsthaler (2000), identity brand identity planning model in four perspectives that the brand should be considered as, this includes brand as a product, brand as an organization, brand as a person and lastly, brand as a symbol. This covers several perspectives, with the brand as a product mainly focuses on the functional benefits; as a person will cover personal characteristics such as sincerity, and trustworthy brand while as an organization looks at competitive advantage such as innovation, environmental concerns, while symbol will enhance recognition and recall.

2.4.2 Brand Positioning

Brand positioning as defined by Keller (2008) is the act of designing the company's offering and image to occupy a distinctive place in the mind of the target market. Positioning may also be defined as a strategy that aims to make a brand occupy the minds of customers in line with the values with which it owns or is differentially associated (Gang, 2011). Kotler (1994) in the STP (Segmentation, Target, and Positioning) concept places positioning at the core of strategic brand management. Brand positioning in the commercial context focuses on how the brand is imbued with unique, credible and compelling values. By associating the trademarks with compelling consumer values, created through product experience and marketing initiatives; enhances customer loyalty, secures premium pricing and hence profitability (Marsden, 2012).

Brand positioning ensures that the brand has a sustainable competitive advantage or a unique selling pro position (USP) that gives consumers a compelling reason to purchase a particular brand. Even though brand positioning has many dimensions; Funch (2008), identifies brand positioning strategies to include; attribute positioning (Kotler, 2005); benefit positioning (Keller 1993) these include direct or symbolic functions, endorsements; and surrogate positioning (Aaker & Shansy, 1982) all these can be applied together or across different targets.

Against this background, three things are important to note; that brand positioning is a management activity, with a customer–focused value proposition, which provides the target a reason to buy the product. Insch et al. (2012) observes that a brand may very well define its position however to achieve the desired effect, this has to be skilfully communicated.

2.4.3 Brand Communication

Communication is essential to all human interaction in order to connect and create relationships. The role of communication in the business environment cannot be underestimated given with the ever changing marketing environment, consumer behavior and more so the advancement in ICT. Anew approach to counter this is Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC), a new paradigm in marketing. IMC as defined by Kotler (1999) is the concept under which a company carefully integrates and coordinates its many communication channels to deliver a clear, consistent and compelling message about the organization and its message. The communication channels include advertising, promotions, events & sponsorships, public relations, direct marketing, word of mouth and new media. Marketing Communication is the voice of the brand (Keller, 2007). Brand Communication therefore harmonizes communication across all the channels, with the functional and emotional brand value (Lynch & de Chernatony, 2004).

Brand Communication looks at both internal and external communication; with the use of stories, jargon and words that reflect the value of the brand. The role of IMC in creating and building brand equity has been studied. Two critical aspects in brand communication are the brand identity and the meaning transfer (Marsh, 2010). Marketers strive to communicate with target consumers in the way they prefer through various communication channels both over the traditional channels and social media, this calls for consistency and flexibility at the same time hence requires an understanding of integrated branding. This interaction requires managing customer relations and understanding customer behavior by using tools such as CRM, and not using these databases as storage capacity for names and addresses of customers (Kitchen & Burgmann, 2010).

In the 21st century customer communication is beyond advertisement and promotions. Customers want to have relationships with brands that result into loyalty. Marketers therefore have to implement new approaches to the communication strategies in the digital era. Customers need authentic communication and interactions. The communication should be direct, spontaneous and be flexible. Brands personality (sincere, trust worthy, committed etc.) can be used to communicate information to a target group of customers so that they can easily connect with the brand. Customers always remember the last impression that the brand persona left them with (Kevin, 2009). According to (Swanson & Kelley, 2001), it is very difficult to control negative publicity of a brand once it is communicated to the public.

2.4.4 Brand Associations

Brand associations may be defined broadly as attributes which come to the mind of a customer about the brand. These are what the consumers hold as impressions and images of a brand (Ahonen, 2008). Keller (2003) defines brand associations as that which is linked to the brand in memory; these translate to the brand image. The most significant aspect of brand equity is the brand association; as it creates value in retrieving information and is the position differentiator to the firm (Aaker, 1992). To the customer brand associations represent the reason to buy (choice) and hence brand loyalty (Aaker, 1991). Keller concludes that personal experience, commercial publicity, word of mouth etc. form and shape associations in consumers mind. That means that marketing communications programs and consumers' brand experiences should strongly reflect the desired brand knowledge. Favourability of brand associations relates to the choice of associations and the level with which it satisfies consumers' needs and wants from the brand. While the uniqueness of brand associations is useful in explaining the importance of brand positioning on competitive advantage (Keller, 2003).

Boyle (2007) explains that the significance of brand associations when used effectively defines the success of brands. Arguing that a brand is simply the network of associations in the consumer's mind which is derived by consumers from three key sources; the product attributes, consumer benefits and attitudes. Several researchers including Farquhar and Herr (1993) et al. have identified how these different types of association contribute to the brand equity. Brand managers must develop brand elements and leverage the associations while building a strong network for all associations. The secondary associations can be linked to other people, brands, places and things, which more specifically, links brands to specific regions, characters, events, other companies, and distribution channels (Keller, 2005).

In summary, Kotler (2008) proposes a systematic approach for the brand management practices/strategies; first by identifying the brand positioning and values; implementing the brand marketing programs; measuring the brand performance such as the BE and lastly growing and sustaining the BE.

2.5 Empirical studies

French and Smith (2010), in their study measuring PBE in the UK whose study on political brands and brand association measurement in the UK, tested brand awareness, loyalty, perceived quality and association was on the UK Labour and Conservative parties. It was established that both had 100percent awareness and high recall; on loyalty the study established that very sizeable minority shift party allegiance; perceived quality though not clearly defined it was noted that some events were judged positively/negatively which were the opposite to politics; while on brand association they were able to see patterns on key components strength, favourability and uniqueness using brand concept maps (BCM).

Further highlighting Riddle (2006), a research where a sample group that studied Conservative Party and Policy on Immigration. The group was asked whether they supported the Immigration policy as the Conservative Party policy and if they supported the same when unattributed to the Conservative party. The unattributed scored 12percent higher. This confirms that the citizens' interest on the party outweighs the policy. Again when the party appointed a new leader Cameron, the party ratings went higher. This means that the leader's image can be used as an assessment as part of the overall brand and is core to the brand association (Clarke et al., 2004).

In Ireland, McDonald et al. (2015) took a study on PBE of four main Irish parties through cognitive mapping. This revealed that Fianna Fail party had very high negative association including the mention of former party leaders and not the incumbent leader yet the party had the largest number of participants therefore creating the opportunity for rebranding. The other party Fine Gael had weak association which again presents the opportunity to track the equity. While the party with rich association, Sinn Fein could enhance those associations of strength and uniqueness.

 In her study political brand loyalty in the UK Scammel (2007), established that there was increasingly low voter involvement and political disengagement in the UK Independent Party and the Liberal Democrats. The study found that voters were willing to try new second order hence diminishing loyalty for party brands. This is useful for growing democracies to investigate various voter segment needs. Scammell (2007) also examined politics and image, the rebranding of Tony Blair showing how trivial details; appearance and tone of voice were significant to the re-branding of Blair before the 2005 general election.

Above and beyond the functional benefits, successful brands build emotional connections with consumers (Needham 2015). Adolphsen (2008) in his study of branding in elections campaigns where Barack Obamas 2008 campaign was described as unique and carefully orchestrated branding operation. TV adverts rated on the Democrat candidate Clinton and Obama found out that both candidates rated similar on the quantitative measurements scores based on policy, personality traits, logos, clothes. Obama brand was high on "emotional wrappers'' and "tiny details". That intangible difference could very well redeem political branding.

2.6 Chapter Summary

Reviewing from the extensive literature from researchers and practitioners alike, to be able to build a brand oriented party and successfully apply branding theory (Downer, 2013). The brand should first do a self-identification and evaluate the party positioning over time. Starting from the unifying core of the party leaders' image reflected on the personality as voters place considerable emphasis on leaders attributes (Marland, 2013). This can be done through opinion research. The party can package and offer branded leaders and candidates as an umbrella of cohesion (Scammel, 2007). As voters form opinion from the messages received and these intangible cues (Adolphsen, 2008). The brand should focus on building trust and developing long term relationships with voters (Cwalina et al., 2011). The brand must also focus on these activities as long term and deliberate strategy (Bigi, 2016; Scammell, 2007).

From the reviewed literature it is apparent that holistic branding will be key for political parties given the highly competitive environment they operate in order to create competitive advantage but more so to build brand Equity and hence long term voter loyalty.

By building the party brand equity voters would have that emotional connection and trust which would be the compelling reason for their support, as there is increasingly the challenge of voter apathy. The study therefore seeks to bridge the gap by building holistic brand knowledge and awareness in party branding which is essential in the adoption of the concept of branding. Further highlighting that in practice, branding as a term has been misunderstood to refer only to certain elements; whereas branding encompasses the brand elements, clear identity and positioning, integrated communication to consistently creating value to the brand.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter covers research design, the population of study, sample size, sampling method, data collection procedures and the data analysis.

3.2 Research Design

A research design is a plan, structure and strategy conceived so as to obtain answers to research questions. This research used both the quantitative and qualitative approach. A descriptive research design was used for the study to gather information about branding practices adopted by political parties in Kenya.

3.3 Study Population

According to Smith and Ablum (2012), population is the total number that consists of individuals, businesses and households that researchers intend to use for their study. The study population consisted of selected political parties registered in Kenya. There are 20 political parties represented in the Kenya National Assembly 2017, 9 of which have a representation of at least 3 members in the 2017 general elections as listed by IEBC (Kenya Gazette). These 9 parties (have a total of 261 members of parliament out of 290 elected members) form the population of this study. The list is attached as appendix 1. The remaining 11 parties represented in parliament, 4 have two members while 7 have one member representation. There are 13 independent candidates (www.iebc.or.ke).

3.4 Data collection

The study utilized both secondary and primary data. Secondary data was obtained through reviews from secondary information resources such as websites, social media pages - Facebook, Twitter; campaign material, advertisements and other publications.

The Primary data was collected through semi structured questionnaires via an online platform with a follow up from the research assistants who also guided the respondents where they needed any further clarification.

The data was collected from various party secretariats of political party offices in Nairobi Kenya. The questionnaire was loaded in three sections: Part 1 had the general information of the party while Part 2 and 3 covered the branding practices by political parties and the party brand respectively. The party secretariat was sent a notification and consent letter ahead of the commencement of the study. Data was collected by the researcher through an online questionnaire and direct interview with the respondents. The instruments were shared with the respondents on email to give them some time to respond to the questions. Upon completion of the questionnaire an interview was scheduled with the party Executive Directors for a short interview to ensure that their views are well captured and to explain any areas where they needed further clarification.

3.5 Data analysis and reporting

This study utilized both primary and secondary data, primary data collected was analysed through descriptive statistics and inferential statistics through SPSS. Descriptive statistics helped to draw meaning from collected data by observing the frequency distribution and percentage score, mean score and standard deviation were also used in Likert scale questions analysis. Inferential statistics was carried out through correlation analysis, to investigate the relationship between branding practices. Secondary data was analysed through content analysis that helped to draw meaningful developments on brand practices in political parties. Data was presented in graphs, charts and tables.

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS, FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the outcome of the data analysis in line with the objective of the study. The objective of the study was to determine the adoption of branding practices by selected political parties in Kenya. The chapter presents data analysis, findings and discussion. Frequency distributions, percentages, standard deviations and means were used to present findings.

4.2 Response rate

The data collection for this research targeted 9 top political parties in Kenya. The primary data was successfully collected from 7 out of the 9 selected political parties who successfully responded to the questionnaires. These were found to be suitable for further analysis resulting in a response rate of 77.78%. Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) assert that a response rate of more than 50% is adequate for analysis. This response rate was deemed fit for the study.

4.3 Organizational profile

This was to establish the number of years that the parties have been in operation and to be able to assess the adoption of branding practices. The results were as indicated on table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Years in operation

Year of registration	Duration	Percentage
1963	>50 years ago	14.3
1992	>20 Years ago	14.3
2011 – 2017	within 10 years	71.4

Source: primary data, (2017)

From the findings, the political parties' sampled years of formation range from 1963 to 2017. From 1963 up to 1992 Kenya was a single party state and that would imply the lack of adequate local literature on political parties branding practices. In 1992, with the advent of multi-party several parties were formed and this accounts for a period of more than 20 years in operation for the parties sampled in this category. A number of the parties sampled were formed between 2010 and 2017. This array of the sampled group would give various views in branding practices. From the findings it was evident that most parties are usually formed during electioneering period and there is need for political parties to adopt branding practices so as to invoke the electorate.

4.3.1 Party branding responsibility

To be able to assess how the Party structures the branding practices, respondents were asked to state the person responsible for the party branding. It was indicated that different branding roles are handled by different people while the Executive Directors were responsible for the overall branding. It was also noted that most of the branding activities were out sourced with the peak of party branding over the electioneering period although it was an ongoing activity.

4.4 Respondent's demographic information

This section analyses the respondent's demographic information which include age, gender, highest level of education, position and how long they have worked at the party. This was in order to ascertain the credentials of the respondents to assess their ability to provide the required information that would be useful to the study.

4.4.1 Gender

This was to establish the gender of the respondents. The results are as shown on Figure 4.1. With an indication that the male respondents were 57.1% while 42.9% were female. This shows that the political branding practices as well as decision making in Kenya is more male dominated. Though the women are fewer, there is significant growth in political decision making positions and processes as well as various roles in the management of political parties. These findings could comparatively agree with Emeka and Alumona (2009) who found out that there is gender discrimination in electoral processes in Nigeria as it is dominated by male both in electoral positions and secretariat management.

Figure 4.1: Gender of the respondents
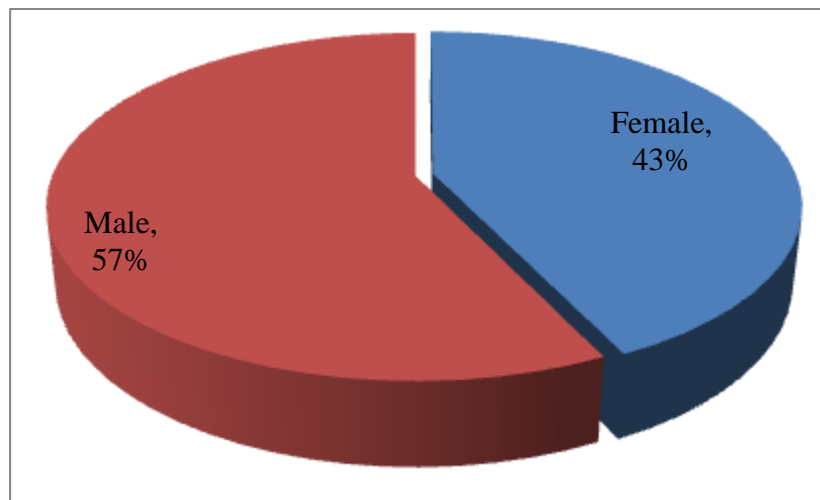
4.4.2 Age of the respondents

The age of the respondents was sought. The results indicated that majority of the respondents were between 26 and 35 years old while over 35 years were 42.9%, with only 14.3% being above 56 years as shown of Figure 4.2 below. This implies that majority of the respondents were young. The inclusion of the younger people in party secretariat is notable.
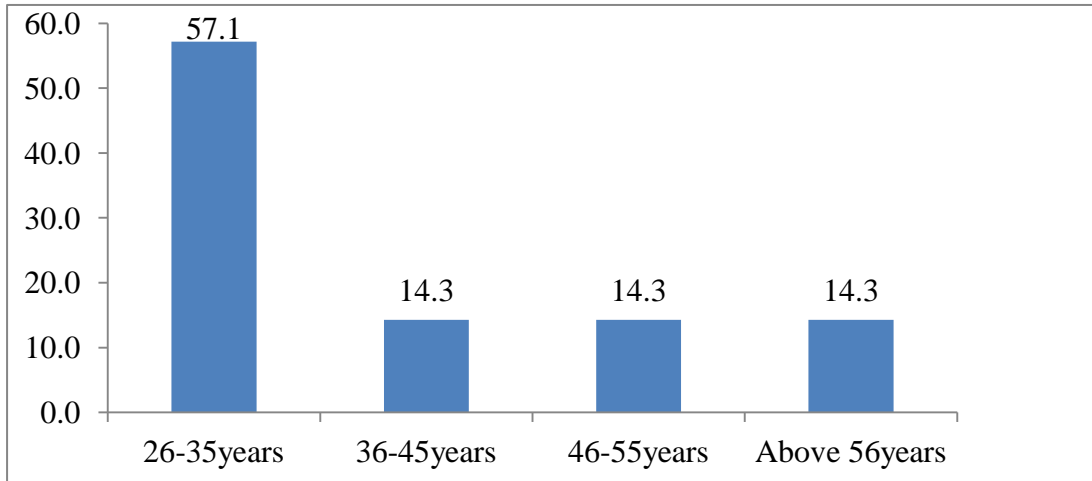
Figure 4.2: Age of respondents.

4.4.3 Respondents position

The respondents were asked to state what position they hold in their respective political parties. The results are as shown in Figure 4.3.
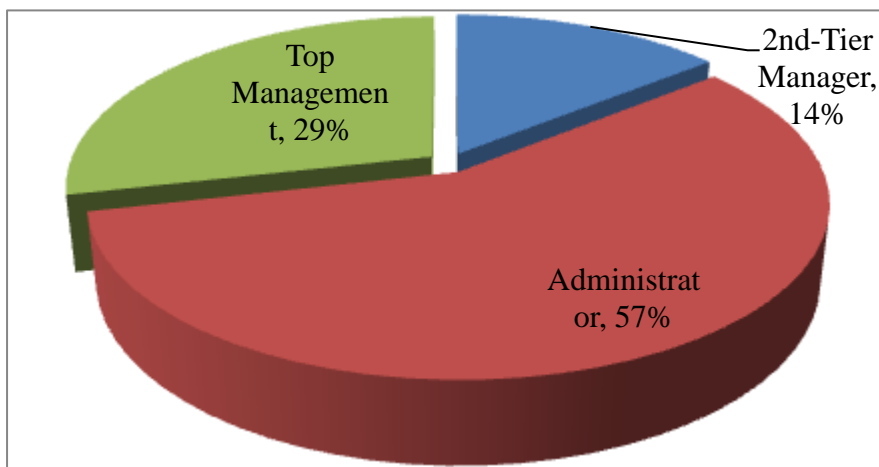
Figure 4.3: Respondents position within the party

From Figure 4.3, a good number of the respondents who took part in this study were administrators as shown by 57.1% while the second tier manager at 14% while the top management were 28.6% of the sampled political parties.

This implies that those respondents who were involved in this study were part of decision making of their political parties and their input is relevant to achieving the research objective.

4.4.4 Respondents level of education

The respondent's highest level of education was sought. The results are as indicated in Figure 4.4.
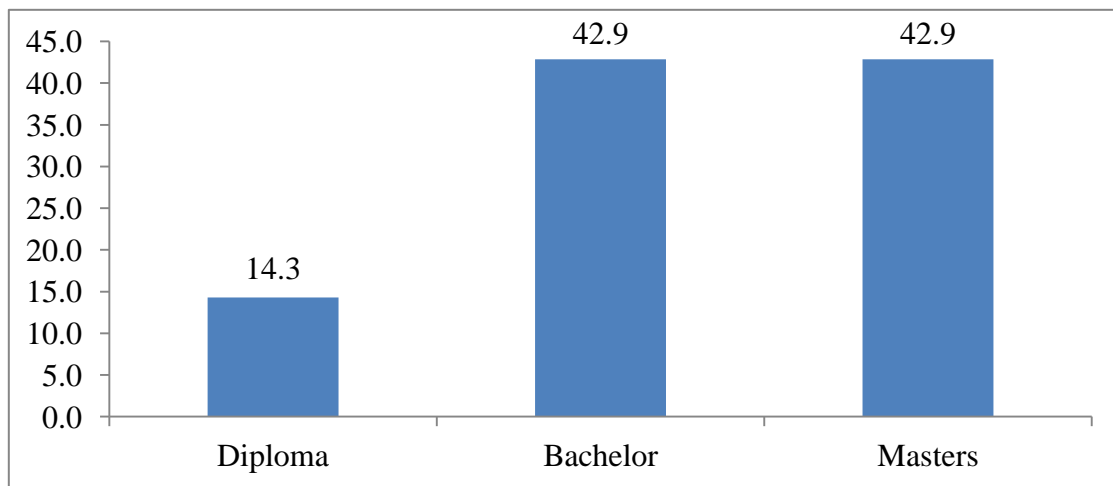
Figure 4.4: Level of education

From figure 4.4 14.3% of the respondents had diploma education level. 85.8% of the respondents were found to be graduates of which 42.9% are bachelor holders and master holders were 42.9%. This implies the respondent's level of education qualified their participation in this study. Further, those who are well educated are able to understand the importance of branding practices undertaken by political parties. According to Worlu (2010), respondents with above average education understand that marketing strategy plays a positive role in political parties. A political party is expected to be an intermediary between the people and the government. It educates the people on government policies and communicates to the government, people's views on government policies.

4.4.5 Respondents years of service within the party

The respondents were asked to state the number of years worked for the party. The results are as shown in Figure 4.5.
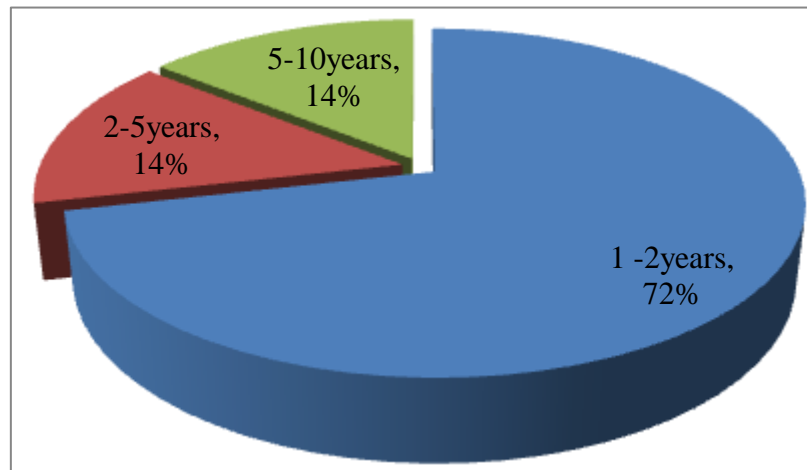
Figure 4.5: Number of years worked within the Party

The results indicated that a majority of respondents have worked for 1 - 2years as shown by 71.4%, 14% had worked for 2 -5 years while another 14% for 5 – 10 years.

4.5 Branding practices

4.5.1 Extent of political party usage of brand elements

The respondents were asked to indicate to what extent their party use the following brand elements. The percentage is the representation of the majority opinion of the respondents in reference to the Likert scale data which 1= Not at all, 2= small extent, 3= Moderate extent, 4= Great extent, 5= very great extent. Mean is a measure of central tendency used to describe the most typical value in a set of values. Standard deviation shows how far the distribution is from the mean.

A value great than 0.90 indicates that distribution is far from the mean hence there is significant difference from the mean. The Table 4.2 is the representation of the respondents' perception on the usage of brand elements.

Table 4.2: Extent of political party usage of brand elements

Brand Elements	Mean	Std Dev.
Brand name - Is simple, memorable , carries the meaning of the party brand	4.71	0.75
Symbol - The party symbol has meaning and is memorable	4.71	0.48
Color - The party is associated with a color that evokes meaning, history and emotion	4.28	0.95
Attire- The party uses attire which is consistent with the identity	4.14	1.21
Song - The party uses songs for identity, adverts , campaigns	3.14	1.86
Grand Mean	**4.19**	

Source: primary data, (2017)

The results revealed that a brand name which is simple, memorable, and carried the meaning of the party brand was found to be used to a very great extent with a mean of 4.71 and standard deviation of 0.75. Similarly, a party symbol which has meaning and is memorable was also found to be utilized to a very great extent with is indicated with a mean of 4.71 and standard deviation 0.48. The results also revealed songs were used to a moderate extent with a mean of 3.14 and standard deviation 1.86. On the use of colours; whereby the party is associated with a colour that evokes meaning, history and emotion, it was found to be practised to a great extent with a mean of 4.28 and standard deviation 0.95. The use of attire; whereby the party uses attire which is consistent with the identity was also practiced at great extent as shown by a mean of 4.14 and standard deviation of 1.21. The results also revealed use of songs for identity, adverts and campaigns was to a moderate extent, as shown with a mean of 3.14 and a standard deviation of 1.86.

4.5.2 Political party's brand positioning

Sampled respondents were asked to state whether they agree or disagree with statements in regards to their Party's brand Positioning. Scores in the Likert scale were calculated in mean scores and a standard deviation and interpreted as, a mean of less than 1.4 = Strongly disagree, 1.5 − 2.4 = disagree, 2.5 − 3.4 = Neutral, 3.5 − 4.4 = agree and 4.5 − 5 strongly agreed. The Table 4.3 is the representation of the respondents' perception on the political party's brand positioning.

Table 4.3: Political Party brand positioning

Brand Positioning	Mean	Std Dev.
The party holds a clear brand vision that is communicated across all channels	4.57	0.78
Both 1 and 2 above are shared in simple messages to the voters	4.57	0.53
The party has developed a unique value proposition	4.28	0.75
Grand Mean	**4.47**	

Source: primary data, (2017)

From Table 4.3, findings showed that respondents strongly agreed that their party holds a clear brand vision that is communicated across all channels with a mean of 4.57 and a standard deviation 0.78. Additionally, respondents agreed that the political parties have developed a unique value proposition with a mean of 4.28 and standard deviation 0.75. Again, respondents strongly agreed that their parties have developed a unique value proposition and at the same hold a clear brand vision that is communicated across all channels with a mean of 4.57 and a standard deviation of 0.53.

4.5.3 Political Party brand management

Sampled respondents were asked to state whether they agree or disagree with the following statements in regards to their political party brand management. The Table 4.4 is the representation of the respondents' perception on the political party brand management.

Scores in the Likert scale were calculated in mean scores and a standard deviation and interpreted as, a mean of less than 1.4 = Strongly disagree, 1.5 – 2.4 = disagree, 2.5 – 3.4 = Neutral, 3.5 – 4.4 = agree and 4.5 – 5 strongly agreed.

Table 4.4: Political party brand management

Brand Management	Mean	Std Dev.
The party has developed a distinct identity from other parties	4.71	0.48
The party has strong brand associations	4.28	0.48
The public/voter can identify these associations	4.28	0.48
Mean	**4.42**	

Source: primary data, (2017)

The results in Table 4.4 shows that respondents strongly agreed that political parties have developed a distinct identity from other parties, as shown with a mean of 4.71 and standard deviation of 0.48. Further, the results indicated that respondents agreed that political parties have strong brand associations, as illustrated with a mean of 4.28 and standard deviation of 0.48 Similarly respondents agreed that the public/voter can identify party brand associations, as shown with a mean of 4.28 and a standard deviation of 0.48.

4.5.4 Political party brand communication

Sampled respondents were asked to state whether they agree or disagree with the following statements in regards to their political party brand communication. The Table 4.5 is the representation of the respondents' perception on the political party brand communication.

Scores in the Likert scale were calculated in mean scores and a standard deviation and interpreted as, a mean of less than 1.4 = Strongly disagree, 1.5 – 2.4 = disagree, 2.5 – 3.4 = Neutral, 3.5 – 4.4 = agree and 4.5 – 5 strongly agreed.

Table 4.5: Party brand communication.

Brand Communication	Mean	Std Dev.
The party maintains communication with voters on different platforms	4	0.81
The party dialogues with followers on social media	3.57	0.97
The party message is flexible to meet different target needs	2.14	.69
The party message is consistent in style, tone, font across various channels	2.00	.57
Grand Mean	**2.92**	

Source: primary data, (2017)

From Table 4.5, findings showed that respondents agreed the political parties maintain communication with voters on different platforms. This was shown with a mean of 4.0 and a standard deviation of 0.81. Respondents also agreed that political parties party dialogues with followers on social media as indicated with a mean of 3.57 and standard deviation 0.97. However respondents disagreed that political party message were flexible to meet different target needs as shown by a mean of 2.14 and standard deviation of 0.69. Further, respondents also disagreed that the political party message was consistent in style, tone, font across various channels at as indicated with a mean of 2.00 and standard deviation of 0.57.

The respondents were also asked to list any other branding practices their party has implemented. Majority of the respondents indicated the use of merchandise as branding practices as indicated by three of the sampled political parties. Others were party branch offices which were branded with the parties' colours and symbols.

4.6 The Party brand

4.6.1. The Party membership recruitment

The study sought to understand how the recruitment of party members is carried out. All the parties responded that they hold membership drive during electioneering period and as an ongoing process membership forms available online and at party headquarters.

One respondent highlighting further that there is free membership for ordinary members, and premium for other category such as Life membership.

4.6.2 Prioritization and consideration of party brand

The respondents were asked to state what their political party considered and prioritizes as the party brand. The results are as shown in Table 4.6. The scale used was as: **5** – To a very great extent; **4** – To great extent; **3** – To a moderate extent **2** – To a small extent; **1** – To no extent. The scores were calculated in mean scores that were interpreted as 4.5 - 5.0; very great extent; 3.5 - 4.4 great extent; 2.5-3.4 moderate extent; 1.5 - 2.4 small extent; and 0.0 - 1.4 very small extent.

Table 4.6: Prioritization and consideration of party brand

Party Brand	Mean	Std Dev.
Party Policies	3.28	1.70
Voter Issues	3.28	1.79
Party Leaders	2.85	2.03
Party Candidates	2.57	1.13
Grand Mean	**3.0**	

Source: primary data, (2017)

The results in table 4.6 reveal that, party policies were considered and prioritized to a moderate extent as shown by a mean of 3.28 and a standard deviation of 1.70 which implies that there was significant deviation from the mean (moderate). It was noted that two of the respondents rated party policies consideration and prioritization at extreme ends (very small and very great extent).

Voter issues were also moderately considered and prioritize for branding as indicated by a mean of 3.28 and standard deviation of 1.79 indicating that there was great dispersion from mean (Moderate). The results further revealed that 42.86% of the respondents revealed that voter issues were considered and prioritized at a very great extent.

Further, party leaders were considered and prioritized at a moderate extent as shown with a mean of 2.85 and standard deviation of 2.03 which implies that there was significant deviation from the mean (moderate). It was noted that three of the political parties considered and prioritized to a very great extent and the same figure was obtained for those who did at very little extent. The results also revealed that party candidates are prioritized and considered at moderate extent with a mean of 2.57 and standard deviation of 1.13.

This also implies there is a significant difference from the mean as more than half of the respondents (57.17%) showed that the consideration and prioritization of candidates was moderate.

4.6.3 Stakeholders participation in developing the party manifesto

The respondents were required to state if party leaders, candidates and voters are involved in developing the party Manifesto. The results are as shown in Figure 4.6.
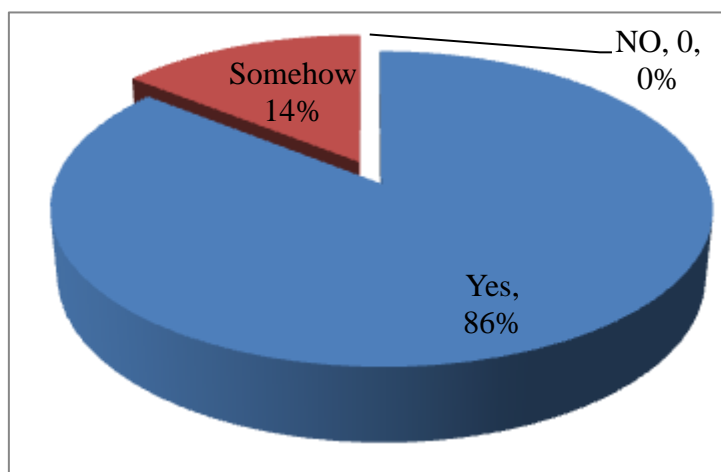

Figure 4.6: Stakeholder participation in developing party manifesto.

From figure 4.6 it is evident that all the stakeholders listed were involved developing the party Manifesto with a varying degree. The results revealed that 85.7% of the respondents indicated they are involved fully while 14% indicating that they are involved somehow. The study was also interested to find out if the party educates members on policies and manifestos.

It was revealed that all the sampled political parties are involved in educating their members on party policies and manifestos. 29% of the respondents indicated that their parties are involved to some extent. The results are as shown in Figure 4.7 below.
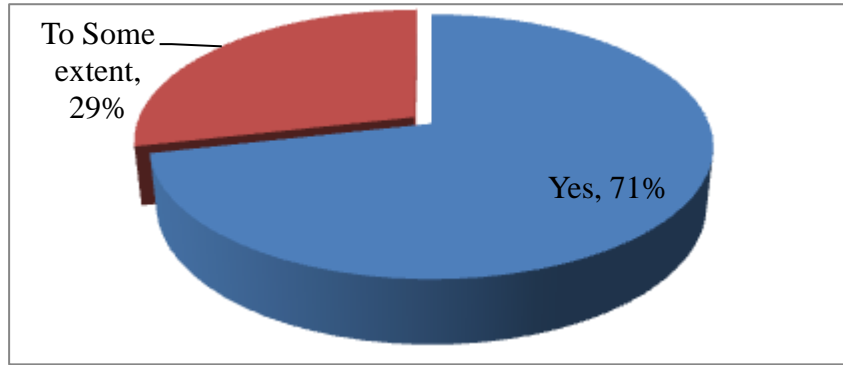
Figure 4.7: Party involvements in educating members.

4.6.4 Candidates as party brand

As the candidates are critical to the party brand, the respondents were asked to state whether they agree or disagree with the following statements in regards their party brand. The results are as shown in Table 4.7

Table 4.7: Candidates as party brand

Candidates as party brand	Mean	Std Dev.
The candidates represent the brand in its totality (public statements, image, associations)	4.14	.37
There is resource allocation for candidate branding	3.57	.53
There is uniformity and consistency in candidates branding	3.28	.48
Grand Mean	**3.66**	

Source: primary data, (2017)

From Table 4.7, it was agreed that the candidates represent the brand in its totality (public statements, image, and associations) as shown by a mean of 4.14 and standard deviation of 0.37 which implies that there is insignificant difference from the mean (agree).

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Similarly, it was confirmed that there is resource allocation for candidate branding as indicated by a mean of 3.57 and standard deviation of 0.53 indicating there was minimal dispersion from the mean. Lastly, the results revealed that the political parties somewhat agree that there is uniformity and consistency in candidates branding with a mean of 3.28 and standard deviation of 0.48 which reveals that there is insignificant dispersion from mean (somewhat).

4.6.5 Leaders as party brand

The Party Leader represent the brand image, the respondents were asked to rate the following aspects as per their party brand as very important, important, neutral and not all. The findings are as shown in Table 4.8

Table 4.8: Leaders as party brand

Party Leader	Mean	Std Dev.
Personality	4.0	0.0
Integrity	4.0	0.0
Trust	4.0	0.0
Leadership Skills	3.9	0.37
Grand Mean	**3.98**	

Source: primary data, (2017)

From Table 4.8, the results revealed that all the respondents rated party leader personality, integrity, trust and leadership skills as very important with a mean of 3.9 and standard deviation of 0.37. However, 85.71 % rated leadership as highly important facet of the party leaders branding while 14.29 % as important.

The respondents were asked to list any other areas they would suggest for improvement in the Party branding practices. Pointing that more resources would help to popularize the party brands countrywide while sighting the following areas as grouped; Branding of party national secretariat and branch offices; town hall meetings; external communication; education and financing; training of staff to handle office politics: party manifestos;

active social media interactions; continuous sensitization of the public; road shows and advertising; public involvement; communication - via media channels TV, radio, newspapers and road shows.

4.6.6 Overall branding practices for the party

The respondents were asked to rate the overall branding practices for the Party. The results are as shown in Figure 4.8.
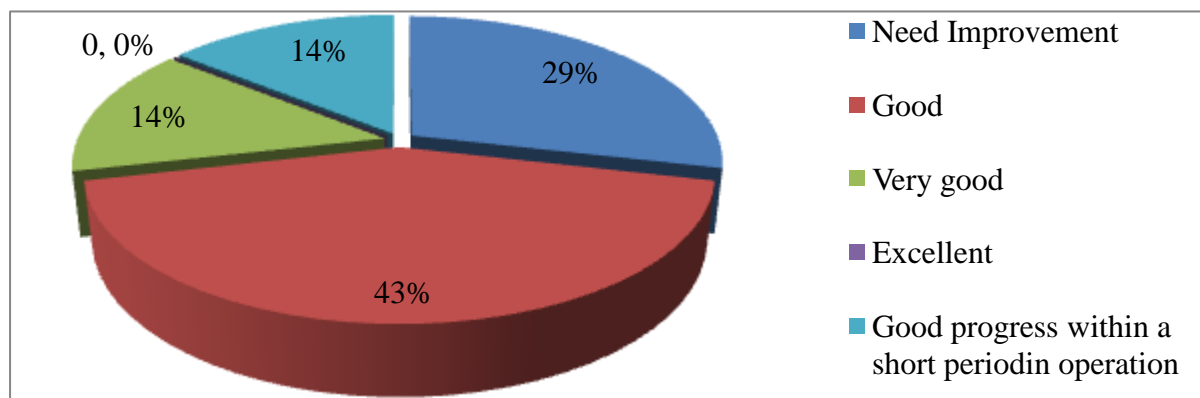

Figure 4.8: Overall branding Practices

From Figure above, majority of the sampled political party respondents (42.9%) indicated that the overall branding for their political party was good with 14% indicating that it was very good. While another 14% indicated that they need improvement. With a mean of 3.57, a standard deviation of 0.97 shows that there is significant deviation from the mean (very good).

4.7 Correlations Analysis

Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to indicate the linear association between the branding practices and overall branding practices for the sampled political parties. On the study of correlation variable, Pearson moment correlation was conducted and the results presented on Table 4.9.

Table 4.9 Correlation Analysis

		Element	Positioning	Management	Communication
Element	Pearson Correlation	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)				
Positioning	Pearson Correlation	.041	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.931			
Management	Pearson Correlation	.699	.594	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.080	.160		
Communication	Pearson Correlation	.352	.730	.838[*]	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.439	.063	.018	
Overall	Pearson Correlation	.492	.592	.301	.594
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.262	.161	.512	.159

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The correlation analysis shows that the branding practices had insignificant relationship with overall branding practices. However, they have positive relationship with overall branding practices for the political parties. The greater the correlation factor the greater the association. A positive correlation coefficient was found between branding elements and overall branding practices, as shown by 0.492- correlation factor , thus the relationship was statistically insignificant as the significance value was $0.262 > 0.05$.

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In addition, a moderate positive correlation was found between brand positioning and overall branding practices, as shown by correlation coefficient of 0.592, P=0.161. On the other hand a weak positive correlation (0.301) between brand management and overall branding practices was shown with insignificant values since the p-values was 0.512 which is greater than 0.05. Lastly, there was a positive correlation between brand communication and overall brand practices the study found positive correlation between as shown by 0.594, this relationship was found to be insignificant statistically as the significance value was 0.159 which is >0.05.

4.8 Discussions and Interpretations

Political parties in Kenya are involved in various branding practices in order to increase their electorate support base. Brand element is practiced at a great extent by various political parties using brand names which resonate well with voters as they are simple memorable and they have meaning. The ODM party for example, is associated with the 2010 constitution struggle when the Orange Movement won the referendum for Constitution change. The party symbols and colour are carefully chosen so that they have a meaning to the political parties. These elements were found in the political parties' attire thereby differentiating themselves from other political parties during campaigns. The parties have used colour to convey certain meaning; The ANC uses white colour to signify peace which is derived from their name along with symbols to convey meaning to electorate but also as branding element. Healy (2008) reveals that visual elements tell a story that builds a connection. The Jubilee symbol of a handshake which indicates 'we are together' (Tuko Pamoja) is a good example, bearing in mind that Kenya is intrinsically divided based on regions and ethnicity.

The study found out that brand management is practiced at moderate extent. The aim of brand management by political parties in Kenya is to remain relevant regardless of their political support base. Brand Positioning was practiced at great extent since positioning is to ensure that political parties are able to remain unique amongst the electorate and give them reason to continue supporting that political party. However whether the positioning is communicated across various channels consistently would require a more Strategic approach. This includes the values, voice, and culture both internally and externally. Brand positioning would also take into consideration fundamental changes in the political environment thus making political parties proactive rather than reactive, as voters easily identify a given need or want that is met by the brand.

The study also revealed that brand communication is practised at great extent. The political parties were found to maintain various platforms for communicating with the voters however as to whether the messages were flexible, consistent in style and tone so as meet different target needs is to a small extent. In developing branding strategies, the role of a voter is inevitable being the audience for branding messages. The findings revealed that party policies and voter issues were prioritized and considered ahead of party leaders and party candidates as far as political party branding is concerned. It has emerged in Kenya, voter issues are fundamental as compared to individuals within the party. In fact, as witnessed the electorate have voted for the 'party' and not for the candidate and that explains the need for politicians to strive towards developing strong party brands.

The political leaders were found to be key to the party brand at great extent as they represent the image of the party and on resources allocation all the parties' prioritized the party leaders branding. The party leaders being part of the brand image was considered as very important as far as their personality, integrity and trust are concerned.

Brand personality is conceptualized based on the way that people attribute personality characteristics to other people during everyday interaction. As noted by Duus et al., (2001) a country's political leader's negative image and reputation would not only impact their political brand negatively but the national brand equity abroad.

The overall branding practice was found to be good and there was relationship between overall branding practices and branding element, brand positioning, brand management as well as brand communication. However, brand management which is the epicentre of branding was found to have high effect on overall branding practices and it was followed closely by brand communication. This implies for effective political party branding, there is need of proper management of branding elements, brand positioning and brand communication. The findings of this study agree with Bigi (2016), that political candidates and parties must distinguish themselves in the conceptual policy space by creating and managing a political brand and a specific set of values. In summary as observed by Prete (2015), (as cited in Bigi (2016), "Parties and candidates must implement the design and construct of a brand and determine its positioning in view of internal and external variables''. These include consideration on the party characteristics and internal resources; the external factors on general political, legislative issues plus other competitive factors such as the media and peculiarities of the electorate. The correlational analysis revealed that brand element; positioning, management and communication had a relationship with overall branding practices. However, the relationship was found to insignificant (P>0.05).

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter summarizes the findings from chapter four. The chapter also highlights the conclusions and the recommendations of the study in line with the objective of the study. The objective of the study was to determine the Adoption of branding practices by selected political parties in Kenya.

5.2 Summary of the findings

The aim of this study was to determine the adoption of branding practices by political parties in Kenya. Nine political parties with at least 3 member representations in the National Assembly were purposely selected to participate in the study. Based on the adoption theory, these parties would be considered to have adopted branding practices based on the findings and reviews from the secondary information resources and the analysis from the primary data that was collected through questionnaire and interviews. From the finding however there was no brand manager or brand coordinator in charge of branding activities within the political parties as this was a shared role contrary to the practice in commercial markets. Most of the branding activities were outsourced from external companies as revealed from the interviews.

On the party brand; the prioritization and consideration of party brand was at moderate extent with policies and voter issues been considered and prioritized ahead of party leaders and party candidates. This is true of strong brands focusing on the customer's needs. Brand positioning was practiced to a great extent highlighting voter issues and policies as a priority. This should therefore be strongly reflected on the brand elements to evoke a particular vision to the electorate. It is noted that however great a brand positioning may be, the brand has to strategically communicate the positioning to the target audience.

The parties must therefore focus on the consistency, flexibility and even the tone while targeting different voter segments. Needham (2006) observes that successful parties must link their external presentational strategies to a set of core values, in order to gain or retain voter support.

On brand image the party leader personifies the brand. The parties sampled agree that party leader's personality, honesty, trust and leadership skills are important. The parties must therefore investigate the voter's perception on the party leader's image through research and develop these attributes in their leaders. It was found that candidates are critical to the party brand since they represent the brand in its totality (public statements, image and associations) hence resources should be allocated for candidate branding to ensure uniformity and consistency to avoid conflicting position that would dilute the party brand equity.

Majority of the sampled respondents indicated that party leaders, party candidates and voters are involved in developing the party manifesto. The parties were also found to educate their members on policies and manifestoes which are positive strategies towards building brand equity. To enhance this relationship and create the 'emotional connection' the party would need to explore further strategies to enhance the voter relationship and create that strong compelling reason to support the party brand now and in the future.

5.3 Conclusions

The following conclusions were made based on the findings. In politics, beyond voter issues, policies and services a party image is not only created from the marketing activities but through the use of visual impressions that are communicated by the party candidate's (people) physical presence, media appearances, experiences and the record of political leaders; all this information is integrated in the minds of citizens. Therefore, brand management is an essential aspect to the overall branding practices.

Robust brand management practices would ensure that memorable and meaningful brand values are developed for political parties, correctly positioned within the political space and communicated to the electorates in consistent message so as to meet different target needs. Therefore, political parties brand managers should evaluate whether their intended brand strategies are being achieved.

5.4 Limitations of the study

At the time of the study, the political climate in the country was unsettled following the outcome of the 2017 Presidential elections that was annulled by the Supreme Court. It was difficult for the researcher to collect data from some political parties. Some of the sampled respondents did honour their appointment while others were sceptical about the motive of the study at this electioneering period and therefore were reluctant to participate. The researcher assured them the research is purely academic and the findings would be useful to the political parties. Some of the party Executive Directors who were the target group for the interviews were engaged with the ongoing Political activities and therefore were unavailable to respond to the research.

5.5 Recommendations

The following recommendations were made based on the conclusions; In developing the brand elements such as songs, names, attires and colours, political parties should put into the consideration the expectations of voters through shared knowledge, images of parties and candidates, meanings and symbols associated with the experience of voting, and personal concerns around the participation in political activities.

Above the main focus on branding of political parties and candidates to design a political brand that is distinguishable from those of their opponents and preferred by potential voters, especially the targeted segment of voters; the parties must continually work on their brand equity which encompasses the awareness and understanding of possible brand visibility risks. Brand value or equity is constantly affected by every respective organization actions. Even though a political party may have a strong brand in the market, voters who are well informed would easily detect any association with negative events and associate it with the brand image. Therefore, political parties should take into consideration every action so that their brand are not misconstrue with negative associations.

The study also recommends that political leaders and candidates should personify all proposed values such as integrity, trust, personality and issues as well as associate their name with the goal of creating a symbol which subsequently connect the political party to the candidates and ultimately appease the voters with a strong personal brand. This is informed by the main research problem that most political parties in Kenya coalesce around individual personalities and ethnic communities (Jonyo, 2013) rather than the focus on ideologies towards national unity.

5.6 Suggestions for further studies

This study was confined to selected parties that have adopted branding practices from the data reviewed; further studies covering individual parties would reveal more on the branding practices by political parties and the adoption level. Focusing on brand management, positioning, communication and brand associations as the key elements of building branding equity, further studies on each aspect would provide an in-depth understanding on the performance, challenges and strategies for efficient delivery of the parties brand promise.

Further a study on the consumer/voter perception on the party's image and brand equity would be useful as the customer mind set measures (Awareness, Association, Loyalty, and Perceived quality) is and should always be the priority on the overall branding of the parties.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: List of selected parties by representation in Parliament 2017

		Political Parties	Elected Members
Composition of Kenya's Parliament 2017			
1		Jubilee Party	140
2		Orange Democratic Movement	62
3		Wiper Democratic Movement	19
4		Amani National Congress	12
5		Forum for the Restoration of Democracy – Kenya	10
6		Kenya African National Union	08
7		Economic Freedom Party	04
8		Maendeleo Chap Chap Party	03
9		Party for Development and Reform	03

Source: Kenya Gazette, (2017)

APPENDIX 2: Consent Letter

Lillian Opiyo
Box 16491 - 00100
Tel 0722705788
Nairobi

RE: Data Collection
Research Topic – Adoption of Branding Practices by Political Parties In Kenya.

I write to request your participation on a research based on the above subject.

I am a student at the University of Nairobi, currently undertaking my final research in MSc – Marketing (Brand & Sales). Please find attached a letter of introduction from the University of Nairobi.

The objective of the research is to establish to what extent the political parties in Kenya have adopted branding practices. This will be useful in identifying opportunities and any gaps towards improving the efficiency and effectiveness of branding practices in the political arena.

The research questionnaire is short and simple. It is loaded in three parts with Likert type questions which should take less than 10minutes. This has been loaded online under google forms, the research link will be sent to you on email on receipt of your acceptance to participate. We will then schedule a brief session to meet you for an interview which is a follow up on the research discussions.

The data collected will be treated with utmost confidentiality and will be used strictly for academic purposes.

Thank you.
Yours sincerely,
Lillian Opiyo

Political parties branding survey - Author Lillian Opiyo

Part One

* Required

1. **Name of party (optional)**

2. **Year of registration**

3. **Location of headquarters**

4. **Name of respondent (Optional)**

5. **Gender**
   Mark only one oval.

   ◯ Female
   ◯ Male

6. **Your age**
   Mark only one oval.

   ◯ Below 25years
   ◯ 26-35years
   ◯ 36-45years
   ◯ 46-55years
   ◯ Above 56years

7. **Position in the party**
   Mark only one oval.

   ◯ Top Management
   ◯ 2nd-Tier Manager
   ◯ Administrator

8. **Highest level of education**

  Mark only one oval.

  - ( ) Secondary
  - ( ) Diploma
  - ( ) Bachelor
  - ( ) Masters
  - ( ) PhD

9. **How long have you worked at the party**

  Mark only one oval.

  - ( ) Below 1 year
  - ( ) 1 -2years
  - ( ) 2-5years
  - ( ) 5-10years
  - ( ) Above 10years

10. **Who is in charge of the party branding?**

Part Two

Branding Practices

11. **In your opinion please indicate to what extent your party use the following brand elements**

  Mark only one oval per row.

	Very large extent	Large extent	Moderate extent	Small extent	Not at all
1. Brand name - Is simple, memorable , carries the meaning of the party brand	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
Symbol - The party symbol has meaning and is memorable	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
Colour - The party is associated with a colour that evokes meaning, history and emotion	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
Song - The party uses songs for identity, adverts , campaigns	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
Attire- The party uses attire which is consistent with the identity	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )

12. **State whether you agree or disagree with the following statements in regards to your Party's brand Positioning**

   Mark only one oval per row.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The party has developed a unique value proposition	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
The party holds a clear brand vision that is communicated across all channels	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Both 1 and 2 above are shared in simple messages to the voters	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

13. **State whether you agree or disagree with the following statements in regards to your party brand management** *

   Mark only one oval per row.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Somewhat	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The party has developed a distinct identity from other parties	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
The party has strong brand associations	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
The public/voter can identify these associations	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

14. **State whether you agree or disagree with the following statements in regards to your brand communication**

   Mark only one oval per row.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Somewhat	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The party message is consistent in style, tone, font across various channels	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
The party message is flexible to meet different target needs	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
The party dialogues with followers on social media	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
The party maintains communication with voters on different platforms	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

15. **List any other branding practices your party has implemented**

Part Three
The Party Brand

16. **How does the party recruit its members?**

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

17. **The party considers and prioritizes the following as the party brand**
    Mark only one oval per row.

	1	2	3	4	5
Party Leaders	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Party Candidates	◯		◯	◯	◯
Party Policies	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Voter issues	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

18. **All the stakeholders mentioned in Q1 above are involved in developing the party Manifesto**
    Mark only one oval.

    ◯ Yes

    ◯ No

    ◯ Maybe

19. **The party educates members on Policies and Manifestos**
    Mark only one oval.

    ◯ Yes

    ◯ No

    ◯ To Some extent

20. **As the candidates are critical to the party brand; please state whether you agree or disagree with the following statements in regards to your party brand**

Mark only one oval per row.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Somewhat	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The candidates represent the brand in its totality (public statements, image, associations)	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
There is resource allocation for candidate branding	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
There is uniformity and consistency in candidates branding	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

21. **The Party Leader represent the brand image, please rate the following aspects as per your party brand**

Mark only one oval per row.

	Very Important	Important	Neutral	Not Important
Personality	◯	◯	◯	◯
Leadership Skills	◯	◯	◯	◯
Integrity	◯	◯	◯	◯
Trust	◯	◯	◯	◯

22. **What other areas would you suggest that can be improved in the Party branding practices**

23. **How would you rate the overall branding practices for the Party**

Mark only one oval.

◯ Excellent

◯ Very good

◯ Good

◯ Need Improvement

◯ Other:

APPENDIX 4: Interview Guide

Political Parties Branding Survey – By Lillian Opiyo

Introduction

Thank you for your participation in this research.

The objective of the research is to determine the adoption of branding practices by selected top political parties in Kenya. Having administered a questionnaire that covers the key aspects will have a few open ended questions to close on the study.

Overview

Branding practice entails developing brand elements, brand positioning, brand communication, and brand management while leveraging on brand associations as a means to building and growing brand equity (value). Above all branding is about the delivery of the brand promise**.**

1. What would you say about the overall branding of your party?

2. Is branding Important to the party (Yes / No). How would you rate the importance of branding? In terms of the delivery of the brand promise?

3. What structures has your party put in place towards building the brand?

4. Are there any challenges?

5.   Any other Comments.