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Beyond the Company Logo: How Advertising Contributes to the Personal Branding of Pakistani CEOs

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Abstract

Personal branding of corporate executives has also become a strategic build of organizational communication in recent years, especially in the case of developing markets. This paper explores the way Pakistani CEOs apply advertising practices in building and sharing their leadership vision, core values, and professional self. The study will be founded on the qualitative research design since the proposed research will utilize in-depth, semi-structured interviews with senior executives across various sectors in Pakistan such as the banking industry, telecommunication, FMCGs and emerging industries. The data on the interview were theoretically examined in order to identify some repetitions in the advertising based branding habits of the CEOs. The results show that Pakistani CEOs are becoming more and more involved with advertising as not only a promotional instrument of the corporation but as a method of telling the leadership stories, projecting their credibility, and supporting the value-based leadership. The advertising techniques are used to spread the long-term organizational vision, accentuate the ethical responsibility, and identify personal leadership with the national, cultural, and socio-economic environment. The paper also brings out the balance between visibility and authenticity by CEOs as they tend to place strategic positions as visionary leaders, which may be in line with the corporate goals. It became evident that the visual symbolism, framing of the message, and the choice of media presence are some of the most important methods of how professional identity can be built and maintained. This study can be applied to the literature on executive communication and leadership branding and advertising strategy because it concentrates on the under-researched situation of Pakistan. Both the theoretical understanding of the topic of personal branding in non-Western settings and practical implications of the study contribute to the value of the work to the CEOs of the company, the communicational strategists, and advertising specialists who want to utilize the visibility of leadership and remain authentic and trusted.

Keywords: Personal Branding, Advertising, CEO Branding, Integrated Marketing Communication, Cultural Communication, Ethical Branding.

Introduction

In the twenty-first century, the dynamics of leadership communication have been dramatically changed. Leadership has been previously restricted to the sphere of management and administration, but nowadays it is closely connected with such an aspect as strategic branding and perception. The new CEO is not just a decision-maker but an icon of the vision, values and credibility of the organization. This transformation is the intersection of leadership, communication, and marketing, where a personal brand of the

leader is a continuation of the corporate brand itself (Fetscherin, 2015; Andreini and Fetscherin, 2021).

Personal branding has become a strategic leadership requirement in the modern business world. Fetscherin (2015) suggests that the CEO Branding Mix, which includes performance, personality, publicity, and promotion, demonstrates how executives become the embodiment of the identity and spirit of their companies. With the help of advertising, the CEOs convey not only what their companies represent but also what they are as leaders. As a result, the CEO becomes a living brand who represents the values of the business and increases shareholder trust.

Elon Musk (Tesla, SpaceX), Satya Nadella (Microsoft), and Tim Cook (Apple) have demonstrated in the world what an advertisement presence can achieve in terms of investor confidence, market positioning, and public perception (Ghini and Vitulli, 2024). Advertising entrusts the creative power to construct a desirable image, i. e. through narratives, descriptions of innovation, and symbolic images, and PR preserves relational credibility i. e. through transparency, communication with stakeholders, and reputation management (Laskin and Freberg, 2024; Silverman and Smith, 2024).

The other reason is that in emerging economies such as Pakistan, branding the CEO is practiced differently due to the interaction of the cultural value, hierarchical systems and traditional media systems. Unlike the Western context in which individualism is usually encouraged, Pakistani business culture glorifies collectivism, modesty, and uprightness that are deeply embedded in the social and religious values (Riaz, 2022; Fuaddah et al., 2025). Consequently, it is the burden of CEOs in Pakistan to balance between international forces of visibility and national forces of modesty and moral leadership. Their image in the society should not only be competent and innovative in nature, but they should reflect the authenticity, community focus and moral accountability.

The personal image of CEOs in industries like banking, telecommunications, and energy where the trust and credibility of the people are central to the industry matters a lot in the reputation of the corporate and the loyalty of the stakeholders. According to the research by Ahmed and Khan (2019) and Yaqoob (2025), the visibility and credibility of executives directly influence consumer trust and the overall performance of the organization. Advertising is essential in raising the visibility through telling the powerful leadership stories that humanize corporate messages, whereas PR strengthens the long-term credibility by building clear and reliable relationships with stakeholders. The combination of these channels of communication has what researchers have described as the so-called branded self a combination of persona, performance, and perception (Lee, 2026; Md Saad and Yaacob, 2021).

Although this is becoming increasingly relevant, it is important to note that empirical research on the conscious use of advertising and PR by Pakistani CEOs to develop and maintain their personal brands is lacking. Majority of local researches have either centered on corporate branding, PR perception or organizational reputation but have not explored how top executives strategically combine these tools to further their own leadership visibility. This research, thus, attempts to address this gap of critical importance by the way CEOs in Pakistan create, perform, and maintain their branded selves by advertising based on their visibility, and PR based authenticity. In this way, it adds to the current discussion of leadership communication in culturally sensitive and developing market settings.

Simply, this study establishes the Pakistani CEO as a communicative brand, of which its credibility and influence rely upon the successful synthesis of storytelling (via advertising) and relational transparency (via PR). It has stressed that the concept of personal branding is not an empty exercise of self-promotion but a calculated procedure of identity formation that integrates the values of leadership with the organizational and societal demands. In the hybrid media sector of Pakistan, where traditional media and online platforms coexist with community networks, it is crucial to comprehend how CEOs negotiate visibility and authenticity, both as an aspect of academic study and as a practice.

According to Andreini and Fetscherin (2021), successful branding of CEOs incorporates leadership performance and communication to promote the credibility of advertising and the corporate trust. Personal branding in the context of Pakistani CEOs tends to function within collectivist and ethical contexts, where modesty, service, and moral authenticity are prized more than individualistic self-promotion (Fuaddah et al., 2025).

Scholars around the world have called this combination of storytelling and trust a hybrid branding model, in which CEOs act as communicators and characters in their own brand narratives (Lee, 2026; Ghini and Vitulli, 2024). In emerging economies such as Pakistan, this dual approach has to traverse through media conservatism, socio-cultural sensitivity and emerging digital worlds.

Although the international scholarship shows that personal branding boosts leadership credibility and organizational success, there is limited information on how Pakistani CEOs put these strategies into practice. The current literature focuses on either, corporate image management (Ahmed and Khan, 2019) or leadership authenticity (Rahi, 2016) but seldom examines the synergistic integration of advertising and PR in building executive identity. This study, thus, examines how Pakistani CEOs apply advertising as a visibility tool as a tool of authenticity in creating sustainable, culturally resonant personal brands.

Objectives of the Study

1. To understand how the Pakistani CEOs use advertising strategies to communicate their leadership vision?
2. In what ways does the Pakistani CEOs employ advertising to convey their core values?
3. To explore how Pakistani CEOs project their professional identity through advertising strategies?

Research Questions

1. How do Pakistani CEOs use advertising strategies to communicate their leadership vision?
2. In what ways do Pakistani CEOs employ advertising to convey their core values?
3. How do Pakistani CEOs project their professional identity through advertising strategies?

Significance of the Study

This study will contribute to the theoretical development and practice in the sphere of leadership communication and branding. It broadens the scope of the current literature by placing Personal Branding Theory (Shepherd, 2005; Gorbatov et al., 2018), Authentic Leadership Theory (Avolio and Gardner, 2005), and the Theory of Integrated Marketing Communication (Kitchen and Burgmann, 2015) in the context of socio-cultural and organizational context of Pakistan. It gives practical advice to CEOs on how to strike a balance between expectations of visibility on the global stage and the local expectations of humility and integrity.

Literature Review

In communication terms, promotion is not only an act of creating meaning, but a purposeful act of creating storytelling about value, identity, and trust (Fill and Turnbull, 2019). Promotion is not limited to goods but people, especially CEOs, executives, and thought leaders whose image has an impact on organisational credibility in leadership communication and branding (Fetscherin, 2015; Mogale, 2024). In this way, the promotion works both at the institutional and individual levels and serves as the strategic mediator between corporate objectives and the construction of human identity.

The traditional elements of the promotional mix are advertising, sales promotion, PR, direct marketing, and personal selling (Kotler and Keller, 2016). Nevertheless, contemporary integrated communication schemes extend it to digital interaction, collaboration with influencers, and executive correspondence (Pickton and Broderick, 2005; Kitchen and Burgmann, 2015). Advertising offers control of messages and creative storytelling, whereby the leaders and firms influence narratives of people (Andreini and Fetscherin, 2021).

These tools are intersecting in CEO branding. Advertising makes leadership presence stronger, PR makes it worthwhile, and social media makes it more participatory communication (Ghini and Vitulli, 2024). Promotional mix thus has emerged as a hybrid ecosystem of narrative control and relational authenticity that is paramount to the negotiating leaders who have to negotiate the complex networks of stakeholders.

The digital media has changed the concept of promotion by decentralising the message power. The online resources like LinkedIn, Twitter (X) and YouTube enables the CEOs to become self-publishers of brand meaning (Venciute, Yue, and Thelen, 2024). This has led to what Jenkins (2014) refers to as participatory culture where audiences contribute to the meaning of brands. This in the context of leadership communication means a dialogic form of promotion where CEOs are no longer remote but now real-time, interactive participants that affect organisational perception (Górska, 2021).

Similarly, in Pakistan, telecom and banking executives have also started relying on LinkedIn and press campaigns to build credibility and expertise (Yaqoob, 2025). Digital convergence, therefore, is an important twist in the theory of promotion as the one that prioritises visibility, authenticity, and interactivity.

In Pakistan, advertising has been employed by a number of corporations especially in the banking and telecommunications industry to humanise their organisational image. Telecom and financial industries have also seen campaigns with CEOs or spokespersons representing innovation and trust as being effective (Yaqoob, 2025) and the financial industry (Rahi, 2016). Riaz (2022) discovered that social media advertisement in Pakistan has a significant impact on consumer perception in terms of emotional and cultural identification, which is a phenomenon on a larger scale worldwide that can be characterised as the so-called CEO-led storytelling, a combination of leadership and corporate identity.

Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) is an idea that coordinates all the different components of the promotional mix of advertising, PR, digital media, and personal branding into a unified strategic storey (Kitchen and Burgmann, 2015). IMC focuses on message consistency and synergy on all platforms whereby stakeholders have a consistent brand image that is not dependent on channel.

In the case of CEOs, IMC offers a model of coherent leadership viewability. Instead of dividing messages between departments, IMC integrates internal and external communications on the basis of the vision of the leader and the core values of the organisation (Fill and Turnbull, 2019). Integrated storytelling is on the rise in Pakistan where corporate communication tends to exist in siloed forms. Zeeshan et al. (2020) discovered that transformational leadership improves the corporate reputation in case of integrated communication in which advertising is merged with PR authenticity.

The media ecosystem in Pakistan, which is composed of Urdu, English print media, TV, and social media, has become a decisive variable in the visibility of CEOs. The spread of online news and journalism through LinkedIn allows executives to develop direct personal images (Riaz, 2022). Nonetheless, top-down corporate cultures restrict spontaneous communication and result in controlled visibility created by PR teams (Ahmed and Khan, 2019).

Riaz (2022) discovered that Pakistani digital audiences are more positively impacted by the concept of relatable professionalism, where CEOs and other executives show transparency and humility when talking about business innovation. This type of promotion is highly aligned with the collectivist culture of Pakistan (Fuaddah, Pawito, and Nurhaeni, 2025) and shows that authenticity and moral framing contribute to the effectiveness of digital leadership branding.

Theoretical Framework

Personal Branding Theory

Personal Branding Theory (Shepherd, 2005; Gorbatoev et al., 2018) places the person as a brand, which can be strategically managed and communicated in accordance with marketing principles. It highlights differentiation, consistency and reputation capital as key elements of professional visibility.

The reason behind the inclusion of this theory is the fact that it is applicable to the advertising and PR aspects of CEO branding. Advertising enhances the visibility of the CEO (brand awareness) and PR builds the relationship between the stakeholders (brand trust). Personal Branding Theory therefore serves as the basis of realization on how the tools can be aligned to project both competence and character.

However, in Pakistan, personal branding should be in harmony with cultural modesty. The leaders, such as media entrepreneurs, social influencers, and those involved in the executive of a social sector, tend to portray service-oriented identity as opposed to self-promotion. Thus, this theory is implemented in the form of contextual adaptation, where self-branding is transformed into an authentic representation and not self-glorification.

Methodology

This research is based on the paradigm of interpretivism, which presupposes that the world is socially constructed and that the perception is produced in the course of human relations, speech, and context (Creswell, 2014). Interpretivism is the opposite of positivism, as it emphasizes the understanding but not the measurement, or meaning, but not generalization.

As this study examines perceptions and communication patterns, it was necessary to use a paradigm that embraces the subjectivity and contextual interpretation. The contexts of the CEOs and PR professionals in Pakistan are guided by religious ethics, social stratifications, and social expectations. These cultural frames shape their understanding of

self-promotion, which is why the interpretive inquiry is the best philosophical underpinning.

The interpretivist base is further enhanced by the action research orientation of this study. Action research is more focused on cyclical learning and reflection (Kemmis and McTaggart, 2005). The researcher conducted face-to-face contact with the communication professionals in this research, reflecting upon their experiences and extracting insights about the field iteratively.

Data Collection Method: Semi-Structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were the main data collection method, and they were both flexible and structured. Every interview was conducted using an interview guide based on the conceptual framework and literature review. The guide included open-ended questions that revolved around such areas as:

- Conscious self-promotion by CEOs
- Advertising campaign effects on visibility;
- Use of media (TV, print, digital, social);

Sampling Strategy

The research used a purposive approach to sampling, in which the subjects were chosen intentionally because they were related to the subject matter. Palinkas et al. (2015) note that purposive sampling is best when the researcher aims at getting information-rich cases. The participants had been selected due to the fact that:

1. CEOs actively participate in personal branding or media presence
2. CEOs who do not favor any personal promotion based on cultural values.

Twenty commerce, public-service, entertainment, and lifestyle chief executive officers or founders. Direct access to the CEO was restricted in a number of instances because of workload or confidentiality and thus their respective PROs were involved giving official input.

Data analysis

The data was analyzed based on the six phases of thematic analysis described by Braun and Clarke (2006) that focuses more on the richness of experience lived and meaning-making as opposed to quantitative methods that focus on numerical accuracy. As personal branding and leadership communication are highly subjective phenomena, which are context-dependent, this type of analysis was especially appropriate to the research objectives.

Ethical Considerations

The cornerstone of this research was the ethical rigor as it was conducted with human participants who were talking about professional practices and personal views on visibility, media representation, and leadership communication. As the topics under consideration involve the reputation and self-presentation in the professional environment, the research was planned to be the most ethically responsible, transparent, and protective of the participants. The research was conducted using ethical procedures regarding the requirements of the established qualitative research standards (Creswell and Poth, 2018) and the ethical standards of the university.

There was no deception, coercion, or undue influence in the research. The participants were made well aware of the nature of the study, the objectives of the study as well as the intended use of the findings prior to their consent to participate. Moreover, the procedures were also checked to be culturally sensitive and consider the professional boundaries of

the participants, particularly when the discussion concerned the reputation or brand identity or a public exposure.

Informed Consent Process

Informed consent was done electronically through a secure form before every interview. The consent form contained all the necessary details of the research such as its purpose, the expected duration, the research processes, the potential risks and benefits, the data confidentiality, the rights of the participants, and the use and exposure of the data in the academic publications.

Anonymity and Confidentiality

The ethical integrity of the study was focused on the maintenance of the anonymity of the participants and data confidentiality. Due to the need of keeping identities confidential, the participants were identified using pseudonyms (e.g., Participant 1, Participant 2) instead of proper names or company names. Any potentially identifying data (the names of organizations, brands, or public figures in the interviews) were thoroughly distorted, generalized, or omitted in the transcription and reported results to avoid indirect identification.

Interview transcripts were analyzed by removing all the identifying information. Participant codes were employed in the presentation of findings only to specify role type or sectoral affiliation (e.g., Participant 4, CEO technology sector). This had the advantage of making it impossible to trace any statement to a particular respondent. All the research data such as digital audio files, transcriptions, and field notes were safely placed in a password-protected computer which the researcher could access but not any other party. Anonymized transcripts were stored as backups on an encrypted cloud storage drive, which was in line with institutional data-security policies. All the printed or handwritten notes were kept in a locked cabinet in the personal study of the researcher. There was no data exchange with any third party during the research.

Data Analysis

The data were evaluated using the thematic analysis technique developed by Braun and Clarke (2006) that revealed six key themes and some subthemes. Every theme represents a common pattern of the interviews and offers the research questions set above an insight.

5.2 Overview of Identified Themes and Alignment

Theme	Core Focus	Aligned Research Question(s)
Theme 1	Conscious and evolving self-promotion among CEOs	RQ1
Theme 2	Advertising as a tool of strategic visibility	RQ1
Theme 3	Cultural and ethical constraints on personal branding	RQ1

The explanation of each theme is provided below, along with subthemes, quotes of interviewees, reasons why they emerged, and how the theme relates to the research.

Theme 1: Conscious and Evolving Self-Promotion among CEOs

This theme deals with the way Pakistani CEOs see and exercise self-promotion as a part of their developing leadership identity. The results indicate that self-promotion is not equally practiced and interpreted. Rather, it lies within a continuum- between naturally occurring visibility and purposeful self-branding. This is an expression of how leadership identity and communication develop together with the increased public role of a CEO.

Several participants made it clear that their visibility started on a small scale, unintentionally and naturally, because of professional involvement and not because of calculated branding. But as their careers advanced and organizations grew, self-promotion became a conscious strategic requirement. These two aspects, the evolution in nature and the intention of strategies, are the core of this theme.

Two main subthemes were also defined:

1. Natural Evolution of Visibility.
2. Conscious and Strategic Branding.

Subtheme 1.1: Natural Evolution of Visibility

Some of the CEOs in this study have explained their self-promotion experiences as an accidental outcome of their careers and publicity and not a strategic move to be noticed. To such leaders, their visibility came naturally since they were known to make their contributions towards their organizations and their leadership style.

Initially, I was not even thinking of self-promotion, I was just building the company. Soon, people began to ask me to speak, and tell my stories, and then I noticed that it is also a part of leadership, (P3, CEO – Tech Industry).

After I started to conduct training sessions, students and clients began to tag me on social media. Little by little I realized that people are not just connected to the company but to a person behind it, (P8, CEO - Digital Marketing Firm).

These lines depict that in many cases; visibility is a natural consequence of competence. Participants mentioned that they experienced a transition between professional anonymity and publicity, which was caused by the increased need to engage with the public, be in the media, and be socially influential. Credibility in this regard became a by-product of visibility.

This is in line with Authentic Leadership Theory (Avolio and Gardner, 2005) that stresses self-understanding and transparency in relationships. True leaders are not interested in attention in itself, but win it by sincere performance and value-related interaction. Their integrity expresses through their visibility and not self-promotion.

Some of the CEOs said that early opposition to visibility was associated with the socio-cultural environment of Pakistan, where humility is valued more than aggressive self-presentation. Nevertheless, as one of the CEOs (P11 Education Sector) observed:

You cannot remain silent all the time. People would want to know who manages the organization. Then, after a while, you understand that it is not vanity to reveal your face, but duty.

This is a pivotal point in the development of leadership. Transparency is not only acceptable, but imperative in creating trust and accountability among the stakeholders.

This subtheme addresses the Research Question 1 (How do Pakistani CEOs use advertising to reflect their leadership vision, values, and professional identity?), since it shows that in many cases, self-promotion is based on genuine participation, and not a deliberate marketing strategy by the leader. Personal Branding Theory (Shepherd, 2005) frames personal branding as an evolutionary process of self-presentation based on credibility and authenticity, which is supported by the emergence of visibility as one of the natural results of effective leadership.

Therefore, self-promotion among Pakistani CEOs is a reaction to leadership success, as opposed to the cause of this success, which supports the idea that visibility and integrity are two dimensions of contemporary leadership communication.

Subtheme 1.2: Strategic and Conscious Branding Efforts

Other participants, conversely, talked about self-promotion as a purposeful and calculated activity, the one that developed through the careful planning and the media outlets application to create a coherent, personal brand. These CEOs acknowledged that controlling one story is as important as running an organization.

Unless I own my story, someone will own it. Visibility enables me to deliver values to my audience in a direct manner, (P5, CEO – Education & Entrepreneurship).

As a CEO, you are the face of the organization. Consumers have faith in brands when they believe in the individual behind the brand, (P14, CEO -Corporate Services).

You cannot afford to remain unseen in the digital market of Pakistan. The more you interact, the more credibility you develop, (P9, CEO - Digital Commerce).

These leaders regard personal branding as a strategic leadership activity and not a cosmetic activity. They regard social media, speaking engagements and interviews as avenues of expressing authenticity, vision and expertise directly. These CEOs use a deliberate narrative-making style which resembles branding of organizations.

This is in line with the theory of Integrated Marketing Communication, (IMC) (Kitchen and Burgmann, 2015) which focuses on ensuring that there is consistency in the message delivered through different communication mediums. Leaders who practice conscious branding apply advertising, social media, and public speaking as tools that connect to form a coherent leadership identity.

As an example, some of the respondents said that it was easy to align their online presence with organizational campaigns:

I also post personally when we launch a campaign. It reveals that the brand promise is preceded by leadership, (P13, CEO -FMCG Sector).

This is an indication of the merging of individual and corporate stories; the voice of the CEO is an active strategic communication tool.

This observation suggests that strategic self-promotion is not just a personal project but it is frequently institutionalized as a component of corporate communication planning. To build organizational legitimacy, CEOs are aware of their presence on the Internet, attend organized events, and practice controlled self-presentation. This subtheme further expands the insight into RQ1, demonstrating that Pakistani CEOs are shifting towards a vision of strategic model of personal branding, the one that is balancing visibility with morals and mission. Their conscious action shows the Personal Branding Theory and IMC Theory in that the consistency of advertising and communication creates credibility of leadership.

Theme 2: Advertising as a Tool of Strategic Visibility

This theme describes the use of advertising by CEOs to build a leadership image, express company values, and affirm the self as a professional. In this respect, advertising is not only a marketing business role, but a strategic communication tool whereby leaders make themselves more human, embrace organizational principles, and reach out to the audiences through their emotions and morals.

The results are that the Pakistani CEOs see advertising as not only a tool of visibility but a fragile act of self-representation that is controlled. Independent of how it is applied, advertising will strengthen credibility; excessive use may bring about feelings of boasting or arrogance. This theme responds directly to Research Question 1 by stating how

advertising is applied to project leadership vision and values without creating cultural and ethical imbalance.

The data revealed two major subthemes:

1. Ethical and Controlled Advertising.
2. Media Presence as a way to Humanize Leadership.

Subtheme 2.1: Ethical and Controlled Advertising.

In the interviews, CEOs and PR managers stressed that advertising, despite its strength, should be well-balanced with modesty and ethical self-representation. Participants mentioned a cultural sensitivity toward visibility in which excessive visibility is considered self-centered or boastful.

I will feature in advertisements but not too much. People in our culture would mock at you when you appear too self-absorbed, (P9, CEO -Public Sector).

One should always be seen but never conspicuous. I like low profile narration rather than self-promotion, (P12, CEO -FMCG Industry).

The respect of leadership in Pakistan is associated with humility. We cannot replicate Western styles of celebrity branding, (P21PRO - Corporate PR Manager).

The result of this is consistent with Cultural Communication Theory that points out that meaning is culturally constructed. Public self-praise may go against the social values in Pakistani society which is based on collectivism, Islamic ethics and modesty. Thus, the CEOs operate at a moderate level of visibility, their self-presentation is not against the moral and community norms.

This sub theme reveals that, the CEOs are aware of how to move between visibility and restraint to achieve a culturally appropriate branding model that can be used to support RQ1. Moderation is also reflected in the leaders focus on the Authentic Leadership Theory (Avolio and Gardner, 2005) in which credibility is tied to moral uprightness and relationship openness. It also appeals to the Personal Branding Theory (Shepherd, 2005), which affirms that the basis of sustainable reputation is authenticity, rather than exaggeration.

The reflection of the participants shows that ethical visibility is a type of strategic humility: to be visible, not self-centered. This supports the claim that, in Pakistan, personal branding should be socially acceptable and morally well-balanced to work.

Subtheme 2.2: Humanizing Leadership through Media Presence

Advertising was also perceived as a way of humanizing leadership- making the CEO less of a distant corporate figure but a human face you can relate to. Numerous respondents shared the view that advertising in combination with storytelling leads to emotional connectivity and increases the approachability of leadership.

When the face is attached to the brand, people get a human connection with it, it is no longer a company in their eyes, (P1, CEO, Personal Branding Consultancy).

Your voice has a face when you appear in ads. It demonstrates that leadership is placed on the side of the values of the brand, (P6, CEO – Tech Start-Up).

Advertising is not sales, it is trust. The message is validated when the CEO supports the message and this is a sign of authenticity, (P21PRO – Corporate PR Manager).

In multiple instances, CEOs have spoken of how appearing in campaigns or in the short documentary style advertisements enabled them to tell their personal story- hence the combination of professional identity and emotional narration. The practice will conform

to the theory of Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) (Kitchen and Burgmann, 2015) that advocates message coherence and emotional narratives across platforms.

As an example, one CEO (P4, Entrepreneurial Sector) remarked:

Our promotion was not about things. It was a question of vision--of demonstrating that we are of progress and education. Individuals connect with purpose, not only profit.

These leaders push the limits of conventional advertising by combining personal presence and brand vision. Their involvement makes corporate communication authentic and warm, and it strengthens the notion that leadership visibility is not a personal glorification and brand humanization.

This subtheme reinforces RQ1 by describing the process of humanizing leadership through advertisement that communicates organizational ethics. Advertising helps CEOs to combine personal credibility and corporate narration, creating a balanced identity that can attract not only emotional but also rational viewers. The observation confirms the IMC approach, which focuses on the integration of individual and institutional branding.

In short, advertising helps the CEOs to manifest the brand- abstract organizational values are made real in the form of human presence. Advertising can be a powerful tool of visibility, which can be practiced with restraint and authenticity to increase leadership influence without losing credibility that restricts but is a unique strength of Pakistani CEO branding, as it creates credibility based on integrity and mutual cultural values.

Overview of Findings

The interviews showed one constant tendency: advertising is seen as a mirror, not a megaphone. Whereas global CEOs tend to enhance their image by engaging in exaggerated self-representation, Pakistani CEOs approach advertising as a way of incorporating organizational and societal values, but subtly introducing their own leadership identity.

The majority of respondents accepted the fact that advertising is a needed visibility strategy - but it should never be unnatural, immoral, and hypocritical.

CEO1, a firm that deals with personal branding consultancy, said:

My reflection of the market is in advertising. It does not only display what we are selling, but what we believe. I ensure that the message is progressive, ethical and the potential of Pakistan.

This perception is reflected in the way Salim Ghauri has handled Net Sol where advertisement is done to focus on the power of Pakistan in IT and not on advertising itself. It also echoes Tim Cook who believed that advertisement should not be about volume, but about values.

A Tech Industry CEO3 used a more representative tone:

My values must resonate through the campaign, even when I am not present, honesty, reliability, and service sense.

This is in line with the Authentic Leadership Theory (Avolio and Gardner, 2005) where the authenticity of communication enhances the moral legitimacy. It is also a reflection of Satyas Nadella understated branding, where the sincerity and empathy are the driving force behind the leadership and the message.

This brings out an important contextual subtext: the cultural limits of visibility. In a collectivist, religious culture, blatant self-promotion will be interpreted as vanity or self-worshipping. Rather, Pakistani CEOs tend to incorporate their values in organizational narratives.

Advertising Strategies Identified

Based on these findings, the Pakistani CEOs could be characterized by five major advertising strategies:

1. Values-Based Advertising

CEOs focus on corporate ethics, national pride, and integrity as opposed to product promotion. This emerged as the prevailing paradigm in the conventional industries such as IT, energy and banking.

2. Emotive Storytelling Advertising.

The leaders incorporate personal or moral experiences in the brand story.

Example: Fashion and retail industries apply founder stories to represent change, similar to the spiritual change of Junaid Jamshed that became his marketing narrative.

3. Associative and Symbolic Advertising.

In place of face-to-face interactions, CEOs employ symbolic imagery (e.g., community progress, innovation labs) to demonstrate leadership ideals.

Example: Telecom advertisements that demonstrate rural connection, in which the hidden meaning is that of the CEO about inclusion.

4. Digital Self-Advertising (Soft Visibility)

LinkedIn, Twitter and YouTube help the CEOs to reinforce personal branding in subtle ways by posting thought leadership, gratitude notes, and micro-campaigns.

Examples: The use of value-based and consistent messaging by Irfan Junejo and Qasim Ali Shah to ensure authenticity.

5. Shared Advertising (Team-Centric Visibility)

The CEOs do not assume superiority over the team but are part of it and focus on the team success.

Example: CEOs of banks and telecoms using in team-based advertisements to show the commitment of the employees or national service.

Conclusion

This research has a great contribution to academic discussions both globally and regionally. Theoretically, it fills the gap between personal branding, leadership communication and cultural communication as it shows that CEO branding in Pakistan is carried out in hybrid conditions, at once under the impact of global corporate logic and domestic ethical demands. Methodologically, using a mix of interpretivist inquiry and real-world understanding, the study adds to a practical model of personal branding that integrates practice with theory - unlike the purely descriptive or Western-centric approach. This paper was aimed at investigating the area beyond corporate image - to find out how advertising can influence the personal brands of Pakistani CEOs in an era where leadership is not merely about performance, but also about perception. This study has revealed that personal branding is not the process of developing a flaunt, rather it is the process of developing trust, consistency, and authenticity through human and professional communication.

With the changing business environment in Pakistan, the CEOs are discovering that visibility does not produce influence. Advertising assists them to make people know their vision, which is based on credibility, not mere recognition. In this regard, communication is much more than marketing; it is an expression by the leaders themselves who they are and what they represent. The research contributes to the intersection of leadership and communication by providing a new idea in this area. It demonstrates that a powerful

personal brand is not created in front of a camera, but in the silent regularity of words and deeds of a leader.

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