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Institute of Communication Studies and Journalism

Master Thesis

2022   **Kirti Joshi**

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Journalistic Branding Behaviour on Social Media: Do Indian political journalists create a brand online?

Master Thesis

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Abstract

In the social media age, communication tools like Twitter have become an important medium to report the latest update from the field. More and more social media users now follow journalists' personal profiles to get news apart from following major media houses. Through a visual examination of the Twitter profiles and the tweets of seven Indian political journalists for a period of 61 days amid an election and COVID-19 second wave in India, this study tries to understand branding practices that are done to promote one's individual as well as news organization content when interacting on social media. Based on an extensive corpus of tweets, results indicate that branding as a tool for self-presentation is common among Indian journalists on Twitter, where they largely try to keep a professional and organisation profile. The study also shows that while branding themself online, the most widely used visual element of branding by journalists was a reference to his/her own journalistic works, instead of organisational or personal branding identity.

Keywords: Twitter, Journalistic Branding, Profile Analysis, Indian Journalist

Abstrakt

Ve věku sociálních médií se komunikační nástroje jako Twitter staly důležitým informačním zdrojem pro sledování novinek z oboru. Stále více uživatelů sociálních sítí nyní sleduje přímo osobní profily novinářů, novinky kromě sledování velkých mediálních domů. Předkládaná studie se snaží prostřednictvím výzkumu vybraných účtu sedmi indických novinářů na Twitteru porozumět tomu, jak vzniká osobní brand novináře a jak toto médium slouží k propagaci jednotlivých novinářů. Vlastní výzkum se soustředí na posty sbírané po dobu 61 dní v čase indických voleb a druhé vlny COVID-19. Na základě rozsáhlého korpusu dat se podařilo zjistit, že branding jako nástroj pro sebeprezentaci je mezi indickými novináři na Twitteru běžný. Tyto profily jsou také z velké části profesionální. Studie také ukazuje, že nejrozšířenějším vizuálním prvkem brandingu novinářů byl odkaz na vlastní novinářskou práci namísto organizační nebo osobní identity značky.

Klíčová slova: Twitter, žurnalistický branding, analýza profilu, indický novinář

Range of thesis: 71 pages and 92000 characters

Declaration of Authorship

1. The author hereby declares that he compiled this thesis independently, using only the listed resources and literature.

2. The author hereby declares that all the sources and literature used have been properly cited.

3. The author hereby declares that the thesis has not been used to obtain a different or the same degree.

Prague, 27 July 2022   **Kirti Joshi**

Acknowledgement

I would like to express my deep gratitude to Professor Anna Shavit, my research supervisor, for her patient guidance and useful critiques of this research work.
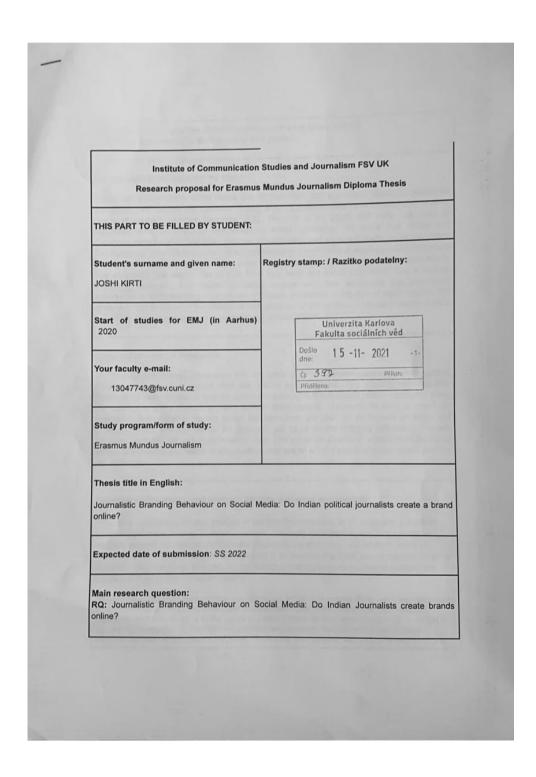
I would also like to thank the staff at the Charles University, the Aarhus University and the Danish School of Media and Journalism for giving me the opportunity to study this master's degree through the Erasmus Mundus scholarship. Their enthusiastic teaching throughout the two years and the encouragement provided by the classmates were invaluable.

Finally, I must express my very profound gratitude to my family and friends back home in India. They have provided me with unfailing support throughout my years of study and through the process of researching and writing this thesis. Anything would not have been possible without them.

To all, I am in debt.

Institute of Communication Studies and Journalism

Approved research proposal

Institute of Communication Studies and Journalism FSV UK

Research proposal for Erasmus Mundus Journalism Diploma Thesis

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Study program/form of study: Erasmus Mundus Journalism	

Thesis title in English:

Journalistic Branding Behaviour on Social Media: Do Indian political journalists create a brand online?

Expected date of submission: *SS 2022*

Main research question:
RQ: Journalistic Branding Behaviour on Social Media: Do Indian Journalists create brands online?

RQ1: What kinds of identities do Indian political journalists create online?
RQ2: What visual elements do they use in their profile?

Current state of research on the topic:

Due to the ever-evolving social media and its integration with journalism, academic studies on the subject are very recent and very limited. Most of these studies have focused on the news media of western counties (Hermida 2010; Hermida et al. 2014) and there has been no significant work on branding behaviours of Indian journalists. We know that Twitter and Facebook have become important sources of information and important platforms for interaction for journalists. This interaction with fellow journalists and audiences is relatively new in India and most organisations still do not have a social media policy like the western media organisations. The journalists are largely free to post what they want and mould their social media identity. Therefore, analyzing how Indian journalists engage with their audiences has paramount importance in understanding how branding impacts journalism in the age of social media. The study will help in seeing if the identity of journalists is not limited to being news disseminators of a media organisation but has moved towards individualization.

Expected theoretical framework:

In India, the internet penetration rate has gone up in the past ten years and so has political conversations on social media sites like Twitter and Facebook. This development has also changed the way journalists interact and make a brand out of themself online, especially when the country is going through a major political development. The research aims to use Ervin Goffman's dramaturgical models where the journalists are seen as performers on stage and branding theory. Through these, the research will focus on the interplay between journalistic identities, professional and organisational roles. The paper will also try to access does the digital selves of individual journalists changes when they are on a more personal social media platform like Instagram.

Expected methodology, and methods for data gathering and analysis:

Through a quantitative content analysis of the tweeting behaviour of 10 employed journalists from the top 5 most popular TV news channels, the study explores the way they use social media to present themselves. As journalists covering the election would be more active on Twitter and would be tweeting more leading up to an election, the focal lens of the second wave of COVID-19 in India was selected. By combining a quantitative and qualitative method, the tweets and their profile will be analysed.

The sampling rationale for selecting journalists will follow four criteria. First, each journalist had to work for one of the top 10 broadcast channels/websites within India. Second, selected journalists had to specialize in the genre of political news for their news organisation. To get a sizable representation to also assess platform engagement, the journalists had to have a minimum amount of five tweets per week. To answer the research question, the period of tweet

assessment was narrowed to a 61 days window during which the COVID-19 was at its peak in India, which was the month of 1st April to 31st May 2021.

Expected research design:

Based on the predefined criteria mentioned above, the Twitter handles of these journalists will be selected:

1. Rahul Shivshankar (@RShivshankar) from TimesNow,
2. Shreya Dhoundial (@shreyadhoundial) from CNN News 18,
3. Shiv Aroor (@ShivAroor) from IndiaToday TV,
4. Sonal Mehrotra Kapoor (@Sonal_MK) from NDTV
5. Sreenivasan Jain (@SreenivasanJain) from NDTV
6. Arunoday Mukharji (@ArunodayM) from @BBC India
7. Rahul Kanwal (@rahulkanwal) from IndiaToday
8. Navika Kumar (@navikakumar) from Times Network
9. Zakka Jacob (@Zakka_Jacob) from CNN News 18
10. Yogita Limaye (@yogital) from BBC India

The time frame for analysis is from the month of April to May 2021.

Expected thesis structure:
(1) Introduction: An introduction of the topic and reasons on the importance of the topic
(2) Review of the Literature: Explanation of journalistic branding and its use through social media sites as personal, professional or organisational space. Then explain how it is being used by newsrooms and media persons in India to redefine journalistic roles and identities.
(3) Research Methodology: Here the data collection method and content analysis method will be described,
(4) Results: The explanation of the outcome of the analysed content will be given.
(5) Discussion: This section will include a description of the major expected/unexpected findings, followed by a brief interpretation as to why they appeared.

Basic literature list (at least 5 most important works related to the topic and the method(s) of analysis; all works should be briefly characterized on 2-5 lines):

1. Ottovordemgentschenfelde, S. (2016). 'Organizational, professional, personal': An exploratory study of political journalists and their hybrid brand on Twitter. Journalism, 18(1), 64–80. https://doi.org/10.1177/1464884916657524
   The study uses the conceptual framework of personal branding, the paper addresses how political journalists negotiate their standing and enforce their legitimacy on Twitter amidst the online environment that directly challenges them.

2. Olausson, U. (2017). The celebrified journalist. Journalism Studies, 19(16), 2379–2399. https://doi.org/10.1080/1461670x.2017.1349548
By means of a critical discourse analysis of tweets and through the theoretical lens of celebrity, this study talks about how journalistic self-promotion discourses evolving in the digitized media setting are constituted.

3. Brems, C., Temmerman, M., Graham, T., & Broersma, M. (2017). Personal branding on Twitter. Digital Journalism, 5(4), 433–451.
https://doi.org/10.1080/21670811.2016.1176534
Through Erving Goffman's theatre metaphor as an analytical framework, a quantitative content analysis of the tweeting behaviour of 40 employed and freelance journalists is done to explore the way journalitis use social media to present themselves and which dilemma's they are facing.

4. Hanusch, F. (2017). Political journalists' corporate and personal identities on Twitter profile pages: A comparative analysis in four Westminster democracies. New Media & Society, 20(4), 1488–1505. https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444817698479
Focusing on journalists' self-representations on the social network site Twitter, this study addresses the lack of empirical understanding through an analysis of the identities which political journalists present on their Twitter profile pages.

5. Gorbatov, S., Khapova, S. N., & Lysova, E. I. (2018). Personal Branding: Interdisciplinary Systematic Review and Research Agenda. Frontiers in Psychology, 9, 1–17. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2018.02238
With the aim to strengthen the foundation for future work, the paper reviews the extant literature and offer an integrative model of personal branding. It then proposes a theoretical model of personal branding summarizing the findings from the reviewed papers.

Related theses and dissertations (list of B.A., M.A. and Ph.D. theses defended at Charles University or other academic institutions in the last five years):

- HEJLOVÁ, Karolína. Aktivita novináře na sociálních sítích Facebook a Twitter. 2016. Bakalářská práce. Univerzita Karlova, Fakulta sociálních věd, Katedra žurnalistiky. Vedoucí práce Čermák, Miloš.
(The activity of journalist on social networks Facebook and Twitter)

Date / Signature of the student:

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THIS PART TO BE FILLED BY THE ACADEMIC SUPERVISOR:

I confirm that I have consulted this research proposal with the author and that the proposal is related to my field of expertise at the Faculty of Social Sciences.

I agree to be the Thesis supervisor.

Anna Shavit

….....................................……………….....…

Surname and name of the supervisor   **Date / Signature of the supervisor**

Further recommendations related to the topic, structure and methods for analysis:

Further recommendations of literature related to the topic:

The research proposal has to be printed, signed and submitted to the FSV UK registry office (podatelna) in two copies, **by November 15, 2021**, addressed to the Program Coordinator.

Accepted research proposals have to be picked up at the Program Coordinator's Office, Mgr. Sandra Štefaniková. The accepted research proposal needs to be included in the hard copy version of the submitted thesis.

RESEARCH PROPOSALS NEED TO BE APPROVED BY THE HEAD OF ERASMUS MUNDUS JOURNALISM PROGRAM.

Contents

1. Introduction

Around a decade or two ago, people used to wait for newspapers or television, the so-called idiot box, to watch the news. Now in 2022, with an increase in the usage of digital spaces like social media sites, journalism has seen drastic changes all around the world. By pressing a button on the screen of their phone or tablet, people can instantly get the most recent news. According to the Pew Research Centre study from 2021, "Twitter is used by 23% of U.S. adults and more than half of those users (55%) go to get news on the site regularly" (News Consumption Across Social Media, 2021). Specifically for India, where the tech giant is fighting a court case against the current BJP government regarding online censorship, the country provides Twitter third-largest user base.

As news organisations increase their digital presence and more journalists make profiles on social media sites to capture information flow (Lee, 2015), users have started to also move towards following journalists' personal profiles rather than solely focusing on news media organisations' official pages (Hermida et al., 2012). In India, the Muck Rack's State of Journalism on Twitter (2022) report stated that prominent journalists like Rajat Sharma, Rajdeep Sardesai, Barkha Dutt and Sudhir Chaudhary were among the most followed verified journalists on Twitter from across the world.

With this, there is a growing trend among prominent journalists to use this digital space in order to create a personal brand and publicise themself as professional individuals rather than just associating themself as a worker of a media organisation (Bruns, 2012). This concept of branding, which initially grew out of the marketing field and was mainly used to sell physical products, is now becoming evident in the media landscape. With the exponential use of social media sites, it has become evident that journalists sell their brands online for free of cost (Brems et al., 2017). "Some news organizations encourage their staff journalists

to engage in social media to expand readership, raise brand awareness and increase their website traffic" (Lee, 2015, p. 313). Now with 280 characters and other options like carefully curated profile pictures, statuses and live videos, journalists get to make a public persona. In the west, renowned media organisations have set guidelines and policies for their journalists on what to and what not to tweet from their personal profiles (Canter and Brookes, 2015). For example, a study by Sacco & Bossio (2016) states big new organisations have "a dedicated social media manager or editor had been employed to oversee the use of social media for the organization, as well as to work with journalists when they presented journalistic content on their individual accounts" (Sacco & Bossio, 2016, p. 184).

This approach of hiring experts to optimise their social media presence and having social media management policies is not a standard in South Asia. Studies about the same are very sparse. Though the internet penetration rate has increased over the past ten years in countries like India, Pakistan and Bangladesh, the usage of social media sites like Twitter is also comparatively less. Therefore, journalists are still largely free to tweet their thoughts and opinions and create a brand accordingly. Most of the time they do not have an organisation to put limitations on what they can or cannot post.

In the case of India, the country saw a boom in the usage of the internet to access social media sites after telecom provider Jio introduced internet packages that were as low as 0.12 euros (Gupta et al., 2019). Users, including Indian journalists, made profiles on Twitter but the usage of it for disseminating news was low. Many were there just lurkers for content. After the 2014 election where the right-wing party Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) won with a thumping majority, the Indian diaspora saw a spark of digitisation with projects like Digital India (Moinuddin, 2019). Indian media started to copy this trend in newsrooms and more and more news started to be conveyed in digital spaces. In 2019, India saw another national

election where BJP again won with a landslide victory. This was the start of the period in Indian journalism when an increasing number of journalists started to create a brand on Twitter. Following the footsteps of Prime Minister Narendra Modi who made selfie culture famous (Rao, 2018), journalists started posting their political stances, opinions or selfies with politicians to show appreciation or affiliation. According to Theodora & Andreas, "selfies depicting journalists with their interviewees, while reporting on site –even in war or terrorism situations – seem to be among the most shared content in the digital world, much more than the news content itself" (Theodora & Andreas, 2016, p. 114). Around the world, top journalists, especially those covering the political beat, are spending more time building personal brands on Twitter (Rogstad, 2014). Studying the relationship becomes important at a time when journalists in India are prosecuted for posting on Twitter and the tech giant "has sought legal recourse in its yearslong battle with the Modi regime" (Pahwa, 2022, para. 4).

Although there is noteworthy research which sheds light into the role of social media in journalism, the effect of journalistic branding in India is mainly unknown.

In light of this situation, this study aims to investigate *whether Indian Journalists create brands online?*

The researcher was guided by the two following research questions:

RQ1: What kinds of identities do Indian political journalists create online?

RQ2: What visual elements do they use in their profile?

In order to do that, the study starts with a review of the literature about Erving Goffman's work on the presentation of self, use of personal branding online and Ottovordemgentschenfelde's (2017) work on journalistic branding on social media sites. Following this, the study then goes over the methodology used, explaining how the sample of

7 political journalists was chosen and the procedures for collecting and analyzing tweets, type of communication and profile outlook. The results are then presented and discussed, followed by a brief conclusion.

2. Theoretical Framework

The role of journalists in creating a brand on social media sites has become a topic of discussion among researchers in the last decade. In today's time, social media sites have made it possible to be close to anyone, be it a person who is a celebrity, or the CEO of an organisation. With the click of a button, one can access the latest tweets or posts of anyone. As studies have shown that the basic price of internet plans has gone down (Odlyzko, 2001), you get an opportunity to get closer to what and whom you like online. An increasing number of journalists now have their verified individual profiles on social media sites. Though research has shown that "branding at the individual level is a particularly thorny area, not least because it involves both personal and professional appeals" (Molyneux et al., 2018, p. 1398).

In the following chapters, the paper will touch upon the relevant themes of branding and how they apply to Indian media and their portrayal on social media sites, especially on Twitter. These chapters also showcase research on the role of personal branding and journalists adapting to marketing themes. Additionally, the primary emphasis will be on journalists' positioning and personal branding to see whether their interactions have an impact on one another. The earlier research on journalists' brand positioning is also used to assess what visual clues they use to present themself, be it explicitly or implicitly.

2.1 Presentation of Self

"All the world's a stage,

And all the men and women merely players:

They have their exits and their entrances;

And one man in his time plays many parts"

(*William Shakespeare, 1623, As You Like It*)

Though these lines were written over 300 years ago in William Shakespeare's play 'As you like it', they can be linked to Ervin Goffman's The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life published in 1959. The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life is a radical work in the field of sociology. It states that during social interactions, individuals wear different masks in front of others in the form of clothes, language, expressions and other non-verbal actions. It also states that people are constantly trying to blend into society by showcasing the best of themselves. He further tried to explain how individuals carry out their day-to-day interactions within society and what societal elements play a different part in it. To explain it, Hoffman used the analogy of theatre. He referred to it as the "Dramaturgical model of social life", where he said, "the individual will have to act so that he intentionally or unintentionally expresses himself, and the others will in turn have to be impressed in some way by him" (Goffman, 1959, p. 2).

In Goffman's (1959) dramaturgical framework, through the use of the analogy of a theatre, he tried to showcase how people engage in 'impression management' in front of other people. According to Goffman, social interactions are like roles played in a theatre, and these roles portray physical and symbolic spaces by differentiating between frontstage and backstage. According to Goffman's (1959) study, the individuals are the actors on the stage, the audience is the 'other people' who note your actions and the 'Front Stage' is the place or environment where you carry out your actions in observance of the people around you.

Goffman analyzed that the acts played on the front stage are given with the audience in mind. They are carefully portrayed with regard to the formal and informal rules of space. With respect to the backstage, the actors are more of themself and do not have to carry acts or impressions as is done on frontstage. According to the theory people while interacting with each other are constantly engaging in the process of impression management. Impression management are the "actions that actors might take to encourage an audience to form a particular impression" (Shulman, 2017, p. 9).

"Examining self-presentation addresses the information that people communicate" (Shulman, 2017, p. 7) and analyzing impression management tactics gives you more insight into how people persuade other people (Shulman, 2017). Tseelon (1992) asserts that people consciously craft and manipulate their public displays. These impression management tactics, according to Goffman, when the interaction occurs at three levels; front stage, backstage and off stage (Tseelon, 1992).

1. The front stage is when the person is conscious of his or her behaviour and acts. They behave within the boundary of societal norms and values in order to be liked. A social front can be like that of a script where the individual knows how to behave because there is a precedent set with which s/he just has to align.

2. In the backstage, the actor or the individual behaves differently than they did on the front stage. A person may be fully himself on this front by letting go of the role. He or she may act in accordance with how they are feeling and are more at ease.

3. The off-stage is where the individual or the actor meets the audience member independently of the team. In such a case, specific performances are given when the audience is dispersed and one meets the other alone.

> Goffman, in his work, has also talked about the appearance an individual gives and gives off. "When an individual intentionally makes gestures and utterances, then that are expressions one 'gives' and all those gestures that remain implicit or unintentional by in what was signified by the individual's intentional actions are expressions that one 'gives off'. (The Presentation Of Self In Everyday Life, n.d.)

As organisations need to communicate their message on their front stage (Shulman, 2017), our main focus will be on that. The organizational researchers on impression management began to focus on this topic post-1980s. The initial theoretical and empirical research on impression management was done by sociologists and social psychologists (Bolino et al., 2017). Cain (2017) states that "in the workplace, the front stage holds the official interpretations of the job at hand, the requirements for completing the job, and ideas about the worth of the job and other participants" (Cain, 2017, p. 671). Keeping Goffman's theory in mind, the field of management studies extensively used these tactics to derive models for brand management.

"The advent of the Internet and related communication technologies has created new opportunities for self-presentation research" (Frederick and Clavio, p. 332). Here Goffman's dramaturgical metaphor has been used to understand social media activities and interactions. Increasingly, this digital space has also been used for impression management which can consist of image-based self-presentation through their digital profile outlook (Sanderson, 2008). Goffman's work can act as a theoretical base when conducting research on the

presentation of self and its extension on social media sites (Ottovordemgentschenfelde, 2017).

2.2 Presentation of self online

With the advent of social media, Goffman's work is more applicable than ever before. Djafarova and Trofimenko (2019) state that the "self-presentation theory is of paramount importance in the social media context…as individuals extensively share information about themselves with others" (Djafarova & Trofimenko, 2019, p. 1433). Goffman's theory helps us understand why and how individuals behave on social media platforms. With the advent of social media sites in our personal lives, people are more careful in what they write or post on their social media accounts because it portrays who they are. For example on Facebook or Instagram, there are features that individuals use so that only a selected number of people can view what they post or write about. As a result of new technologies, communication has become easier across social media sites, and "careers have become personal brands that need to be managed in a virtual age" (Gioia et al., 2014 as mentioned in Gorbatov et al., 2018).

Social media is the driving factor in marketing communication (Djafarova & Trofimenko, 2018), people put up a 'face' in front of others. Goffman described 'Face' as a positive social value that individual claims for himself and if a person is not able to put forward a performance that doesn't integrate with what he claims to be then he is said to be a 'wrong face'. People carefully consider what they communicate in order to make positive assumptions (Djafarova & Trofimenko, 2018) that are fostered through social media in order to be seen by others and open up new venues (Richeye et al., 2017). According to Labrecque et al. (2011), these practices of branding are used to underline one's positive attributes.

In his paper, Richey et al. (2017) also claim that

> Self-presentation "can be likened to post-modern performances in which the traditional boundaries between actor and audience are intentionally unsettled. These casual posts communicate additional personal traits that are not otherwise included in professional presentations. Since there are no strict boundaries between formal front-stage and relaxed back-stage regions in these types of performance, a liminal mental state is often used, which enables a better assessment of the type of information to present on social media. (Richey et al., 2017, p. 421)

Earlier research on the presentation of self has examined its prevalence on web sites, personal blogs and online communities (Dominick, 1999; Niven & Zilber, 2001; Hevern, 2004; Bortree, 2005, Lampel & Bhalla, 2007; Schwämmlein & Wodzicki, 2012, as cited in Sanderson, 2008, as cited in Lorgnier et al., 2013). In an era of ever-increasing influencers, these social media tycoons brand themselves within a certain boundary that they know will work with their target audience. They portray a culture that they know others desire. On the front stage, they are able to create a desire for that culture amongst others so that their followers increase. And, most of the time, what happens back stage is not shown on their accounts.

Using Goffman's analogy about the appearance one gives and gives off, we can see how it's true in terms of Twitter. On Twitter, where people can connect to each other more intimately and directly, politicians, actors and sportsmen tweet in sync with a performance. Since Twitter depends more on the audience and the individual relationship, the tweets are made in such a manner that they give an impression that millions of their fans would believe

in. Several people hire PR companies to handle their Twitter accounts so that their 'mask' remains intact.

In the end, social media is a 'stage' where individuals act out their role as actors in front of the audience. "Elements within personal Web pages and social networking profiles such as personal information, photographs, design, and layout choices are akin to the wardrobe and props of the theatrical metaphor" (Labrecque et al., 2011, p. 38). Here, individuals have multiple identities now which they use with their different social media applications, thus giving more meaning to who they really are. The 'the act' remains the same and the 'audience' remains the same. The only thing that has changed is the 'setting', thus Goffman's work has more credibility than ever before.

2.3 Personal branding, Journalists and Twitter

"We are CEOs of our own companies: Me Inc. To be in business today, our most important job is to be head marketer for the brand called You."
(Peters, 1997, para 3)

The use of the term 'personal branding' was first seen in Tom Peters' (1997) article 'The brand called you' written for a magazine. Talking in a very casual tone, here he argues that you as an individual do not belong to any company or organisation. He urges people to create a brand of themself just like the way big corporations do. This involves doing marketing and selling your skills and making campaigns that give you publicity and visibility. While talking about marketing your personal attributes, he ends the article by stating, "you are a brand. You are in charge of your brand. There is no single path to success. And there is

no one right way to create the brand called You. Except this: Start today. Or else" (Petrers, 1997, p. 47).

Other researchers point out the origins of the concept in Goffman's work (Lorgnier and O'Rourke, 2011; Khedher, 2015; Philbrick and Cleveland, 2015, as cited in Gorbatov, 2018). Labrecque et al. (2011) were the early researchers to focus on online personal branding to assess the effectiveness of these strategies by generating digital brand audits of 12 people. Marketing-born and reared term of personal branding, which sits at a junction of sociology, communication, psychology, and organizational behaviour file, (Vitberg, 2010), has now made its headway in journalistic communication. In an ever-increasing global market space, there is intense competition to stand out amongst the many-a-like. By creating a personal brand one can make that point and be looked at one standing out from the rest. A study by Gandini (2016) has also described personal branding as a process to acquire reputation. This dynamic process of personal branding can be referred to as a way for an individual to stand apart from the crowd by showcasing their value and uniqueness (Gorbatov, 2018).

> In other words, a personal brand is a perception in the minds of others - a perception you can help create and control - that there is no one in the marketplace quite like you. Creating a personal brand is the best way you can stand out and prosper in an increasingly noisy and fast-paced business-development world. (Vitberg, 2009, p. 45)

With the power of the web and elements like search engine optimisation, "having a personal brand means creating and maintaining social and networking profiles, personal web sites, and blogs" ((Labrecque et al., 2011, p. 39). Social media has brought drastic changes in the way news media is used and produced, and journalism is one of many social institutions

that must adjust to it (Brems et al., 2016). With the internet penetrating remote villages and towns, it has made the world a common global village, where anything that happens on one end of the world can be read and viewed by everyone. Journalists are at the forefront of this revolution where they give out information or news to the public. As early as 2005, Singer (2005) was among the very first researchers to analyse how journalists affiliated with mainstream media outlets were using blogs during the 2004 US election. The focus here was on how this usage affected journalistic norms and practices like non-partisanship, gatekeeping and accountability. Her study showed that many used the medium to enhance accountability and transparency by providing sources.

With its central focus on Twitter, Hermida (2010) was among the early researchers to shed light on how the "new para-journalism forms such as micro-blogging are awareness systems, providing journalists with more complex ways of understanding and reporting on the subtleties of public communication" (Hermida, 2010, p. 298). By drawing from computer science literature, Hermida (2010) calls Twitter an awareness system. This social media site is "intended to help people construct and maintain awareness of each others' activities, context or status, even when the participants are not co-located" (Markopoulos et al., 2009 as mentioned in Hermida (2010, p. 301). By exploring the concept of ambient journalism, the study states that a reporter's Twitter profile makes people more aware of their surroundings. Marwick and Boyd (2011) have explored how Twitter users or so-called content creators imagine their audiences. They suggested that techniques of audience management included personal branding as well as practices of a 'micro-celebrity'. Additionally, the study showed that people are "far more concerned with parents or employers viewing their Twitter stream than a complete stranger" (Marwick and Boyd, 2011, p. 129).

Lasorsa et al. (2012) conducted a quantitative content analysis to sheds light on how journalists working in mainstream media negotiate their practices in this digital space. Through the analysis of over 22,000 tweets, they concluded that journalists expressed more freely on Twitter and shed light on conducting their work to create transparency. The study also stated that "this new mass medium that is still evolving, some patterns and trends are appearing" (Lasorsa et al., 2012, p. 12). In another paper, Lasorsa (2012) touched upon journalistic norms on Twitter and how female and male journalists differ in their use of Twitter.

Now that most journalists employed by major media news houses have an account on Twitter, and some have even two to separate their personal and professional life, they can reach the masses more intimately. Those who have used Twitter cleverly have amassed millions of followers, which in itself brings repute and publicity to the media houses. From Anderson Cooper to Piers Morgan, online personas on Twitter have become an indispensable part of self-branding. In some cases, individuals have become a bigger brand than the media houses (Bruns, 2012; Olausson, 2017). This could be because "the general organisational accounts are often unable or unwilling to respond effectively to comments and questions received as private or public replies from their followers, acting instead purely as one-directional mechanisms for disseminating pointers to newly published news updates" (Bruns, 2012, p. 100).

Deviating from Singer's (2005) research, Papacharissi and Oliveira (2012) state that now on Twitter, there is a hybridisation of old and new news values and the "stream of news combines news, opinion, and emotion to the point where discerning one from the other is difficult" (Papacharissi and Oliveira, 2012, p. 266). On crisis communication and Twitter, Vis (2013) identified the use of linking, photographs and the use of hashtags by two

prominent journalists. The study further categories their tweets into opinions, statements and reactions among others. She states that their extensive reporting through tweets during the 2011 UK led them to attract significant numbers of followers but there can be differences in how journalists use the site. Additionally, Canter (2014) states that traditional gatekeeping and verification conventions are changing in this diverse field and personal branding varies significantly among journalists. Canter (2014) also shed light on how journalists have to follow the company's guidelines on social media when tweeting.

Holton and Molyneux (2017) in their study state that in these rapidly transforming spaces, many journalists are doubtful of fully accepting branding and aren't sure what exactly their employers expect from them. Additionally, many are unsure about how to manage their online personal and professional personas. Many journalists also claim that they view being asked by news organizations to read and interact with social media messages as additional work (Holton and Molyneux, 2017). Sacco and Bossio (2016) also conclude that sometimes journalists felt conflicted by the social media regulations and professional expectations. Lee (2015) discovered that audiences' impressions of journalists in the professional dimension were negatively impacted by their online interactions with audiences. Swasy (2016), in her book, claims that very few journalists started using Twitter right away in their everyday activities. Instead, they registered to the site and promptly forgot about it for a few years. They reconnected with the site when their friends discussed its simplicity, use, and reach or when their bosses urged them to become active on Facebook or Twitter.

In a study to assess how journalists brand themself online, Brems et al (2016) stated that journalists might "brand themselves on these platforms to preserve the sustainability of their news organizations" (Brems et al., 2016, p. 444). Employed journalists tweet less than

freelance journalists and are cautious if the interaction is going to harm their organisation. By incorporating branding, they also feel a loss of personal identity (Holton and Molyneux, 2018). "This choice presents a paradox: if journalists choose to present too much of personal identity, they risk punishment by their employers. If they present only a professional identity, they risk offending their audiences" (Holton and Molyneux, 2017, p. 208).

Twitter acts as a medium through which journalists can indulge in professional image construction through its various elements and tools (Lough et al., 2017). In their study, Mellado & Alfaro (2020) claim that in terms of social media sites, Twitter is closer to the "more traditional professional practices of journalism such as breaking news with exclusive content, or contacting sources" (Mellado & Alfaro, 2020, p. 1266). Additionally, Ottovordemgentschenfelde (2016) in her paper argues that in order to create a reputation with users, journalists create a profile on Twitter which involves features like biography, photos, and hyperlinks to their work. It also includes occupational achievements. This helps in portraying their legitimacy as a journalist and this also acts as a digital portfolio for them. This is in stark contrast to what they earlier had to do offline in order to build relationships and connections. In their research, Brems et al. (2016) talked about Papacharissi's (2002) early work which argues that self-presentation in digital space can occur through certain visual aesthetics. This helps them stand out from others in the digital space. Therefore, in this fast-moving process to make a brand on Twitter, "the only static elements on Twitter are the possibility of choosing a profile photo, a header photo and a personalized description of the self in the bio section" (Brems et al., 2016, p. 447)

According to an academic paper by Holton and Molyneux (2017), reporters are being asked to make changes on their personal social media pages. Thus, as a result, they have been

told by news organisations to add specific elements to their profiles and to publish or forward
fewer links to stories that have not been published by their employers. Reporters are also
more focused on their professional identities and their personal identities. Molyneux et al
(2018) state that journalists have complex personal and professional identities "because
professional branding work can be directed at developing individual, organizational, or
institutional" (Molyneux et al., 2018, p. 1389).

Hermida (2013) argues that -

New paradigms of collaborative and collective newsgathering, production and
management at play, facilitated by the sociotechnical dynamics of Twitter. The
result may be journalism but not as we know it, breaking with classic narrative
structures and deviating from long-held and fiercely defended norms.
(Hermida, 2013, p. 306)

Additionally, Hermida (2013) adds that journalists are carefully constructing a brand
of their own when they are using a Twitter account which is under their name or identity. Due
to the rise of marketing and its convergence of it with the field of journalism, employed
journalists have a different identity than their media houses now. By making a brand identity
of their own, journalists are able to attract followers and become a primary source of
information on special media (Brems et al., 2016). Ottovordemgentschenfelde (2017),
describes the identities of online journalists in three ways. First, the professional identity of a
journalist relates to the "occupational ideals, role conception, and standards of journalistic
production that may speak to their legitimacy as a skilled professional"
(Ottovordemgentschenfelde, 2016, p. 8). When journalists are showing a personal side or are
being 'likeable' or 'funny', it is their personal identity. Lastly, the organizational identity

reflects a journalist's association with his or her employer. Mellado & Alfaro (2020) claim that this range of identities overlapped when they talk through social media sites.

Just like Goffman's (1959) work, journalists now play the role of an actor on the stage of social media sites like Twitter. Brems et al. (2016) states -

> We can consider the Twitter profile and feed as a front stage, i.e. the place where the per- performance happens, and the direct messages (DM) and locked profiles as backstages, i.e. places that are not visible to the audience. When journalists are performing in the front, i.e. in the public feed, they are aware that they have an audience, but also that they build and shape it. They thus actively try to control the impressions they make in this virtual environment. (Brems et al., 2016, p. 446)

During the assessment of 679 political journalists' profiles, Hanusch (2017) found a symbiotic relationship where journalists used Twitter as a way to put forward their corporate identity and the users also followed the journalist's personal profile for their work.

By examining the personal brand positioning of journalists on Twitter, Ottovordemgentschenfelde (2017) discovered three identities—organizational, professional, and personal. As the study tried to find out journalists' branding practices on Twitter, the focus here shall be mainly on personal branding practices on the 'front stage' of Twitter. For this, a journalist's verified profile can be seen as the frontstage, while his direct message feature of Twitter can be called the backstage. The three identities identified by Ottovordemgentschenfelde (2017) will be used for reference and profile analysis indicators identified by Hanusch (2018) for the interpretation.

2.4 Personal branding and Indian journalists on Twitter

Today India is home to 462 million internet users (Statista, 2018). The userbase has significantly grown in the past few years. While the history of the Internet began in the 1960s with the world wide web, internet came to India in 1985 through a joint UNDP project where its use was mainly limited to scientific and educational purposes. From 2004, the general public was able to get access through a BSNL broadband connection and by 2014, India became the third-largest internet user community. This progress was further fueled by Jio which was launched for public use in September 2016. The services were offered at an "absolutely lower cost, enabling Indians to venture into the world of faster internet" (Jain et al., 2019, p. 345). In India, the majority of the general public uses a mobile phone to reach social media sites. One of the main reasons for the public to prefer mobile phones is due to sparse internet cable connectivity throughout the country and computers being costly for the general population (TRAI, 2012 as mentioned in Belair-Gagnon et al., 2013).

For India, which is often called the biggest democracy, one of the main events that made social media like sites Twitter popular for interaction was the 2014 general election in which BJP won with a massive majority. With a 16% internet penetration at that time, the well-established political parties utilized Twitter to support their offline action plan, young and rising ones used Twitter as a tool for self-promotion (Ahmed et al., 2016). Many had predicted that social media would be decisive in deciding which party will win the most seat and further studies, like Kanungo (2015), argued that social media will remain an important player in the upcoming elections. BJP's then face of the election Narendra Modi, who later became the Prime Minister, was the first to make a brand online (Rai, 2017). He was himself

a blogger and an avid Tweeter since 2009 and had over three million followers in 2014. By associating the idea of a good time himself, he branded himself as an action-oriented leader online (Kaur, 2015) and an actor of change. In order to get the first update from him, many journalists followed in his footsteps and created a personal profile on Twitter. Though news organisations were initially hesitant to launch web editions but most eventually obliged (Thakur, 2009 as mentioned in Chattopadhyay, 2012). The usage of social media sites like Twitter was mainly adopted by news organizations to break the latest news and engage with the viewers (Sinha and Basu, 2020).

The study by Poell & Rajagopalan (2015) states that in India, the most active social media users are journalists among others. Adding to this, Mishra & Pal (2020) have also shown that on Indian Twitter, there is a dominance of television and digital journalists as compared to those who work as print journalists. The reason behind this could be the that visual form of journalism was the first to add and adapt to the need of the digital world. The consumption has been to keep track of event updates and reactions from activists at gatherings (Belair-Gagnon, Mishra, and Agur, 2014 as mentioned in Poell and Rajagopalan, 2015).

Verma and Singh (2018) did take into account the personal branding done by journalists where they focused their research on personal branding and Indian consumers' consumption habits. In this study, the focus of the assessment was on both media and political sectors. The results stated that personal branding did influence people's consumption habits and that a majority of people keep the personal brand of the anchor in mind when switching to a certain news segment. The study further stated that personal branding, rather than corporate branding, played a major role in the audience's decision-making for both media and political sectors. Verma (2017) has also talked about personal branding on social

media through images. Mainly focusing on the use of Instagram by millennials, through photographs they try to show a positive part of their brand which could be professional or artistic. The study further states that "partly creating and marketing one's identity through images can thus be more efficient than doing it in real life" (Verma, 2017, p. 214).

With its focus on India, another study has also talked about talked personal branding on social media where Tariq and Syed (2019) put the focus on the activity of LinkedIn users from India. Assessing age as a factor, the research tried to find out its relationship to personal branding on LinkedIn. "Though age was found to be a statistically insignificant criterion for using the LinkedIn platform for Personal Branding, yet many young job seekers do not have a comprehensive and updated profile" (Tariq and Syed, 2019, p. 51). The research also states that the sample size within India is not that aware of the tactics and methods they can employ to use mediums like LinkedIn for personal branding use.

As Hendriks et al. (2016) assert that social media provides a dynamic, and perhaps unstructured venue for political discussion, no studies have been found to discuss the online branding of Indian journalists, much less with a focus on political TV journalists. In India, the concept of personal branding is still confined to the realms of management research. Thus most of the studies have looked into the concept through the lens of business and management (Verma and Singh, 2018; Kushal and Nargundkar, 2020).

Today in India, journalists are understanding the reach of personal branding. On many TV shows, journalists like Arnab Goswami, Ravish Kumar and Rubika Liyaquat are known for their persona and personality, which shines beyond their profession and newsroom. This also influences their fans, the media industry and the brand of journalism in India in general.

One knows that when they switch on to a show by Arnab Goswami, the show will be overshadowed by his voice and strong personality while Ravish Kumar's show would be lighter in its tone. When these journalists shift to the digital space, these personality traits are also reflected on social media sites like Twitter. These journalists also see how social media sites can help them reach an audience sitting thousands of miles away from them. Thus, they have started to create profiles online giving the audience an opportunity to reach them with a click of a button to show them who they are and bout their next move. In other words, it is mainly about promoting who you are, and what you stand for. For example, in recent times, many Indian journalists started to announce their resignations from their Twitter accounts. For example, In 2013, Siddharth Varadarajan, Editor-in-Chief of The Hindu was one of the very first journalists from India who via Twitter announced his resignation from the news organisation. Another example of this was when in 2020 Nidhi Razdan took on Twitter to announce her resignation from NDTV and will move from Harvard. This move turned out to be a phishing scam that someone had played on her by sending a fake job offer from this educational institute. These profiles made by a journalist can also be used for social activism, reputation or to create visibility. The angle of social activism from the journalist's profile was seen when the COVID-19 pandemic hit India. Journalists from big or small new organisations, and verified or unverified profiles actively helped people in accessing and amplifying medical requests. In this study, the research will investigate how Indian political journalists actively communicate through their Twitter profiles and does this branding involves self-promotion. This research also helps in understanding what brand identities journalists want to be associated with on social media– the organizational, the professional, or the personal (Ottovordemgentschenfelde, 2017).

3. Methodology

Overall, this paper examines journalists' personal branding on social media by conducting research on self-presentation and to do so, a quantitative method approach was taken. The focus of the sample will be on Indian political journalists who are working on the political beat and covers the political news section in their respective news media organisation in India. The reason for the selection of political journalists was that every news organisation has a journalist specialising in covering politics and categorising political news is easier than lifestyle or technology beat. Additionally, for India, which is also called the largest democracy in the world, politics is always an intriguing topic. Therefore, finding data from a journalist's Twitter profile would yield substantial content for analysis. In this day and age, when the tag of being called a 'journalist' has varied into streams like freelancing, citizen journalism and social media-based reporting, this study takes its sample only from journalists who have been affiliated with a news organisation or website. Therefore, study also did not include freelance journalists. Additionally, the study also did not take into account foreign correspondents working for a news organisation.

In earlier studies on Twitter, researchers selected journalists based on the number of followers or asked their followers for input (Brems et al., 2016). For this study, the sampling rationale for selecting seven journalists followed four criteria that are mentioned below.

First, each journalist needs to work in one of the top 10 broadcast channels or news websites (as in high circulation reach) within India. Second, the selected journalists cover political news for their news organisation. In this study, owing to concerns about a person's active communication to get a sizable representation and to also assess platform engagement,

the journalists had to have a minimum amount of three tweets per week as the third selection criteria. Additionally, the journalists on Twitter as well as the organisations where he/she is employed need to communicate in English in order to reduce the complexity of the data. During the initial search for journalists, the Twitter profiles of several journalists were scanned and their respective organisation's name and their position within that news media organisation was was noted down. In order to make the data more diverse and not to be dominated or imbalanced by one gender, nearly equal size representation was sought for the study. In this, the age of these journalists was not taken into account as a factor for selection.

To answer the research question, the period of tweet evaluation was narrowed to a 61 days window from the 1st of April to the 31st of May. The rationale behind selecting this time period was that India was going through an election period. Political journalists covering the election would be more active on Twitter during this time and would be tweeting more leading up to an election. Another reason for selecting this focal lens was that while political strategies were conducting road shows and campaigns, the country was hit by the surge of the deadly COVID-19 wave second where over 6 million cases were reported in April. To understand the gravity of the situation in the month of March and April 2021, researchers have now reported that more than 3.2 million people deaths were reported from April to June (Jha et al., 2022). Politically as well, the country was going through internal turmoil and change. In February 2021, the Indian election commission announced election dates for several states. This meant that before these dates, political parties around the country were taking out road shows and marches to entice voters. This added fuel to the fire of the already spreading COVID-19 pandemic and by the end of March, the country was struck by the second wave. This was far more lethal than the first wave as hospitals were struggling to get supplies of basic medicines, vaccines and oxygen. The government was hugely criticised for

its inaction to control the crowd at these rallies. The combination of these factors made it more like likely that journalists would have tweeted more from their profiles during the selected time period.

Based on the predefined criteria mentioned above, Twitter handles representing the accounts of Shreya Dhoundial (@shreyadhoundial) who works as an Editor for CNN News 18, Sonal Mehrotra Kapoor (@Sonal_MK) who works as an Associate Editor for NDTV, Sreenivasan Jain (@SreenivasanJain) who works as a Group Editor for NDTV, Arunoday Mukharji (@ArunodayM) who works as a Journalist for @BBC India, Rahul Kanwal (@rahulkanwal) who works as a News Director for IndiaToday, Zakka Jacob (@Zakka_Jacob) who works as a Managing Editor for CNN News 18 and Yogita Limaye (@yogital) who works as a Correspondent for BBC India were selected. The data was collected on the 30th of May, 2022 and the data set included a total of 2652 tweets for the 61 days window. In the month of November, while submitting the proposal, the list of the journalist to be assessed for the study also included the name of three more journalists, but due to restrictions on Twitter's side on downloading their data, they were not included in the final data sample.

In order to get an understanding of the social media policy of each news media organisation, a background check was done on their respective sites. The news channel CNN News 18 and NDTV did not seem to have any overarching social media policy for the staff but they have occasionally asked employees to share only those stories that have been published by their organisation. While BCC, a British broadcaster, also has universal guidelines that list the rules on writing opinions on social media sites like Twitter. India Today did have social media policy for its staff which advises the staff to not use their

personal political views or agendas, implicitly or explicitly. The company has stated that this new policy was not a breach of their right to freedom of expression and any deviation from this could result in disciplinary action, including termination from the job.

For gathering tweets of political journalists, the online free tool 'Tweetbeave' was used to collect the metadata in excel sheets. Each Twitter profile's page was manually coded for this research study. For the RQ1- What kinds of identities do Indian political journalists create online?, the data of the total tweets from each profile were coded into two categories - Twitter profile history by tweets (1), re-tweets(2) and replies (3); and which brand is used when tweeting - personal (1), professional (2), organisational (3).

For the first part, the tweets (1) category included original tweets as well as quote tweets where the journalist embed his/her own comments above the original tweet of his own or someone else. The re-tweets (2) category included content when journalists put someone else's original tweet and content creator front and centre thus allowing other creators' tweets to be in focus. Replies (3) were categorised as simply when the journalists tweeted to a user to reply to their tweet.

Here, tweets which primarily conveyed personal information or interaction were labelled as personal (1). The tweets which did not include personal information but had some relationship to the journalistic profession or had some journalistic opinion were coded as professional (2) tweets. The tweets which were labelled with their news organisation handle or contained an element of their news organisation and were categorised in organizational (3) tweets.

For the assessment of the profile of political journalists and answer RQ2 on what visual elements they use in their profile?, screenshots of the desktop profile pages on Twitter were taken through the free 'SnippingTool' software. "Twitter is accessible in many formats on mobile phones and computers and while the different formats have unique design and access elements, profile images and header images remain the same across all methods of access" (Logh et al., 2017, p. 6). The screenshot image, taken in a high-quality version, includes the profile page, the header image, the user's custom profile wording (including their Twitter name, handle, bio, URL links), their following and followers count number, and the date of profile creation.

For the assessment and analysis of the profiles, further variables were created based on an earlier study (Hanusch and Bruns, 2017; Ottovordemgentschenfelde, 2017; Hanusch, 2017; Molyneux et al., 2017). The variables for the Twitter profile visual analysis were - identifies as journalist, news organization name in the Twitter handle, news organization link through the bio, news organization name in profile information, and personal information in the profile (for example - proud daughter, wife and mother), disclaimer (for example - views my own or RTs don't equal endorsements), personal contact (email or website) link stated, account verified, direct message option open etc. The description of their Twitter profile was also taken into account to see whether journalists use personal, professional or organisational branding behaviour in their user biography statement. The other standard information that was taken from these profiles included the number of followers, number of their posts favourited, user handle (Twitter handle which starts with @), name of the user, and information present on thor URL link option.

Additionally, for the RQ2, the visual aspect of users' profiles was also coded with respect to the main profile image outlook (journalist at work in the profile image, professional profile image), header photo outlook (work-related, personal header photo). Table 5 and 6 show examples of Twitter profiles along with their profile details, such as user descriptions and other meta-data.

Building upon the previous work of Hanush (2018) and Molyneux, et al. (2017), to understand the kind of branding in the visual identity of the Twitter profile, the variables from profile analyses (Table 5) and image analysis (Table 6) were combined and coded for their presence or absence. This would help understand which branding identity - personal, professional and organisational, do these journalists use in the visual information of Twitter profiles.

As Twitter allows instant changes to revise account information, update profile pictures and delete content, all information gathered is of the 25th of June, 2022.

4. Results

4.1 Branding Identity through Tweets

Social media sites have allowed journalists to create a persona outside that of bylines and ticker plates. Today, "branding is so common among journalists on Twitter suggests that it is seen as an acceptable, even obvious, practice among journalists of all stripes" (Molyneux et al., 2017, p. 12). To study if Indian journalists create a brand online, the final sample of the study comprised seven journalists where three were women and four were men. Out of this sample, four journalists worked for a national broadcaster and three for a news website.

In this sample, the earliest Twitter account was created in 2009 and the youngest was created in 2014. In terms of followers count, the highest follower count was of Rahul Kanwal with 4.5 million followers and the lowest count was of Arunoday Mukharji with over 16 thousand followers (see Table 1). Earlier studies have shown a "highly significant positive relationship between the position of a journalist and her number of followers" (Simon, 2018, p. 1209). Rahul Kanwal's Twitter followers also include all the six other journalists from this sample.

From the given sample, the data also showed that the highest number of tweets were also by Rahul Kanwal which was around 22% of the total tweet sample of 2652 tweets. A total of 19% of the tweets were by Shreya Dhoundial and 18% of the tweets were by Sonal Mehrotra Kapoor. Yogita Limaye, Zakka Jacob and Arunoday Mukharji stood at 10%, 7% and 7%. Sreenivasan Jain, who had the second highest followers from the sample, had only 14% tweets from the total gathered tweets.

Table 1

Profile of the seven selected journalists

Journalist name	News organisation	Position in organisation	Gender	Total posts	Followers count	Year of joining
Shreya Dhoundial	CNN-News 18	Editor	Female	511	48.1 k	2013
Sonal Mehrotra Kapoor	NDTV	Associate Editor	Female	486	168.9 k	2011
Sreenivasan Jain	NDTV	Group Editor	Male	379	627.9k	2011
Arunoday Mukharji	BBC India	Journalist	Male	208	16.7 k	2010
Rahul Kanwal	India Today	News Director	Male	606	4.5 M	2009
Zakka Jacob	CNN-News 18	Managing Editor	Male	195	37.9 k	2014
Yogita Limaye	BBC India	Correspondent	Female	267	63 k	2009

In this sample, out of the total tweet sample of 2652 tweets, the number of original tweets was 50%. The number of re-tweets and replies stood at 36% and 14% respectively from this sample. The highest number of tweets were by the journalist Rahul Kanwal (32%) out of the 1316 original tweets and the highest number of re-tweets were by Sreenivasan Jain (20%) out of the total 968 re-tweets. When it came to replies from these seven journalists, Shreya Dhoundial put forward the most number of tweets which amounted to 36% reply tweets out of the total 368 replies.

In order to understand the branding identity, when the total tweets were analysed, the total number of original tweets stood at 189 (7%) tweets out of the total 2652, and the total number of personal tweets stood at 923 (35%). With its highest share in terms of its percentage out of the total sample of tweets posted by these seven journalists, as many as 58% were organisational tweets.

Journalists now not only play an important role in information dissemination on Twitter but they now also "engage in online conversations and share their thoughts on current issues" (Varol and Uluturk, 2019, p. 91). At a time when studies like Mourão and Harowl (2020) state that social media have become routine in basic reporting practices, the data in this study shows that close to 50% of the journalists preferred to interact with the audience through original tweets while the reaming preferred to interact through re-tweets and replies. (see Table 2). Through these tweets, the journalists focused on creating either professional or organisational identity (see Table 3). Here, these professional or organisational tweets mostly consisted of breaking news stories or the top news of the day. For example, Shreya Dhoundial who was very frequently sharing professional tweets and had the highest percentage of professional tweets (29%) had posts on breaking news updates. For example- 'Big Breaking: Delhi to unlock from Monday. Construction activities and factories to resume. Unlocking will be gradual says @ArvindKejriwal'. For Rahul Kanwal, who had the most number of organisational tweets from the sample (33%), tweets consisted of content such as 'India Today accesses photos of Mehul Choksi behind bars in Dominica, with injury marks. In one of the photographs, Mehul Choksi can be seen standing behind a gate with iron grilles, resembling a lock-up'. Sonal Mehrotra Kapoor was the journalist with the most personal tweets. Out of the total 189 personal tweets, 23% of such tweets belonged to her. For

example - With the caption 'Lucknow mornings!', she shared a video of a flower bed hanging from a balcony while it rains in the background. In the study, it was seen that a majority of the personal tweets from the seven journalists included condolence messages to people who had lost someone during the COVID-19 second wave. Thus it can be said that even with the small sample of personal tweets, these 7 Indian journalists did not give glims of their private life and there was no mention of their family or hobbies.

Table 2

Type of post out of total tweets

	No. of original tweets (1)	No. of retweets (2)	No. of replies (3)
Shreya Dhoundial	268	110	133
Sonal Mehrotra Kapoor	219	194	73
Sreenivasan Jain	147	200	32
Arunoday Mukharji	74	84	50
Rahul Kanwal	425	156	25
Zakka Jacob	54	139	2
Yogita Limaye	129	85	53

Table 3

Type of tweet out of total posts

	Personal (1)	Professional (2)	Organisational (3)

Shreya Dhoundial	42	272	197
Sonal Mehrotra Kapoor	45	189	252
Sreenivasan Jain	21	106	252
Arunoday Mukharji	38	130	40
Rahul Kanwal	16	79	511
Zakka Jacob	5	3	187
Yogita Limaye	22	144	101

Out of the total 1316 original tweets, the data showed that the percentage of personal, professional and organisational tweets were - 6%, 38 and 56%. While further studying the interaction through only the original tweets (1) of the journalists (see Table 2), the data showed that four journalists were more inclined to put forward professional identity when putting original tweets (see Table 4). For example, in the case of Shreya Dhoundial, 47 percent of her total original tweets were professional tweets. For Sonal Mehrotra Kapoor it was 55%, for Arunoday Mukharji it was 77%, and for Yogita Limaye it was 68%. The other three journalists, namely Rahul Ranwal, Sreenivasan Jain and Zakka Jacob, were more inclined to tweet more about the content related to their news organisation in their original tweets (see Table 4). For Sreenivasan Jain, the percentage of organisational tweets stood at close to 50% out of his total 147 original tweets. For Rahul Kanwal, it was 88% and for Zakka Jacob, it was 85%. As opposed to Molyneux et al. (2017), the least used branding identity was when these journalists put personal information in their original tweets. This shows that even with the absence or lack of understanding of social media policies in the

Indian newsroom, the journalists rarely talk about their personal life or put out any miscellaneous information.

Out of the total 968 re-tweets, the data showed that the percentage of personal, professional and organisational tweets were - 2%, 25% and 73%. From the data of their re-tweeting activity, five out of the seven journalistic preferred to put forward mainly their organisational identity. Here, this content included re-tweets of a compliment about a story that they did with the news organisation. Other times, it was exclusively a re-tweet of their article, story or picture that was shared by their employee's Twitter handle. For example, all the 139 retweets done by Zakka Jacobs were organisational tweets while for Sreenivasan Jain, 83% of his total retweets were organisational. In the case of Rahul Kanwal, 80% of the 156 retweets were exclusively a re-tweet of a story or a breaking news input thus solidifying his organisational identity. It is also important to remember that the news organisation where he works (India Today) has one of the strictest social media policies. His news organisation has exclusively stated that the employees can share and respond with only the content coming from the India Today Group.

Out of the total of 968 re-tweets, the data showed that the percentage of personal, professional and organisational tweets were - 2%, 25% and73%. Personal tweets were again the last choice when it came to re-tweeting. For example, in the case of Shreya Dhoundial, 1.8% percent of her total re-tweets were personal tweets. For Sonal Mehrotra Kapoor, it was 2%, for Sreenivasan Jain it was 2%, for Arunoday Mukharji it was 3% and for Rahul Kanwal, it was 1%. For both Zakka Jacob and Yogita Limaye, they had no re-tweet.

Among the 3 ways of tweeting, using the replies option was the least used way of communicating on Twitter for these employed Indian journalists. Out of the total 368 re-tweets, the data showed that the percentage of personal, professional and organisational tweets were - 28%, 46% and 26%. Again, they focused more on amplifying journalistic content rather than engaging in organisational or personal conversations. Interestingly, the data showed that when replying, the journalists did engage in personal conversation over organisational. This is in line with research by Brems et al. (2017), where "the journalists appear to use Twitter more as an interactive platform to exchange information than to simply broadcast information" (Brems et al., 2017, p. 450). Though Brems et al. (2017) also noted that employed journalists were less likely to interact on Twitter through replies than freelance journalists. There was not a single pattern regarding what kind of replies these journalists were indulging in. While a majority including Shreya Dhoundial, Sreenivasan Jain, Yogita Limaye and Rahul Kanwal engaged more in professional tweets when replying, Sonal Mehrotra Kapoor and Zakka were more inclined towards putting an organisational brand when using the reply option on Twitter. In terms of percentage, Shreya Dhoundial's 64% replies were professional tweets. For Sreenivasan Jain, the percentage stood at 37%, for Yogita Limaye it was 54% and for Rahul Kanwal, it was 44%. For Sonal Mehrotra Kapoor and Zakka Jacob, who gave importance to organisational tweets when replying, the percentage stood at 49% and 100%. While Zakka Jacob was the only journalist who posted zero personal and professional replies, Arunoday Mukharji, with 64%, gave the most importance to personal replies.

Table 4

Type of post and tweet out of total tweets

		No. of original tweets (1)	No. of retweets (2)	No. of replies (3)
Shreya Dhoundial		(268)	(110)	(133)
	Personal (42)	17	2	23
	Professional (272)	126	60	86
	Organisational (197)	125	48	24
Sonal Mehrotra Kapoor		(219)	(194)	(73)
	Personal (45)	24	4	17
	Professional (189)	122	47	20
	Organisational (252)	73	143	36
Sreenivasan Jain		(147)	(200)	(32)
	Personal (21)	9	4	8
	Professional (106)	65	29	12
	Organisational (252)	73	167	12
Arunoday Mukharji		(74)	(84)	(50)
	Personal (38)	3	3	32
	Professional (130)	57	60	13
	Organisational(40)	14	21	5
Rahul Kanwal		(425)	(156)	(25)
	Personal (16)	8	2	6
	Professional (79)	40	28	11

	Organisational (511)	377	126	8
Zakka Jacob		(54)	(139)	(2)
	Personal (5)	5	0	0
	Professional (3)	3	0	0
	Organisational (187)	46	139	2
Yogita Limaye		(129)	(85)	(53)
	Personal (22)	7	0	15
	Professional (144)	88	27	29
	Organisational (101)	34	58	9

As opposed to research that states that those who have been on "Twitter longer were more likely to engage in individual branding rather than organizational branding" (Molyneux et al., 2017, p. 12), in this study, Rahul Kanwal, who was the first one to make a profile on Twitter shared the maximum number of organisational tweets (see Table 3). He was also putting forward the most original tweets through his Twitter profile (see Table 4). When journalists tweet more, for this sample, the tweet likely has organisational or professional branding. Unlike Molyneux et al. (2017), Rahul Kanwal and Sreenivasan Jain, who had the most number of followers did not focus on branding activities at the personal level. Rather the stress was more on creating a professional or organisational brand through their tweets.

Lasorsa (2012), stated that there was some significant difference between "female and male reporters when the topic of the tweet was the tweeter's own personal life. Such personalizing tweets were significantly more likely to have been posted by a female journalist

than a male journalist" (Lasorsa, 2012, p. 409). The same pattern was seen within this sample. Out of the total 189 personal tweets, 24% belonged to Sonal Kapoor Maerotra, and 22% to Shreya Dhoundial. For example, Sonal Mehrotra Kapoor posted personal tweets telling which TV series reunion she would want to see, while Yogita Limaye had also put forward a post stating 'My #toolkit to keep calm in these crazy times.', she had put a photograph of a novel titles 'Zen, the art of simple living'. In, a study Mourão and Harlow (2020), they had suggested a significant relationship between women journalists and social media adoption for reporting. Thus, in these studies, these female journalists have adopted to tools of social media sites so much, that they feel free to use social media space to put any and every casual thought in mind.

Unlike Ottovordemgentschenfelde (2017), where "features that actively communicated the professional brand identity were more diverse but overall less common as compared to the organizational brand identity" (Ottovordemgentschenfelde, 2017, p. 10), in this sample, the results state that majority journalist communicated both professional as well as organisational brand identity. Following the argument by Molyneux et al. (2017), it is also possible to suggest that organizational branding takes the biggest priority for most Indian journalists. This suggests that they may focus on "almost exclusively professional and corporate identity for fear they may be seen as untrustworthy if they were to divulge too much of their own off-stage personae" (Hanusch, 2017, p. 1502).

The above-gathered data aligned with Ottovordemgentschenfelde (2017), where she claims that journalists on Twitter mostly have a hybrid brand identity where they play with organizational, professional, and personal, but they differ in terms of significance in different

situations. Overall, this study found that the use of Twitter for branding use varied across this sample of Indian political journalists.

4.2 Branding through visual elements in Twitter profile

4.2.1 Profile Analysis

On Twitter, a well-constructed stage can be an effective tool for disseminating information. Extending Goffman's research, in this stage, as Brems et al. (2017) said the actors use it in a manner that helps in playing the role by using the digital elements that Twitter provides. These elements could be images, a header photo, a description or a personalised hashtag. In the visual data gathered from the seven journalistic, all were verified by Twitter with a blue tick thus legitimising their profession. All seven identified themself as a journalist in their Twitter description. Hanusch (2018), in his study, also argued that journalists put up a professional outlook in order to use their accounts mostly for work purposes.

All seven journalists used their news organisation name in the description and simultaneously specified their designation there. For example, Sreenivasan Jain said in his bio statement 'Group Editor, NDTV', Yogita Limaye introduced herself as 'BBC News South Asia Correspondent' while also mentioning the countries that she covers, and Rahul Kanwal even referred to the other institutional affiliation within the news organization that he works for. Like earlier studies, like Hanusch (2017) and Ottovordemgentschenfelde (2017), the journalists here want to show that they use the medium for the purpose of work. This also resonates with a study by Varol and Uluturk (2019) which says that journalists use the profile description "to link their work and education information by mentioning Twitter accounts of those organizations" (Varol and Uluturk, 2019, p. 89).

All the journalists, except one, were consistent in not putting any disclaimer of any kind in their Twitter profile information. This result was in contradiction to earlier studies like Hanusch and Bruns (2017) and Hanusch (2018) where a majority of the journalists did put a disclaimer to distinguish their thoughts from their employer. In this sample, none of the journalists had a direct message option open for communication or story tips, thus meaning that the backstage of twitter was not accessible to their followers and they remain hidden from the general public (Brems et al., 2017). This also shows that these journalists mostly use this medium to have one to many conversations, thus the only option through which the audience can reach these journalists is through tweet replies. As stated in the above findings, the replies option is also one of the least used ways of tweeting for this sample.

In this study, four out of the seven journalists also included a hyperlink to their employees' Twitter accounts in their biography description (for example - CNNnews18, BBC, NDTV) though none added the Twitter handle of their news organisation in their Twitter handle name. Even though Twitter allows the aspect of networking, Sonal Mehrotra Kapoor and Rahul Kanwal were the only journalists to put their contact information (their Facebook and Instagram links) on their Twitter profiles though this was also just a link to their other social media pages. No journalist provided any email information, be it personal, professional or corporate, in their Twitter biography or URL link, thus it can be concluded that his/her followers would not have any way of reaching them directly for a one-on-one conversation. It is to be noted here Twitter limits the number of characters in your bio to 160 and only allows the user to put one URL link, thus putting some restrictions on the journalist on what to put to the public and what information to omit. Therefore, it can be said that the choices made by these journalists were all conscious when they were writing their biography and putting URL links.

Out of the sample of seven journalists, only two female journalists, namely Sonal and Yogita Limaye, had provided some level of personal information on the Twitter profile description. Sonal Mehrotra Kapoor in her profile included text like 'Dog mom, amateur cook', and Yogita Limaye started in her profile description 'everything stops for chai'. As mentioned earlier, this resonates with earlier studies which state that the provision of putting personal information is not widely used by journalists (Hanusch and Bruns, 2016; Hanusch 2017). This finding from the sample can also be linked to another result of this study which states that female journalists were also the ones to share the most personal tweets. Though further research needs to know the conclusive reason but it can be said that female journalists feel more at ease putting a personal branding outlook than men. Additionally, unlike previous studies like Ottovordemgentschenfelde (2016), adding personality attributes like humour, passion or hobby was not a common practice for these employed Indian journalists.

Another trend which, though rare, was seen in journalist bio descriptions was to add universities attended or the fellowship they have received (HBS Alumni, Chevening Fellow etc). In this sample size, this was done by two journalists namely Rahul Kanwal and Arunoday Mukharji. This could be done by journalists to solidify their online prestige by associating themself with such highly reputed journalistic organizations or, fellowships (Varol and Uluturk 2019). Rarely, in their biographical descriptions, do journalists also include their prior work experience. Thus, highlighting their professional growth and affiliations. For example, Sonal Mehrotra Kapoor said she is 'Former Anchor and Associate Editor with NDTV', and Shreya Dhoundial also referred to her previous role by stating 'Formely: Editor, Defense CNNnews18'.

Table 5

Twitter profile analysis

	Shreya Dhoundial	Sonal Mehrotra Kapoor	Sreeni vasan Jain	Arunoday Mukharji	Rahul Kanwal	Zakka Jacob	Yogita Limaye
Identifies as journalist	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
News org name in Twitter handle	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
News org link through bio	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No
News org name in bio	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Personal informatio n in bio	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Yes
Direct message option open	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
Disclaimer	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No
Personal contact stated (email/ link or website)	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No
Account verified	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

While overall in this study any similarity within the sample of the Indian political journalists was not high, the outcome portrays a further examination into the potential link between the use of social media profiles and using humour, hyperlinking, religion, political leaning, and gender in it. This would produce some interesting patterns like that of the research by Hanusch. For a country like India, such a relationship is extremely crucial to understand as journalists have a long history of working together for each other's gain in India. This has also seeped into social media sites too. While there have been news stories of journalists working with Hindu right-wing portals to spread polarising stories, other journalists like Mohammed Zubair, a critic of the Modi government, have been arrested over tweets.

4.2.2 Image Analysis

 Of the profiles studied within this sample, all Indian journalists included a profile image, all included a bio description, and all, except one, included a header image. Like Hanusch (2017), while most journalists had some professional identification in the Twitter bio, it was a lot evident in visual images such as a head photo or profile picture. This shows that journalists like to solidify through the texts that they are professionals in the field without identifying them with a particular organisational brand through visual clues (Hanusch 2017).

When looking at Twitter pictures, it is seen that the journalists seem to be carefully curating their image through photographs. All journalists prefer to put a profile picture of their own and four out of seven had a profile photo which was related to their profession. For example, Sonal Mehrotra Kapoor's profile photo showed her in the newsroom as an anchor, while Sreenivasan Jain's profile photo also showed him in a newsroom during a show, thus showing their affiliation with the profession. Similarly, Arunoday Mukharji had a photo of himself while doing a news report and Yogita Limaye, in her profile photo, was seen with a

mic in her hand. Therefore, they do place the focus on themself but this branding is that of a professional instead of personal life or their news organisation. This is in line with the findings of Lough et al. (2017) which state that 'journalists' profile pictures are more professionally oriented than personally oriented" (Lough et al., 2017, p. 8) outlook. Here it is also to be seen that the option of journalists using an organisation-related profile picture is still not as widespread as no journalist used their organisation's brand logo in their profile photo. It is also common to find journalists in professional clothing, thus solidifying some level of authority and professionalism. For example, in this sample, Sonal Mehrotra Kapoor, Sreenivasan Jain, Rahul Kanwal, Zakka Jacob and Yogita Limaye were wearing business wear like a blazer, and Shreya Dhoundial and Arunoday Mujharji donned a shirt. This photo, which will always pop up next to the tweet, thus helps them declare themself as a professional. Though further research would be needed to explore the domain, this trend remains consistent among this sample of employed Indian political journalists.

When talking about the header photo, even though the data was much less consistent, four of these political journalists had the header photo which was related to them through their image. For example, Rahul Kanwal had a collage of his photos where he is posing with international dignitaries and interviewing people, and Zakka Jacob's header photo included a photograph of himself and the logo of his employer with the text 'Brass Track' the TV show name that he hosts for CNN-News18. The header image also mentions 'weeknights at 9:25 pm', the timing of his show. In the sample of seven journalists, Sreenivasan Jain was the only journalist who did not have a header photograph.

All female journalists in the sample had a casual header photo. Shreya Dhoundial had an illustration of a woman sipping tea, Sonal Mehrotra Kapoor showed feet relaxing at the beach and Yogita Limaye had put a photo of her relaxing at a mountain top. Here it is to be

noted that header images are only seen when you actively go to a Twitter user's profile, while a profile picture will always show next to every tweet that your followers see in his or her timeline (Logh et al., 2017). Thus Logh et al. (2017) state that profile photos can be called a primary form of expression as they are seen during general Twitter usage, and header images can be called a secondary form of expression as only when a user actively visits an individual's page, he/she sees it. For this sample, it can be said that through profile image, the primary form of expression, the Indian journalists want to be looked at as a professional but through header images, the secondary form of expression, they add some level of personal outlook by putting casual header photos. These casual photos do not promote or provide any link to their employer and are spontaneous or casual in nature.

Table   **6**

Image Analysis

	Shreya Dhoundial	Sonal Mehrotra Kapoor	Sreenivasan Jain	Arunoday Mukharji	Rahul Kanwal	Zakka Jacob	Yogita Limaye
News org in header photo	No	No	-	Yes	No	Yes	No
Personal image in header photo	Yes	Yes	-	No	Yes	No	Yes
Header photo profession-related	No	No	-	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
News org in profile photo	No	No	No	No	No	No	No

| Profile photo profession-related | No | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | No | Yes |
| Self in profile photo | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |

4.2.3 *Use of three branding identities through profile*

Like Hanusch (2017) and Ottovordemgentschenfelde (2016), the study combined the variable from figure 5 and figure 6 along with some new variables to measure personal, professional and corporate identity in their profile outlook. To measure the personal identity of Indian political journalists, these variables were included - (a) personal information in bio, (b) a private email id, (c) a private social media site link, (d) any casual info in text form, (e) any casual visual, (f) a profile photo in informal clothes, or (g) a personal header photo. When counting these variables altogether, the highest possible score was 7 but the maximum score that a journalist reached was 5. Two journalists scored 4, 2 and 1, while three journalists score 0, thus indicating that they provided no personal branding on their Twitter profiles. Here, the findings further emphasised that female journalists were among the top three scorers when calculating personal brand identity.

To measure the professional identity of Indian political journalists' profile, these variables were used - (a) gave description or title of his work (b) a disclaimer stating "views my own," (c) a disclaimer stating "retweets don't equal endorsement," (d) details about media school/fellowship (e) a profile photo of them in professional clothing (f) a header photo related to the profession (g) a professional website link or (h) a profile image of them at work. When counting these variables altogether, the highest possible score was 8 but the maximum score that a journalist reached was again 5. But this time, in the sample size, no journalist

scored zero and the lowest score was 2. Therefore, it can be concluded that Indian journalists do provide some level of professional branding on their profile.

To measure the organisational identity of Indian political journalists' profiles - these indicators were assessed - (a) employee name in Twitter handle, (b) employee's name in their username, (c) named their employer in their bio, (d) provided a link to their employer in their bio, (e) linked to their employer through the URL field, (f) provided their corporate email address, (g) company logo in their profile picture, or (h) included a corporate logo in their header photo. Here the highest possible score was 8 but the maximum score that was reached was 3, but this score was attained by two journalists. No journalists scored zero. This showed that Indian journalists do create some level of organisational identity through their profiles.

Again, it can be said that through their profiles, these journalists create a branding identity which mostly gives a professional outlook. Though they also include features to include their organisational identity. This intermix is less likely to include personal branding identity.

5. Conclusion and Further Discussions

Social media sites have allowed journalists to create a persona outside that of bylines and ticker plates. The individualism of these accounts gives them the power to shoot information at the audience without the permission or approval of an editor or a manager. The findings of this exploratory study have provided an understanding of branding practices adopted by Indian political journalists. While earlier research, mainly from western countries, has examined the content of tweets or the visual selections journalists make when making their profiles, this research tried to combine the two approaches for Indian journalists. This is done to see what branding practices are evident through tweets or their main Twitter page. The results indicated that original tweets and retweets were the most used type of posts that the political journalists used on the open frontstage of Twitter. By analysing these tweets through Ottovordemgentschenfelde's (2017) three banding identities- the organizational, the professional, and the personal, it was seen that these journalists used Twitter for breaking professional news stories or mostly retweeting their organisational tweets. Twitter seems to be a 'breaking news' dissemination platform, thus showing that Twitter became a reporting tool (Vis, 2013). Here these professionals are producing content under their own identity while also being employed by big media conglomerates. This corresponds with emerging literature on branding practices of journalists on social media (Hanusch & Bruns, 2016; Molyneux & Holton, 2017; Ottovordemgentschenfelde, 2017). The study also showed that the two prominent branding identities coexist and compliment each other when Indian journalists tweet.

Branding through organisational tweets still plays an important role where journalists like to put forward the news carried out by organisations where they are employed. Though journalists usually try to combine their brand identities (Ottovordemgentschenfelde, 2017),

political journalists in India individually focus on building more organisational or professional brands online by constantly sharing posts regarding the same on Twitter. Earlier studies like Lough et al. (2017) had also pointed toward an increasing professionalisation of journalists' online personas while Hanusch (2017) also observed that the "UK journalists focus on a corporate identity due to market pressures" (Hanusch, 2017 as mentioned in Simon 2019, p. 1213). This study also echoes Molyneux et al. (2017) findings. "The prevalence of branding among journalists in various media and with varying levels of experience on Twitter shows that, to a great degree, journalists are using social media to make appeals for attention and authority" (Molyneux et al., 2017, p. 1399).

This study points out that the higher the number of followers journalists have, the less bothered they were to interact with the audience through replies. In such a case, where the journalist is engaging in few-to-many communication, may not be aware of the larger hegemonic and power systems (Olausson, 2017). In this study, all journalists donned a professional outlook on their profiles. For journalists, earlier studies have talked about "tensions between disclosing personal information to be authentic or maintaining a professional presence to be authoritative, and tensions between developing one's individual distinctiveness at the expense of promoting one's employer or other stakeholders" (Molyneux et al., 2017, p. 1396). In a study similar to Simon (2019), where data of 300 journalists were studied through quantitative analysis, this link can be further explored in the South Asian social media region where the space is still evolving. It will help in understanding what portion size of Indian journalists' social media activity is focused on personal branding, professional branding and organisational branding.

Regarding the visual outlook of the Twitter profiles, a stage where these performers can control their image in front of their audience, no journalists made use of humour or sarcasm in their profiles. "By using the props that Twitter offers —e.g. links, visual attachments, a header image or a small biography—the stage can be constructed in a way that adds to the character the performer is trying to play" (Brems et al., 2016, p. 455). For Indian political journalists, this character that they are trying to play is to be identified through their profession. In terms of the visual outlook of their profile, again, the least used branding identity by this set of journalists was the personal one and they rarely promoted or talked about their personal life on this platform. While it can be said that "journalists, empowered by social media, have added a new tool to their traditional toolkit: the self" (Brems et al., 2016, p. 456), non-professional details rarely come on these platforms and it can be said that journalists use Twitter as a portfolio or a business card.

As mentioned earlier in the research, these employed journalists are focusing on creating a professional and organisation brand at a time when most new organisations do not have central social media policies. Therefore, as Logh et al. (2018) stated that though social media provides a participatory, transparent, and engaging platform for journalists, they still are driven to put forth a professional self. "This hints at the organizational, and possibly institutional, influence that many journalists continue to work under" (Lough et al, 2017, p. 12).

This study comes with its own limitations. For example, Twitter Application Programming Interface (API) can only return up to 3,200 of any user's most recent Tweets. For this study, it meant that journalists who used Twitter to communicate more frequently since April 2021 could not be included in the study. The name of the three journalists stated in the proposal submitted for this research paper, R Shivshankar, Shiv Aroor and Navika

Kumar, their data could not be included for analysis. They had tweeted more than 3200 times since April 2021. Due to this limitation from Twitter's end, the data set was limited to the remaining seven journalists. As the screenshot of the profile was taken on 25th of June, 2022, by this time two journalists in the sample had already changed the news organisation that they worked for. This meant that the two journalists, namely Shreya Dhoundial and Sonal Mehrotra Kapoor had already rephrased their Twitter description to 'Formely: Editor, Defence @CNNnews18' and 'Former Anchor & Associate Editor @ndtv'. Though not a limitation, the software TweetBeawer which was used to download bulk data from Twitter is not operational and the website owner has stated that they are not sure when or if it will start working again.

The findings of this study have to be seen in the light of some limitations as the sample size of the journalists was just limited to seven accounts, and the results are far from being representative of all the journalists in India with a social media account. Thus, the data cannot be generalised to others in the field. Additionally, the study might not accurately reflect the branding efforts of journalists working in other parts of the world which have different languages and cultures. As this study focused on snapshots of profiles and tweets, it cannot identify trends and patterns in branding practices therefore additional studies which can focus on changing or evolving branding practices are necessary. Another very important limitation to keep in mind here is that the ever-evolving research on 'new' communication mediums like social media sites is as relevant as the latest update or upgradation of the medium. Therefore, any research which does not remain important, timely, and applicable will become out of date because the authors focused on technologies that are no longer in use. The tried-and-true method of dissemination of news is changing and will continue to change journalism and news organizations. Academicians will also have to catch up to this pace to

explore the ways the use of those personal branding on social media had on journalists and organizational dynamics

Though there is a research gap when it comes to finding literature on journalistic branding practices in India, this paper can help raises some interesting questions for further exploration in the future. To bridge this gap, the online branding practices of political journalists can also be studied through sentiment analysis of tweets and the role of organisational position. Additionally, future research should follow up with qualitative studies including qualitative interviews with journalists and editorial staff to better understand how Indian journalists build their brands on Twitter and what are the motivations behind specific personal branding practices. Looking it through the eyes of Goffman, a more qualitative approach will help understand which particular audience they are performing for when tweeting (Hanusch, 2017).

Since the focus of this study was on journalistic branding on Twitter, the same practices might be adapted with a different approach on new emerging social media sites like TikTok and Snapchat. Therefore, a comparative analysis, mainly focusing on non-western nations where social media guidelines are in their infancy, would help us get a deeper and more varied interpretation of journalistic branding behaviour across social media sites in south-Asia, and specifically India. Further exploring if this branding practice is implicit or explicit, such studies in the future will help in understanding how much journalists calculate their actions for self-presentation on social media stages like Twitter.

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