

Communicating Royalty: A Study of Modern Monarchs' Online Branding

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Abstract

Modern monarchies have received both criticism and adoration throughout the years. Prior research indicates that to maintain relevance and public acceptance, royals need to communicate certain identities in their branding. Using a content analysis, the author coded for various branding elements present on the official websites of three monarchs. This study sought to determine the brand personality and narratives told by each monarch. Overall, each monarch employed various elements of traditional and heritage branding to create a unique brand personality and narrative.

I. Introduction

The monarchy is one of the world's oldest institutions of rule. In existence for thousands of years, monarchies around the globe have remained an intriguing spectacle of tradition and opulence. Inherently rooted in the past, today's monarchies are challenged with perpetuating the rituals that are the basis of their allure while maintaining relevancy in a modern world.

Currently, there are 26 active monarchies presiding over 46 nations. The monarch's degree of involvement and actual political power varies by country. The current landscape of royals can be broken down into monarchs who are head of state, monarchs who have some power, and monarchs who are figureheads with no legitimate political power (Dewey & Fisher, 2013). Other differentiating factors include succession rules, official title, history, and perceived role within a country.

Arguments in favor of monarchies include boosts to international trade, economic growth, diplomatic benefits, and increased national pride (Ansink, 2013). Those opposed to the institution cite riskiness of hereditary succession, inherited privilege, cost, lack of transparency, and perpetuation of class divides as negative implications (Smith, 2012).

Due to the elevated visibility and controversial nature of modern monarchs, establishing a strong personal brand and public image are crucial to continued survival and public approval. While some monarchs cultivate worldwide celebrity status, others are household names only within their country of rule. Can this divide be attributed to corporate image differences of "the Crown" in these countries? Online platforms offer

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monarchs a platform to establish their own narrative and global brand identity apart from media coverage or public perceptions. A monarch's self-representation online indicates volumes about his or her personal and national ideology, as well as desired corporate image.

This study will examine the communication tools and tactics employed by various royals in self-branding online. The three royals selected for this study are King Harald V of Norway, King Abdullah II of Jordan, and King Mswati III of eSwatini (formerly Swaziland). These three monarchs maintain comprehensive official websites and distinctive narratives. The author chose to examine these particular monarchs because of their origins in different regions of the globe and differing levels of political influence.

King Mswati III of eSwatini

One of 60 sons, Mswati III was born in 1968 and ascended to the throne in 1986 at age 18. Mswati has received criticism for his many wives, luxurious lifestyle, and autocratic style of rule. In the early 2000s he was criticized for trying to limit democracy (Swaziland Profile, 2015).

King Harald V of Norway

Harald V was educated in Norway and Oxford. He ascended the throne in 1991 after achieving the rank of captain in Norway's armed forces. He is a constitutional monarch with largely ceremonial duties, including the head of the armed forces and church (Norway Profile, 2013).

King Abdullah II of Jordan

Abdullah II ascended the throne in 1999 and is believed to be a direct descendant of the Prophet Muhammad. Powers include appointing governments, approving legislation, and dissolving parliament. Jordan's peace agreement with Israel and close relations with the United States are unpopular among many citizens (Jordan Profile, 2015).

II. Literature Review

To investigate the role of monarchy branding online, this literature review encompasses basic elements of branding, online branding, brands with heritage, royalty as a brand, and online leader branding.

Branding Basics

To critically examine the branding efforts of various monarchs, it is essential to first determine the definition of a "brand." Branding is the foundation of an entity and its differentiation from other similar competitors through a defined brand image and brand promise (Haygood, 2014). Branding can also be defined as the name, term, signal, symbol, or features that distinguish a brand (Chung & Ahn, 2013).

A well-defined brand employs clear brand architecture, brand personality, and brand value. Brand architecture is the definition of a brand's attributes, benefits, values, personality, and brand essence (Haygood, 2014). Attributes are the basic features of a product and benefits are the emotional and rational implications derived from those attributes. Brand value is the entity's representation of what it stands for. Brand personality is the idea that a brand can portray human-like qualities, such as youth or classiness (Haygood, 2014). By defining itself with brand personality and brand value, a brand is able to communicate to consumers a belief and value set that make it appealing.

Another dimension of branding is the concept of brand as an identity system. As an identity system, a brand takes on qualities of culture, personality, reflection, and relationship that are meaningful to the consumer (Maurya & Mishra, 2012).

Beyond functional benefits, a brand provides a means of self-enhancement for consumers (Chung & Ahn, 2013). Consumers typically build strong relationships with and loyalties to brands that represent a desired trait, such as wealth or popularity. This means of self-expression is another way that brands can provide distinct value to consumers. By using branding elements that are easily recognizable with a positive association, a corporate name or logo can lend equity to a product (Maurya & Mishra, 2012). With strong branding, a certain level of quality or status becomes synonymous with the logo, colors, or name of that

brand. By employing these elements, a brand can establish brand affinity and consumer loyalty.

Online Branding

The internet is pervasive. With constant internet access through a variety of devices, the internet is a critical touch point for brands to reach consumers. Not only does a brand need to maintain strong brand identity through physical products, but also by maintaining brand authenticity across various platforms (Shaker & Hafiz, 2014).

Online platforms and tools provide the opportunity for a brand to communicate its positive and favorable attributes. Two critical components in building a strong brand identity online are text-based information and image-based information. When portraying a brand online, the online representation should be built on an aspect of human personality. Last, online branding should highlight the strengths, goals, and personality of a brand in a persuasive manner (Shaker & Hafiz, 2014).

The internet provides an element of interactivity that can help to enhance a brand. Interactivity is reciprocal, two-way communication between a brand and its consumer that can positively affect attitude, memory, and behavioral intentions towards that brand (Chung & Ahn, 2013).

Brands With Heritage

Brands with heritage have unique elements of branding and points of differentiation. Brand heritage is a dimension of a brand's identity found in its track record, longevity, core values, use of symbolism, and belief that history is important (Urde, Greyser & Balmer, 2007). Rooted in the past, heritage brands are reliant on tradition, customs, and a sense of nostalgia. Heritage brands emphasize history as a key component of their identity (Urde, Greyser & Balmer, 2007). Heritage and longevity also lend a brand identity and legitimacy (Suddaby, Foster & Trank, 2010). Stewards of heritage brands have the unique task of maintaining the past glory of a brand while also positioning it as forward facing and relevant.

According to Balmer, effective heritage brands employ the concept of relative invariance. Relative invariance is the manner in which heritage identities remain the same in some regards, while evolving over time (Balmer, 2011). For example, the status or symbols of a brand might remain the same, but the meaning or connotation changes slightly over time (Balmer, 2011). Key elements to heritage brand maintenance are trust, authenticity, and affinity (Balmer, 2011).

Corporate heritage brands are unique in that they contribute to collective identity to build equitable reputation (Foster et. al, 2011). Corporate heritage brands enter into the common consciousness of a group's collective memory while embodying cultures, places, and time frames (Balmer, 2011). To maintain relevance over time, a heritage brand needs to employ adaptability (Urde, Greyser & Balmer, 2007).

Previous scholars have identified elements of corporate heritage branding within monarchies, including heavily symbolic communication, integral use of history as part of identity, and significant institutional longevity (Urde, Greyser & Balmer, 2007). Monarchs employ symbolism in several branding elements, such as use of recognizable crests and imagery of the crown. The symbol of the crown has become synonymous with prestige, quality, and exclusivity. Critical elements in maintenance and emphasis of the heritage of most monarchies include public pomp, ritual, and pageantry (Otnes & Maclaran, 2018). Monarchs, in some ways operating like a CEO, leverage themselves as a heritage brand to enhance their country's social balance and core values; thus a royal motto serves much in the same manner as a corporate tagline (Urde, Greyser & Balmer, 2007).

Royalty As a Brand

The aim of this study is to examine the branding and communications efforts of various monarchies. Before conducting original research on the royals, it is important to examine the role of the monarchy and prior studies of monarchy branding.

European monarchies are symbolic and ceremonial institutions, mainly responsible for bolstering national image through affirmation of values and heritage (Otnes & Maclaran, 2018). Another view is that royals are a human expression of the institution of the crown (Balmer, Greyser & Urde, 2006). The royal narrative is critical for humanizing monarchs. For example, these authors argue that the "underdog meets prince" narrative of the United Kingdom's Prince William has an allure that is conducive to brand loyalty and interest (Otnes & Maclaran, 2018). The use of diverse and calculated imagery can contribute to a well-defined

narrative for public figures (Gaither, 2007). Additionally, some monarchs provide an endorsement of sorts to certain brands with the “by royal appointment to” certification (Otnes & Maclaran (2018).

According to Balmer, Greyser, and Urde, the Crown is a brand with characteristics of a corporate brand and should be managed as such. Therefore, the institution of monarchy employs several traditional branding elements, such as attributes, core values, and brand promise. Similar to corporate brands, monarchs employ powerful visual symbols or vision statements akin to brand promise (Balmer, Greyser & Urde, 2006). The five key elements or “5 R’s” to distinguishing the Crown as a brand are royal, regal, relevant, responsive, and respected (Balmer, Greyser & Urde, 2006). Monarchs employ the attribute of “royalty” as a way of setting themselves apart, for example with coats of arms and crown jewels. By “acting in a royal manner” monarchs are regal. They have to maintain relevance and respect and must be responsive and flexible to change (Balmer, Greyser & Urde, 2006).

Similar to a corporate brand, monarchs reinforce their efficacy by building a brand personality and adding value to target groups. Although embodying certain elements of a corporate brand, the monarchy cannot rely on traditional advertising and promotion, instead using philanthropic efforts, speeches, and royal events to build their brand (Balmer, Greyser & Urde).

Loss of reputation is the main threat to the crown, making communications efforts extremely important for monarchies. Shaping the national identity, building an emotional relationship with the country’s citizens, and gaining the support of important publics such as Parliament are among the top priorities (Balmer, Greyser & Urde, 2006). As an historic institution and consistently challenged with criticisms of irrelevancy, monarchs have to work extra hard to maintain a place of importance and affection in the minds of citizens.

Online Leader Branding

Gaither’s study (2007) of online branding for leaders of developing nations parallels this study. Gaither used a mixed methods approach to examine the official websites of global leaders. He performed a content analysis of 31 leader websites.

Gaither also established a list of commonalities among the website homepages, such as presence of speeches, flags, emblems, and leader biographies. He analyzed how leaders attempted to portray themselves through narrative analysis, for example, citing Putin as a leader that aimed for the narrative of someone with “normal human values.” Gaither also examined organizational and operational information, such as whether the website defined a vision for the future of the country or government agency information.

III. Methods

Based on prior research and the literature review, this study raised the following research questions:

RQ1: How do monarchs incorporate branding strategies on their websites?

RQ2: How do branding efforts contribute to a corporate image and brand narrative?

The research in this study followed a mixed-methods approach through content analysis and narrative analysis to reveal patterns in the online branding of monarchs. The content analyzed included the material published on the chosen royals’ official websites at the time this study was conducted. The author analyzed content ranging from photos, to press releases, imagery, symbols, and other elements.

The sample for this study includes the official websites of King Harald V of Norway, King Abdullah II of Jordan, and King Mswati III of eSwatini. The author selected these monarchs because each maintains up-to-date information and material detailing various aspects of the monarchs’ duties, lives, and aspirations. This sample was also selected because it represents geographically diverse monarchs, with sovereigns from Europe, the Middle East, and Africa. This sample revealed three different approaches towards monarchy branding.

The first method this study employed is content analysis. Qualitative content analysis is “an approach to documents that emphasizes the role of the investigator in the construction of the meaning of and in texts. There is an emphasis on allowing categories to emerge out of data and on recognizing the significance for understanding the meaning of the context in which an item being analyzed (and the categories derived from

it) appeared” (Bryman, 2004). This research revealed similarities and differences in elements of messaging presented by the sample of monarchs. The study used a coding sheet adapted from Gaither’s methodology.

The second method in this study is narrative analysis, a qualitative research method that emphasizes “stories” told by the subject matter being studied to see how people “impose order on the flow of experience to make sense of events and actions in their lives” (Riessman, 1993; Ferguson, 2011). Additionally, narrative analysis allows a researcher to “identify patterns, themes, and discourses based on these stories and uncover a deeper meaning that is not always readily evident through quantitative research methods” (Ferguson, 2011). Through narrative analysis, this study distilled all of the website content into distinctive narratives for each monarch.

IV. Findings & Analysis

King Mswati III of eSwatini

The website of King Mswati III of eSwatini employs various elements of branding to espouse a specific brand image for the crown of eSwatini (Thekingofswaziland.com). The website features a balance of historical information and forward thinking theories. As discussed in the literature review, monarchs rely heavily on symbolism. This website features the eSwatini flag as well as the coat of arms with a lion representing the King and an elephant representing the Queen Mother. Last, the website theme is in the same color as the flag of eSwatini, contributing to an overall cohesive website that although is for one individual, portrays the identities of the whole nation. It is important to note that the website is available only in English, not in the national language of Swazi, indicating that the website is meant to act as an outward communications tool, not necessarily for the eSwatini constituents.

The website is carefully crafted to show two distinct sides of King Mswati III; a traditional King juxtaposed with a polished suit-and-tie wearing leader interacting with various other nation heads. A “History and Culture” section features Mswati exclusively in traditional attire, performing in various festivals, whereas the “Home” page of the website overwhelmingly features Mswati in a suit and tie, greeting western leaders such as Barack Obama and the Prince of Wales. No photos show a more relaxed King, or any insight into his family or hobbies. This presents a uniform, archetype version of the King. Language on the website emphasizes heritage and a collective identity, “Here live the Swazis, proud of their heritage, who hold tight to traditions that are to them as sacred as life itself.”

The website presents Mswati as the steward of these important traditions: “His Majesty faces a world ignorant of the Swazi traditions that he is duty bound to sustain and it is with patience that His Majesty continues to reign, the only absolute monarch in Africa who rules his country with a firm hand.” The website also explains various ceremonies that the King plays an integral role in throughout the year, solidifying his role as protector of ancient Swazi tradition. As discussed earlier, modern monarchs seek to embody the five R’s to maintain relevance: royal, regal, relevant, responsive, and respected (Balmer, Greyser & Urde, 2006). The website of King Mswati III portrays these traits fairly well. It communicates “royalty” by emphasizing the family tree, central role in the culture, and coat of arms and crown. Rhetoric paints the King as “regal” by discussing his esteemed role as King and how he has held the role for over two decades, maintaining the lineage. “Responsiveness” is demonstrated, not in terms of direct correspondence with constituents, but in the King’s Vision 2022 plan in which he recognizes a need for improved education, welfare, and quality of life and outlines a plan to achieve these goals.

The website aims to show that he is respected by positioning him as a peer to other global leaders—emphasized in photos of him conducting meetings with recognizable leaders. The language used to describe King Mswati III is almost reverent, describing him as “an extraordinary monarch who lives the legacies he has inherited, sustaining tradition with care” while also keeping an eye “to the future so he may bring his people safely into the 21st century.” The website also describes the King as “wise, humble and full of pleasant smiles.” As a brand, the King of eSwatini’s attributes might include a leader who can implement plans for the future of the country and plays a role in traditional ceremonies. These add value to people of eSwatini by improving their daily lives and contributing to their sense of tradition, culture, and a collective eSwatini identity by looking to the King as a national icon.

The narratives present within the website content include maintenance of history and vital tradition, forward thinking for a better eSwatini, and bringing eSwatini onto a global stage through foreign investment and interaction with global leaders. In terms of a brand personality, the website content paints King Mswati III to be a well-rounded, almost holy monarch. According to this narrative, the traditions of the country and culture could not exist without him, and the hopes for a better future rest within his hands. His brand personality is regal and untouchable. The language takes on a strong stance, almost providing justification that King Mswati III is a fit leader and should be respected, because he is King, doing a lot of “telling” why he is a great King, with less “showing.”

King Harald V of Norway

The official website of the Norway monarchy presents King Harald V as a very traditional, royal king (<https://www.royalcourt.no>). While the website links to social media for the entire royal court of Norway, the remainder of the website maintains a comprehensive and classic air. Information is easy for anyone to attain, with a dedicated “For the Press” section, where journalists can find photos, speeches, and up to date information on the King’s activities, emphasizing the media access cited as important for monarch branding (Balmer, Greyser & Urde, 2006). One narrative present throughout the website is that King Harald V is a constitutional monarch, and therefore “the King is formally the head of state, but that his duties are mainly representative and ceremonial.” The website very clearly outlines the duties of the King, which include serving as the formal head of the Church of Norway and as the head of the Army and the Navy. In each of these duties, the section of the Constitution affording the King these duties is highlighted, almost providing evidence that he deserves to have these duties.

The branding is extremely reliant on symbols to evoke a sense of royalty. King Harald’s crowns, royal residences, regalia, and flags appear throughout the website. An entire section of the website is dedicated to regalia, with imagery and information about the King’s Crown, Queen’s Crown, orb, scepter, anointment horn, and sword of state. Further emphasizing the importance of symbolism, the site describes and provides images of the various Norwegian orders and medals that the King can award, as “laid down in Article 23 of the Constitution.” This relates to the idea that a royal endorsement can provide brand equity via transferring some of the “royal” status and superiority equated to royalty and The Crown. This idea is also present in the inclusion of “Patronage” to societies such as the Norwegian Cancer Society. The website notes “Royal Patronage serves to raise public awareness of an organization or a specific event that supports a worthy cause,” a tactic outlined as a replacement for traditional advertising in monarchy promotion.

A key narrative in the website is history of the monarchy. The narrative emphasizes the Norwegian monarchy’s age of over 1,000 years and highlights a family tree. A “History” section also chronicles Norwegian monarchy involvement throughout history, in regards to World War II and gaining Norway’s independence from Denmark. In highlighting these world events, the website emphasizes the monarchy’s involvement and shows how although a constitutional monarchy now, Norway’s kings and queens have maintained a stalwart institution for a century, acting as an identity system for the Norwegians. The website also extensively describes the 1,000-year-old coronation, consecration, and anointing ceremonies, and how they have changed and been maintained throughout the years. In images, King Harald is portrayed mostly formally, with official sashes, regalia, and traditional pomp and circumstance in the forms of a royal guard and opulent backgrounds. A few images show him on a boat or in the Amazon rainforest, but these all maintain a somewhat distinguished feel, hardly toeing the line of casual. Although the website updates visitors on current official visits and events conducted by the King, there is no information about his personal vision for the country or desires for change.

Concerning “the five R’s,” the website heavily emphasizes “royal” and “regal” with symbolism and history concerning powers granted only to the monarch. In terms of “relevant,” the website highlights current events and activities the King participates in, and offers tours of the Royal Palace. “Responsive” is not really highlighted on the website, since the King does not evoke change, although the website links to social media accounts for the monarchy, which may foster more direct contact with constituents. “Respect” is highlighted by the elevated status in which the King is presented. By the very nature of having the “royal” elements, a certain respect is connoted. The attributes of King Harald include a protector of the past and the benefits include maintaining tradition and ritual, with a potential value of unifying Norway and improving life through philanthropy. The brand personality of King Harald is distinguished, traditional, and exactly what one might expect of a white, European monarch.

King Abdullah II of Jordan

King Abdullah II's website is comprehensive and all elements work together to create a strong "King Abdullah II" brand image (<https://kingabdullah.jo>). The amount of information, both written and visual, is extensive. Aside from a tab about the history of the Hashemite Kings, the majority of the website pivots around King Abdullah's progress and future plans for Jordan. A three-prong vision statement extensively explains his plans for progress, faith, and peace in Jordan along with "Vision 2025." Additionally, the website features "Discussion Papers" published by King Abdullah, and a robust "Media Centre" featuring speeches, photos, videos, op-eds, and a press room with updates on his daily activities, emphasizing the need for content and media in royal branding. A "Facts and Figures" graphic also highlights the number of activities, such as meeting with foreign leaders or military activities, that he has completed in the previous calendar year. Symbolism is present throughout, with a golden crown animation often appearing next to the King's name or titles, as well as the coat of arms, which features the Hashemite crown. Jordanian flags and the Flag of His Majesty the King of Jordan appear throughout the website.

The imagery of the King is diverse. He is often pictured in military gear, abroad with various world leaders, and greeting citizens. In contrast, several photographs in the "Personal" or "Hobbies" section feature him playing with his children on playgrounds, reading while traveling, and riding a motorcycle. He is almost always pictured with a smile. This creates the narrative that although he is a royal, he too enjoys spending his free time with the people, or things, he loves making him relatable. Social media accounts are also linked to the website, which features live updates of each platform. The use of social media and casual, relatable imagery evoke a sense of modernity and accessibility not mirrored by King Mswati or King Harald.

Although there is a strong focus on the future, the website content is not without a nod to the past. The website clearly explains that King Abdullah II is the 41st direct descendant of the Prophet Mohammad and that he falls at the end of the line of prior Hashemite Kings. This portion of the website explains the heritage of the Hashemite Kings and that they "call for making a better, dignified life for the Arab people, while shunning violence and extremism." It is also noted that the Kings have custodianship over the Holy Sites within Jordan, and that in 2013, King Abdullah signed a historical agreement reaffirming the King's guardianship over historic sites. A list outlines the ten restoration projects completed under King Abdullah, including the historic Al Aqsa Mosque.

Overall, the narrative presents history as a justification for how King Abdullah became King and what legacy he upholds. Beyond providing a background for his rule, history is not heavily relied on for his brand image, which is future-focused overall. In regards to the five R's, King Abdullah emphasizes "relevant" strongly on the website with ongoing publication of papers and opinions, tweets about what is happening with citizens, and recent meetings with world leaders. The website conveys "royalty" with the recurrent crown symbol as well as imagery showing the King giving speeches from his throne. Imagery portrays the King as "regal" and "respected" while on his throne, or interacting with citizens and prominent leaders.

Language on the site paints the King as "responsive" to national issues, by explaining how he reacted to a public health issue, and developed the Hakeem Program for public health in response. Another narrative that is present throughout all facets of the website is King Abdullah's frequent and well-documented activity. He is portrayed as a dynamic monarch that accomplishes tasks and portrays this image on his website in clear, easy to understand reports, such as the "Facts and Figures" sections.

The attributes of King Abdullah include a well-respected global leader with benefits of improving Jordan and its relationship with other nations. The brand personality of King Abdullah is accessible, future focused, modern, and relatable, while still maintaining a sense of tradition and heritage. He is the King that "does it all."

V. Discussion

The websites of these three royals reflect similarities in addition to sharp dichotomies. The absence or presence of certain elements on their official websites contributes to distinctive brand images and personalities. King Mswati III and King Abdullah II have more power than the constitutional monarch King Harald V. As a result, King Harald's branding and narrative is heavily reliant on symbolism, history, and ritual. His branding focuses on the idea of "pulling back the curtain" on a status and standard of living not

experienced by the “common folk.” This is evident in images of diamond-encrusted crowns and advertised tours in which the public can peak into the royal palace for a glimpse into the lives of the elite monarchy. King Harald’s narrative also relies on his role in rituals to justify his maintained power. The content describes in plain language how century-old ceremonies and rituals function, and what exactly the King’s role is within the traditions. The website attempts to show that the King is active.

In contrast, King Mswati and King Abdullah’s websites combine elements of tradition, with heavily developed narratives for the future of their country including outlined vision statements and initiatives. It appears as though these monarchs are aiming to evade public criticisms of modern monarch irrelevancy. Instead, their website narratives demonstrate how the monarchs positively impact their constituents and add value through initiatives and action. Although both show high activity levels, the brand personalities of these two active and powerful monarchs are very different. The juxtaposition between a more closed off, untouchable King Mswati and a more transparent, accessible King Abdullah is very apparent. These brand personalities are achieved through imagery. For example, the only images of King Mswati show him in official capacities, from meeting with global leaders to participating in ceremonies. This creates a flat, two-dimensional portrayal of him as a king figure. Images of King Abdullah show the same formal scenarios, but also expand to show him with his family, holding his newborn child, or driving a motorcycle. As a result, he is more humanized and the audience gets a sense of who he is as a person, not just as a king. This contributes to a more well-rounded and relatable brand personality. With an institution as old as monarchy, criticism of its relevancy is more prominent now than ever before. To maintain a positive public image, creating a strong brand personality that aligns with the values of the country and constituents is critical to maintaining positive public perception.

VI. Conclusion

This study provides insight on the different levels of involvement that exist within a monarchy, how priorities and needs influence communication strategy, and how this communication strategy is crucial for building and maintaining a brand that upholds the monarch’s reputation.

Each of the three monarchs presented a distinct brand personality and brand essence. All three heritage brands emphasized history as a key component of their identity. King Abdullah II and King Mswati III portrayed relative invariance, by evolving over time, whereas King Harald V’s narrative was mostly history-centric. As research predicted they would, all three monarchs’ websites emphasized symbolism. Additionally, since none of the monarchs could rely on traditional advertising to strengthen their brand, they all use royal events, speeches, and philanthropy to bolster their brand identities, a tactic outlined in the literature review.

Overall, these three websites were consistent with many of the heritage and royal branding findings outlined in previous research (Balmer, 2011). This study confirmed that just as any corporate brand would, monarchs, though distinct, are also reliant on branding elements to build a strong brand personality and narrative.

This study was conducted over the course of one semester and the four-month time frame limited the extent of examination and the number of monarchs. The content analyzed was limited solely to the monarchs’ websites, and further research could examine the monarch’s social media platforms as a branding tool in addition to their websites.

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