

The Role of Political Skill in Bigg Boss: Strategies for Survival and Behavioral Competencies in Reality Show

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Abstract. This study investigates how political skill turns into success on Bigg Boss, an Indian reality TV show. Political skill, involving adaptability and influence, is known to be valuable in organizations, but its reach beyond business is unexplored. This study analyzes Bigg Boss Season 14 to address this gap. A purposive and convenience sampling method was utilized. Housemates' behaviors were analyzed through content analysis with a summative approach, identifying five key aspects of political skill: influencing, sincerity, deceitfulness, social astuteness, and networking. Housemate statements were translated and analyzed to identify recurring themes and patterns. Correlations between these behaviors and success in the game were examined. Results showed a link between all five behaviors and success, suggesting housemates who exhibited them more often lasted longer. The winner displayed the most social astuteness, followed by sincerity, networking, influencing, and lastly, deceitfulness. These findings highlight that political skill, characterized by a strategic combination of social behaviors, is key to winning Bigg Boss. The study offers a broader understanding of political skill by demonstrating its applicability beyond business and emphasizing the importance of using these behaviors skillfully and adaptively. It also suggests connections to other academic fields, opening doors for future research.

Keywords: Bigg Boss; Reality TV; Political Skill; Social Behavior.

Politinių įgūdžių vaidmuo „Bigg Boss“ realybės šou: dalyvių išgyvenimo strategija ir elgsena

Santrauka. Šiame tyrime nagrinėjama, kaip politiniai įgūdžiai virsta sėkme dalyvaujant Indijos televizijos realybės šou „Bigg Boss“. Politiniai įgūdžiai, tokie kaip gebėjimas prisitaikyti ir daryti įtaką, yra žinomi kaip vertingi organizacijose, tačiau jų poveikis už verslo ribų nėra ištirtas. Šiame tyrime analizuojamas 14-asis „Bigg Boss“ sezonas. Taikytas tikslinis ir patogiosios atrankos metodas. Būsto draugų elgesys buvo analizuojamas taikant turinio analizę su apibendrinamuoju metodu, nustatant penkis pagrindinius politinių įgūdžių aspektus: įtakos darymą, nuoširdumą, apgaulingumą, socialinį įžvalgumą ir tinklaveiką. Dalyvių pasisakymai buvo išversti ir išanalizuoti siekiant nustatyti pasikartojančias temas ir modelius. Buvo tiriamos šių elgesio būdų

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ir sėkmės žaidime sąsajos. Rezultatai parodė ryšį tarp visų penkių elgesio būdų ir sėkmės, o tai reiškia, kad dažniau jais pasižymintys kambario draugai šou išsilaikė ilgiau. Nugalėtojas labiausiai pasižymėjo socialiniu įžvalgumu, toliau iš eilės rikiavosi nuoširdumas, ryšių užmezgimas, įtakos darymas ir galiausiai – apgaulė. Šios išvados rodo, kad politiniai įgūdžiai, kuriems būdingas strateginis socialinės elgsenos derinys, yra raktas į pergalę „Bigg Boss“ konkurse. Tyrimas leidžia plačiau suprasti politinius įgūdžius, nes parodo, kad juos galima taikyti ne tik versle, ir pabrėžia, kaip svarbu šias elgsenas naudoti sumaniai ir adaptyviai. Be to, jis siūlo sąsajas su kitomis mokslo sritimis, atverdamas duris ateities tyrimams.

Pagrindiniai žodžiai: *Bigg Boss*; realybės šou; politiniai įgūdžiai; socialinis elgesys.

Introduction

Bigg Boss, an Indian television reality show, focuses on survival, adjustment, and tolerance (Parmar, 2019). The show debuted in 2006 in India (Sen, 2014) and has consistently grown in popularity each year (Mehta, 2018), attracting high Television Rating Points (TRP) (Adgully Bureau, 2014). At the time the present study was conducted, there had been 16 seasons of the Hindi-language Bigg Boss aired on Indian television networks (Anon n.d.). The game begins with the selection of housemates who reside in a specially designed house. Daily tasks are assigned to the housemates, and housemates are observed through live cameras and headphones to monitor their performance and behavior (Puthillam et al., 2019). These tasks can be individual or group-oriented, often requiring interaction and cooperation among the housemates (Thornborrow & Morris, 2004). Additionally, building rapport and securing support from fellow housemates is crucial. Hence, housemates need to establish a positive and influential identity within the house to avoid the red zone and gain audience votes, ensuring their survival. To survive, housemates often exhibit diverse behaviors, such as aggression (Mehta, 2018), dominance, honesty, deceit, caution, networking, or forming alliances. They strategically present themselves, concealing their true identity, to attract the audience and earn their votes (Dhote, 2018). Hence, the housemates must possess inherent competence that enables them to influence the audience, other housemates, and seniors by projecting an influential and sincere self-image, forming alliances with strategically positioned housemates (e.g., the captain of the house), and adapting their behavior according to the circumstances, ensuring survival in the game and ultimately securing victory. The present study argues that political skill, as a multi-dimensional social competency, acts as the winning tool for the victorious housemate.

Existing literature suggests that individuals with high political skill possess the ability to adapt their behavior according to the situation, project an image of honesty and sincerity, gain the trust and support of others, and effectively influence and control their responses (Ferris et al., 2005). The present study examines the behaviors of housemates in Bigg Boss Season 14 to investigate the role of political skill in determining the game-winner.

The present study contributes to the theoretical and practical understanding in three significant ways. Firstly, while previous research has explored the association between political skill and work performance in business organizations (e.g., Ahearn et al., 2004; Bing et al., 2011; Blickle et al., 2008; García-Chas et al., 2019; Hayek et al., 2018; Ka-

poutsis et al., 2011; Treadway et al., 2013), there is limited literature examining the exhibition of political skill beyond such contexts. The application of political skill outside of business organizations remains largely unexplored. Notably, within the context of reality TV shows, no prior studies have examined the behavioural competencies exhibited by participants. Thus, the present study contributes by examining the role of political skill in the context of Bigg Boss, thereby expanding the understanding of political skill beyond traditional organizational settings.

This expansion is crucial because reality shows like Bigg Boss, with their unique and intense atmosphere, may act as a miniature version of various real-life situations (Mayagita, 2021). Political skill can be useful in Bigg Boss since the show encourages its contestants to influence others, negotiate complicated social dynamics, and make strategic decisions under pressure. By studying these skills in such a context, relevant understandings of other domains such as governance, social assistance, community leadership, and even interpersonal relationships may be acquired.

Moreover, traditional organizational settings provide a controlled environment for studying interpersonal dynamics. In contrast, reality shows offer a unique platform where these dynamics are expanded and intensified. Contestants in Bigg Boss are employed in an environment with intense competition, constant surveillance, and complex social alliances, mirroring aspects of real-life interactions albeit in an exaggerated manner. Thus, a more comprehensive understanding of the nuances and complexities of human interaction across diverse contexts may be acquired by analyzing how individuals manage these challenges using political skill.

Secondly, it highlights the significance of political skill in enhancing performance and achieving work objectives in various domains outside of business organizations. This broader recognition of political skill's relevance beyond business organizations can be useful for professionals in diverse fields.

Lastly, the study addresses the call made by scholars (Blickle et al., 2012; Pfeffer, 1981; Tiwari et al., 2021) to expand the existing literature and understanding of political skill in different contexts.

Political Skill Dynamics for Strategic Adaptation, Manipulation, and Survival in Bigg Boss

In the high-stakes environment of Bigg Boss, the concept of political skill can be a pivotal survival competency for contestants, enabling them to sail across the complex social dynamics and strategic challenges of this reality show. Unlike other reality shows that focus solely on talent or skill (e.g., singing and dancing), Bigg Boss features celebrity contestants who compete against each other while residing in an isolated house under constant surveillance.

Success in the game depends not only on completing assigned tasks but also on proficiently managing interpersonal relationships, handling conflicts, and strategically positioning oneself to gain favor with both fellow housemates, and the viewing audience who

possess the voting power to retain or eliminate them (Puthillam et al., 2019). Housemates must carefully craft their public persona to shape public perception and secure their place in the game (Dhote, 2018). Emotions run high as housemates employ a range of behaviors – from aggression and dominance to vulnerability and alliance formation to advance their game objectives and ensure their survival (Aslama & Pantti, 2006; Mehta, 2018; Parmar, 2019; Zee Media Bureau, 2017). In this intense and competitive environment, ability such as political skill can be a defining factor in a housemate’s journey towards victory.

Defined as “the ability to effectively understand others at work, and to use such knowledge to influence others to act in ways that enhance one’s personal and/or organizational objectives”(Ahearn et al., 2004, p. 311), political skill can serve as the tools to proficiently progress through diverse situations, foster trust, exert influence, and build useful alliances (Ferris et al., 2005; Tiwari et al., 2021). With their networking ability politically skilled individuals forge meaningful social connections, gather valuable information, and garner support from influential individuals (Bing et al., 2011; Blickle et al., 2009; Brouer et al., 2016; Gentry et al., 2013; Liu et al., 2007; McAllister et al., 2016).

Extent literature suggests that, within the restricted space of the Bigg Boss house, where interpersonal relationships are important and strategic alliances can build or break a housemate’s game, political skill can be crucial, empowering housemates to adapt their behavior according to situational demands, project sincerity, understand the motivations of others, and tactically strategize to secure their position in the game. The rationale behind this assertion lies in the connections between the concept of political skill, and the housemates’ behaviors observed in Bigg Boss as outlined in existing literature (see Table 1).

Table 1: **Type of behaviors**

Primary Behavior of Housemates	Method(s) to Exhibit Behavior	Activities to Exhibit Methods	Research Reference
Influencing	I-1. Aggression:	A-1. Shouting, A-2. Abusive/Insulting language, A-3. Physical action / assault, A-4. Heated arguments, A-5. Bullying A-6. Domination, A-7. Rudeness, A-8. Impolite	(I-1) Aggression can be used to dominate others (Treadway et al., 2013) (A-1 to A-4) There are many ways to exhibit aggression such as shouting, abusive or insulting language, heated arguments, physically assaultive actions (Holley et al., 2017) (A-5) Bullying at the workplace is aggressive behavior towards the targeted individual(s) (Treadway et al., 2013). (A-6) An individual uses aggression to dominate others (Ferguson & Beaver, 2009; Treadway et al., 2013).

Primary Behavior of Housemates	Method(s) to Exhibit Behavior	Activities to Exhibit Methods	Research Reference
Sincere	S-1. Honest Self Image	H-1. Supportive H-2. Humble H-3. Fairness	(S-1) A sincere person is the prototype of an honest soul. (Berger, 1973). (H-1 to H-3) Being humble and fair are aspects of honesty. Such individuals are more helpful to others (LaBouff et al., 2012).
Deceitful	Deception	D-1. Manipulative D-2. Faking D-3. Lying D-4. Acting D-5. Put-ons D-6. Bluffing	(D-1) Manipulation is a deceptive tactic (DELFINO, 2018) (D-2 to D-6) Deception has been defined by many names such as faking, bluffing, acting, cover-ups, and put-ons (Bok, 2011).
Social Astuteness	Socially Astute	S-1. Situationally act S-2. Build trust S-3. Self -confident S-4. Reputed image S.5 Strategic and Careful S.6 Pretend	(S-1) Socially astute individuals behave according to situational demands (Blickle et al., 2011). (S-2) Socially astute individuals may be perceived as trustworthy (Lvina, 2011). (S-3) Social astuteness gives an individual a sense of self-confidence (García-Chas et al., 2019). (S-4) People see socially astute individuals as simple and clever. Social astuteness has a positive relationship with conscientiousness (Treadway et al., 2005) and self-monitoring (Ferris et al., 2005). Thus, socially astute individuals maintain a healthy scale of accountability with others and create a reputed self-image among others (Ferris, Treadway, et al., 2007). (S-5) Socially astute individuals strategically and carefully select the most situationally appropriate behavior for themselves (Ferris, Treadway, et al., 2007). (S-6) Social astuteness helps individuals to effectively choose the right behaviors and tactics (Wihler et al., 2014); thus, social astuteness can be helpful for individuals to pretend differently in different social situations.

Primary Behavior of Housemates	Method(s) to Exhibit Behavior	Activities to Exhibit Methods	Research Reference
Networking Behavior	Networking Ability	N-1. Network building N-2. Team/Partnership building N-3. Contact building N-4. Coalition building N-5. Participative N-6. Cooperation	(N-1) Individuals with networking ability can proficiently develop a large and diverse network(s) of people (Ferris et al., 2005). (N-2) Individuals with networking ability build advantageous partnerships/teams with others (Ferris et al., 2008). (N-3) People with networking ability involved in networking behavior to build an extensive range of contacts (Laird et al., 2013; Wolff et al., 2018). (N-4) Networking ability helps individuals in building beneficial coalitions (Ferris, Treadway, et al., 2007). (N-5) Being participative is a dimension of networking behavior. (Forret & Dougherty, 2004). (N-6) Networking is a system of interconnected or cooperating individuals (Luthans et al., 1988, pp. 119–120).

Influencing Behaviour

The extant literature implies that individuals display aggressive behavior to influence others to achieve their personal goals (Treadway et al., 2013). (Porath & Erez, 2009) suggest that individuals who have been subjected to aggressive behavior may experience an indirect influence on their subsequent behavior. Aggression can be exhibited by an individual in many ways, such as shouting, insulting or abusing language, heated arguments, physically assaultive actions (Holley et al., 2017), bullying (Treadway et al., 2013), domination (Ferguson & Beaver, 2009), rudeness (ISMP, 2014; Porath & Erez, 2009), and impoliteness (Santana Flannery, 2021). Individuals who possess political skill may demonstrate a greater ability to select opportune contexts in which to exhibit aggression. This, in turn, allows them to choose aggressive behaviors that are not only advantageous to their own goals but also psychologically influential to their targets (Treadway et al., 2013). Ferris, and colleagues (2007) argued that politically skilled leaders who engage in bullying behavior have been characterized as using specific tactics of influence with the strategic goal of projecting a particular image and subjugating their targets into a state of powerlessness, making them more amenable to manipulation and control. This conduct is undertaken to fulfil personal objectives. There are many instances when housemates tried

to influence other housemates by exhibiting aggression and domination; especially in the situations such as altercations, disagreements, and confrontations between the housemates. The housemates even tried to physically assault each other sometimes. Housemates also try to influence others with heated arguments (Cyril, 2020) and are found to speak to other housemates in a stern and dominating manner to survive in the Bigg Boss house. The present study found 135 exhibitions of influencing behaviors by the housemates. These exhibitions from the different episodes of Bigg Boss season 14 suggest that housemates often used influencing behaviors to achieve personal objectives such as staying in the house for a long period as possible and coming out as the winner of the game.

Sincere Behavior

Berger, (1973) posited that sincere individuals are commonly regarded as models of honest and upright characters. The display of sincere behaviors by an individual is often perceived as highly credible, effective (Benoit, 2014; Stephens et al., 2019), honest, and helpful (LaBouff et al., 2012), helping them to easily build a fair image in public. In addition, people's helpful behavior towards others portrays them as more trustworthy (Penning & Woiceshyn, 1989). Consequently, the perception of an individual's behavior as sincere can influence the subsequent actions of those around them (Caza et al., 2015). The extant literature suggests that politically skilled individuals are proficient in portraying themselves in a manner that seems genuine and sincere (Ferris et al., 2005), stimulate trust and support from those around them and influence others effectively (Brouer et al., 2009). Politically skilled individuals can successfully influence people (Ferris, Treadway, et al., 2007) because they are perceived to have no ulterior motives (Jones, 1990). Housemates often act and behave in a way that creates an honest self-image for themselves among housemates and the audience. Housemates were sometimes showcased to be fair and just in the house especially when they had been assigned the position of "Sanchalak" (In-charge) task. Having such a sincere image helps them to gain support from the other housemates as well as the audience. By showcasing sincere behavior, politically skilled housemates get other housemates and audiences in their favor. There were 135 instances of sincere behaviour recorded in the present study.

Deceitful

Deception has been defined by many names such as faking, bluffing, acting, cover-ups, put-ons (Bok, 2011) and as common aspect of interpersonal relationships (Zuckerman et al., 1981). Deception has been viewed as a characteristic of the individual (Zuckerman et al., 1981) and an essential quality for the survival of relationships (Millar & Tesser, 1988). (Clements et al., 2016, p. 2) articulated deception as "the deliberate attempt, to conceal, fabricate, and or manipulate others" to attain desired objectives. Highly politically skilled individuals are likely to feel more confident in their ability to deceive others (Clements et al., 2016) and successfully engage in purposeful deception to influence others. Since survival in Bigg Boss is the ultimate objective of the housemates, they use deception as a

tool in controlling social interactions for survival in the house. For example, a housemate after leaving the house, posted on social media, “It’s not unfortunate that people aren’t genuine; what’s unfortunate is that insincere people try to act sincere and in doing so, mislead and deceive the other (sic)” (timesofindia.com, 2021). The present study recorded 129 incidents of exhibiting deceitful behavior by the housemates.

Social Astuteness

Socially astute individuals possess a remarkable ability to interact with others, often regarded as ingenious, clever, and respectable (Ferris, Treadway, et al., 2007). They utilize their aptitude for assessing social situations and individuals, employing adaptability to tailor their approaches to influencing others (Ferris et al., 2005). Proficient in accurately identifying opportunities to exhibit personal initiative, socially astute individuals can effectively navigate various circumstances (Wihler et al., 2014). Furthermore, their ability to strategically and carefully adapt the most appropriate behavior in response to situational demands (Ferris, Treadway, et al., 2007) stems from the self-confidence that comes with possessing social astuteness (García-Chas et al., 2019). In the context of political skill, individuals who exhibit political astuteness leverage their social awareness to develop a keen understanding of both themselves and others, enabling them to calibrate and adapt their conduct within different and evolving contexts. This astuteness and contextual adaptability contribute significantly to their interpersonal influence, as their attempts to exert influence often go unnoticed (Blickle et al., 2011; Ferris, Treadway, et al., 2007). Rather, politically skilled individuals are perceived as possessing high levels of genuineness and integrity, fostering trust and confidence in their interactions (Blickle et al., 2011). Moreover, by demonstrating social astuteness in their interactions with colleagues and projecting authenticity, politically skilled team members can cultivate numerous friendships and be regarded as individuals of high integrity, consequently being perceived as more trustworthy (Lvina, 2011). These outcomes and consequences of social astuteness bear relevance in the context of thriving and emerging as successful participants in environments like the reality show *Bigg Boss*. The current study discovered that housemates adeptly communicated with enthusiasm, reflecting positive thinking, optimism, and self-confidence. They strategically adjusted their actions based on situational demands, thereby fostering respect and trust among their peers. Notably, some housemates exhibited astute behavior, demonstrating loyalty towards their fellow contestants. A total of 144 instances of socially astute behavior were identified, highlighting the prevalence and significance of this trait in the show.

Networking Behavior

Networking entails the deliberate endeavor of constructing and nurturing personal and professional associations with a diverse range of individuals. The primary goal is to establish a repository of valuable assets, including contacts, information, and cooperation (Batistic & Tymon, 2017) by participating in the community and increasing self-visibility (Forret

& Dougherty, 2004). Individuals possessing networking skills demonstrate adeptness in effectively cultivating extensive and heterogeneous networks of individuals. In addition, networking is a significant and viable strategy for attaining success. Individuals engage in networking to fulfil their need for achievement, power, affiliation, effective teamwork, and the ability to influence others in accomplishing tasks (Kotter, 1982; Pentland, 2012; Wolff et al., 2018; Zanzi et al., 1991).

According to Ferris et al. (2005), politically skilled individuals possess a high level of networking ability, enabling them to adeptly cultivate networks consisting of influential contacts (Laird et al., 2013), which in turn facilitates the formation of influential alliances, coalitions, advantageous teams, and partnerships that can be effectively utilized to support the accomplishment of their goals (Ferris et al., 2008). They are adept at identifying mutual benefits and leveraging these opportunities to their advantage to capitalize on favorable circumstances (Pfeffer 1992).

In the reality show Bigg Boss, the ability to network plays a crucial role for housemates as they seek to establish alliances with fellow participants to strengthen their position within the house. This significance of alliance-building and coalition formation is exemplified by a statement made by one housemate, who acknowledged the prevalence of such strategies by remarking, “You are also trying to form an alliance in this house. People ally here so that they can save themselves from nomination (sic).” This observation underscores the relevance of networking ability within the context of the game, where certain tasks require housemates to build larger teams and alliances by persuading others. Consequently, networking behavior emerges as a vital skill that empowers housemates to establish a formidable presence in the house and ultimately emerge as the winner. In the present study, a total of 159 instances of networking behavior were identified among the housemates in Bigg Boss.

In addition to the above, the claims put forth by seniors and housemates in Bigg Boss, along with the existing literature, emphasize the game’s focus on personality and personal reputation (Parmar, 2019). Numerous studies have demonstrated a positive relationship between personality and performance (e.g., Blickle et al., 2008). However, personality alone is insufficient; and effective social skills are necessary to complement one’s personality (Hogan & Shelton, 1998). Research indicates that individuals with high political skill and strong personality characteristics tend to exhibit better performance, while those with significant personality traits but insignificant political skill may perform lower (Blickle et al., 2008). Likewise, personal reputation is closely associated with performance (Tsui, 1984). However, developing and managing a personal reputation requires attentive and deliberate behavior (Ferris et al., 2003; Zinko et al., 2007), such as employing political skill. Highly politically skilled individuals can successfully build personal reputations among their peers (Laird et al., 2012).

Housemates often exhibit crafted behaviors to establish personal reputations and gain popularity among fellow housemates and the audience (Mehta, 2018). For example, Mehta (2018) narrated an incident where a housemate admitted an attempt to commit suicide, a statement later refused by her secretary, suggesting a purposeful misrepresentation and

behavioral adjustment with situational demands. Literature suggests that highly politically skilled individuals are more confident in such deceptive attempts, increasing their chances of success (Clements et al., 2016).

Given the above, it is evident that highly politically skilled housemates are capable of displaying various behaviors such as influencing others, demonstrating sincerity, engaging in needed deceptive attempts, displaying social astuteness, and effective networking. In the context of Bigg Boss, these behaviors are crucial for their survival and increasing their likelihood of winning the competition. Accordingly, the present study considers the following proposition.

Proposition₁: In the context of the reality TV show Bigg Boss, housemates with high political skill are more likely to exhibit a range of behaviors including influencing, sincerity, strategic use of deceit, social astuteness, and networking in a way that contributes to their likelihood of survival and ultimate victory in the game. Conversely, housemates with low political skill are expected to exhibit these behaviors to a lesser extent, leading to a lower likelihood of survival and victory compared to those with high political skill.

Precisely, the present study seeks answers to the following research questions.

RQ₁: Does the level of political skill significantly impact the survival and victory of housemates in Bigg Boss?

RQ₂: Are housemate(s) with low political skill less likely to survive and win Bigg Boss compared to those with higher political skill?

Methodology

Approach and Study Design

The present study employed a combination of purposive and convenience sampling methods to select participants from the 14th season of Bigg Boss. The summative approach to content analysis was utilized, which involves deriving codes or keywords from a review of existing literature (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005) as it aligns with the present research objectives. Unlike other similar approaches, for example, thematic analysis, which seeks to extract themes from data, summative content analysis focuses on quantifying the frequency of specific keywords. In addition, while thematic analysis is purely qualitative, summative content analysis combines qualitative exploration with the necessary quantification of data which is required for the present study.

In the present study, the behaviors of housemates were analyzed based on five categories: Influencing, Sincere, Deceitful, Social astuteness, and Networking behavior (refer to Table 1). These categories, as discussed earlier in the literature review section, served as the keywords for the content analysis of all the episodes of Bigg Boss season 14. Prior studies predominantly employed the 18-item Political Skill Inventory (PSI) (Ferris et al., 2005), relying on individuals' self-reported responses. The present study assesses political skill by observing housemates' behaviors without relying on their intended self-responses. This perspective minimizes the potential for self-reported biases, leading to a more objec-

tive, in-depth, and comprehensive understanding of political skill. This method offers a fresh perspective without self-report biases.

Sampling

The present study focused on season 14 of Bigg Boss, which was chosen for several reasons. Firstly, season 14 had the highest number of episodes, totaling 142. Secondly, it was broadcast for the highest number of days, spanning 143 days. Lastly, season 14 featured the highest number of housemates, with a total of 23 individuals participating (Prime Video, 2021). All the housemates in Bigg Boss season 14 were included as the sample for the present study.

Data Collection

The data collection process involved careful and repeated viewing of all the episodes. The recorded statements made in the Hindi language were translated into English by a proficient translator. The translations were performed verbatim, attaining the essence of the original statements. Statements already in English were directly used without translation.

Data Analysis and Results

After conducting a meticulous analysis of all the episodes of Bigg Boss Season 14, the present study documented various behaviours exhibited by the housemates. The translations of housemates' statements were examined adopting an iterative approach to identify recurring themes and patterns in their social interactions. The analysis began with assigning preliminary codes to capture specific verbal and behavioral actions. These codes reflected various aspects of social interaction, for example, statements of dominance (e.g., "Take care of your tongue," "Do what you have been told"), and expressions of support (e.g., "I've got your back," "I will support him just because of you"). The initial codes were grouped into broader patterns based on shared characteristics. For example, codes like "shouting," "abusive language," and "heated arguments" were aggregated into the pattern "aggressive behavior." Similarly, codes like "supportive," "humble," and "fair" were grouped into the pattern "sincere behavior." This process allowed the present study to identify recurring behavioral tendencies among housemates. Finally, five overarching themes were identified: Influencing, Sincere, Deceitful, Social Astuteness, and Networking.

Influencing theme captured instances of various methods housemates employed to exert power and control over others. These methods included aggression and domination tactics as evidenced by shouting matches and heated arguments.

Sincere theme captured instances of genuine and honest behavior. Statements reflecting supportiveness, humility, and fairness were categorized under this theme. These behaviors fostered trust and positive social interactions within the house.

Deceitful theme included manipulative tactics and dishonest behavior. Codes like faking, lying, and acting were aggregated here. The analysis revealed instances of housemates using these methods to gain personal advantage or mislead others.

The Social Astuteness theme characterized housemates who displayed a high degree of social awareness and adaptability. This included the ability to act situationally, build trust, and project a confident image. Additionally, codes like strategic and pretend suggest housemates strategically adjust their behavior based on the situation.

The networking theme captured housemates who actively built and maintained social connections within the house. Codes like team building, contact building, and cooperation suggest housemates engage in activities to establish a strong social network, potentially offering strategic advantages within the game.

In addition, to explore the relationships between these behaviors and success in the game, a correlation analysis was conducted to assess the strength and direction of the linear relationships between the frequency scores for each behavior and housemates' position in the game (elimination order or final ranking).

Results and Findings

The correlation analysis revealed statistically significant correlations ($p\text{-value} < 0.05$) between all five behaviors and housemates' position in the game (see Table 2). This indicates that housemates who exhibited these behaviors more frequently tended to be more successful in the game (i.e., evicted later, runners-up or winner). The analysis also revealed several strong positive correlations between the housemates' behaviors, suggesting that housemates who exhibited one behavior frequently exhibited other behaviors. This suggests that housemates likely relied on multiple behaviors as their strategy. In other words, housemates who were good at reading social cues, acting strategically, and building trust (sincerity) were also likely to use influencing tactics and engage in networking to perform in the game successfully. Interestingly, sincerity also seems to play a role alongside influencing, suggesting that contestants who appeared genuine were more persuasive.

Table 2: Correlations between housemates' behaviors exhibition and their position in game

	1	2	3	4	5	6
1 Position in Game	-					
2 Influencing	-.71**	-				
3 Sincere	-.73**	.94**	-			
4 Deceitful	-.74**	.94**	.95**	-		
5 Social Astute	-.72**	.95**	.99**	.95**	-	
6 Networking	-.73**	.95**	.97**	.99**	.97**	-

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level.

The study further examined the frequency of each behavior exhibited by the housemates (see Table 3). Networking behavior was the most prevalent, followed by social astuteness, influencing and sincere behaviors, and lastly, deceitful behavior. These findings indicate that these behaviors were the primary behavioral strategies employed by the housemates.

Notably, the winner of Bigg Boss Season 14 displayed the highest frequency of social astuteness, followed by sincerity, networking, influencing, and lastly, deceitfulness. This suggests that the winner effectively utilized and demonstrated these behaviors more frequently than the other housemates.

Table 3: Analysis of behaviors of the housemates

House-mates	Position in Game	Behaviors					
		Final Status	Influencing	Sincere	Deceitful	Social Astuteness	Networking
P1F	23	Evicted	0	1	0	0	0
P2M	22	Evicted	2	0	0	0	2
P3M	21	Evicted	3	1	2	1	3
P12F	20	Evicted	0	1	1	0	1
P13M	19	Evicted	0	1	0	0	1
P4M	18	Evicted	3	5	4	4	6
P5F	17	Evicted	6	2	3	5	4
P14F	16	Walked	4	0	2	1	2
P15F	15	Evicted	0	0	1	0	1
P16M	14	Walked	2	0	0	1	1
P17M	13	Evicted	0	2	0	0	0
P6F	12	Evicted	8	7	7	6	9
P9M	11	Walked	10	8	9	8	10
P18F	10	Evicted	0	3	3	2	3
P19F	9	Evicted	7	3	5	6	5
P7M	8	Evicted	9	9	8	9	10
P23M	7	Walked	2	4	3	4	4
P22F	6	Evicted	0	0	1	0	1
P10M	5	1st runner-up	16	20	22	23	24
P11F	4	2nd runner-up	16	17	18	19	20
P20M	3	3rd runner-up	15	12	12	11	13
P21F	2	4th runner-up	10	11	10	12	15
P8F	1	Winner	22	28	18	32	24
Number of times behavior exhibition			135	135	129	144	159

Considering existing literature, which suggests that highly politically skilled individuals effectively employ these behaviors to achieve desired outcomes, it can be inferred that

the winner of Bigg Boss Season 14 exhibited a high level of political skill. These findings support the initial proposition that housemates with high political skill, characterized by a strategic combination of social behaviors (sincerity, influencing, deceitfulness, social astuteness, and networking) are more likely to achieve success in Bigg Boss.

Discussion and Conclusion

This study investigated the relationship between political skill and success in the reality TV show Bigg Boss. The findings support the proposition that housemates who exhibited a combination of five key social behaviors (influencing, sincerity, deceitful, social astuteness, and networking) were more likely to achieve success (measured by position in the game). These findings offer novel insights into political skill in two key ways:

It extends the understanding of political skill beyond the sphere of business organizations (e.g., Ahearn et al., 2004) by demonstrating its applicability in the complex social environment of Bigg Boss. Reality TV, with its emphasis on strategic maneuvering and social influence, serves as a small-scale version of real-world situations like governance, social work, and even interpersonal relationships (Mayagita, 2021). Understanding political skill in this context offers valuable insights into its potential role in these diverse domains.

The study goes beyond simply identifying the relevant social behaviors. The positive correlations between these behaviors suggest that housemates likely employed a multifaceted strategy, strategically combining influencing tactics with sincerity, social astuteness with networking, and so on. The winner's behavior profile, with the highest frequency of social astuteness followed by sincerity, further exemplifies this strategic integration. This finding highlights the importance of not just possessing these behaviors but also using them skillfully in a coordinated and adaptable manner.

While this study offers the relationship between social behaviors and success in Bigg Boss, it acknowledges certain limitations that future research can address. The study focuses solely on Bigg Boss Season 14. Examining social behaviors and success across multiple seasons could provide a more robust understanding of how these factors influence the game's outcome. Additionally, analyzing the behaviors of winners from all seasons could provide a more comprehensive understanding of political skill in Bigg Boss. The study relies on content analysis of housemate statements to infer social behaviors. Future research could employ a combination of methods (e.g., self-report measures, and peer assessments) to obtain a more comprehensive representation of social behaviors employed by housemates. Moreover, the study links social behaviors to political skill. However, it does not directly measure overall political skill itself. Future research could incorporate validated measures of political skill, such as the 18-item Political Skill Inventory (PSI) developed by Ferris et al. (2005) alongside analysis of specific social behaviors. This comprehensive approach may strengthen the link between political skill and success in Bigg Boss.

Furthermore, the present research findings also suggest connections with other academic fields (e.g., TV and media studies, cultural studies, semiotics and linguistics).

For example, the strategic use of communication within the context of Bigg Boss – a reality show supports TV studies' exploration of power dynamics (Fiske, 1989) and the role of television in shaping political culture (Ong et al., 2008). The role of media in shaping political behavior connects with media studies' investigation of media influence on society. Extant research on media demonstrates that media is a core element of political behaviors and actions (Ong et al., 2008). The extant literature on cultural studies advocates the synergetic relationship between politics and culture (Fiske, 1989; Hamilton & Shepherd, 2016). Culture is a mirror of politics and also shapes the political landscapes (Weldes, 2001, 2003).

The present findings on how housemates project political skill to shape an image that garners audience support connect with the research in the field of semiotics. A semiotics study by Mehrabian (1971) suggests that nonverbal communication plays a significant role in shaping how political figures are perceived. This image management plays a crucial role in influencing audience perception (Mehrabian, 1971).

Linguistic research consistently highlights the power of effective communication as a tool for persuasion. It emphasizes how individuals can tailor their language to achieve personal or public goals (David, 2014; Silvestre-López, 2004). This strategic use of language can be manipulative, hiding the speaker's true intentions from the listener (Asya, 2013). The present study reflects this concept. Housemates exhibiting high political skill utilize strategic communication styles which allow them to build alliances, manage social interactions, and advance their position in the game, often without revealing their hidden motives.

This interdisciplinary approach not only deepens our understanding of political skill beyond the context of Bigg Boss but also opens possibilities for future research across those various disciplines. For instance, cultural studies can investigate how cultural norms and expectations influence the perception and practice of political skill. Similarly, television studies can explore the practice of political skill within diverse television genres given the significant role, television plays in shaping political culture (Ong et al., 2008). Furthermore, the field of semiotics can explore how political skill influences selecting and interpreting nonverbal cues. Linguistics can examine the language styles employed by individuals with high political skill to exert influence and how politically skilled individuals use language strategies (e.g., framing, word choice) to influence others.

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