

**EXPLORING ARTISTIC SUCCESS IN THE DIGITAL AGE: A
QUALITATIVE STUDY INTO THE IMPACT OF PERSONAL
BRANDING ON CONTEMPORARY ARTISTS**

Abstract

In the current market, the ability to brand oneself plays a huge role in determining an artist's success. Indeed, personal branding qualifies as the intentional constitution, positioning, and favourable image projection of a person as per their attributes. Thus, through the interviews with 10 contemporary artists, the influence of personal branding on the artists' achievements and careers in the age of digitalization was explored. The interviews explain how the practice of personal branding delivered the objectives of recognition, collaboration opportunities, and career advancement in the contemporary art world. Research participants were artists in various art forms: Singer, animator, dancer, photographer, tattoo artist, actor, violinist, sketch artist, DJ and a music producer. Thematic analysis was employed in this research study. This paper revealed that personal branding uniquely improves the artist's exposure and familiarity, thereby improving sponsorship and partnership engagements. The artists who used digital media and worked hard to create quality content established better personal brands. However, they also experienced difficulties while maintaining authenticity and responding to the market needs, as well as combating financial instability. In summary, personal branding was revealed to be a key tool with which artists can not only promote themselves in a highly saturated art market but also excel in the contemporary art world.

National College of Ireland

Project Submission Sheet

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Chapter 1: Introduction

The Problem:

The lack of extensive research explaining how personal branding can impact the career outcomes of artists is the problem that this research will try to address. Given the lack of research on personal branding, this research will also try to uncover the specific strategies that artists deploy to enhance their visibility and recognition.

Why Personal Branding Matters?

Personal branding is in vogue (Lair, Sullivan & Cheney, 2005). It is receiving discernible attention as an effective career behaviour because of its positive impact on job success, confidence, and professional contentment (Gorbatov, Khapova & Lysova, 2019). It aids in self-promotion and self-realization, benefiting individuals through increased exposure, financial rewards, promotions, and prestige (Daniel, 2016). Research has also found a favourable correlation between an artist's brand and their skill, notoriety, and popularity, influenced by market power and specialization (Angelini, Castellani & Pattitoni, 2022).

However, despite the increasing amount of research on personal branding, the matter has not been sufficiently examined explicitly concerning artists and their careers, and the existing research is inadequate. The majority of studies in the existing literature tends to focus on different professions and roles such as CEOs, entrepreneurs, freelancers, and athletes. However, there is an apparent lack of work specifically focusing on artists. There is a desperate need for research that can shed light on the ways in which personal branding can help artists reach their career milestones. Another major reason research specifically focused on artists is necessary is because unlike other technical professions, artists are more likely to face financial instability across the span of their careers (Menger 2001, pp. 241-242). Moreover, the problem of balancing their artistic authenticity with commercial needs within the competitive art industry and ever-evolving digital landscape, further exasperates the issue. The lack of targeted research also makes it difficult for artists to produce truly effective strategies for personal branding.

But currently, countries around the world are becoming increasingly penetrable for artists who are trying to expand their reach, thanks to social media platforms and the internet in general (Wahid, Ling & Kee, 2023). In a world that is increasingly being dictated by technology and social media platforms,

cultivating a personal brand appears to be a logical and strategic decision. The significance of personal branding is further magnified by the fact that compared to our ancestors; we are rapidly evolving into a technologically proficient society (Vitelar, 2019).

Context:

The concept of branding has manifested in various aspects of our society. Apart from traditional products, cities implement branding as they face competition and try to attract foreign investments, governments are counselled about the potential advantages of branding their countries to develop tourism and attract foreign investment, even universities employ branding to enrich their reputation and attract bright students (Kavaratzis, 2005). This type of branding has narrowed down even further and developed into personal branding. Personal branding has been around for decades now and is used in various industries by people who provide entertainment, athletes, writers, administrators, entrepreneurs, and elected government officials (Kavaratzis, 2005; Baltezarević & Milovanovic, 2014). It has been argued that personal branding is now more relevant than ever before (Kang, 2020). And the rationale is that globalization, and especially the internet, has increased connectivity, which has translated into limitless competition. In this type of environment, artists need to realize the importance of distinguishing themselves from the rest.

In the past, artists were mostly dependent on alignment between nations to advance their career opportunities in foreign lands. For example, The Closer Economic Partnership Arrangement (CEPA) which was signed a couple of decades ago between China and Hong Kong. Such opportunities allowed artists in Hong Kong to grow professionally in the best-case scenario and in the worst-case scenario, it allowed them to survive (Wahid, Ling, and Kee, 2023, p. 134). But realistically, such partnerships are not something that artists can initiate or control. This was a problem. Previously, most service providers and customers of a corporation were within a 20-mile radius. Now, the same corporation may have a web administrator who is situated in Kuwait, a team of programmers in India as well as the United States, and a PR firm in Austin. The same corporation may also have customers in Japan, Thailand, Türkiye, Brazil, Chile, Peru, Italy, Germany, France and throughout America. Your ability to show up on someone's search results on any search engine is equally, if not more important, than word-of-mouth references. Rather than listening to compact discs and radio stations, people listen to songs and podcasts on their iPhone. Rather than visiting a physical bank, people utilize their smartphones for lodgments, transactions, and taking care of their expenses. Novel ways of doing things are replacing outdated ones in all sorts of industries. In summary, it is imperative to develop and

manage a personal brand to avoid being overlooked in a competitive environment. In other words, deciding to neglect personal branding is a reliable way to be outpaced by the competition. One's personal brand is arguably their most important asset. A combination of rapidly increasing competition for jobs as well as the proliferation of online platforms has driven personal branding from being an attractive possibility to an absolute fundamental necessity. Personal branding can catapult an artist from being unknown to being desired. This aligns with the results of Jobvite's online survey of upwards of 800 HR (Human Resources) and hiring experts from the US according to which almost 90% of recruiters utilize or intend to utilize online platforms like LinkedIn, Facebook, and Twitter for recruiting (Kang, 2020).

Key Literature and Gaps:

Personal branding can be defined as the process of fashioning one's identity and managing one's reputation. Personal branding is about showing one's value to the market and sharing stories and ideas. Personal branding is not just about what the artist says about himself, it is also about what the market says about the artist. The familiar phrase that "perception is reality" holds more truth than ever regarding personal branding (Kang, 2020). In keeping with the lack of a critical-empirical investigation of the function of personal branding in the career outcomes of artists, this whole interrogation is centered around two questions:

1. What effect does personal branding have on an artist's career advancement and professional fulfilment in a competitive art market, while factoring in an evolving attention economy on different social media platforms?
2. Which strategies do artists use to establish and expand their personal brands using modern tools to advance their career in the contemporary art environment?

In this context, personal branding has been projected as being remarkably effective for upholding the success and growth of contemporary artists in this digital age improving their recognition status, collaboration opportunities and career advancement in the modern art world. This hypothesis may be able to provide a missing link in the literature for artists seeking to build and develop their persona.

The Motive of The Study:

The purpose of this work is to study the role of personal branding in the professional lives of modern artists under the conditions presented by the modern art environment. The research aims to detect different approaches to personal branding and the resultant consequences to find out how artists might benefit from the concept of personal branding to enhance their status in the profession. This research will also look at the utility of digital media and social media regarding personal branding to give insight into effectively building the artist's brand.

This work does not explore previous behaviors intended towards career progression that artists embraced before the internet. Although we realize that people have been creating their brands in other professions such as entertainment and sports industries, this work shall not cover such categories of people. Finally, this research utilizes a qualitative approach, which allows for detailed and complex gathering of data which improves the understanding of the experiences associated with the contemporary art personal branding process. The other advantage of using this research approach is that it also enables research about complicated notions as well as stories to unravel the impact of personal branding on the career destiny of artists.

Objectives:

- To understand the consequences of successfully engaging in personal branding activities on professional growth for artists
- To review the extent to which personal branding helped artists reach their career goals.
- To inspect the specific strategies that artists exploit within our technologically advanced communities.

Sub-objectives:

- To examine the extent to which personal branding boosts the recognition and visibility of artists within the art market.
- To explore the impact of personal branding on an artists' probability to get exhibitions and collaborations.
- To understand how artists leverage online platforms and the tools they provide to successfully build their personal brand.

These objectives and subjective will potentially contribute new knowledge to the existing literature by addressing how personal branding affects various aspects of the career of an artist.

Organisation Of the Study:

This study is organized to systematically address the research questions concerning the impact of personal branding on contemporary artists. The introduction provides background on the evolution and significance of personal branding, justifying the research and outlining the main questions and hypotheses. The literature review examines existing research on personal branding, especially in the art industry, identifying gaps and suggesting future research directions. The methodology chapter details the qualitative approach used, including participant selection and data analysis through thematic analysis. The findings and analysis chapter presents the results of the interviews with artists, discussing key themes such as career opportunities, strategies, challenges, and digital platforms. The discussion integrates these findings with existing literature, providing reflective insights and practical implications. Finally, the conclusion summarizes the key findings and offers recommendations for artists and future research.

Chapter 2: Literature Review:

1.0) Structure of the Literature Review:

The literature review is sequenced to provide a comprehensive analysis of the development and consequences of personal branding, especially as it applies to artists. It starts with a genesis section that outlines the concepts of personal branding and its history dating back to the later part of the twentieth century and the credit accorded to Tom Peters for coining the term 'Personal Brand.' After this, the review proceeds to discuss the first explanations of personal branding and how early views of it differ or like modern views. That is followed by the discussion of the process of branding ideas and their application on the level of individual branding, with the stress on the contrast between the corporate branding approach and the individual branding approach. The review also responds to the subject of the present work, providing proof of the enormous interest in personal branding throughout different professions in the contemporary digital interconnected working environment for career purposes. Further sections detail the specific challenges and necessities of personal branding in the art industry, including the strategic use of online platforms and digital technologies. The review concludes by identifying gaps in existing research and proposing directions for future studies, ultimately setting the stage for the subsequent methodology chapter that will investigate these themes in greater depth.

1.1) Background Of the Study:

Except for a renowned few, most artists face significant work instability and financial limitations in the art world (Jang, 2021). This discrepancy is caused due to multiple reasons which will be discussed in detail in the subsequent sections. The antidote to this discrepancy and one of the ways in which an artist can bridge the gap between irrelevancy and success, is by engaging in personal branding. But what is personal branding? Simply put, all the activities carried out by individuals with the purpose of establishing recognition in the industry fall under the umbrella of personal branding. These activities have been customary for years by actors, athletes, and musicians, as well as many authorities in corporate and political circles (Shepherd, 2005).

2.0) The Concept and its Evolution:

2.1) Genesis:

During the early 1990s, a new outlook on careers was starting to emerge. Serious transformations in the way organizations designed themselves were starting to manifest as the experts were rethinking the very fundamentals of work (Tams & Arthur, 2010). This initiated a widening of our perceptions of careers and what they mean. During this change, a relatively small printing and self-betterment market had been built, which advised as well as encouraged people to promote and establish their own brands. It operated on the clear rationale of employing the same marketing and branding strategies that were initially created for products and corporations to individuals (Peters, 1997). It was conceived a little before the twentieth century. This was the first version of what is now referred to as personal branding.

2.2) Tom Peters:

Any review of personal branding requires you to commence with an individual named Tom Peters. It was Tom Peters who coined the phrase “Personal Branding,” in his article called “The Brand Called You” The crux of what Peters said in this article was that the primary enterprise that we work for in our lives is not the jobs we work at, but ourselves. He said, “We are CEOs of our own companies: Me Inc.” He also stressed placing the utmost importance on marketing oneself (Peters 1997, p.83). The central idea here was that everyone possesses a personal brand. Peters also alluded to an individual’s personal brand as their ‘sign of distinction’ (Shepherd, 2005). This was no different than a marketing technique that tried to highlight one’s talents and qualities, acting as a catalyst in the process of achieving their professional objectives (Peters, 1997).

2.3) Definitions:

Personal branding has also been described as the process of identifying an individual’s “main idea,” uncovering the core of who they are, and then sharing it with the world. According to this definition, one is required to do the inner work of recognizing the ideas that dominate much of his or her cognitive bandwidth. It is less focused on how other people perceive an artist, and more on the actual essence of the artist (Roffer, 2002). While this definition encouraged one to be authentic, it provided no real clarity on how one needs to package and share this authentic self with the world. The real obstacle for artists here would be how they need to productize their talents in a way that fulfils the requirements of the customer.

A subsequent, and a more well-rounded definition of a personal brand involved a mix of recognized people, information, distribution techniques, and communication speed, which was a bit more tactical and practical (Vitberg, 2009). But again, this definition lacked the depth that was needed to reflect the contemporary environment which was characterized by constant change at ever-increasing speeds. One of the latest definitions of personal branding, which pertains to the process of strategically fashioning, aligning, and maintaining a good reputation of oneself based on one's personal characteristics (Gorbatov, Khapova and Lysova, 2019) is not vastly different than a definition from a decade ago. However, one critical difference is that this definition is not overly fixated on authenticity but instead describes a different process of crafting an image or painting a picture in the minds of the audience in a proactive and conscious manner. As the number of iterations on the definition of personal branding kept increasing, so did the usage of the term. The words "personal branding" is now widely recognized and is being used more often (Shepherd, 2005) But this was not always the case.

2.4) Refinement:

Initially, branding in general was perceived as a vague component of corporate influence, without a precise knowledge of its underlying principle. The crux of this issue stems from the precise meaning of 'brand' and the absence of agreement over its definition (Jones and Bonevac, 2013). However, after sufficient refinement, brands were understood as intangible and legal assets that are based on specific conditions for a corporation and serve as indicators of perceived value for the people, ranging from practical to psychological associations (Kumar and Mishra, 2012). Brands like Apple, Coca-Cola, and McDonald's are known worldwide thanks to years of developing such positive associations, whether practical or psychological, with their brands (Cijo, 2014). Even though this definition is limited to corporations it directly connects to the idea of personal branding for modern artists, where we view good brands as assets that produce positive associations. It is no surprise that brands have attracted substantial academic interest owing to their effects on a company's performance, including its degree of awareness, associating strength, and general brand attitudes, which considerably affect its market position (Levy, 1999). In essence, the evidence emphasizes the significance of branding. But the implications of these findings clearly go beyond corporations and commodities. Personal branding has proven vital for modern artists. It has been depicted as a critical component of an artist's career, directly affecting their exposure, market presence, and ultimately, their success in the modern art environment (Tomiuc, 2015).

2.5) Personal branding vs Marketing:

In today's economy, an individual's professional reputation is a crucial factor for career advancement (Clark, 2013). It is becoming increasingly important to understand how the branding strategies and principles utilized by corporations may assist individuals in establishing a personal brand, remaining relevant, and staying competitive in today's digitally linked world. Because, whether we accept it or not, individuals, just like corporations and goods, need to maintain a personal brand. But unlike corporations, personal brands are built upon the individual's personality traits, prior experiences and progress, as well as their interactions with others (Rangarajan, Gelb and Vandaveer, 2017). This makes personal branding dissimilar to marketing. Personal branding is not about things that are superficial, like modifying identities or styles, and it is not about persuading anyone in an inauthentic way or demanding them to do anything for us, but instead about creating a solid standing with people around us (Cooper, 2014). This is mirrored in the importance of reputation for building a favorable personal brand, which will be examined in a later section.

2.6) Importance Across Professions:

While there was a growing literature investigating what a brand truly means, another matter was being simultaneously examined, which was about the influence of personal branding on the individuals entering the workforce. They found that entry into the workforce demands the capability to set oneself apart from their counterparts (Lee and Cavanaugh, 2016). Researchers looked across various disciplines, looking to find the role that personal branding in establishing professional success. They found that the findings together emphasized the ubiquitous importance of personal branding across many areas, illustrating a worldwide trend that stretches from CEOs and entrepreneurs to freelancers, sportspeople, and artists (Brandão, 2021; Sharifzadeh, 2021; Adriana, 2019; Hernando, 2017; Kondor, 2017). It is understandable that in today's world, users have a higher probability of trusting a company when its leader is present and engaged on social media (Smith, 2019).

3.0) Impact of Personal Branding on Career Success:

In the digital era, job hunting demands personal branding and an online presence for social proof (Lind and Velthuis, 2012). Personal branding is necessary for modern artists since it is closely tied to the establishment of their brand inside the art world. An artist's value is strongly related to their marketing and branding activities. With galleries having monopolies over artists' works and different components

including the secondary art market, art fairs, auction houses, and museums contributing to an artist's fame, media attention, and metamorphosis into a "superstar," personal branding becomes a strategic weapon. It not only provides economic value but also inspires art consumers, urging them to acquire and own the artist's work (Lind and Velthuis, 2012).

4.0) Personal Branding in the Art Industry

As we examine the concepts of personal branding in the context of artists, let's describe artists as those who make art utilizing deliberate talent and creative imagination, embracing diverse genres such as painting, sculpture, music, or writing (Merriam-Webster, 2019).

4.1) Navigating Financial Instability:

The reason artists need to shift their focus towards personal branding is because their professions are prone to work instability and financial limitations. The reason for these limitations and instability is because in the labor and product markets, such as those seen in sports and the arts, individuals get rewards that are determined by their comparative excellence. Therefore, these markets tend to generate substantial profits for the few while yielding meagre returns for the majority (Cook, 2010). Moreover, the fact that artists earn much less money compared to individuals in technical, and related occupations who possess equivalent human capital attributes and encounter more income disparity and fluctuation, further exasperates the problem (Menger, 2001). Ernst and Young's 2021 analysis reveals a significant decline of 31% in sales within the European culture and arts industry in 2020 compared to the previous year (Ernst and Young, 2021). This shows that the present-day work environment demands that the workforce be a lot more market oriented (Lair, Cheney, and Sullivan, 2005).

4.2) Digital Transformation:

The internet's influence is especially significant in the art industry, where an artist's branding has become paramount to their market presence and professional success (Markusen, 2013). The internet has profoundly revolutionized branding, and subsequently personal branding, with digital identities now greatly affecting the physical world. Back in 1997, Peters correctly anticipated the impact of branding as we experience it today. Similarly, other researchers have demonstrated the increasing significance of personal branding for contemporary artists, necessitating the strategic promotion of their identity within the competitive art system (Guisseppi, 2016).

4.3) Law of Specialization:

The foundational tenet of branding is that a brand should be straightforward, understandable, and coherent. This was highlighted when a ‘Law of Specialization’ was proposed for personal branding. This law points out the importance of fixating on one domain of accomplishment or competence (Montoya et al. 2002). While creating a consistent brand image is crucial, it is common for people to assume various functions, identities, as well as self-perceptions in their public, private, and professional lives. This brings up the question of whether it is permissible for someone to cultivate diverse individual identities, each corresponding to their distinct functions or identities. According to conventional branding principles, this approach is likely to result in conflicting brands and weakening of brand identity. Artists that create multiple variations of their personal brands jeopardize these identities and end up weakening each other in the marketplace. This can, at best, lead to vague focus and in the worst-case scenario, reflect poor public relations.

4.4) Expert advice:

The practice of personal branding is publicized as an indispensable move by industry experts and life coaches. Public leaders and experts prophesize the end of the general tradition of having only one job for life and speculate that it will be replaced by individuals who work in multiple jobs. They also advise skill enhancement and personal reinvention to match the ever-changing demands of the market and stay relevant in the modern world. These suggestions are perfectly in line with the changing market dynamics and the need to cater to the ever-changing demands of the consumer (Shepherd, 2005).

4.5) From Hollywood to Sports Stars:

During the mid-nineties, movie studios in Hollywood fully grasped the Law of Specialization and developed detailed and coherent narratives around their most lauded celebrities. They also did not hesitate to curb any type of narrative that could corrode these well-constructed life stories. Fast-forward to the 21st century, top-notch musicians have understood the value of the Law of Specialization and successfully implemented it. They have shied away from creating multiple identities at the same time and confusing the audience. Instead, they have set out to generate a series of different identities when the stage is set to reimagine oneself. (Prominent instances include David Bowie, Madonna, and

Kylie Minogue) Stars like David Bowie and Madonna were proactive in this regard. However, it was imperative for other popular sports stars to embrace this approach. This was because their sporting careers eventually concluded. That is the reason they need to create a brand-new persona (Shepherd, 2005).

4.6) The Challenge:

For an artist aiming to attain success, the difficulty of the task of personal branding should not be underestimated. With countless corporate brands and scores of commodity brands vying for attention, the endless number of artists striving to establish a unique identity within the market confront an intimidating scenario. But competition is not a new problem by any stretch of the imagination, especially in the local communities. However, when we consider the implication of the web and online platforms, distinguishing oneself in the worldwide market may seem overwhelming (Davenport and Beck, 2001).

4.7) The Zipf Curve:

The artist who is intending to build, or already has a personal brand, must be acquainted with the Zipf curve (Shepherd, 2005). This relates to the fact that a small fragment of society, the megastars, enjoy the lion's share of attention and recognition, and the rest have to live on the leftovers. For artists that are just starting out on their personal branding journey, the metaphor of Sisyphus seems relatable. So, looking at personal branding as the most effective way to get attention is the most apt. That is the reason it is repeatedly prescribed as the best way to stand out in an overcrowded market. The "attention-getting" perspective is further supported by the convincing argument that globally, the supply of attention across media is scarce, but this shortage of supply does not, in any way mitigate the importance of it. In fact, if anything, it increases its importance. Considering this, it's logical to view attention as a form of currency similar to money. "Those lacking it desire it. Even those who possess it crave more. It can be exchanged and bought. People strive to maintain and expand their existing attention. Moreover, attention can be transformed into other forms of value (Davenport and Beck, 2001). Contemporary society, particularly the growing digital landscapes of the web and mobile phones, exemplifies an ever more cutthroat 'attention economy' (Davenport and Beck 2001). This presents a major struggle for artists aiming to make their voices heard.

5.0) Digital Age and Personal Branding Strategies:

5.1) Online Strategies for Fostering Creative Personal Brands

A variety of strategies have made maintaining one's brand relatively easy. Personal branding now involves creating and managing one's brand via digital platforms, which is increasingly relevant for artists (Guisseppi, 2016). Incorporating online platforms such as LinkedIn, Instagram, and Twitter have become crucial for artists to effectively highlight their work, network with potential collaborators, and reach a broader audience (Tulbure, 2023).

The future economy will rely on creativity and imagination to generate value amidst evolving circumstances. Strong creative personal brands are crucial for expanding the country's, the company's, and the institution's wealth. Since artists belong to a unique network of professionals that have their own distinctive set of capabilities and insight this makes personal branding an integral part of their toolset in order to achieve success in their careers (Kucharska & Mikołajczak, 2018). According to a study, an artist's attitude towards being a personal brand positively influences their personal performance (Kucharska, 2018). The way in which one can develop the right attitude towards being a personal brand is by having university curriculums for up-and-coming artists that involve initiatives to assist emerging artists define and distinguish their identity.

6.0) Role of Online Platforms and Digital Technologies:

6.1) Building a Digital Personal Brand: Strategies, Tools, and Content Creation:

A digital presence enables artists to not only exhibit their creative outputs but also communicate their unique personal brand narratives, attracting followers and building a supportive community (Sa'idah, 2020). The strategic use of social media and digital platforms empowers artists to transcend geographical limitations, connect with global audiences, and establish a solid and recognizable personal brand (Geva, 2016).

Internet's rapid expansion has greatly revolutionized the world of art, allowing virtual curation and trade, overcoming technological difficulties, and boosting online sales since 2013 (Koutsoupas, 2019; Lee and Lee, 2019; Read, 2019; Lind and Velthuis, 2012). As the Internet and digital media evolve, so do the methods for branding oneself, highlighting an artist's work, and interacting with potential clients

and followers (Lind and Velthuis, 2012). For instance, platforms like Instagram and YouTube allow artists to directly engage with audiences, fostering a personal connection and providing real-time updates about their artistic journey. Additionally, tools like SEO (Search Engine Optimization) and content management systems enable artists to enhance their online visibility and ensure their work reaches the right audience. The integration of digital tools and technologies is pivotal in the contemporary art landscape, shaping how artists build and sustain their personal brands (Koutsoupas, 2019; Lee and Lee, 2019; Read, 2019). This digital presence enables artists to not only exhibit their creative outputs but also communicate their unique personal brand narratives, attracting followers and building a supportive community (Sa'idah, 2020).

Historically, artists often had to consider relocating to major metropolitan locations (Markusen, 2013). However, the advent of modern technology has substantially altered the sense of relevance and significance, moving from the real world to the increased significance of information accessible online, making this type of migration less relevant. The intentional promotion of content through social networks and other online platforms helps artists to overcome geographical barriers and gain a stable and recognizable audience; an individual brand that will remain recognizable despite the geographical location of the artist (Geva, 2016). All these changes have nothing but raised the stakes in personal branding across many professions. Adding to the increase in the importance of virtual spaces for Generation Z these are the reasons that attempt to understand and navigate the modern world of personal branding (Vitelar, 2019).

In today's world, content creation and management are the most crucial activities in the process of personal branding. Artists have to constantly create and post artworks that are of premium quality and represent their personality and artistic voice. This process involves not only the designing and making of the art products, but content production in the form of videos, blogs, and social media updates. The strategic approaches include content mapping, content sequencing as well as analyzing the viewers' trends, and types of content suitable for use on the available platforms. Through the permanent Internet presence and properly developed content, artists create establishment and vitalization of their brands (Vitelar, 2019).

7.0) Challenges and Adaptations in Personal Branding

Except for a few renowned artists, most artists face significant work instability and financial limitations in the art world (Jang and Lee, 2021). Personal branding has turned out to be a requisite for modern artists for their future success and as a community of specialists with idiosyncratic abilities and

expertise (Kucharska, 2018). The present-day work environment demands that the workforce be a lot more market oriented (Lair *et al.*, 2005). Despite the industry-wide declines, artists may still strategically cultivate a strong personal brand to navigate and maximize their professional success (Rantala, 2021). One of the significant challenges artists faces in personal branding is the highly competitive nature of the art industry, where maintaining visibility and relevance requires continuous effort and innovation. Additionally, balancing the authenticity of one's personal brand with market demands and audience expectations can be challenging. Artists must navigate these complexities while ensuring their personal brand stays aligned with their artistic vision and values. Another inherent weakness in the allure of personal branding lies in its eventual diminishing returns. Early adopters might initially reap benefits, but over time, this advantage will erode. Currently, a small number of marketing graduates who excel in personal branding may enjoy a competitive edge, but once most graduates enter the job market with a 'Personal Brand Statement,' their relative advantage will be significantly reduced.

8.0) Synthesis and Integration of Findings

8.1) Identification of Gaps:

There are several significant gaps in research on personal branding for artists that this study aims to address. Firstly, there is a lack of detailed empirical analysis on specific personal branding strategies used by contemporary artists and their direct impact on career success. This research will gather and evaluate qualitative data to position the efficiency of these strategies. Moreover, considering numerous works that touch upon the topic of artists' compromise and their desire to gain commercial success and recognition while preserving their individuality and remaining sincere in their creations, the phenomenon of artists' persona is underexplored. It is within this context that this study will examine ways artists vulnerable to these pressures can minimize them while at the same time outlining how to manage the balance. Another gap identified is the lack of critique on how specific digital media and applications support or hinder the conception of artists' personal branding. This study will assess how emerging media platforms like Instagram and TikTok can help in promotional advertising and establish artists' positions and careers. In filling these gaps, this study seeks to offer a sound understanding of personal branding as a profession for artists and specify methods for success with relevant ethical implications.

9.0) Conclusion

Thus far the literature study reveals the evolution of branding from the corporate world to the need for individual branding in different fields. Concerning the analysis of personal branding as a concept that is relevant to artists, it was possible to understand its significance within the context of globalization and, specifically, the role of the Internet. The highlighted problems in the art industry, along with the strategic relevance of personal branding for visibility and success, motivated the design of the research questions. These questions dive into the varied influence of personal branding on artists' careers in the current art environment and analyze the unique techniques artists adopt in the digital era for increased success.

Chapter 3: Research Questions:

- 1) What effect does personal branding have on an artist's career advancement and professional fulfilment in a competitive art market, while factoring in an evolving attention economy on different social media platforms?
- 2) Which strategies do artists use to establish and expand their personal brands using modern tools to advance their career in the contemporary art environment?

These questions investigate the relationship between personal branding deployed by artists and its impact on their overall careers, in the context of various social media platforms and the competitive nature of the domain of art. They also dig into the specific strategies that artists utilize to launch their personal brands from scratch and expand their reach to increasingly diverse audiences.

Objectives:

- To understand the consequences of successfully engaging in personal branding activities on professional growth for artists.
- To review the extent to which personal branding helped artists reach their career goals.
- To inspect the specific strategies that artists exploit within our technologically advanced communities.

Sub-objectives:

To examine the extent to which personal branding boosts the recognition and visibility of artists within the art market.

To explore the impact of personal branding on an artists' probability to get exhibitions and collaborations.

To understand how artists leverage online platforms and the tools they provide to successfully build their personal brand.

Chapter 4: Methodology

Researcher Positionality Statement:

As a researcher who is curious about the way that the arts could be transformed due to the introduction of digital technologies, I recognize that my experiences, personally and professionally, shape the way I conduct research about personal branding within the art world. As the manager of an art magazine and working with artists internationally, I have a good awareness of how artists employ some of these online instruments to support their marketing and promotion. It also allows me to study the topic with an understanding of the benefits and risks that artists consider while functioning in this digital environment. I understand that there might be certain biases inherent in the conviction about the given subject, personal branding. Such an attitude could perhaps affect the analysis of the various aspects of the data on the efficacy of personal branding to a certain degree. To reduce this bias, I will try to be as self-reflective as possible throughout this study to challenge every assumption made and to embrace any findings that are inconsistent with such assumptions. Also, I understand the seriousness of paying tribute to and portraying the diverse experiences of the participants. This pushes me to ensure that I capture and portray the correct information of the respective artists.

Introduction:

The present section outlined the standardized procedure used to study the role of personal branding in an artist's career progression and professional satisfaction within the context of contemporary art. It also evaluates how the artists employ various methods to develop personal branding and employ the current equipment to progress their profession in the current world of art. The strategy used in this chapter was geared towards collecting and analyzing data, which squarely addressed the research questions and objectives highlighted in the previous chapter to arrive at valid and comprehensive conclusions.

Data Requirements:

In order to answer the research questions in the current study, it was important to have detailed information on several specific areas. First of all, there was a necessity to gain data on artists' career advancement and their development in general, and how personal branding affected their career chances, experience, reputation, and ability to collaborate. Second, in-depth details on the specific strategies artists use for building and managing their personal brands were essential. This includes their

use of digital platforms, content creation, audience engagement, and marketing techniques. Third, comprehensive insights into how the evolving digital landscape has impacted personal branding practices among artists were necessary. Finally, a nuanced understanding of how current market dynamics affect artists' personal branding and career progression was required.

Research Design:

A qualitative research approach was employed to thoroughly address and answer the research questions. According to Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2015), the 'research onion' model provides a systematic framework for understanding and selecting the appropriate research methodology, ensuring a robust and comprehensive approach.

Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2015) have developed a model known as the 'research onion'. The reason they developed the 'research onion' was to assist researchers to logically and deliberately determine the methodical approach that they could utilize for their research. The design of this model is organized in layers. Every layer denotes a separate stage in the research procedure. The advantage of utilizing this model is that the researcher can make decisions with clarity and adequate justification during every stage of the research process, making it a methodically integrated approach. The layer that is farthest from the center of the research onion has to do with the research philosophy. This is regarding the fundamental belief system that directs the research. Positivism, realism, pragmatism, and interpretivism are on the list of standard philosophies. The current research is guided by an interpretivist philosophy. The reasons an interpretivist philosophy is most appropriate for the purposes of this research is because it intends to comprehend the subjective experiences of artists in relation to their personal branding, which are complex in nature. Proceeding inside, the layer that is the second farthest from the center of the research onion has to do with the development of the theory. At this stage, researchers decide between a deductive, an inductive, or an abductive approach. The inductive approach is most appropriate for the purposes of this research. This is because an inductive approach strives to develop theories from the qualitative data that has been collected. This is also in alignment with the exploratory nature of the study. The third layer from the center of the research onion has to do with methodological choices. This stage assists the researcher to decide whether the use of quantitative, qualitative, or a mixed methodology seems most apt. As the current research strives to examine the complex subjective experiences and in-depth strategies of artists, a qualitative methodology has been deployed. The second layer from the center of the research onion directs attention to the different strategies for collecting data for the research. Standard data collection

strategies include narrative inquiry, grounded theory, action theory, ethnography, case studies, archival research, interviews, surveys, and experiments. For the purposes of this research, semi-structured interviews were chosen as a strategy for data collection. The reason semi-structured interviews were selected was because it is suitable for fluid and comprehensive examination of the personal branding strategies employed by artists. The first layer right next to the center of the research onion highlights the time horizons, which refers to the timespan of the research. This period could be longitudinal or cross-sectional. Concerning the above discussion, to capture the best time horizon, a cross-sectional time horizon was used in this research. This is because the current research portrays a picture of the personal branding practices from the artists' perspectives at a given period. Last of all, the core of the onion, the smallest ring, is the mechanics, the processes, and the Essential Features of Data Gathering and Analysis. As for the method of data collection and analysis, the most suitable ones in this case are methods such as semi-structured interviews and thematic analysis aimed at the collection of qualitative data on personal branding among artists.

Research Approach:

The selected qualitative research approach also involves the use of semi-structured interviews with the selected artists besides analyzing the data collected thematically. This approach allows for detailed and complex gathering of data as it improves the understanding of the experiences associated with contemporary art personal branding process. Other closely related studies that have also applied semi-structured interviews include Jacobson (2020). Another example of wise use of qualitative approach is the work by Dašić, Ratković & Pavlović (2021). The other advantage of using this research approach is that it also enables research about complicated notions as well as stories to unravel the impact of personal branding on the career destiny of artists. The specific methods are built from semi-structured interviews to gain an insight into the respondents' subjective experiences and opinions, and their interpretations of techniques related to personal branding in artists' perceptions of their professions. Similar studies on the subject as those conducted by Gorbatov, Khapova & Lysova (2018) and Kaur et al. (2021) further endorse such usage of similar approaches that include semi-structured interviews.

Research Sample:

The research sample involves artists who are active participants in the artistic practice in the age of social media with personal brand recognition. In the present investigation, ten participants were included in the research sample. These participants are artists who are building and developing their

careers in the contemporary art business. One can identify them as working in many different spheres. Personal branding plays a significant role in the promotion of a professional career enhancement plan. Thus, they use different online platforms for communicating, and as a result, have become more visible and recognizable within the networks. They have also been able to acquire several collaborations due to their branding. The participation of these participants was based on the criteria outlined by Saunders et al. (2015) which pointed to a sample representative of digital artists with strong personal branding.

The table below details the diverse artists in the sample for this research.

No.	Gender	Age	Industry	Profession
1.	Male	25	Animation	Animator
2.	Female	22	Music	Singer
3.	Male	26	Performing Arts	Dancer
4.	Male	24	Photography	Photographer
5.	Male	27	Body Art	Tattoo Artist
6.	Male	25	Entertainment	Actor
7.	Male	28	Music & Performance Arts	Violinist
8.	Female	24	Visual Arts	Sketch Artist
9.	Male	22	Music & Entertainment	DJ
10.	Male	30	Music	Music Producer

Table: List of Artists

The rationale behind how the two artists in the research were chosen is known as the purposive sampling technique. This technique was used to filter the artists who satisfied the specific criteria that are pivotal to this research. Purposive sampling is described in the framework of the research onion by Saunders et al. (2015). This technique assists the researcher in identifying participants that will form the population for the study. It covers the ground that the learners chosen for the study have particular traits that are appropriate to the research questions. This makes certain that the gathered data can correspondingly contribute well to the achievement of the set objectives of the research. The same method known as purposive sampling also guarantees that the most vital information that can be drawn from the data set contains rich information to respond to the research questions. Ten artists, being the

participants who formed the sample population for the qualitative interviews, ensure that there is depth as well as breadth in the accumulation of data.

Materials:

For facilitating the process of collecting the data for this research, a number of materials had been utilized. Another reason to use these materials was to strictly adhere to the required standards of ethics. The following list includes the materials that were central to the execution of the research. They are included as appendices for the purpose of being referenced.

1. Computer and Software:

The process of conducting the interviews and recording them was carried out using a laptop. The analysis of the data collected was also carried out on the aforementioned device. The main software that was used to conduct the interviews was Microsoft Teams. This is because of the accessibility, ease of use, ability to conduct virtual interviews, and the auto-transcription feature that Microsoft Teams provides.

2. Participant Information Sheet:

In order to make sure that each participant was completely informed about the various elements of the research, they were provided with an Information Sheet (Appendix A). The Information Sheet included in-depth information about the overall objective of the study, its protocols, as well as the potential advantages and disadvantages of the research.

3. Consent Form:

To ensure that participants agreed to participate in the study, they signed a consent form (Appendix B). Besides describing the rationale and plan of the research study and stating that the participants have the right to refuse to participate or withdraw their responses at any time.

4. Debrief Form:

At the end of the interviews, a Debrief Form (Appendix C) was handed out to the participants. In this form, the reason was to briefly describe the aims of the study as well as the additional details. It was

also possible to provide the contact information in case a participant has some questions or disputes within the framework of the completed form.

5. Interview Schedule:

The Interview Schedule was developed having the intention of using it as an interview framework. Using this Interview Schedule was beneficial for the interviews because it helped to establish a certain degree of structure in interviews by focusing on particular aspects and using particular questions. It was designed to cover several crucial areas and then have a fundamental understanding of the brand identity of artists in the modern art context. Some of the issues previously discussed in the interview schedule include the following questions, results, and detailed evaluation of artists' opinions as follows: personal branding and how it has enhanced one's career chances or career advancement, unique difficulties faced by artists in building and marketing their personal branding expertise and constraints, measures used by artists to overcome these difficulties and be a renowned artist in the business. It also examined the effect of the shifting paradigm in digital and aimed to confront the artists for cases of effective personal branding exercises that led to the specific artists gaining phenomenal career achievements. Each of these themes on their own and in combination with one another provide a broad overview of the topic. Every semi-structured interview lasted for a duration of 30 to 45 minutes. These interviews were carried out via Microsoft Teams, allowing the adjustment to the different schedules and geographical locations of the artists.

6. Other Tools and Platforms:

Aside from the tools mentioned above, the use of email and various social media platforms was made to recruit participants and schedule interviews. Every form provided in the appendices provides transparency, which in turn allows for the replication of the study.

Semi-Structured Interviews and Development of Interview Questions:

To investigate the personal branding experiences and strategies of artists, semi-structured interviews were carried out with the artists that were selected. Since semi-structured interviews are optimal for investigating complex themes, they are recommended by Saunders et al. (2015). The flexibility and ability to gain deeper insights that is provided by semi-structured interviews allows the researcher to focus on specific areas of interest while retaining a constant structure for all the interviews. The questions that were asked during the interview were designed to answer the research questions,

objectives, and sub-objectives. They were developed to draw out in-depth and thoughtful answers from the artists. To urge the artists to willingly share their subjective experiences and epiphanies, all the questions were designed to be open-ended. The process of critically reviewing the literature helped to clarify, refine and form the research questions as well as the research objectives and sub-objectives. This meant that any matter that would not be associated with the personal branding of artists could be excluded. The first activity was to develop initial questions that needed to be quite broad to see how much detail the respondents could provide. Just to do an initial trial of the set questions and inspect them if modifications are needed, a pilot study was carried out. Yet it was concluded that the proposed draft did not require further polishing. This was because the questions posed during the interview performed well in identifying the detailed accounts and stances about work-life balance adopted by the artists under study. The questions were also appropriate for the research in terms of their formulation since they were constructively designed based on the analysis of the literature related to the topic of personal branding which might provide rich information on the specific experience of artists. The type of research that was informative in the design of the interview schedule includes such works as Gorbatov, Khapova, and Lysova (2018). This study provided information on the key issues concerning personal branding that would be useful for the progress of artists' careers. Furthermore, the information shared by Saunders et al., (2015) on the procedure and stages of applying for a semi-structured interview helped construct the open-ended questions. Other researchers who helped narrow down the questions also include Lind and Velthuis (2012) and Markusen (2013). These studies center on the effects that personal branding has on recognition and other career-related prospects which is also seen in the current research.

Data Collection Procedure:

The following steps collectively constituted the data collection procedure:

1. **Recruitment:** social media or email were used to contact potential participants to extend an invitation to them to participate in the study. An exhaustive information sheet, which comprised of the purpose of the research, all the protocols and procedures, as well as the ethical considerations were supplied to the participants. From start to finish, the recruitment process ensured that each participant was informed in every respect and participated in the study voluntarily.

2. **Consent:** every participant provided their informed consent. This safeguarded their rights and maintained the voluntary nature of their participation. The risks, benefits, procedures, and the objectives of the study were clearly outlined in the consent form. This offered the participants the option to ask questions and clear any doubts prior to agreeing to participate.
3. **Interviews:** the interviews that were carried out were semi-structured in nature. Each interview was recorded for transcription that was devoid of mistakes. To aid a comprehensive evaluation process, each interview was transcribed verbatim. The interviews were organized via Microsoft Teams ensuring convenience and ease of access. The dates and timings for the interviews remained flexible to remain suitable for the participant.
4. **Pilot Study:** prior to the collection of the main data, a pilot study was carried out with one participant to improve and develop the interview schedule as well as the interview questions. However, the outcome of the pilot study made it clear that it was not necessary to make any changes to the interview schedule since the initial draft proved to be effective in answering the research questions.

Data Analysis:

The data that was collected from the interviews conducted using the semi-structured interview schedule for the research was analyzed using thematic analysis. This paper employed the type of analysis called Thematic Analysis as outlined by Braun and Clarke which involved the identification, evaluation of themes and documentation of patterns present in the obtained data. The model that was followed in conducting thematic analysis of the data comprised the following steps: getting to know the data, coding the data, generation of codes to form themes consisting of details assessment and refinement to ensure that the data was thoroughly analyzed. Saunders et al. (2015) also highlighted the procedure of familiarization and coding, formation of themes, and assessment and development which was recommended in the current research. The first step of the familiarization stage of the proposed model entailed the process of transcribing each of the interviews conducted word by word. These audio-taped documents were transcribed and then practiced to repeatedly immerse the researcher in the reading of the data. After familiarizing oneself with the data, the researcher made notes of the initial observations. This was followed by the next stage of the model. At this stage, the relevant categories

of data were logically labeled with appropriate codes. The coding process was carried out manually, ensuring that the codes are consistent with the data. In the next stage, the already developed codes were organized into themes by recognizing trends and interconnections within the data. These themes were subjected to a thorough analysis and optimization protocol, which legitimized the relevance and reliability of the themes. This protocol also made sure that no consequential piece of data was omitted. These themes were labelled based on the data that they consisted of along with an in-depth assessment of the theme which assisted in understanding the data and helped outline its range and focus. The last stage in the process was the development and establishment of a narrative that revealed the themes in a systematic sequence. This narrative was also consistently validated by direct quotes from the data collected from the interviews. The findings were positioned within a broader context of the prevalent literature on personal branding and professional growth for artists.

Ethical Considerations:

To safeguard the rights of the participants and to ensure the integrity of the data collected and the subsequent findings, the complete research process has adhered to strict ethical standards.

Informed consent: Informed consent was one of the most prioritized aspects of the study. The process of receiving the informed consent of the participants made sure that the objective, protocols, benefits, and the possible risks associated with the research were made explicitly clear at the outset. It was distributed and read to each of them before they signed their consent to participate in the study. The information sheet encouraged the participants to go through all the contents carefully. Finally, when, and only when, the participants were satisfied with the information about the steps of the research, they were asked to fill in a consent form. The consent form legally marked the subjects' voluntary participation in the research to present their strategies, insights, and experiences. In the consent form, they also included the participant's right to withdraw from the study at any stage before, during and after the study. This process of withdrawing would be without any penalty; it ensured that the participants were respected throughout the study.

Confidentiality: The measures of maintaining confidentiality were strictly complied with during the conduct of the research. This made sure that the participant was always protected when undergoing the tests and the results collected were very accurate. To remove any direct connection of the participants

to the information gathered from them, all identification details were removed. Besides the researcher who did the study and the supervisor who oversaw the study, any other person did not have a chance to interact with the raw data. This raw data was saved in an encrypted folder to provide privacy for the data being collected. These steps also ensured that the data was only used in the course of the research study. All these procedures made it possible to maintain the anonymity of all the participants.

Data Protection:

The research was conducted in compliance with GDPR to ensure the highest standards of data protection for participants. The whole dataset was kept in a secured network so that none of the unauthorized persons got access to the data. Further, the data retention policy also points out that the data collected will have to be secured for a given time period, generally five years, before it is properly disposed of as per NCI's recommended procedures.

Conclusion:

The methodology chapter involved the following sections: the data needs, study methodology, the population and sample, measures, data collection process, analysis, and the issues of ethics regarding the effects of personal branding on artist careers and professional growth. The adopted methods were efficient in responding to the research questions and objectives as well as being reliable. With the aid of a qualitative method of data collection involving semi-structured interviews, this study aimed to critically discuss the linkage between personal branding and the careers of artists in the context of the contemporary art scenario. By using this approach that was explained in the chapter, the current body of knowledge grew rich with the findings regarding artists and personal branding in contemporary art settings.

Chapter 5: Findings and Analysis

Introduction

The current section reveals the analysis and findings of the research that was carried out about the impact that personal branding has on the professional success of artists in the contemporary art environment. The findings that were obtained after analyzing the semi-structured interviews with the participants were synthesized and contextualized within the prevailing research. The findings and analysis section are organized around the primary themes that were discovered during the thematic analysis. The themes that were identified pertain to the research questions, objectives, and sub-objectives. Eight themes were identified from the data collected. The themes range all the way from the impact of personal branding on visibility and recognition, collaborations and sponsorship opportunities, digital platforms, the creation, and management of content, to balancing authenticity with the demands of the market, financial situations, world-wide reach and digital transformation, and influence of evolving technology.

Impact of Personal Branding on professional opportunities

Theme 1: Enhanced Visibility and Recognition

Artists reported that personal branding significantly enhanced their visibility and recognition in the art world. Many artists have found that leveraging digital platforms like Instagram and YouTube have increased their market presence and professional success. Participant 6, an actor, put it this way, "Social media has become an essential tool for creating my personal brand. It helps in documenting my journey and reaching audiences who appreciate my style. This visibility often leads to recognition by directors and brands that share my vision". Similarly, Participant 4, a photographer, shared, "By sharing my travel stories and fashion projects online, I've become more accessible, putting myself out there and gaining recognition in different art and business circles." Participant 3, a hip-hop dancer from India, shared that engaging with popular trends on Instagram and building a brand around his dance style led to teaching opportunities and invitations to perform at major events. He stated that, "Due to my personal brand, I was contacted by the company and they asked if I wanted to conduct my own teaching sessions," highlighting how his brand directly facilitated these professional opportunities. These experiences underscore the importance of personal branding in enhancing artists' visibility, opening

doors to various professional opportunities, and affirming the literature's findings on the strategic importance of branding in the digital age

Theme 2: Improved Collaboration and Sponsorship Opportunities

Some artists described how the concept of building a brand allowed for product endorsement and partnership. An example from Participant 2 is she is a musician, and she believes her personal brand assisted her to get crucial opportunities, including the opportunity to perform at music festivals and make collaborations with musicians. She said, “I have been specially invited at one of the music festivals because the organizer said that my brand is suitable for the event and the public.” Sketch artist participant 8 was able to explain how a video that she created eventually went viral and allowed her to rapidly grow her followers saying, “that video alone gained me thousands of followers within a period of time, and I was featured in a magazine basically overnight, which is always great if you are trying to get more recognition although it did help build my followers.” Participant 1, an animator, said this, “Cooperating with a famous YouTuber expanded my audience and contributed to the increased popularity of my animations.” Participant 4, mentioned that his collaborations on Instagram led to a feature in a prominent magazine, significantly boosting his visibility and credibility: “The magazine featured me and my series of photos which defined my work. I got so much popularity as people saw my credibility.” These examples show that with a proper personal brand, one gets more partnership and sponsorships which are essential in the rigid and often financially unpredictable environment of the art market.

Strategies Used for Personal Branding

Theme 3: Utilization of Digital Platforms

Various digital platforms play a key role in enabling artists to build their personal brands and reap the rewards of their efforts. Online promotion strategies were used by the artists in the construction of their persona online. Concerning the use of social media, Participant 1, in the capacity of an animator, displayed efficacy in the active use of social media, specifically Instagram, to progress his career and reach out to new contacts. He underlined that with the help of it, he built a unique persona that is easily recognizable, and stated that due to his brand building activities, he received numerous invites to collaborate and participate in promotional campaigns. Participant 6 said, “Definitely, I am very active

on YouTube and Instagram to market my brand and promulgate my work, they create a steady online platform for me”. Participant 4 said, “Instagram is perfect for telling stories through images, videos, and audios and explaining what I do is easy now, I can share reels of my work and people from all over the world can view them.”

Theme 4: Content Creation and Management

Effective content creation and management were central to personal branding efforts. Artists consistently produced high-quality content that reflected their unique style and brand identity. Participant 6, an actor, focused on authenticity and collaboration in his YouTube and Instagram content. Participant 2 mentioned sharing behind-the-scenes looks, performances, and personal stories on Instagram and YouTube to connect with her audience. She explained, "I decide what to share based on what I think will resonate with my audience and reinforce my brand." Participant 1 emphasized the importance of storytelling, stating, "I host live Q&A sessions on Instagram to interact directly with my audience and share stories, which helps in building a personal connection and reinforcing my brand." Participant 8 highlighted the role of authenticity, "Sharing time-lapse videos of my sketches on social media not only showcases my process but also engages my audience deeply."

Challenges Faced in Personal Branding

Theme 5: Balancing Authenticity with Market Demands

Artists faced challenges in balancing authenticity with market demands. Participant 2 explained the challenge of maintaining authenticity while promoting oneself: "One of the main challenges that I have faced was maintaining authenticity while promoting myself...I stayed true to my values and only endorse projects that I am comfortable with". Participant 1 discussed the pressure of balancing creativity with market needs, stating, "Balancing creativity with business demands for me means setting aside dedicated time for both...I prioritize my animation practice by planning some uninterrupted studio time and I give specific hours for marketing tasks like updating my website and engaging on social media". Participant 6 discussed the challenge of maintaining a consistent persona, stating, "The digital self is always a bit different, and dealing with critics who don't understand this was a major challenge." Participant 1 added, "While there's pressure to follow trends, I focus on high-quality work that stays true to my style, which eventually pays off."

Theme 6: Overcoming Financial Instability

Financial instability was a common challenge among artists, making personal branding even more critical. Participant 5, a tattoo artist, observed that “by coming up with new innovative designs and posting on the social networks, the problem was solved because there would be more clients. It also increased my exposure online, while partly tackling some of the monetary complications as well.” Participant 4 was also able to make some income-related remarks based on his experience with personal branding, saying, “By creating a personal brand, I was able to concentrate on areas I have interests in and enhance competencies while benefiting from higher earnings”. Participant 8 also echoed this sentiment, they said, “Financial support was supplemented through a partnership with an art supply company and my clientele base was enlarged.”

Role of Digital Platforms and Technologies

Theme 7: Digital Transformation and Global Reach

Artists were able to freely interact with fans irrespective of the country they were in through the available social platforms. Participant 9, a musician by profession mentioned that he managed to get collaborators from all over the world through Instagram and SoundCloud. Participant 3 added that networking is easy because people already know who he is thus he can connect with artists and audiences from the comfort of his home, especially during the pandemic. Participant 4 said that because he has a robust online presence, he can attend virtual conferences and do online shows thus keeping his work active and his business running, especially during the pandemic. Participant 4 said, “The collaboration option on Instagram was particularly useful as it allowed me to engage with photographers in different parts of the world and receive adequate exposure.”

Theme 8: Impact of Emerging Technologies

Probable future instruments of personal branding were discussed, among which virtual reality and augmented reality were noted. Participant 1, an animator, said he would like to incorporate AR in his animations in order to probably have a more interactive work for his target group. He said: “This is about a tech start-up who contacted me after seeing my post promoting the combining of animation and augmented reality for a project that came out to be very rewarding.” Participant 6 focused on the technology that could be useful for creating even more engaging experiences: “For me, virtual and

augmented reality have a great potential of becoming as powerful tools as movies were in the beginning of the twentieth century; it is a great opportunity for art.” While not yet requisite, these technologies are the future of personal branding for artists, new means to interact with the viewer.

Chapter 6: Discussion Chapter

Introduction

The present chapter provides a complete interpretation of the research findings revealed in the previous chapter. This interpretation includes the detailed explanation of the implications of the findings on the research questions and hypothesis. It explains how this research adds to the existing body of literature and the broader context in general. It will analyze the commonalities and differences with similar research conducted previously, while highlighting where the findings conflict with or extend beyond existing literature. Finally, it will discuss the latest insights and their practical implications for artists.

Key Findings and Their Implications

Enhanced Visibility and Recognition

The research found that personal branding significantly enhances artists' visibility and recognition in the art world. This finding aligns with the literature, which suggests that a strong personal brand can increase an artist's market presence and professional success. Lind and Velthuis (2012) had made the same observation when they spoke about how important it is for artists to build their own personal brands if they want to improve their visibility, market presence and professional success in the art market. But while artists reported that personal branding significantly enhanced their visibility and recognition in the art world, artists, like participant 3, expressed the pressure they face to sustain a constant online presence. This finding contrasts with more optimistic studies, such as Markusen (2013), which emphasizes the democratizing and empowering potential of digital platforms without addressing these pressures.

Increased Collaboration and Sponsorship Opportunities

Another significant finding is that personal branding facilitates collaboration and sponsorship opportunities. Many artists, especially photographers and musicians, acknowledged how the personal brands that they built played a vital role in obtaining critical breaks like performing at a well-renowned music festival or getting featured in a prominent magazine. This is in alignment with Markusen's (2013) discovery about the positive impact of personal branding on obtaining important career

opportunities and monetary incentives. This capacity of artists to draw in collaborations and garner enough recognition to receive sponsorships is vital for them to chart a course amidst the competitiveness and financial instability of the art industry. Participant 3, a hip-hop dancer from India, shared that engaging with popular trends on Instagram and building a brand around his dance style led to teaching opportunities and invitations to perform at major events. This outcome is in alignment with the proposition that enhanced professional opportunities and financial rewards is a result of successful personal branding (Gorbatov, Khapova, and Lysova, 2019). Participant 4, a photographer, described how sharing travel stories and educational projects online increased his accessibility and recognition in various art and business circles. He mentioned that his collaborations on Instagram led to a feature in a prominent magazine, significantly boosting his visibility and credibility. This aligns with the findings of Lind and Velthuis (2012) who discuss the impact of online presence on artists' market recognition and professional success.

Utilization of Digital Platforms

Artists in this study made use of various digital platforms to build and manage their personal brands. During the interviews, several artists referred to the function of digital platforms like YouTube and Instagram to share their art and develop a connection with their audience while increasing their reach. This key role that digital platforms play in the development of a sense of connection makes it an essential element of building a strong personal presence. This was well-established when Koutsoupas (2019) highlighted the role of online platforms in the personal branding process. Participant 4 mentioned using Instagram and YouTube to share his work and connect with a broader audience. He shared, "Instagram is great for visual storytelling. I can share high-quality reels of my work and connect with a global audience instantly." This supports the research on the role of digital tools and platforms in enhancing artists' visibility and audience engagement (Lee and Lee, 2019). Two of the artists, a hip-hop dancer, and an animator, among other participants in the study emphasized the crucial role those online platforms, for example Instagram and YouTube, played in the process of achieving prestigious opportunities and collaborations. This is how the hip-hop artist (participant 3) put it, "So, as I was growing, I was using my content to grow on social media. Using YouTube Instagram etc." The animator (participant 1) articulated it this way, "Last year my branding efforts paid off when a renowned animation studio noticed my work on Instagram. This led to another freelance project that boosted my personal brand." This finding underscores the crucial role of digital platforms in contemporary personal branding strategies.

Content Creation and Management

Effective content creation and management emerged as central to personal branding efforts. Artists consistently produced high-quality content that reflected their unique style and brand identity. This strategy aligns with the literature on the importance of engaging multimedia content in building a strong personal brand (Lair, Cheney, and Sullivan, 2005). The participants' focus on authenticity and storytelling in their content creation efforts illustrates how artists can connect with their audience and build a loyal following. Participant 2 spoke about sharing behind-the-scenes looks, performances, and personal stories on Instagram and YouTube to connect with her audience. She explained, "I decide what to share based on what I think will resonate with my audience and reinforce my brand." This aligns with the findings on the importance of content strategy in personal branding (Kucharska, 2018).

Balancing Authenticity with Market Demands

Aside from the numerous advantages that personal branding provides, it also faces some challenges. One of the most shared challenges that several artists spoke about during the interviews was the act of balancing their authentic artistic impulses with the commercial demands of the market. This challenge that is commonly faced by most artists is also documented by Shepherd (2005), when he addressed the pressures that artists face as they try to meet the expectations of their audience while remaining true to their authentic vision. As the artists participating in the interviews shared their challenges in this regard, the need for practical strategies to overcome this challenge was becoming increasingly apparent.

Overcoming Financial Instability

Financial instability remains a significant challenge for artists, making personal branding even more critical. The current research aligned with Menger's (2001) review of the financial disparity that the art world faces. Novel personal branding strategies could potentially aid in alleviating the majority of the difficulties when it comes to the finances by reaching out to newer audiences and potentially drawing in additional clients. This could also potentially result in the introduction of new income streams. Many participants, including a tattoo artist, shared his experience of how personal branding helped them propel their career and achieve financial stability.

Digital Transformation and Global Reach

The digital transformations have allowed artists worldwide to overcome geographical restrictions and provided them with the opportunity to introduce their work to audiences across the globe. Artists, including musicians and photographers, have remarked how they could engage in virtual events that allowed them to stay relevant, all because of their online personal branding activities. These activities also helped them to maintain relevance during troubled times like the COVID-19 pandemic. This discovery is supported by Markusen (2013), when he highlighted the prime importance of a robust digital presence. Participant 4 also mentioned that during the pandemic, his strong online presence allowed him to participate in virtual conferences and online shows, keeping his work relevant and his business afloat during challenging times. This supports the findings of Lind and Velthuis (2012), who discuss the significance of a strong digital presence in maintaining professional relevance during disruptive periods. While digital platforms provide global reach, the saturation and competition on these platforms present a significant challenge. This reality contrasts with earlier literature, which often emphasizes the benefits of digital presence without acknowledging the difficulties artists face in standing out in an oversaturated market.

Impact of Emerging Technologies

Augmented reality and virtual reality were some of the technologies that were mentioned during the majority of the interviews. These were viewed as promising tools for personal branding. Even though these tools lack the mass adoption as compared to some of the other social media platforms, they do present themselves as the next step in the future of personal branding by providing new possibilities and means of engaging with the audience. This suggests a future direction for personal branding strategies. This perspective aligns with contemporary trends in digital innovation (Koutsoupas, 2019).

Limitations:

Despite the fact that comprehensive insights could potentially be gleaned from the use of the quantitative approach, it does face some limitations. A significant limitation is the reliance on self-reported data. self-reported data always possesses the possibility of introducing potential biases in relation to the perceptions and experiences of the participants. The combination of these limitations could possibly have impacted the global applicability of the findings to the general community of artists. Saunders et al. (2015) observed that the first major disadvantage of purposive sampling is that

it could potentially commence the research with bias. The researcher bias could impact the extent of objectivity of the finding of the study. The judgement of the researcher while making decisions about the participants that are going to be selected could be plagued by this bias. The second disadvantage connects back to the first one which is that since the recruitment process for the participants was subjective by nature, it was reliant on the judgement and competence of the researcher. This could potentially have an unfavorable influence on the outcomes of the research. The third major limitation refers to the transformative character of the online platforms and digital technologies. The reason this is a limitation is because the findings of this research could potentially become outdated in terms of their impact and effectiveness, due to the dynamic nature of these digital technologies. This time-bound limitation advocates constant ongoing research in order to stay up to date on the latest developments in this domain of personal branding on online platforms. The fourth limitation of this research is its emphasis on successful personal branding activities. This may result in failing to notice and acknowledging the artists that have experienced hardships or may have completely failed in accomplishing successful outcomes using personal branding. This kind of a success bias could potentially provide an incomplete viewpoint of the problems faced by artists in reality. The requirement for more research with a more extensive and diverse group of participants is highlighted by these limitations. This could also include longitudinal research to evaluate the long-term impact of personal branding on artists in the contemporary art environment.

Practical Implications:

The practical implications of this study are noteworthy for contemporary artists. The study found that artists who strategically utilize online platforms and consistently create and share content on these platforms could potentially improve their recognition, visibility, opportunities for collaborations, and become more financially stable. The research also found that artists are better off creating authentic and engaging content that also resonates with their audience. Artists need to do this by leveraging the emerging technologies in order to stay ahead in an increasingly competitive industry.

Situating Findings in the Literature

The findings of this study both support and extend the existing literature on personal branding, with some nuances and contrasts observed. The enhanced visibility and professional opportunities resulting from personal branding are well-documented, and this study provides empirical evidence specific to contemporary artists. For example, the role of digital platforms in enhancing visibility and

opportunities is well-supported by the work of Markusen (2013) and Lind and Velthuis (2012). Participants in this study highlighted how platforms such as Instagram and YouTube were instrumental in reaching wider audiences and securing professional opportunities.

However, the study also reveals contrasts with past research. While Markusen (2013) emphasizes the democratizing potential of digital platforms, this study found that not all artists experience equal benefits from online branding. Participant 3, discussed the high competition and pressure to maintain a consistent presence, stating, "There's always this pressure to keep it on... if you don't do that, it's of no use." This finding contrasts with the more optimistic views in literature, highlighting the challenges of digital saturation and the need for constant engagement.

The challenges faced by artists, such as balancing authenticity with market demands and overcoming financial instability, echo the discussions by Shepherd (2005) and Menger (2001). However, this study extends these discussions by exploring how personal branding can both alleviate and exacerbate these challenges. Participant 4, noted, "The biggest challenge has been staying motivated after failures," suggesting that while personal branding offers opportunities, it also creates pressure to succeed consistently, contrasting with Shepherd's emphasis on artistic freedom.

Furthermore, while Menger (2001) discusses financial instability as a prevalent issue, the study found that personal branding offers new revenue streams and financial stability, as participant 2 highlighted: "By creating a unique identity and consistently presenting it, I was able to attract more opportunities." This suggests that personal branding can mitigate some of the financial challenges identified by Menger, although not universally.

In summary, while this study supports the existing literature on personal branding's benefits and challenges, it also identifies specific contrasts, particularly in the pressures of digital branding and the varied financial impacts, offering a nuanced understanding of personal branding in the contemporary art world.

Summary:

The discussion chapter outlined the different means through which personal branding positively impacts the career advancement and professional fulfilment of artists. By contextualizing the findings of this research with the existing literature on the topic, novel observations have been made, especially in regard to the specific strategies and familiar challenges that the participants faced in the process of building and expanding their personal brands. These findings have numerous implications that provide

practical advice as well as useful guidance on which strategies to utilize in order to get the most out of their personal branding efforts. Upcoming studies could build upon these findings along with the existing research by examining the long-term effects of personal branding and the capabilities of emerging technologies.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

The conclusion section outlines an extensive examination of the findings obtained from the data that was collected during the semi-structured interviews with the selected participants. It drew attention to the indispensable role that personal branding plays in the career outcomes of artists. The findings also highlight the significance of online platforms, competent content creation and management, and the balance between genuine artistic expression and the expectations of the art market. The combination of these realizations enhances our understanding of the potential impact of personal branding on artists. This section also provided applicable techniques for harnessing the power of personal branding. Subsequent investigations could examine the long-term impact of personal branding and the possibilities that nascent technology can unveil in this industry.

Summary of Key Findings:

According to the research, successful personal branding improves visibility and recognition, as well as improving the odds of obtaining significant professional opportunities. Opportunities for collaborations and sponsorships organically increased as sophisticated personal branding strategies were deployed. Aside from highlighting the importance of online platforms, the research also revealed that the artists who successfully built their personal brands shared first-rate content consistently. They also ensured that the content they shared aligned with their distinctive style and personality. The research identified the need for specific strategies that allow artists to remain aligned with their authenticity while simultaneously remaining relevant to their audiences. Moreover, emerging technologies like augmented reality and virtual reality were recognized as tools that could potentially present novel ways to approach personal branding and connect with audiences.

Objectives Realization:

This study successfully examined the implications of effective personal branding on the professional advancement of artists. Implications such as increased recognition and visibility were identified. Delving deeper, certain specific strategies that artists used in relation to the creation of content, and the tools through which they deployed these strategies such as the digital platforms were identified. Additionally, the challenges that artists must deal with as they strive to maintain their authenticity while meeting the demands of the market were brought to the forefront. Finally, a future direction was

provided by suggesting an examination of the emerging technologies in relation to personal branding activities.

Scope for the Future:

A bigger sample size that includes a diverse set of participants, the incorporation of a quantitative approach along with the qualitative approach, a more long-term approach to the study, as well as the examination of the function of emerging technologies like virtual reality and augmented reality in the establishment and growth of a personal brand were some of the suggestions that this research made for the direction of future research.

Summary:

Therefore, the current research underscores the significance of personal branding in artists' successes in the globalized world. Therefore, utilizing the web applications, generating unique materials, and implementing new technologies, artists can multiply their exposure, credibility, and opportunities for work and cooperation. The future work and practical development should contribute to further strengthening and development of the concepts of personal branding in the art sphere. Thus, personal branding greatly enhances the recognition and collaboration potential of artists while increasing the likelihood of professional development, fulfilment, and success for modern artists.

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Appendix

A. Participant Information Sheet

(1)

Exploring Artistic Success in the Digital Age: A Qualitative Study into the Impact of Personal Branding on Contemporary Artists.

I would like to invite you to take part in a research study. Before you decide you need to understand why the research is being done and what it would involve for you. Please take time to read the following information carefully. Ask questions if anything you read is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not to take part.

WHO I AM AND WHAT THIS STUDY IS ABOUT

I am a master's student in the field of International Business, conducting this study as part of my degree requirements. The overall aim of this study is to investigate the impact of personal branding on the career success and professional development of artists in the contemporary art environment. This research seeks to understand how artists build and manage their personal brands and the extent to which these efforts influence their visibility, market presence, and opportunities for collaboration within the art industry. The study is designed to be objective and does not presume any specific outcomes.

WHAT WILL TAKING PART INVOLVE?

Taking part in this research will involve participating in a one-on-one interview, which will cover topics such as:

1. Your experience and strategies in building a personal brand.
2. The challenges and benefits you have encountered in personal branding.
3. The impact of personal branding on your career and professional opportunities.
4. Your perception of personal branding within the contemporary art industry.

The interview will take place either in person at a mutually agreed location or virtually via video conferencing, depending on your preference. The duration of the interview is expected to be no longer than an hour. With your consent, the interview will be audio and video recorded to ensure accurate documentation of our conversation. However, you can keep your camera off if you prefer.

INCLUSION CRITERIA

To participate in this study, you must:

- Be over 18 years of age.
- Be an active artist in the contemporary art industry.
- Have experience with personal branding and its application in your professional career.

(2)

WHY HAVE YOU BEEN INVITED TO TAKE PART?

You have been invited to take part in this research because of your notable achievements and experience in the field of personal branding within the contemporary art industry. Your insights and expertise make you a valuable participant for understanding the intricacies and impacts of personal branding on professional opportunities and career development. You were selected based on your professional background and contributions, which align with the objectives of this study.

DO YOU HAVE TO TAKE PART?

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You have the right to decline participation, choose not to answer any specific question, or withdraw from the study at any point without any repercussions. Your decision regarding participation will not affect you in any manner.

WHAT ARE THE POSSIBLE RISKS AND BENEFITS OF TAKING PART?

Participating in this research provides an opportunity to share your experiences and perspectives on personal branding within the contemporary art industry, contributing valuable insights to scholarly discourse. While the benefits include intellectual engagement and potential contribution to academic knowledge, it's essential to acknowledge potential risks, such as discomfort in discussing personal experiences related to career development and branding. However, strict confidentiality measures will be in place to protect your privacy, and you can withdraw from the study at any time without consequence, ensuring your autonomy and well-being throughout the research process.

WILL TAKING PART BE CONFIDENTIAL?

Confidentiality will be strictly maintained in the study. In this study, rigorous measures will be employed to safeguard the privacy of participants and any individuals they discuss. To ensure confidentiality, all collected data will be securely stored and accessible only to the researcher. Personal identifying information will be removed or anonymized to prevent the identification of participants. Additionally, any transcripts or documents will be coded to further protect confidentiality. This practice ensures that even if the data were to be accessed by unauthorized individuals, the identities of participants and others discussed would remain protected. However, there are circumstances where confidentiality may need to be breached. If the researcher becomes aware of a serious risk of harm or danger to the participant or another individual, such as instances of physical, emotional, or sexual abuse, concerns for child protection, incidents of rape, self-harm, suicidal intent, or criminal activity, it is imperative to report this information to the appropriate authorities to ensure the safety and well-being of those involved. Furthermore, non-anonymized data, such as signed consent forms and audio recordings, will be collected and retained as part of the research process. While these documents contain identifiable information, they will be stored securely and accessed only by the researcher to maintain confidentiality. By adhering to these rigorous

(3)

confidentiality protocols, the integrity of the research will be upheld while prioritizing the protection and privacy of the participants and any individuals discussed during the study.

HOW WILL INFORMATION YOU PROVIDE BE RECORDED, STORED AND PROTECTED?

The interview will be digitally recorded using NCI's Microsoft Teams. All research data will be securely stored with stringent security measures. Signed consent forms and original audio and video recordings will be retained safely, accessible only to authorized personnel, until after the degree has been conferred. Subsequently, a transcript of interviews with all identifying information removed will be securely stored electronically in a password-protected folder for an additional two years. Access to the data will be restricted to the researcher and authorized personnel. Under freedom of information legislation, participants are entitled to access the information they provided at any time.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO THE RESULTS OF THE STUDY?

The results of the study will be used solely for the completion of the dissertation. There are no plans for further dissemination beyond the academic institution's requirements for the degree.

WHO SHOULD YOU CONTACT FOR FURTHER INFORMATION?

For further information, please contact:

Ryan Anthony

Student at National College of Ireland

theryanmagazine@gmail.com

Supervisor:

Dr. Amanda Kracen

Associate Professor of Psychology at National College of Ireland

Amanda.Kracen@ncirl.ie

THANK YOU

B. Consent Form

(1)

Exploring Artistic Success in the Digital Age: A Qualitative Study into the Impact of Personal Branding on Contemporary Artists.

Consent to take part in Research.

INCLUSION CRITERIA

To participate in this study, you must:

- Be over 18 years of age.
- Be an active artist in the contemporary art industry.
- Have experience with personal branding and its application in your professional career.

|

- I..... voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.
- I understand that even if I agree to participate now, I can withdraw at any time or refuse to answer any question without any consequences of any kind.
- I understand that I can withdraw permission to use data from my interview within two weeks after the interview, in which case the material will be deleted.
- I have had the purpose and nature of the study explained to me in writing and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study.
- I understand that participation involves a one-on-one interview covering your personal branding experience, challenges, benefits, and its impact on your career and within the contemporary art industry. The interview, lasting not more than an hour, can be in-person or virtual, with consent for audio and video recording, although I can keep my camera off if I prefer.
- I understand that I will not benefit directly from participating in this research.
- I agree to my interview being audio and video recorded, although I can keep my camera off if I prefer.
- I understand that all information I provide for this study will be treated confidentially.
- I understand that disguised extracts from my interview may be quoted in the dissertation.
- I understand that if I inform the researcher that myself or someone else is at risk of harm, they may have to report this to the relevant authorities.

(2)

- I understand that signed consent forms and original audio/video recordings will be retained in a secure location, accessible only to the researcher and the supervisor until the exam board confirms the result of their dissertation.
- I understand that a transcript of my interview in which all identifying information has been removed will be retained for two years from the date of the exam board.
- I understand that under freedom of information legalisation I am entitled to access the information I have provided at any time while it is in storage as specified above.
- I understand that I am free to contact any of the people involved in the research to seek further clarification and information.

Ryan Anthony

Student at National College of Ireland

theryanmagazine@gmail.com

Supervisor:

Amanda Kracen

Associate Professor of Psychology at National College of Ireland

Amanda.Kracen@ncirl.ie

Signature of research participant

Date

I believe the participant is giving informed consent to participate in this study.

C. Debrief Form

Exploring Artistic Success in the Digital Age: A Qualitative Study into the Impact of Personal Branding on Contemporary Artists.

Participant Debrief Sheet

Thank you for participating in the interview. I hope that you found it engaging and insightful. Your contribution is invaluable to my research. If you have any concerns or feedback regarding the topics discussed, please feel free to reach out. Your comfort and satisfaction are important to us.

If you have any queries about the study or wish to speak with a member of the research team, please contact:

Ryan Anthony

Student at National College of Ireland

theryanmagazine@gmail.com

Dr. Amanda Kracen

Associate Professor of Psychology at National College of Ireland

Amanda.Kracen@ncirl.ie

If you have found any part of this experience to be distressing, please consider speaking with someone that you trust such as a family member or friend. You may also consider speaking with one of the organisations below for additional support:

ORGANIZATION	CONTACT
Befrienders Worldwide	info@befrienders.org / 02084276299
Lifeline International	giving@lifeline.org.au / 1800 800 768

D. Interview Schedule

Interview Schedule:

1. Can you describe how personal branding has influenced your career opportunities and success as an artist?
2. How has your personal brand contributed to your professional development and growth?
3. In what ways has personal branding affected your visibility and recognition within the art market?
4. Can you provide examples of how your personal brand has helped you secure exhibitions, collaborations, or other professional opportunities?
5. Have you noticed any changes in how the art industry perceives you since you started focusing on your personal brand? If so, what are these changes?
6. What role do you think personal branding plays in the contemporary art environment compared to traditional methods of career advancement?
7. How has your personal brand helped you navigate the evolving digital landscape and market-oriented work climate?

Strategies for Building and Managing Personal Brands

8. What steps did you take to establish your personal brand initially?
9. Which digital platforms (e.g., social media, personal website) do you find most effective for building your personal brand, and why?
10. What types of content do you regularly share to promote your personal brand, and how do you decide what to share?
11. How do you maintain consistency in your personal brand across different platforms and mediums?
12. Have you adopted any specific storytelling techniques to enhance your personal brand? If so, can you describe them?
13. What challenges have you faced in building and managing your personal brand, and how have you overcome them?
14. How do you measure the success of your personal branding efforts?
15. Can you share any specific strategies that have significantly contributed to the success of your personal brand?
16. How do you balance the creative aspects of your art with the business and marketing demands of personal branding?
17. In what ways has the digital age influenced your approach to personal branding?
18. Can you provide examples of how your personal brand has helped you connect with your audience and build a loyal following?
19. What advice would you give to emerging artists about building and managing their personal brands in today's digital landscape?
20. How do you see personal branding evolving in the future, and how do you plan to adapt your strategies accordingly?

E. De-identified Transcript


(1)


PARTICIPANT 10


Meeting with Ryan Anthony -20240529_173703-Meeting Recording


May 29, 2024, 4:37PM
27m 24s


● Ryan Anthony started transcription

 **Ryan Anthony** 0:06
Can you hear me?


 **Participant 10** 0:11
Yes, yes.
So I can hear you very clearly.
How are you doing?
Can you hear me?


 **Ryan Anthony** 0:16
I'm doing great.
Participant 10, thank you so much for joining us today.
I really appreciate you taking the time for this.
Thank you so much.


 **Participant 10** 0:29
It's a pleasure.


 **Ryan Anthony** 0:38
The pleasure is all mine.
So let's just jump into it.

 **Participant 10** 0:50
Yes.


 **Ryan Anthony** 0:52
So I think I would start at the beginning.

 **Participant 10** 1:23
Okay.


 **Ryan Anthony** 1:27
Can you describe how personal branding influenced your career opportunities and success as an artist?

 **Participant 10** 1:37
So back in those days when I started, initially branding personal branding was more of a delusion.
I would say people did not know anything at all about it.
It was not at all clear.

 **Ryan Anthony** 2:06
Yeah.

 **Participant 10** 2:10
So when I initially started my career, looking at the influences of artists like Armin Van Buren, Hardwell, these guys had already established themselves as personal brands, which really made me motivated.
Like you know, this is something which can be done here in India because it has not been done yet and that time it was pretty new and there were very few artists who were doing it, you know.


 **Ryan Anthony** 2:42
Yeah.

 **Participant 10** 2:44
So initially everything started off obviously on a harder note.
But slowly, when it started shaping up, I would say 2-3 years down the line.


(2)


It really, really made a very big major impact in a very simple way.
For example, if I want to get the a gig booking for example I want to get something done for me, right?


 **Ryan Anthony** 3:30
Yeah.

 **Participant 10** 3:31
I stopped having to depend heavily on people.


 **Ryan Anthony** 3:38
Yeah.

 **Participant 10** 3:38
Because when you're starting out as an artist, it's a very difficult venture.
So as there was nobody and I was by myself.
So yeah, it did make a very big.


 **Ryan Anthony** 3:59
OK.
Uh, so you mentioned something about accessibility and you being able to reach out to people, would you say that personal branding has given you a sort of power in terms of how you can reach out to people who are well established and has given you an opportunity in terms of your professional growth?


 **Participant 10** 4:20
Yes, definitely.
Right.


 **Ryan Anthony** 4:42
Yeah.


 **Participant 10** 4:48
I mean, when I'm on the decks, I am in control of what I am delivering.


The deliverables are in my control in simple terms.
Now when I hire somebody else, for example, A team for my Instagram or a team for my Facebook handles, it becomes kind of annoying because you don't know exactly what they're doing and you can't really trust anybody and everybody in the market right now.

 **Ryan Anthony** 5:15
It's like giving power away to someone else.

 **Participant 10** 5:15
Yeah.
Yeah, yeah, yeah, that's true.

 **Ryan Anthony** 5:33
Okay.
Can you provide some examples of how maybe personal branding has helped you land a big concert or help you reach out to a DJ like; you know Hardwell or Armin Van Buren?
Can you give me some examples?

 **Participant 10** 6:18
One of the simplest example is that now every uh music producer and DJ nowadays needs to have support from bigger artists in order to get recognition in the art scene.
So that is one of the core factors which actually starts helping an artist grow and become bigger.
So in that terms, I have had support from Martin.
I have had support from Timmy Trumpet.
I have support from Samfield and a lot of techno artists as well in the field.

 **Ryan Anthony** 7:06
Correct.

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TS Participant 10 7:24
Yeah.

So yeah, personally handing personal branding did definitely help me there.

Ryan Anthony 7:30
OK.

Have you noticed any changes in how the industry like the industry of the musicians, DJ's, techno artists like the whole industry and how they perceive you since you have established a person brand?

Because I know that there was a point where you did not have a personal brand and now you do so during that shift, how you would treat it by these other artists and industries, has it changed?

TS Participant 10 8:01
So I mean, not just for me, but for every artist who is doing what I am also doing here.
Initially, there's nothing.
There's no Support.
There's nobody out there for you.

Ryan Anthony 8:13
Yeah.

TS Participant 10 8:39
So yeah, it definitely changes the entire game because through those personal branding processes, which I have just mentioned in short, every person who looks at you, it changes, it changes it just different.

Ryan Anthony 8:59
Yeah.

TS Participant 10 9:01
So yeah.

Ryan Anthony 9:03
Because in my experience, they start taking you more seriously.
They start expecting you to ask for more and more, yeah.

TS Participant 10 9:09
They start respecting you, they start respecting your word.

Ryan Anthony 9:19
Correct.

TS Participant 10 9:21
And I would say that this applies to everybody, because when you are climbing up the ladder, everybody sitting on top will never even look at you.

Ryan Anthony 9:25
Right.
Yeah, especially if you don't have a personal brand and like you don't have something to show.
It's like nobody's going to take you seriously in that situation, right?

TS Participant 10 9:40
Yes.

Ryan Anthony 9:57
Yeah.
So, I would like to take you back in time.
You mentioned how tough it was in the beginning when you were starting the person branding journey.
What were the initial steps that you took to establish a person parameter?

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TS Participant 10 10:33
Well, it was a very confusing phase. I've released a lot of music on Spotify and the data is different, Instagram data is different now over here today, we all have we luckily have access to that data.
What happens is that in the initial stages is that your goals are smaller, your vision is smaller and you feel the smallest of achievements and you feel a lot of happiness, you know.

Ryan Anthony 11:22
Yeah.

TS Participant 10 11:23
And that really kind of puts a full stop over your progress.

Ryan Anthony 11:31
OK.

TS Participant 10 11:34
When I started it, instead of going out and looking for options that give me a higher vision and a better horizon to look at because I was not clouded by somebody else's opinion, I had my own opinion over what I controlled.

Ryan Anthony 11:43
OK.
Yeah.

TS Participant 10 11:52
So that really helped me because I knew my potential.
I knew where I can do what. That definitely gave me that jump start to, you know, have a bigger vision and move ahead.

Ryan Anthony 12:23
Well, uh talking about personal branding.
What digital platforms do you use?
Or do you find like it's the most effective for a musician and a music producer like yourself?

TS Participant 10 12:35
This is quite a debate today because it's a big battle between those influences.

Ryan Anthony 12:39
Yeah.

TS Participant 10 12:43
And at the same time, there are artists who do different kind of work like we musicians.
We do not want to like, you know, come up on screen, do something stupid to become viral, and people are doing that nowadays.

Ryan Anthony 12:57
Yeah, it's about the reputation as well, right? Yeah.

TS Participant 10 12:59
Yeah.
Yeah, that that's not what I follow.
So talking about platforms, Instagram is definitely not my go to.
Moreover, the first platform I really love is Apple Music.
Then comes Spotify, and then I would prefer YouTube.

Ryan Anthony 13:44
OK, OK.


TS Participant 10 13:45


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Because that is right now the standard algorithm for musicians to be successful. If you can hit the charts on Apple music, you are good to go everywhere else.

 **Ryan Anthony** 13:53
Yeah.


And also on these platforms like Spotify and Apple Music, you don't have to do cringe dance videos and stuff like that.


 **Participant 10** 14:01
No, you need to make the right music.

 **Ryan Anthony** 14:02
It's all about your work and your quality.


 **Participant 10** 14:07
You just need to make sure that people are liking it.

 **Ryan Anthony** 14:10
Yeah.

 **Participant 10** 14:28
So it's all about music at the end of the day.


 **Ryan Anthony** 14:30
So you mentioned YouTube, Spotify and Apple Music.
Have you find it challenging or do you like how do you maintain consistency across these platforms?

 **Participant 10** 14:36
Yes.


 **Ryan Anthony** 14:41
Because they are fundamentally different platforms, right?
Spotify is about more music and audio, and YouTube includes video as well.
So does your strategy to change in terms of being consistent across these platforms?


 **Participant 10** 14:56
The strategies are different for all the three platforms because if you see these three platforms, they work differently.


 **Ryan Anthony** 14:59
OK.


 **Participant 10** 15:03
You do have a very different audience.
Spotify has a very different audience and Apple music has a very different.


 **Ryan Anthony** 15:07
I completely agree.

 **Participant 10** 15:09
Yeah.
So you have to cater to those platforms according to what audience you are trying to serve and what do they have with them.


 **Ryan Anthony** 15:17
Beautiful.


 **Participant 10** 15:18
You have to work around.


 **Ryan Anthony** 15:21
So would you say that maintaining consistency and remaining the same on all the platforms is a disadvantage in a sense?


 **Participant 10** 16:34
You just cannot try to mix everything up and you know it's just not going to work out.

(6)


 **Ryan Anthony** 16:40
Yeah.
Can you share some strategies that have significantly contributed to your personal brand like in terms of maybe you have some strategy about posting small titbits of your music that you're working on, some behind the scenes?
Or maybe you try out your music in small bars before going out and to pick concerts like can you name some strategies as a musician that you might use for personal brand?


 **Participant 10** 17:09
So the first thing is that mostly you have to be relevant.
I believe that relevance is the answer to everything there.

 **Ryan Anthony** 17:41
OK.
So like the strategy would be to stay relevant.

 **Participant 10** 17:50
There are a lot of artists who will say that, no, I want to be stuck to how I do things like probably your methods are getting older, are already old and it's not so relevant with the current generation of people.


 **Ryan Anthony** 18:13
Yeah.


 **Participant 10** 18:16
You have to evolve with it.


 **Ryan Anthony** 18:18
Just evolving with the culture.

 **Participant 10** 18:22


There is no other alternative.
You have to move.


 **Ryan Anthony** 18:24
Yeah.
And since we're on strategies, is there any storytelling techniques or strategies that you implement in your personal branding?

 **Participant 10** 18:33
Yes, definitely. I mean, talking about being relevant, you can either create stories which are relevant or it can be stories which is inspired by you.
So stories are something which can be anything and everything, but talking about being relevant, you really need to be focused on what is being liked by people when it comes to music, you know, statistically talking, you have to focus on what people are liking and you have to be in that zone.

 **Ryan Anthony** 18:55
Yeah.
What were the challenges that you have faced as you building and managing your personal brand?
One of the things challenge you mentioned was that when I outsource my Instagram or Facebook, that's really annoying because you get control, lose control.

 **Participant 10** 19:25
Yeah.

 **Ryan Anthony** 19:26
What are some other challenges that you might have faced during the process?

 **Participant 10** 19:30
Like the biggest challenges is to like reach out to people.

 **Ryan Anthony** 19:35

(7)

Yeah, distribution.

TS Participant 10 19:42
I mean, there are two ways to look at it here for me, because one is either looking at it musically, being produced and released, or it's me performing.

Ryan Anthony 19:42
Yeah.

TS Participant 10 19:52
So these are two different tangents here.

Ryan Anthony 19:54
Yeah, yeah.

TS Participant 10 19:55
I just wanted to understand the question better.

Ryan Anthony 19:59
So I would like to focus on the challenge like which part of it was more challenging or what was the challenge that you overcome; you know while building it?

TS Participant 10 20:09
Thanks.
So, uh, talking about challenges when I'm probably releasing some music like nowadays it is like a law for every artist to, you know, start the promotions 3 weeks, one month earlier. You start creating a hype for it.

Ryan Anthony 20:23
Oh.

TS Participant 10 20:24
It's all about creating a hype at the end of the day, right?
You create a good hype and then you release it so that you get a good reach.

Ryan Anthony 20:27
Yeah.

TS Participant 10 20:31
And when it comes to shows as well, it's the same thing.

Ryan Anthony 20:31
Correct.
Yeah.

TS Participant 10 20:59
And the problem with there is a call with personal branding and that is that you have to infuse yourself with some other parties in order to achieve the results.

Ryan Anthony 20:59
Yeah.

TS Participant 10 21:09
Otherwise it just won't work out.

Ryan Anthony 21:11
Like a teamwork or collaboration.

TS Participant 10 21:12
So yeah, that's the one.
I mean, nothing can be done alone.

Ryan Anthony 21:26
OK so.
Yeah.
And so I think the challenge as a summary would be just like creating the initial high because in the music industry, the first launch matters a lot, right?

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Because then there's some other launch that the attention shifts towards, and as long as you have the spotlight, you have to make the most of it. Right.

TS Participant 10 21:40
Yes.
Right.

Ryan Anthony 22:47
So how do you personally balance your creative impulses with the business end of things like the marketing and money?

TS Participant 10 22:59
So if you look at it two different perspectives, you're always going to be in the middle of the mix.

Ryan Anthony 23:05
Yeah.

TS Participant 10 23:05
But if try to combine both of them into being one, then it changes the entire game.

Ryan Anthony 23:11
Beautiful. OK.

TS Participant 10 23:13
So for me time is valuable.

Ryan Anthony 23:21
Yeah.

TS Participant 10 23:22
I don't want to waste my time thinking too much.
I don't want to waste my time, you know, doing all that.

It's either I put this and this together and make one idea out of it and it comes out beautifully.
Like today, I was just watching a movie called Atlas.
This is a beautiful example I'm giving, so in this movie they have shown the I would say the combination of a human brain and an AI brain infused together.
What it becomes so right now what you just ask me was basically you thinking and then your heart is telling you something is same thing.

Ryan Anthony 23:49
Yeah, yeah.

TS Participant 10 23:57
Humans are the heart, and AI is your mind.
So you need to infuse it to create a better output out of it.

Ryan Anthony 24:00
Yeah.
That is beautiful.
That is, that is such practical advice.
I love it.
OK, so.
Can you provide me some examples of how your personal brand has helped you build a loyal following?

TS Participant 10 24:36
Yes, definitely.
Because T***** being my personal brand, it gave out the right.
I would say the right vibe.

Ryan Anthony 24:48
Yeah.

TS Participant 10 24:50

(9)

And the right energy to those people out there.
So yeah.

 **Ryan Anthony** 24:55

OK so.
What advice would you give to emerging artists who are just starting up?
Like, just imagine 10 years ago.
You just starting up.
What advice would you give?

 **Participant 10** 25:07

Thinking back, dream big without any doubt.
But be practical, and just focus on your music or your art, because that is the most important, because that is what eventually is going to give you the growth.
I mean, that's the base.
I mean, many people go wrong there.
People want to become big now like this.
You know, I have the money.
I can buy equipment.
I can do that.
I can do this.
Everybody can do that, but the problem is that if you do not invest yourself into the basics, the small things which make your art then your art is not going to work out so well.

 **Ryan Anthony** 25:45

And I love how you balanced it like the Atlas thing.
You went like dream big but be practical about it.
It was like because some people are like, they're going to talk a big game and then when it comes time to pay the rent, they really have nothing to show for it. Right.

 **Participant 10** 26:00

Exactly.

 **Ryan Anthony** 26:01

So that's beautiful.
So we've spoken about the past, we have spoken about the present strategies.
How do you feel like in the future the personal branding is going to evolve, maybe with the coming of AI chat, GBT, all these new technologies, how do you think your strategies are going to change accordingly?

 **Participant 10** 26:42

It has already changed for me
I'm heavily using all the things and all the software.

 **Ryan Anthony** 26:49

Yeah.

 **Participant 10** 26:52

So yeah, I mean it.
It's definitely a big influence.
Been talking about personal branding when you start with a personal brand, you start with a vision and getting that vision accomplished is your ultimate goal.
So once that has been achieved, then you are in a different league.
So I would say that in the near future, once that is accomplished, for me it will be great, yeah.

 **Ryan Anthony** 27:15

OK, perfect.

 **Ryan Anthony** stopped transcription