

# Defining personal brand, personal branding and personal brand equity

Péter Szántó <sup>1\*</sup>  and László Radácsi <sup>2</sup> 

1 Budapest Business School. Budapest, Hungary

2 Freelancer. Budapest, Hungary

\* Correspondence: [szanto.peter@uni-bge.hu](mailto:szanto.peter@uni-bge.hu)

**Abstract:** This study examines the concept of personal brand equity (PBE) and the relationship between the constructs of personal brand (pb) and Personal Branding (PB). This article provides insight into the concept of PBE. The definition of the three main constructs and the corresponding key variables are reviewed based on the existing literature. The study defines the construct of Personal Brand Equity as the value added to an individual's reputation by their personal branding efforts. The systematic literature review is based on the keywords of "Personal Branding" AND "personal brand" AND "personal brand equity". This article proposes a framework for measuring PBE. The findings suggest that there are six groups of attributes that can best be measured using a Likert scale to estimate how strong one's personal brand is and what value it represents. This study contributes to understanding PBE, pb, and PB from a theoretical perspective and to interpreting the findings as a process with identified inputs and outputs. It is necessary to conduct further empirical testing to assess the reliability and validity of PBE before any conclusions can be drawn about the model's effectiveness.

**Keywords:** personal branding; personal brand; employer branding

## 1. Introduction

The topic of branding has received significant attention in management literature. Despite the growing interest in personal branding over the last two decades, scientific research in this field remains limited and the construct's definitions require further clarification. Currently, personal branding seems to be situated at the intersection of multiple disciplines (Lair et al., 2005), although its exact position remains to be determined.

It is important to consider the shift in responsibility from organizations to individuals, as this should be identified as the key driver of change (Arthur & Rousseau, 1996). Given the changing nature of work and social interactions, these dynamics are largely influenced by the impact of technological progress, since personal brands are becoming increasingly relevant in the digital age (Gioia et al., 2014).

Few studies have been conducted on PBE, and most of these focus on specific areas such as occupations or age groups (Bendisich et al., 2013; Gorbатов et al., 2021; Fetscherin, 2015; Dumont & Ots, 2020; Lobpries et al., 2018; Ottovordemgentschenfelde, 2017; Vallas & Christin, 2018). Therefore, there is insufficient standardized and empirical research that can in general to any given demographic group. As a starting point, a reconceptualization of the definition is required to measure PBE in a standardized way.

Consequently, it is fair to note that there is no accepted understanding of the definition of PBE (Bendisich et al., 2013; Bridgen, 2011; Ottovordemgentschenfelde, 2017; Parmentier et al., 2013; Tarnovskaya, 2017). This appears to be the main obstacle to empirical research. A recognized definition is not only needed, but as a criterion an appropriate definition should be applicable to general use. Still, the definition of PBE by Bendisich et al. (2013, p. 606) focused on the CEO's personal brand: "the aggregation of all attitudes and behavior patterns of the brand's stakeholders". This definition does not take into account how to distinguish PBE from other constructs. This needs to be addressed in order to use the PBE definition to measure someone's value (Suddaby, 2010).

### Citation:

Szántó, P., & Radácsi, L. (2023). Defining personal brand, personal branding and personal brand equity. *Prosperitas*, 10(3), 2. Budapest Business School.  
[https://doi.org/10.31570/prosp\\_2022\\_0043](https://doi.org/10.31570/prosp_2022_0043)

### History:

Received: 9 Dec 2022  
Revised: 9 Apr 2023  
Accepted: 15 Apr 2023  
Published: 30 May 2023



### Copyright:

© 2023 by the authors. Submitted for possible open access publication under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY-NC) license.

This article highlights the importance of identifying an appropriate conceptual framework. In order to do this, the current definitions of pb, PB, and PBE should be clarified since no widely accepted definition in the literature exists (Gorbatov et al., 2018). Based on the above, this paper proposes a new definition that can overcome existing limitations and can be applied in various contexts. To this end, the following main research question is proposed:

*RQ: What is Personal Branding?*

## 2. Methodology

The aim of the literature review is to systematically and comprehensively examine existing studies and theoretical frameworks related to the topic. Searches were carried out in several databases including Scopus, EBSCO, and Web of Science using the keywords “Personal Branding” and “personal brand”. Further articles were also identified by examining the references of the selected articles, producing a total of 116 documents. After the deletion of irrelevant, outdated, or non-scientific articles, the list was narrowed down to 42 articles that focused specifically on the definition and origins of personal branding. With the addition of articles from references, the final list includes 48 articles.

It is true to say that the study of this field is in its early stages. The objective and methodology of this paper is therefore to advance the existing theories by conducting multiple case studies, which is considered to be a highly effective approach for theory development (Eisenhardt, 1991; Perry, 1998).

Due to limited research in this field, this study focuses on the development of theory rather than on empirical testing. To achieve this objective, this study uses a multi-case study methodology that is appropriate for theory development and provides a comprehensive understanding of a given construct (Eisenhardt, 1991; Perry, 1998).

The literature review was carried out in four stages (see Figure 1):

1. In the first stage of the collection, keywords were used to find relevant articles. Below is a keyword search for the Personal Branding construct as an example. Other constructs were investigated using the same steps:
  - “Personal Branding”;
  - “Personal Branding” and “Business Development”;
  - “Personal Branding” and “Success”;
  - “Personal Branding” and “Employer Branding”;
  - “Personal Branding” and “measures”/“constructs”/“scales”;
  - “Personal Branding” and “Brand Equity”.
2. The first stage of the collection produced a total number of 218 articles. In the second stage, additional exclusion criteria were added: working papers, non-peer-reviewed articles, conference papers and duplicates were removed, leading to a reduction in the number of articles: 158.
3. As an intermediate step, in the third stage, the abstracts and references were analysed for several purposes: 1) to identify the relevant articles on the subject of this literature review, limiting the number of articles to 65; and 2) to find cross-references and add them to the list, which led to 71 precisely selected articles.
4. In the last, i.e., fourth, stage, after thorough reading of the articles, a detailed content analysis was carried out: finally, 72 articles were shortlisted for this literature review. The selection provided a sufficient map of the interrelationships between the constructs of the topic as well as served for defining and grouping Personal Branding as a phenomenon.

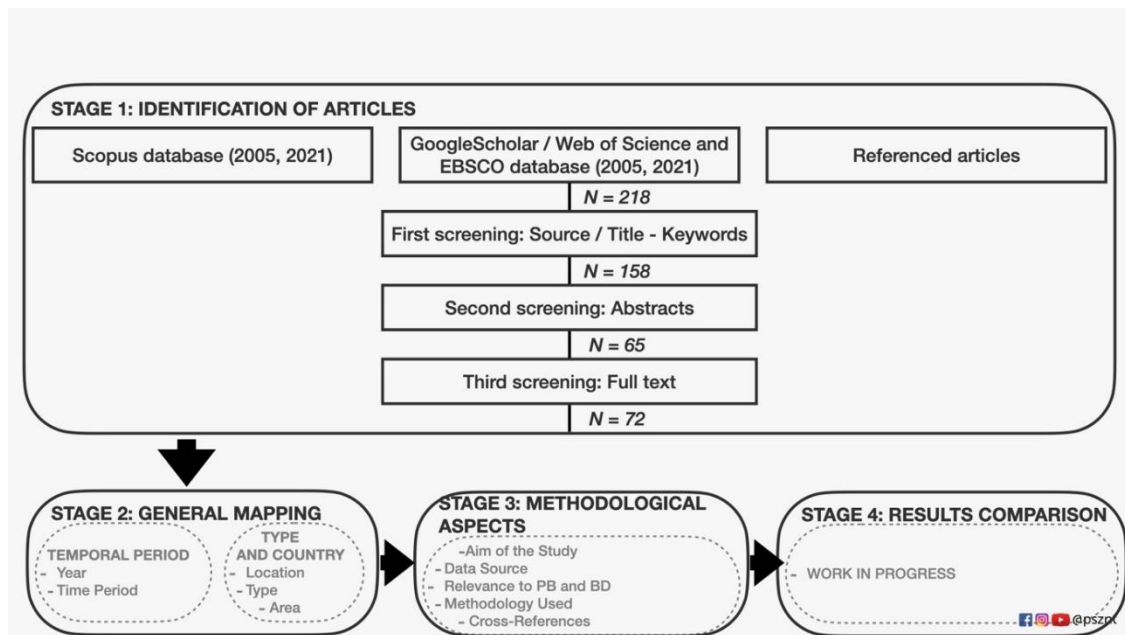


Figure 1. Identification of articles. Source: own work

### 3. Literature review

A well-established research field in marketing literature focuses on Personal Branding and product brand equity. Brand equity is understood as a result of positioning a product (and its associated brand) on the market, reflecting both the efforts of the brand owner and consumer perceptions (Aaker, 1991; Keller, 1993).

In the field of product marketing, the brand equity construct can be viewed from two perspectives: from financial and consumer aspects. The financial perspective refers to the value of a brand from a financial equity standpoint (Simon & Sullivan, 1993). The consumer perspective, on the other hand, concerns how a brand is perceived by consumers as unique, memorable, or strong (Keller, 1993; Keller & Lehmann, 2006). This consumer-based brand equity is based on subjective and non-tangible attributes that contribute to the appeal of a brand. The product itself should be considered separately from these external and consumer-rated factors.

Other important constructs of self-presentation include reputation, status, image, fame, celebrity, pedigree, legitimacy, credibility, branding, and impression management (Goffman, 1956; Zinko & Rubin, 2015). Gorbatov et al. (2021) examined the relationship between PBE (personal brand equity) and career achievement aspiration and developed hypotheses about the positive relationship between the two. However, as this relationship has not yet been tested, it may be worth conducting control studies using the same methodology.

Gorbatov et al. (2021) proposed that PBE (personal brand equity) is a career construct that influences various indicators of career success. This study tests this hypothesis in both the context of career and entrepreneurial development, examining the relationship between PBE as a career construct and its impact on business development success indicators. The study will follow Gorbatov et al.'s (2021) methodology to determine the validity of the proposed relationship.

It is important to have a clear understanding of self-presentation constructs because they can influence career success. Arthur et al. (2005) define career success as the "achievement of desirable work-related outcomes at any point in a person's work experiences over time" (p. 179). In addition, understanding the strengths and weaknesses of a person can help to clarify his or her professional identity (Ibarra, 1999). The individual's self-confidence can also be a motivator for task execution and is based on their ability to effectively use resources (Luthans et al., 2007).

Another important construct to be considered is employability, which is defined as "work-specific active adaptability that enables workers to identify and realize career opportunities" (Fugate, et al., 2004, p. 16). Its components (personal adaptability, career

identity, and social and human capital) have been the subject of empirical research and are also relevant to PBE. Gorbатов et al. (2021) argued that Personal Branding can increase employability by making individuals more adaptable. Strong career identity is also important to build a personal brand as it helps to identify, clarify, and communicate a professional identity (Brooks & Anumudu, 2016; Cederberg, 2017). Combining self-promotion with a strong personal brand can help individuals achieve career goals such as securing new jobs (Hazer & Jacobson, 2003). One way to measure employability is to assess how others perceive employees (Bolino & Turnley, 1999). These elements can be measured by other-rated quantitative methods such as the analysis of an individual's social media profiles. On the basis of the literature review and empirical research, it is fair to conclude that human and cultural capital has a positive impact on PBE.

Measurable factors such as salaries, incomes, and their progress (both at the individual and organizational levels) can be key indicators of PBE value (personal brand equity). According to the previous hypothesis, the accumulation of knowledge, skills, experience, resources and social networks has direct impact on the status and income of individuals. These resources are clear indicators of revenue, whether it is the income of an individual or the revenue of an organization generated by its employees' work (Ng et. al, 2005; Wolff & Moser, 2009). The performance of an organization is also closely linked to the performance of the individuals' job performance. Thus, it is important to define this construct. Job performance should be evaluated both at the task level performance, using the individual's skills and competencies, and at the context level taking into account the relationships within an organization and how the objectives are aligned (Borman & Motowidlo, 1993). One challenge is the generalization of this construct due to the differences between jobs, economies, and societies. Therefore, the variables used may vary depending on the fields and industries (Koopmans et al., 2011). During the qualitative semi-structured interview phase, testimonials should be identified in order to overcome the difficulty of determining relevant indicators. PBE is related to the above-mentioned constructs, but also takes into account external and self-directed actions. Therefore, in order to measure external factors, some form of objective metric is needed. On this basis, economic capital and PBE are proposed to have positive correlation.

### **3.1. Understanding the constructs and definitions: Personal Brand, Personal Branding, and Personal Brand Equity**

This section aims to discuss the main constructs of the study and to explore the dimensions of each construct through a literature review. To do so, it is first necessary to determine the clarity of the construct and its position in relation to the related concepts (Gorbатов et al., 2018). This is important for defining Personal Branding as an independent construct.

Personal branding (Shepherd, 2005), also known as self-branding (Gandini, 2016), refers to the process of positioning oneself for success (Parmentier et al., 2013). To understand the construct of Personal Branding, Gorbатов et al. (2018) conducted a literature review, analysed the definitions and related concepts, synthesized the key attributes of personal branding, and defined both personal branding and a personal brand.

The definitions of the construct are diverse and heterogeneous. Marketing approaches link it to product branding, while psychological and sociological approaches focus on how others interpret individuals. Although there is no widely accepted definition of personal branding, it is understood as a process in which people market themselves (Khedher, 2015). The lack of a standardized definition impedes the development of a metric system for measuring personal branding.

The concepts reviewed involve the management of the perception of others by an individual. Zinko and Rubin (2015) identified reputation, status, image, frame, celebrity, pedigree, legitimacy, credibility, branding, and impression management as key concepts in this field. Gorbатов et al. (2018) also identified several commonly used concepts based on a review of more than 100 publications:

- Human branding is a subfield of the broader marketing discipline focusing on individuals and their role in inter-organizational communication (Thomson, 2006).

- Impression management refers to the process of controlling how others perceive individuals (Kowalski & Leary, 1990).
- Self-promotion in the literature is sometimes associated with Personal Branding, but it differs in that it emphasizes positive outcomes rather than a holistic representation of an individual, including both positive and negative aspects.
- Image is often used in a professional context (Roberts, 2005), while Personal Branding encompasses the entire life of an individual.
- Reputation is oftentimes mentioned in relation to Personal Branding, but it is a more specific concept that lacks a clear and universally accepted definition. It is related to Personal Branding, but it has a narrower focus (Zinko & Rubin, 2015).
- Employee Branding is a clear link between Personal Branding and an organization. Miles and Mangold (2004) defined employee branding as "the process by which employees internalize the desired brand image and are motivated to project the image to customers and other organizational constituents" (p. 68). A more in-depth study of this definition can provide an insight into the role of Personal Branding in the success of an organization.

### **3.2. Applying brand equity practices to Personal Brand Equity**

Keller (1993) identified three dimensions of brand equity: consumer responses to marketing, differential effects, and brand knowledge. Gorbatov et al. (2021) adapted Keller's approach to the context of Personal Branding and re-conceptualized PBE, renaming the dimensions accordingly.

The first dimension is a consumer's response to marketing, which refers to their perceptions and behaviour towards a brand, including how attractive or appealing the brand is. Gorbatov et al. (2021) renamed this dimension "brand appeal". From a marketing point of view, the aim is to generate a positive response from consumers, while at the individual level, the focus is on attributes and attitudes (Aaker, 1991). Increasing PBE (personal brand equity) requires meeting the needs and preferences of a target audience, such as employers, business partners or other relationships. This involves developing personal brand appeal, which can be influenced by such characteristics and features as friendliness (Pagis & Ailon, 2017), networking and focus on audience needs (Hedman, 2020). A positive outcome occurs when the needs and preferences of the target audience are in line with the characteristics and features of an individual.

The second dimension is the differential effect, which refers to the extent to which a product stands out from other products. In the context of Personal Branding, this translates into the value of an individual's contribution compared to others. Gorbatov et al. (2021) renamed this dimension "brand differentiation" and associated it with superior advantages in one's work. It is arguable whether brand differentiation should only focus on superiority, since it only shows the relative difference from others on an ordinary scale. An absolute scale is more adequate to fully grasp this concept. According to Evans (2017), PBE (personal brand equity) can be influenced by the degree of differentiation of such benefits. In marketing, the differential effect can be measured by comparing the reactions of customers to a branded product with an unbranded version (Keller, 1993). In the context of Personal Branding, an appropriate way to measure differentiation might be to assess the role of an individual's reputation in securing a job. Measurement could include factors like being invited to participate in a project or obtaining investment or promotion into account. This could be achieved through self-reported surveys and external evidence, such as the salary or the LinkedIn profile of an individual in relation to the years of their work experience. McCorkle and McCorkle (2012) found that creating a basic LinkedIn account is a form of Personal Branding, and that this platform could also serve as a control variable.

The final dimension is brand knowledge, which refers to a stored perception associated to a brand. In marketing, recognition refers to the ease with which target audiences can remember a brand (Keller, 1993). Gorbatov et al. (2021) renamed this dimension "brand recognition", which refers to an individual's reputation and how others perceive their work ethic and performance. Higher reputation is associated with better performance ratings (Hochwarter et al., 2007). In addition, individuals tend to have an accurate perception of their own social status (Anderson et al., 2006). In the context of PBE (personal brand equity),

Gorbatov et al. (2021) suggested that self-reports can accurately measure an individual's perception of the value of their personal brand. It is also important to take into account both self-rated and other-rated performance indicators. The first reflects the individual's own perception of their potential, while the second is based on the perception of others. Performance should not be evaluated only on the basis of financial indicators, but also on the basis of meeting performance expectations of others (Hogan & Shelton, 1998).

Based on the frameworks of marketing and career literature, Keller's (1993) dimensions are similar in approach and meaning to Arthur and Rousseau's (1996) competency-based view, which supports the existence of PBE (personal brand equity) as a construct. Gorbatov et al. (2021) defines PBE as "an individual's perception of the value of one's personal brand derived from its appeal, differentiation, and recognition in a given professional field". These three dimensions – brand appeal (features and characteristics), brand differentiation (professional benefits), and brand recognition (outreach and awareness) – should be balanced and should contribute to the overall value of personal brand equity.

To clarify the relationship between the different constructs, this study introduces a criteria matrix to understand how value is created. The matrix is two-dimensional, with two axes: one for uniqueness and another for competitiveness. Uniqueness refers to the importance of distinguishing oneself from mass production, where individual inputs are less relevant. Competitiveness refers to the relationship between competition and ambition in the context of the entrepreneurial journey.

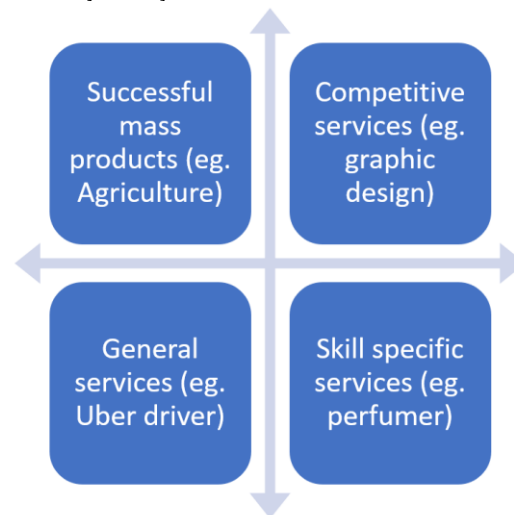


Figure 2. Criteria matrix of values. *Source: own work*

## 4. Results

This section defines personal brand, Personal Branding, Personal Brand Equity, and the relationships between the constructs identified.

To define the relationship between personal branding and other concepts clearly, it is necessary to define the key attributes that can serve as a standardized model for future research. Gorbatov et al. (2018) proposed five first-level attributes of personal branding: strategic, positive, promise, person-centric, and artefactual. This literature review focuses on four of these attributes and contributes to the understanding of personal branding.

- The **strategic** definition of Personal Branding predicts specific outcomes for specific audiences but may overlook other aspects. Bolino and Turnley (1999) point out that not all impression management is strategic and intentional, and can also be unconscious.
- The **positive** definition of Personal Branding is widely accepted in the literature and is understood as a favourable impression. However, there are cases where Personal Branding has different outcomes, which suggests that differentiation may be a more appropriate characteristic. In this context, it is worth introducing the subconstructs of insufficient branding and misdirected branding.

- The **promise** of Personal Branding is derived from marketing and signifies a promise to a specific target audience. The promise of PB is distinguished by a higher level of quality and is more favourably accepted by the target audience. This aspect falls under both human and employee branding (Thomson, 2006) as it involves transferring promises, and is relevant for further research on organizational success metrics.
- The **person-centric** interpretation of Personal Branding is a second-level agency attribute. Its significance derives from the involvement of the individual, a criterion that is missing from human and employee branding.

On the basis of the definitions of Personal Branding found in the reviewed literature, Personal Branding can be classified as a process, product, or a combination of both. Many studies agree with Suddaby's (2010) definition of personal branding:

*"Personal branding is a strategic process of creating, positioning, and maintaining a positive impression of oneself, based on a unique combination of individual characteristics, which signal a certain promise to the target audience through a differentiated narrative and imagery".*

Furthermore, Personal Branding implies involvement in building and maintaining a clear and consistent image or reputation aligning with one's career goals and values:

*"The process by which individuals and entrepreneurs differentiate themselves and stand out from a crowd by identifying and communicating their unique value propositions".*

Gorbatov et al. (2018) expanded upon the definition of Personal Branding by incorporating the work of Ottovordemgentschenfelde (2017):

*"A personal brand is a set of characteristics of an individual (attributes, values, beliefs, etc.) rendered into the differentiated narrative and imagery with the intent of establishing a competitive advantage in the minds of the target audience".*

In response to the Research Question, these definitions raise questions about certain aspects of Personal Branding, such as the requirement for it to be strategic, positive, differentiated, and aimed to achieve competitive advantages. By omitting these attributes, a standard definition can be formulated:

*"Personal Branding is a process of positioning the impression of an individual's characteristics, resulting in establishing certain outcomes for any chosen target audience".*

As opposed to this definition, this study differentiates Personal Branding as an effort and personal brand as an outcome. The latter – personal brand – should be considered as an outcome of positioning the impression of an individual's characteristics, which results in certain outcomes for any chosen target audience. At the same time, Personal Branding should be considered as a strategic **process of the efforts** of positioning impressions of an individual's characteristics, which will lead to establishing the **desired** outcomes for any chosen target audience.

In addition, Personal Brand Equity is also necessary to be defined. Bendisch et al. (2013, p. 606) provided the most widely accepted and cited definition of PBE (personal brand equity): "the aggregation of the attitudes and behaviour patterns of the brand's stakeholders." However, this definition is limited in its focus on the CEO's personal brand. This study proposes the following definition:

*"Personal Brand Equity is the value aggregated from all self- and external attitudes and behaviours directly related to the achievement of an individual's – and indirectly to an organization's – reputation as a result of their personal branding efforts". In short: PBE is the added value to an individual's reputation as a result of their personal branding efforts.*

In detail, personal brand equity as a construct refers to the value associated with an individual's personal brand from the perspective of their target audience. This value is determined by the perceived quality, uniqueness, and credibility of the individual's personal brand (Aaker, 1991). According to Fombrun and Van Riel (2004), personal brand equity is composed of three dimensions: reputation, distinction, and marketability. Reputation refers to the perceived quality and reliability of the individual's personal brand. Distinction refers to the perception of the uniqueness of the individual's personal brand. Marketability refers to the perceived ability of the individual's personal brand to attract new opportunities.

Building and managing personal brand equity is a process that requires ongoing efforts and strategic planning (Lamb et al., 2018). This statement is in line with the proposed definition

of Personal Branding. In order to build personal brand equity, individuals should focus on consistently communicating and demonstrating their values, skills, and achievements to their target audiences (Kotler & Keller, 2016). This can be done through various channels, such as social media, networking events, public speaking, and guest writing (Fombrun & Van Riel, 2004). To effectively manage personal brand equity, individuals should monitor and measure the impact of their personal branding efforts on their target audience (Aaker, 1991). This can be done by a variety of means, such as surveys, focus groups, and online analytics (Lamb et al., 2018).

Overall, personal brand equity is an essential factor in building and maintaining a successful career, which is why this research niche is not only relevant for academic research but also provides benefits in the real-world. By understanding the value of their personal brand and by consistently communicating and demonstrating their unique value proposition to their target audience, individuals can effectively build and manage their personal brand equity over time.

### 5. Discussion

Further research is needed to fully understand the relationship between personal brand equity (PBE) and individual performance. In order to fully understand the nature and extent of this relationship, a deeper examination is needed. This could include examining the specific characteristics and behaviour contributing to the development of a strong personal brand, as well as the examination of external factors that may influence the perceived value of an individual's personal brand. Raftari and Amiri (2014) also suggest that external factors such as industry and networking opportunities can affect the perceived value of individuals' personal brand. Although it is clear that building and managing PBE can have a positive impact on the career and professional development of individuals, the exact nature of this relationship requires further investigation. This is an important area of research as it has potential implications for professionals wishing to advance their career and for organizations wishing to identify and develop top talents.

An exploration of the context and dependencies of the three frameworks introduced can be valuable. To this end, Gorbатов et al.'s (2021) three dimensions – brand recognition, differentiation, and appeal – are aligned with the self-presentation constructs researched by Zinko and Rubin (2015) including reputation, status, image, fame, celebrity, pedigree, legitimacy, credibility, branding, and impression management.

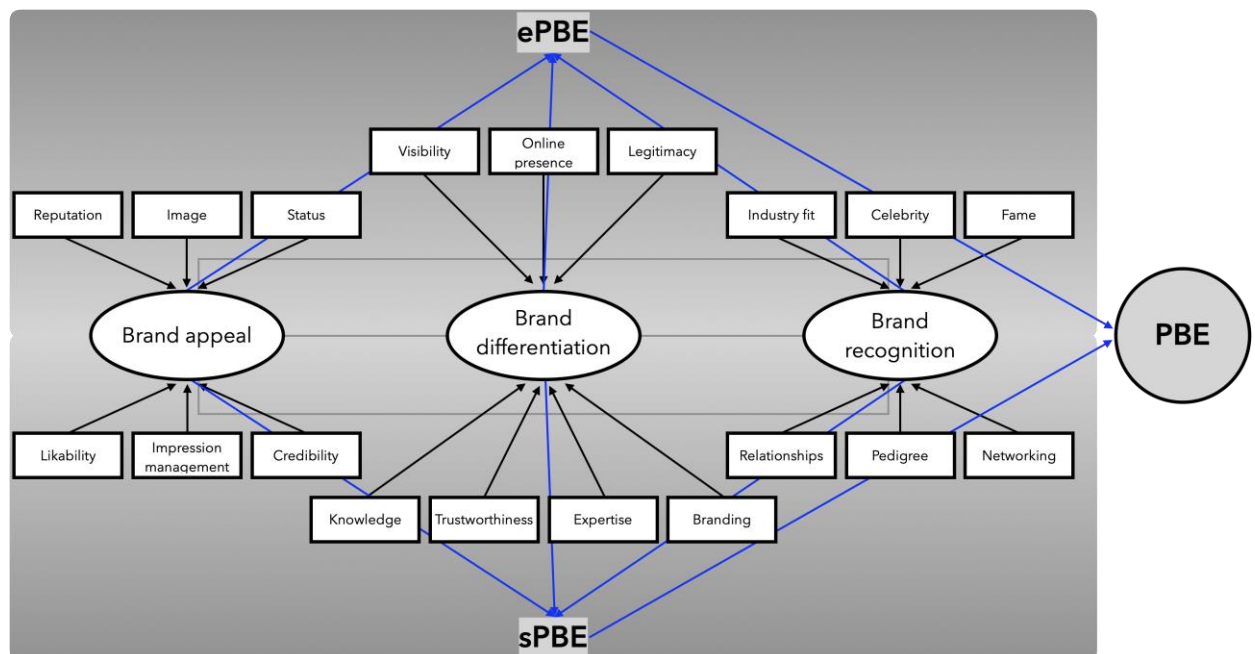


Figure 3. Research framework. Source: own work



Furthermore, this classification may be relevant for further combination with personality based on socio-analytic theory, which presents two perspectives: the perspective of the actor and the perspective of the observer (Hogan & Shelton, 1998).

This section introduces a framework that establishes connections and dependencies between the three dimensions of brand equity: brand appeal, brand differentiation, and brand recognition. For each dimension, measurable variables were identified, and aligned with the proposed questionnaire questions and with the Personal Brand Equity Scale (PBES). These variables were further divided into two groups: external Personal Brand Equity (ePBE) and self Personal Brand Equity (sPBE). ePBE and sPBE provide the whole concept of Personal Brand Equity (PBE). The framework and its variables are visualized in Figure 3. The aim of understanding the relationship and influence between these dimensions and variables is to deepen our understanding of the complex processes of Personal Branding and its value.

The variables in the PBE framework are interdependent and contribute to the result. The framework is divided into two categories: ePBE based on external data, and sPBE based on self-reporting. The result not only provides the value of PBE but could also indicate a deeper understanding of which areas it is worthwhile to work on and what results an individual or organization can expect. On the other hand, it could also show that it is not worth maximizing a particular area of a given variable, since after a point of inflection, the amount of work invested does not yield such a result. For example, n+1 Forbes appearances do not provide as much value as a new speaking opportunity at a conference.

## 6. Conclusions

The results both supported and complemented the definition of personal brand, Personal Branding, and Personal Brand Equity. Thus, Personal Branding should be viewed as a process of positioning the impression of an individual's characteristics in order to achieve the desired outcomes for a chosen target audience. Furthermore, the concept of Personal Brand Equity, the value added to an individual's reputation as a result of their personal branding efforts, was also defined and explored in this study. As for future research and practical use, empirical tests should continue to explore the links between Personal Branding, Personal Brand Equity, and their impact on individuals and organizations.

In the next phase of this research, it will be important to identify a mediating variable by way of conducting additional tests. A potential route to explore further developments could be the influence of online presence on the success of Personal Branding. In addition, future research should consider the potential impact of competitive advantages, such as family background and access to resources on Personal Branding efforts. In particular, the role of financial resources should be studied in order to better understand the effectiveness of Personal Branding efforts under different resource constraints.

In order to fully assess the proposed framework, an inductive approach is recommended, especially with respect to conducting empirical testing regarding practical applications and assessing the reliability and validity of the framework. If necessary, the proposed framework may be modified on the basis of such future findings.

The proposed framework was developed through a comprehensive systematic literature review including both theoretical foundations and previous empirical studies. As a result, the 19 initial attributes were categorized into a 6-item scale that fits into three groups that together provide the Personal Brand Equity. It is important to note that all items that describe a person's attributes can be measured on a Likert scale. Measurements using this approach can provide an estimation of the strength of a personal brand and the value it represents.

The proposed six-item scale – of the 19 categorized attributes – for measuring Personal Brand Equity was developed through conducting a systematic literature review. This scale consists of three groups of attributes that can be measured on a Likert scale and can be used for future empirical research to estimate the strength and value of an individual's personal brand. All the items describing a person's attributes can be measured using this method.

This multifaceted attribute system is hypothesized to take into account both strengths and weaknesses. For measuring PBE, empirical testing is necessary in order to determine the suitability of the framework and its attributes. To this end, a proposed questionnaire is needed.

The questionnaire should go through testing, where the result of the data analysis will have to provide an insight into how each attribute interacts with one another, reveal dependencies, as well as assess reliability and validity.

In conclusion, it can be stated that every individual has a personal brand, whether or not they are aware of it. Personal Branding, however, is a conscious and strategic effort that involves a series of actions and processes. Therefore, even if everyone has a personal brand, personal branding is an active and purposeful activity.

**Funding:** This research received no external funding.

**Conflicts of Interest:** The authors declare no conflict of interest.

## References

- Aaker, D. A. (1991). *Managing brand equity: Capitalizing on the value of a brand name*. Free Press.
- Anderson, C., Srivastava, S., Beer, J. S., Spataro, S. E., & Chatman, J. A. (2006). Knowing your place: Self-perceptions of status in face-to-face groups. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 91(6), 1094–1110. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.91.6.1094>
- Arthur, M. B., & Rousseau, D. M. (1996). *The Boundaryless Career*. Oxford University Press.
- Arthur, M. B., Khapova, S. N., & Wilderom, C. P. M. (2005). Career success in a boundaryless career world. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 26(2), 177–202. <https://doi.org/10.1002/job.290>
- Bendisch, F., Larsen, G., & Trueman, M. (2013). Fame and fortune: A conceptual model of CEO brands. *European Journal of Marketing*, 47(3/4), 596–614. <https://doi.org/10.1108/03090561311297472>
- Bolino, M. C., & Turnley, W. H. (1999). Measuring impression management in organizations: A scale development based on the Jones and Pittman Taxonomy. *Organizational Research Methods*, 2(2), 187–206. <https://doi.org/10.1177/109442819922005>
- Borman, W. C., & Motowidlo, S. J. (1993). Expanding the criterion domain to include elements of contextual performance. In Schmitt, N., Borman, W. C. and Associates (Eds), *Personnel Selection in Organizations* (pp. 71-98). Jossey-Bass.
- Bridgen, L. (2011). Emotional labour and the pursuit of the personal brand: Public relations practitioners' use of social media. *Journal of Media Practice*, 12(1), 61–76. [https://doi.org/10.1386/jmpr.12.1.61\\_1](https://doi.org/10.1386/jmpr.12.1.61_1)
- Brooks, A., & Anumudu, C. (2016). Identity Development in Personal Branding Instruction: Social Narratives and Online Brand Management in a Global Economy. *Adult Learning*, 27(1), 23–29. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1045159515616968>
- Cederberg, C. D. (2017). Personal branding for psychologists: Ethically navigating an emerging vocational trend. *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*, 48(3), 183–190. <https://doi.org/10.1037/pro0000129>
- Dumont, G., & Ots, M. (2020). Social dynamics and stakeholder relationships in personal branding. *Journal of Business Research*, 106, 118–128. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2019.09.013>
- Eisenhardt, K. M. (1991). Better stories and better constructs: The case for rigor and comparative logic. *The Academy of Management Review*, 16(3), 620–627. <https://doi.org/10.2307/258921>
- Evans, J. R. (2017). A strategic approach to self-branding. *Journal of Global Scholars of Marketing Science*, 27(4), 270–311. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21639159.2017.1360146>
- Fetscherin, M. (2015). The CEO branding mix. *Journal of Business Strategy*, 36(6), 22–28. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JBS-01-2015-0004>
- Fombrun, C. J., & Van Riel, C. B. M. (2004). *Fame & fortune: How successful companies build winning reputations*. Pearson Education.
- Fugate, M., Kinicki, A. J., & Ashforth, B. E. (2004). Employability: A psycho-social construct, its dimensions, and applications. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 65(1), 14–38. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2003.10.005>
- Gandini, A. (2016). Self-branding. In *Encyclopedia of Consumer Culture* (pp. 1-3). SAGE Publications.
- Gioia, D. A., Hamilton, A. L., & Patvardhan, S. D. (2014). Image is everything: Reflections on the dominance of image in modern organizational life. *Research in Organizational Behavior*, 34, 129–154. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.riob.2014.01.001>
- Goffman, E. (1956). *The presentation of self in everyday life*. University of Edinburgh.
- Gorbатов, S., Khapova, S. N., & Lysova, E. I. (2018). Personal Branding: Interdisciplinary Systematic Review and Research Agenda. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 9, article 2238. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2018.02238>
- Gorbатов, S., Khapova, S. N., Oostrom J. K., & Lysova, E. I. (2021). Personal brand equity: Scale development and validation. *Personnel Psychology*, 74(3), 505–542. <https://doi.org/10.1111/peps.12412>
- Hazer, J. T., & Jacobson, J. R. (2003). Effects of Screener Self-Monitoring on the Relationships Among Applicant Positive Self-Presentation. *Journal of Management*, 29(1), 119–138. <https://doi.org/10.1177/014920630302900101>
- Hedman, U. (2020). Making the most of Twitter: How technological affordances influence Swedish journalists' self-branding. *Journalism*, 21(5), 670–687. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1464884917734054>
- Hochwarter, W. A., Ferris, G. R., Zinko, R., Arnell, B., & James, M. (2007). Reputation as a moderator of political behavior-work outcomes relationships: A two-study investigation with convergent results. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 92(2), 567–576. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.92.2.567>
- Hogan, R., & Shelton, D. (1998). A Socioanalytic Perspective on Job Performance. *Human Performance*, 11(2–3), 129–144. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08959285.1998.9668028>

- Ibarra, H. (1999). Provisional Selves: Experimenting with Image and Identity in Professional Adaptation. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 44(4), 764–791. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2667055>
- Keller, K. L. (1993). Conceptualizing, Measuring, and Managing Customer-Based Brand Equity. *Journal of Marketing*, 57(1), 1–22. <https://doi.org/10.1177/002224299305700101>
- Keller, K. L., & Lehmann, D. R. (2006). Brands and branding: Research findings and future priorities. *Marketing Science*, 25(6), 740–759. <https://doi.org/10.1287/mksc.1050.0153>
- Khedher, M. (2015). A brand for everyone: guidelines for personal brand managing. *The Journal of Global Issues*, 9(1), 19–27.
- Koopmans, L., Bernaards, C. M., Hildebrandt, V. H., Schaufeli, W. B., de Vet Henrica, C. W., & van der Beek, A. J. (2011). Conceptual frameworks of individual work performance: a systematic review. *Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine*, 53(8), 856–866. <https://doi.org/10.1097/JOM.0b013e318226a763>
- Kotler, P., & Keller, K. L. (2016). *Marketing management*. Pearson Education.
- Kowalski, R. M., & Leary, M. R. (1990). Strategic self-presentation and the avoidance of aversive events: Antecedents and consequences of self-enhancement and self-depreciation. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 26(4), 322–336. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0022-1031\(90\)90042-K](https://doi.org/10.1016/0022-1031(90)90042-K)
- Lamb, C. W., Hair, J. F., & McDaniel, C. (2018). *Essentials of marketing*. Cengage Learning.
- Lair, D. J., Sullivan, K., & Cheney, G. (2005). Marketization and the Recasting of the Professional Self: The Rhetoric and Ethics of Personal Branding. *Management Communication Quarterly*, 18(3), 307–343. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0893318904270744>
- Lobpries, J., Bennett, G., & Brison, N. (2018). How I Perform is Not Enough: Exploring Branding Barriers Faced by Elite Female Athletes. *Sport Marketing Quarterly*, 27(1), 5–17.
- Luthans, F., Youssef, C. M., & Avolio, B. J. (2007). Psychological capital: investing and developing positive organizational behaviour. In Nelson, D.L. and Cooper, C.L. (Eds), *Positive Organizational Behavior* (pp. 9-24). SAGE Publications.
- McCorkle, D. E., & McCorkle, Y. L. (2012). Using LinkedIn in the Marketing Classroom: Exploratory Insights and Recommendations for Teaching Social Media/Networking. *Marketing Education Review*, 22(2), 157–166. <https://doi.org/10.2753/MER1052-8008220205>
- Miles, S. J., & Mangold, G. (2004). A Conceptualization of the Employee Branding Process. *Journal of Relationship Marketing*, 3(2-3), 65–87. [https://doi.org/10.1300/J366v03n02\\_05](https://doi.org/10.1300/J366v03n02_05)
- Ng, T. W. H., Eby, L. T., Sorensen, K. L., & Feldman, D. C. (2005). Predictors of objective and subjective career success: A meta-analysis. *Personnel Psychology*, 58(2), 367–408. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1744-6570.2005.00515.x>
- Ottovordemgentschenfelde, S. (2017). 'Organizational, professional, personal': an exploratory study of political journalists and their hybrid brand on Twitter. *Journalism*, 18(1), 64–80. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1464884916657524>
- Pagis, M., & Ailon, G. (2017). The Paradoxes of Self-Branding: An Analysis of Consultants' Professional Web Pages. *Work and Occupations*, 44(3), 243–267. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0730888417709327>
- Parmentier, M.-A., Fischer, E., & Reuber, A. R. (2013). Positioning person brands in established organizational fields. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 41, 373–387. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11747-012-0309-2>
- Perry, C. (1998). Processes of a case study methodology for postgraduate research in marketing. *European Journal of Marketing*, 32(9/10), 785–3802. <https://doi.org/10.1108/03090569810232237>
- Raftari, M., & Amiri, B. (2014). An Entrepreneurial Business Model for Personal Branding: Proposing a Framework. *Journal of Entrepreneurship, Business and Economics*, 2(2), 121–139.
- Roberts, L. M. (2005). Changing Faces: Professional Image Construction In Diverse Organizational Settings. *Academy of Management Review*, 30, 685–711. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.2005.18378873>
- Shepherd, I. D. H. (2005). From Cattle and Coke to Charlie: Meeting the Challenge of Self Marketing and Personal Branding. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 21(5-6), 589–606. <https://doi.org/10.1362/0267257054307381>
- Simon, C. J., & Sullivan, M. W. (1993). The Measurement and Determinants of Brand Equity: A Financial Approach. *Marketing Science*, 12(1), 28–52. <https://doi.org/10.1287/mksc.12.1.28>
- Suddaby, R. (2010). Editor's Comments: Construct Clarity in Theories of Management and Organization. *Academy of Management Review*, 35(3), 346–357. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.35.3.zok346>
- Tarnovskaya, V. (2017). Reinventing Personal Branding Building a Personal Brand through Content on YouTube. *Journal of International Business Research and Marketing*, 3(1), 29–35. <https://doi.org/10.18775/jibrm.1849-8558.2015.31.3005>
- Thomson, M. (2006). Human Brands: Investigating Antecedents to Consumers' Strong Attachments to Celebrities. *Journal of Marketing*, 70(3), 104–119. <https://doi.org/10.1509/jmkq.70.3.104>
- Vallas, S. P., & Christin, A. (2018). Work and Identity in an Era of Precarious Employment: How Workers Respond to "Personal Branding" Discourse. *Work and Occupations*, 45(1), 3–37. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0730888417735662>
- Wolff, H.-G., & Moser, K. (2009). Effects of networking on career success: A longitudinal study. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 94(1), 196–206. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0013350>
- Zinko, R., & Rubin, M. (2015). Personal reputation and the organization. *Journal of Management & Organization*, 21(2), 217–236. <https://doi.org/10.1017/jmo.2014.76>