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**Personal Branding of Artists and Art Designers: Necessity or Desire?**

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## Personal Branding of Artists and Art Designers: Necessity or Desire?

### Abstract

**Purpose:** Personal branding becomes a new in-demand skill for all professionals today. To be well-known helps to achieve success in the networked business environment. Personal relationships and a good reputation in the reality of network economy help young artists and art designers move up the career ladder. The paper discusses a problem of artists who often find it difficult to define their artistic and self-distinction identities. The concept of personal brand and branding seems quite irrelevant, especially in reference to their own selves. People usually associate branding with marketing, which in our minds is usually the same as “pushy” and aggressive sales practices. They find problematic to market themselves. The goal of this article is to highlight that, based on existing theories, artistic identity creation in connection with the skill of personal branding are crucial for personal success in the profession of today’s young artists and art designers.

**Methodology:** The study was conducted based on the data originally collected among artists, designers, architecture professionals, and students. The data has been analyzed with the equal structural modeling method (SEM).

**Findings:** This paper presents empirical evidence that if artists view themselves as personal brands, it affects their personal performance in a positive way.

**Research limitations/implications:** Authors claim that a teaching curriculum for young adult artists should include a personal branding program, to help them find and support their artistic identity and express their personal values and self-brand distinction, and leverage them to build their professional career.

**Originality/value:** This is one of the first studies to quantify the self-brand performance of young art designers as a benefit of being self-brand oriented.

**Keywords:** artists, art designers, artistic identity, personal branding, personal brand performance, self-brand expression, self-brand distinctiveness, creativity

**Paper type** Research paper

### 1. Introduction

Artists along with professions such as scientists, engineers, managers, and lawyers represent “the creative class” (Florida, 2002; Markusen, 2006). The main feature of this group is the ability to “create meaningful new forms” and “thought leadership” of contemporary knowledge-powered and networked societies. Employment in the arts and creative industries is high and growing. As Lena and Lindemann (2014) claim, scholars have not yet achieved a consensus on who should belong in this professional category. Based on their study, the terms: artist and art designer when used in this paper carry the meaning according to definitions presented in Table 1.

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Table 1

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Lena and Lindemann (2014) examined 13581 alumni of the Strategic National Arts Project for their artistic identity. They found out that there is a large dissonance group: individuals who claimed to work in artistic professions but rejected the title of “a professional artist”. In an attempt to explain this fact, the authors suggested that “artist” is a label that is connected not only with educational credentials but also professional achievements and it is associated with entering an elite status group. “It’s worth noting that there may be a professional value derived from being an artistic worker who



does not self-define as an ‘artist’”, as Lena and Lindemann (2014) emphasize. Paraphrasing this statement: It is worth noting that there may be a professional value derived from being an artistic worker who does not brand himself as an “artist” and does not self-define any self-brand distinctions. Thus, it is worth to highlight the skill of personal branding grounded in self-discovery and self-identification is crucial for today’s young artists and art designers for their future personal success and essential for all artists as a network of professionals who possess specific, unique skills and knowledge.

Referring to fashion designers and architectural authors, Deamer (2005) claimed that “In contemporary culture, the trafficking between fame and branding is so pervasive and so complex that it is difficult to maintain a distinction.” Personal branding becomes more and more important for all professionals today. Because the new way of making business today connects peers above hierarchies, being well-known helps to achieve success in the networked business environment, called the network economy (Powell, 2003). Personal relationships and a good reputation can move young artists and art designers up the career ladder. However, young artists today seem not to accept the fact that an individual, read: an artist, can be a brand. Branding is usually associated with marketing, which in our minds is often identified with “pushy” and aggressive sales practices. The goal of this article is to prove, based on existing theories, that the skill of personal branding is crucial for today’s young art designers performance in both art and labor market if they want to be successful. The study presented in this article gives empirical evidence that an artist’s attitude to be in one’s own eyes perceived as a personal brand affects his/her personal performance in a positive way.

Artists and designers contribute to broadly defined business regardless whether or not they see themselves as business players. A lot of innovative processes have a support of professional knowledge and experience of artists and art designers. It is likely that such a state of affairs will intensify. According to Austin and Devin (2003), the economy of the future will be about learning how to create value in the changing world in an appropriate manner. The way to achieving this high value is creativity and imagination. In Austin and Devin’s opinion, no one knows more about the way to do it than artists. Adler (2006) pointed out that designing innovative options requires skills that creative artists have used for years. In her opinion, creating novel solutions for businesses requires far more than the traditional analytical and decision-making skills which most MBA programs teach. Thus, although well-established knowledge of economics and management constitute a foundation of a business success, the key to building a competitive advantage is the ability to create innovation and futuristic visions which entirely transform the existing reality. The ability to develop new solutions which create real value and the capacity to convince others to implement them make an ideal leader. What is the connection between an ideal leader and an artist? Shmulyian *et al.* (2010) compare a large organizational system to a complex orchestra creating musical performance and an organizational leader to a conductor who brings together all elements that collectively amount to a unified artistry and harmony. The same aspects come together in creating a beautiful symphony, architecture, painting or any other piece of art.

Artists have very high rates of self-employment (Markusen and Schrock, 2006), they are their own leaders. Most of them play the role of leaders who change a human perception of the world. Artists can feel, see, and understand more than an average person. It is rather a kind of ‘gift’ than the learned skill. The art often communicates much stronger and clearer than words. The eloquent example of such art is “Venus of Our Times” by Anna Uddenberg showed at Berlin Biennale 2016. This sculpture perfectly exposes the narcissism of the “selfie generation.” None scientific paper (e.g., McCain *et al.*, 2016; Pounders *et al.*, 2016; Sorokowska *et al.*, 2016;) achieved such a spectacular success of understanding this particular mass social change of self-perception and self-presence of young people worldwide as the Swedish artist.

According to Lena and Lindemann's study (2014) on economic conditions and self-employment, it is not a coincidence that more than 548 000 arts businesses employed 2.9 million workers in the United States in 2006. These numbers account for 4.3% of all businesses and 2.2% of all workers included in the data from Markusen *et al.* (2008). The 2000 U.S. Census reports that 1.4% of the labor force, or 1 931 000 Americans, are artists, as Alper and Wassall (2006) confirm. To achieve the position of a leader of change in the eyes of a nation, a company or an individual must take advantage of their personal authority reflected in respect borne out of professional and social success. Steve Jobs is a good example of an individual whose innovative capacity not only created an image of himself or the Apple company but supported the positive image of the whole US. Influenced by Dieter Ram, he remained consistent and showed magnificent respect for the professional design. Ram, a German legend of industrial design (between 1955 and 1995 he worked for Braun's) strongly inspired not only the Apple founders. His 10 timeless golden rules of good design continuously uplift the whole designing world. Alessandro Mendini, Philippe Starck, and Karim Rashid are the other example of modern designers who have become recognizable brands due to their outstanding perception of things. The art-designer Maarten Baas sustainable striving to give products a unique character which made him famous. Iconic Andy Warhol is a perfect example of another strong personal brand. He was a leader in the visual art movement known as pop art. His works explore the relationship between artistic expression, celebrity culture, and advertising, and span a variety of media, including painting, silk-screening, photography, film, and sculpture.

Professional and social competencies mostly determine the reputation of a personal brand. The essence of a particular personal brand success is that others create a personal brand for others, whether they want it or not. Sometimes it happens only within a few seconds of meeting somebody. The idea of personal branding is trying to take control of this process in the best way each person can. Personal branding responds to the need for building one's reputation. A strong personal brand with a distinctive image and good reputation becomes an object of desire for professionals, leaders, and experts, generally speaking, all knowledge workers, including artists and art designers. Referring to Ding *et al.* (2007) for example, the architectural design is a knowledge-intensive activity. Similarly to other art designers' professions, a natural talent is firmly supported by professional knowledge. In the context of the network economy and based on the essence of a personal brand, the aim of concentrating on the extended self is to advance one's personal career. Personal branders manage an extended self (Belk, 2013) online and offline. Brooks and Anumudu (2016) presents detailed Personal Branding Instructions based on a PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) workbook. Vallas and Cummins (2015) screen identity norms in the popular business press in the context of Personal Branding. It means that personal branding skills become more and more meaningful not only for business leaders but for all. Labrecque *et al.* (2011) imply that people broadly use social media today purposefully to create their personal brands. Although being concerned about one's reputation has always been an important element of self-presentation, the omnipresence of networking, both in the real and virtual worlds, makes us attend to our own image with particular care in all areas of life. Relationships, the key condition of belonging to any professional or social group, originate from shared values or reciprocal advantages. Thus, creating a personal brand in the environment of the network economy becomes a necessity.

## 2. Conceptual Framework

Referring to Lena and Lindemann's (2014) opinion presented in the introduction section that the self-definition of "an artist" is vital for creating value in artistic professions, the aim of this study is to empirically prove on the basis of existing theories that the skill of personal branding is crucial for today's young artists and art designers and is connected with their self-identity. The study supports the



purpose of the article which is to highlight that the skill of personal branding grounded in self-discovery and self-identification is crucial for today's young artists and art designers.

Table 2 presents key definitions connected with all constructs used in the conceptual framework section.

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Table 2

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The construct of personal branding was invented by Peters in 1997. The crux of personal branding is a planned process of self-marketing. Montoya and Vandehey (2002) in their handbook entitled "Brand called You" explained the essence of having and creating a personal brand. In the beginning, the self-marketing idea seemed to apply mainly to celebrities (Rein *et al.*, 2007; Kowalczyk and Pounders, 2016), politicians, and business leaders (Shepherd, 2005; Schawbel, 2009; Vosloban, 2013). With time it turned out to have importance to general knowledge workers such as project team members (Kucharska and Dąbrowski, 2016) and average social media users (Lampel and Bhalla, 2007; Schawbel, 2009; Vitberg, 2009; Labrecque *et al.*, 2011; Karaduman, 2013). When it comes to the idea of "prosumerism" by Alvin Toffler (1981), one can hypothesize that there is some level of probability that personal brands in the network economy present in professional networks, collaborative networks or even in the social media constitute an opportunity for self-presentation. Social media, collaborative networks, and professional networks in principle serve the purpose of building relationships between people. They enable self-expression, and in consequence self-presentation. Social media such as LinkedIn or GoldenLine are used as recruitment tools. Facebook is a source of information about a lifestyle and personality of a potential candidate. Since social media provide knowledge about a person, they are a crucial element for every network user who wants to build his/her image for the sake of recruiters, friends, and acquaintances. The idea of online personal branding was broadly discussed by Lampel and Bhalla (2007), Vitberg (2009), Labrecque *et al.* (2011) and Karaduman (2013). Table 3 presents key definitions connected with personal branding and Figure 1 presents the graphical framework of that construct.

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Table 3

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Figure 1

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A self-expression is a form of affirmation of someone's self (Ashforth and Mael, 1989; Kim *et al.*, 2001; Wallace *et al.*, 2014). Consumer engagement with self-expressive brands: brand love and word-of-mouth outcomes always take place in a social context (Ashforth and Mael, 1989; Bearden and Etzel, 1982; Escalas and Bettman, 2005), meaning that so-called "reference groups" have an influence on both the self-image and the act and ways of an individual's self-expression. Referring to Erikson (1956), who described identity in a less volatile era as "an individual's link with the unique values," it can be assumed that the expression of a personal identity, and particularly personal values, have a strong influence on personal brand recognition. A personal identity was developed and supported, as Brooks and Anumudu (2016) claimed, in a social context of reciprocal human relationships of recognition and responsibility.

Bearing in mind all the above and drawing from the theory of planned behavior by Ajzen (1991), and referring to Shepherd's (2005) and Khedher's (2014) definition of personal branding as a planned

process in which people make efforts to market themselves, the following hypothesis has been formulated:

H1: Self-Brand Expression positively influences Personal Branding.

Referring to a commercial brand, brand distinctiveness is a combination of measures that indicate the uniqueness and superiority of a brand in the marketplace (Aaker, 1996; Wong and Merrilees, 2007). To maintain such distinctiveness, in the long run, marketers need to have a clear brand vision that helps design brand-based strategies (De Chernatony, 2001; Hatch and Schultz, 2001; Urde, 1994, 1999). Brand distinctiveness can be achieved by positioning the brand in the marketplace, which can project an image to customers who see the unique values offered to them (Wong and Merrilees, 2008). Analogously to a commercial brand, a personal brand requires a concrete basis of the desired image built on unique values. The first step in building a personal brand begins with the groundwork of analyzing how the person has been perceived so far and how this person wants to be perceived (Sandlin *et al.*, 2011; Kang, 2013; Clark, 2013, 2014; Vallas and Cummins, 2015; Brooks and Anumudu, 2016). The self-definition is the most important part of that process. The crucial thing is to find one's personal distinction. The relationship between brand distinctiveness and a commercial brand is understood as a set of characteristics which make the brand unique and outstanding (Wong and Merrilees, 2007). The awareness of personal values and advantages, next to the formulation of the extended self, is crucial for personal brand creation. According to Belk (2013), personal branders manage an extended self. Sociologists Vallas and Cummins (2015) pointed out that the discourse of personal branding results in a narrative of the "incorporated self," which requires an internalization of market-based logic. So, young designers must present the distinctiveness of their brands based on their advantages and personal values. The need for self-expression defined by Bhat and Reddy (1998) has made it possible to formulate a hypothesis regarding the relationship between self-expression and self-esteem understood in the context of personal branding as a synonym of Self-Brand Distinctiveness<sup>1</sup>.

H2: Self-Brand Distinctiveness positively affects Personal Branding.

In light of the above, the assumption has been made that Self-Expression plays an intermediary role in the relationship between the sense of Self-Brand Distinctiveness and Personal Branding. The above conclusion leads to the following hypothesis:

H3: Self-Brand Distinctiveness positively affects Self-Brand Expression.

As regards the commercial brand, brand performance refers to how successful a brand is in the market (Wong and Merrilees, 2008). Brand awareness, reputation, and loyalty were suggested as an important performance of a brand (Chaudhuri, 2002; Chaudhuri and Holbrook, 2001; Reid, 2002; Wong and Merrilees, 2007). Likewise, the awareness of the existence and a reputation of a personal brand have an effect on its performance. As Brooks and Anumudu (2016) claimed, personal branding is the deployment of individuals' identity narratives for career and employment purposes. As it is with a commercial brand, where brand management as an activity has an influence on brand performance (Chapman, 1993; Wong and Merrilees, 2008; Baumgarth, 2010) because of the brand reputation (Lai *et al.*, 2010) and its distinctiveness (Fadzline *et al.*, 2014). As a result of that, the activity influences brand performance. Moreover, some studies have discovered that commercial brand personality can have positive performance implications, such as identification with the brand (e.g., Ambler, 1997) and

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<sup>1</sup> which McAdams (2013, p.90) called "the redemptive self." It goes: "(...) I am special. I am gifted. I have a deep advantage. I am a unique self with unique talents, and I am here to do something unique and good, to be something extraordinary and wonderful, to fulfill an inner calling and actualize a vast inner potential (...)" to develop my career.

brand effect and brand trust (e.g., Sung and Kim, 2010). All these suggest that the overall personal marketing performance can increase with the marketing activities being more personally brand oriented. The assumption has been made that personal brand orientation could enhance the overall personal performance. Therefore, based on all the above, the following hypothesis has been formulated:

H4: Personal Branding has a positive influence on Personal Performance.

Figure 2 below presents a summary of the theoretical model.

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Figure 2

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This issue is addressed by examining a thesis that the skill of personal branding is important for young designers. The study presents empirical evidence that an approving self-attitude to consider oneself to be a personal brand has a positive influence on the personal performance of a young artist. By linking Self-Brand Distinctiveness and Self-Brand Expression with Personal Branding implementation and Personal Performance outcome, we can demonstrate the substantiation for the implementation of Personal Branding programs by academies of fine arts to help young art designers' careers.

### 3. Methodology

The study was conducted based on the data originally collected among Polish artists (30%), art designers (35%), and architecture professionals and students (35%). The sample comprised 79% of young artists and working students (under 25 years old) and 21% professionals (25 years old and more). 43% of the respondents were male, and 57% were female. The questionnaire's design was based on the constructs measurement scales and their sources presented in Appendix 1. The respondents reacted to statements based on a 7- point Likert scale, which goes from 1 – definitely NOT, through 4 – neither YES nor NOT, until 7 – definitely YES. The questionnaire was preceded by a short introduction explaining the purpose and subject matter of the study. The first qualifying question directly referred to the subject matter of the study and regarded the respondent's affiliation to art-designing or architecture. The subsequent part of the questionnaire led from general to detailed questions which required more precise answers. The proper study was preceded by a pilot study (34 persons), next divided into two focus groups where pilot study results were discussed. Our focus was to explain the idea behind the applied constructs. The pilot study made it possible to optimize the statements. In effect, for the benefit of the reliability of the study, problematic statements were clarified. Data collection was performed with the paper version of the questionnaire, using mainly the "convenience method." The research sample was composed of students and staff of The Academy of Fine Arts in Gdańsk and the Faculty of Architecture at the Gdańsk University of Technology. Respondents were asked to voluntarily complete the questionnaire. The data were collected from February to June 2016. The sample size was 397 respondents, 357 cases were accepted for further analysis, after rejecting faulty and incomplete questionnaires.

The data analysis was conducted using the structural equation modeling method. Before the measurement model CFA was evaluated, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test and Bartlett's test of sphericity were conducted to assess the factorability. The KMO measure of sampling adequacy is 0.713 and the significance of Bartlett's test of sphericity was less than 0.001, this result can be assessed as good (Kaiser, 1974). The cumulative percentage of total variances extracted by factors is 60.3 % what also is positive (Hair *et al.*, 2010). For the theoretical model presented in Figure 2, a

measurement and later a structural Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) models were developed. The model was then estimated and assessed. Estimation was conducted according to a maximum likelihood method (ML). The evaluation of the model quality was conducted based on tests such as Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), CMIN/DF, Comparative Fit Index (CFI) with the use of SPSS AMOS 23 software.

Based on the readings, CFA model presented in Figure 2 may be considered as well fit in relation to the data. Model reliability level 2.45 can be viewed as high, with the reference  $\leq 5$  (Wheaton, 1977). Model fit to the data based on approximation average error RMSEA at 0.064 also meets the reference values below 0.08, referring to Steiger and Lind (1980). Measurements of the goodness of fit came close to 1 (Bollen, 1989) and AGFI/CFI > 0.9, which confirms the mentioned above quality. Average of Variance Extracted is AVE > 0.5 what is adequate (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). Cronbach's Alpha test was used to confirm consistency of the constructs measurement model, and the alpha coefficient is higher than 0.75 what is correct (Francis, 2001; Robinson *et al.*, 1991). Composite Reliability is CR > 0.75 for all constructs, and it is higher than the required 0.6. Notes for model: Chi-square = 122.66, Degrees of freedom = 50, Probability level = .000. The content validity was achieved by having a comprehensive literature review and by including in the survey opinions of, in majority, working students of The Academy of Fine Arts in Gdańsk and the Gdańsk University of Technology (Architecture Faculty). All constructs measured with the questionnaire designed with the use of the above-mentioned measurement scales (Appendix 1) at the measuring and measurement analysis stage are considered as unobservable variables. They were measured by observing their observable components (at the measurement phase: loadings). The selected analysis method SEM allows analyzing relationships posited in the assumed theoretical model regarding both the strength and relational structure between variables. A positive evaluation of the measurement model allows us to proceed with the presentation of results.

#### 4. Results

The results presented in Figure 3 indicate a statistically significant influence of all variables included in the model. Particular attention needs to be paid to the variable of Self-Brand Expression (SBE) which plays a role of a mediator between the variables of Self-Brand Distinction (SBD) and Personal Branding (PB) in the given relationship between Self-Brand Distinction (SBD), Self-Brand Expression (SBE), and Personal Branding (PB) as an influencer of Personal Performance. Consequently, the mediated influence of the SBD by SBE variable on PB is significant, which is visible in the analysis of total (direct and indirect) effects presented in Table 5. It is also worth looking at the very significant influence of Personal Branding variable on Personal Performance. The fact that the model explains the variable of Personal Performance in 25%, which is indicated by Squared Multiple Correlations presented in Appendix 2, clearly proves that the model does not include many other significant variables which influence Personal Brand Performance, such as e.g. talent, diligence, and others. The purpose of this model, however, is not as much explaining the variable of Personal Brand Performance, as proving a significant influence of Personal Branding, originating from Self-Brand Distinction and Self-Brand Expression, on the already mentioned Personal Brand Performance. The presented model proves that Personal Branding is an essential factor for the creation of Personal Performance.

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Figure 3

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Table 4

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Table 4 above presents a summary of the hypothesis tests referring to the theoretical model shown in Figure 2. The entire hypothesis was supported. Probability level  $<0.001$  was achieved for all tests B indicators obtained in the case of each hypothesis, including critical ratio (C.R) and probability level (p), point to a high significance of statistically presented results. Estimations of the total standardized effects of the model shown in Table 5 point to a significant role of the Self-Brand Distinction variable on Personal Branding in the model presented in Figure 3.

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Table 5

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The analysis of the direct and indirect estimations and the total effects presented in Table 5 show that Self-Brand Distinction is partially mediated by Self-Brand Expression when affects Personal Branding which positively influence on Personal Performance. This means that if artists view themselves as personal brands, it affects their personal performance in a positive way. It also supports the view that university curriculum for young adult designers should include personal branding programs to help young artists with their self-esteem and help them to define and distinguish their self-brand which will have a positive impact on their personal brand performance.

### **5. Discussion and Practical Implication**

Social recognition is particularly important for the identity development of emerging adults (McAdams, 2008) and this is the reason why our study was conducted based on a group of young art and design students and faculty, who are about to shape their professional and social status. Building one's personal brand based on self-esteem which is reflected in self-brand distinctiveness is much harder in their case than it is in the case of people with already recognized professional achievements since they have no spectacular results to show. Self-consciousness and being highly sensitive to criticism are typical features of young artists. This is why they need support to define their self-brand distinctiveness linked to their self-esteem. Compared to people with low self-esteem, people with high self-esteem are more likely to expect, accept, and believe in success (Blaine and Crocker, 1993) because that success is congruent with their positive self-concept (Shrauger, 1975; Danielsson and Bengtsson, 2016). Miles and Maurer (2012) claim that the more confidence individuals have in their ability to perform a particular task, the more spectacular successes they achieve. Every university wants to shape people of success. Song *et al.* (2017) even point out that people with relatively lower level of self-esteem are more likely to minimize attention to the self, which means that the sense of self-esteem reflected in self-brand distinctiveness should be enhanced in the case of young art designers in order to successfully create Personal Branding, and consequently personal performance, which is reflected in the presented model. Lee and Cavanaugh's case study (2016) on infographic resumes proved that teaching students reflective educational strategies, allows them to better understand their personal strengths and weaknesses, and becomes the groundwork for their self-analysis and self-branding. The results of our study indicate that classical directional education of young art designers when bolstered with mentoring and structured knowledge of methods and techniques of personal branding can bring about an expected outcome in the shape of professional successes of these universities' graduates. Practical implications of our study suggest that there is a justified need to shape self-brand oriented attitudes among young art designers. It would be interesting to extend the study of how Personal Branding influences Personal Performance to other age or occupational groups, or different populations. As it has already been said, another intriguing matter is the construct of brand personality of a commercial brand in the context of personal branding.

## 6. Limitations and Conclusion

The main limitation of presented study is a relatively small sample group based on one country's population. All scales used in this article were adapted from scales related to commercial brands and it is possible that there are certain differences in viewing personal and commercial brands. However, the concept of Personal Branding was invented in the late 90's so it is a relatively new research area, and the literature of this subject matter, in comparison to the literature referring to commercial brands, is still quite scarce and lacks scientific support. Indeed this problem meets criteria for an interesting research topic. Potential doubts whether it is appropriate to apply the analogy between a commercial and a personal brand in this article can be dispelled by the existence of a construct: Brand Personality in reference to a commercial brand, where brand personality "refers to the set of human characteristics associated with a commercial brand" (Aaker, 1997). The presented work sheds new light on the issue of personal branding. On the one hand, it leads to the commercialization of one's own skills, on the other hand, it requires an awareness of own values, advantages, and goals. Personal Branding is also a form of one's personal affirmation, which supports personal development. This research proved that the skill of personal branding is crucial for young artists and art designers. The results of the research confirm that an approving self-attitude to consider oneself to be a personal brand has a positive influence on the performance of a young artist. This new knowledge and the presented theoretical review lead to a better understanding of the essence of Personal Branding and justify the point of teaching it at academies of fine arts. Artists' self-definition, referring to Lena and Lindemann (2014), often fails when it's unjustified by others. Thus, presented results prove that it is worth supporting their extended self-concept formulation in the educational process when the identity of a young artist is shaped. Going back to the question posed in the title of this paper: Personal Branding of Artists and Art designers: Necessity or Desire? In light of the presented literature and empirical studies of the subject matter, it can firmly be stated that both. "Personal Branding - the Desire" results from the need for recognition, which is typical of artists; whereas "Personal Branding - the Necessity" is a response to the surrounding environment. Network economy, according to the idea of prosumerism, is founded on the collaboration of individual creators based on a network of values instead of hierarchical dependencies. Intellectual capital as a source of value in the networked economy is generated outside hierarchies. Thus the network economy imposes building a relational equity (Sawhney and Zabin, 2002) which is the essence of efficiency in a network. In reference to Hunt's and Madhavaram's (2014) resource-advantage (R-A) theory, the relationship in itself also constitutes a resource. Personal branding of young artists and art designers, whose goal is to build business relationships, becomes a natural consequence of their empowerment in the contemporary economy, especially that artists have very high rates of self-employment (Markusen, 2006). Thus personal brands of artists and art designers have a strong impact on their performance. Summarizing, developing national, corporate or organizational capital reflected in the "creative class" requires strong creative personal brands.

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Appendix 1

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Appendix 2

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Table 1: Artist, designer, art designer: definitions

term	definition	source
artist	Workers who see themselves, and are seen by others, as producers of artistic objects and ideas, e.g. (musicians, writers, architects, photographers, actors, singers, dancers, directors, painters, designers).	Lena and Lindemann (2014)
designer	Workers who translate their own or somebody's idea into a visual object, e.g. sign, design, product, service, process, project; create the meaning of the idea by acting on the semantic dimension of the particular culture, for industry or massive purpose rather than individuals.	Authors definition, based on Dell'era and Verganti (2009).
art designer	Workers who translate an artistic idea into a visual object. The designer creates unique objects, short series.	Authors definition

Source: Authors own study

Table 2: Constructs used in the theoretical model: definitions

term	definition	source
Personal Branding	"managing an extended self"	Belk (2013)



Self-Brand Expression (SBE)	a form of affirmation of someone's self to boost their extended self-concept and image	Authors definition, based on Ashforth and Mael, (1989), Kim <i>et al.</i> (2001), Wallace <i>et al.</i> (2014)
Self-Brand Distinction (SBD)	self-identification as unique and superior, based on self-esteem, personal advantages, and values	Authors definition, based on Aaker (2003), Wong and Merrilees (2007)
Personal Brand Performance	all personal results, including reputation	Authors definition, based on Wong and Merrilees (2008)

Source: Authors own study

Table 3: Idea of Personal Branding: key definitions

TERM	DEFINITION	SOURCE
brand	“a name, term, sign, symbol, design, or combination of them, intended to identify goods or services of one seller or a group of sellers to differentiate them from those of competitors”	Kotler and Keller (2006)
branding	“an act of creating a brand”	Moore and Reid (2008)
personal brand	“a brand called YOU”	Peters (1997)
	“a particular real person's name connected with all notions intended to identify this person and to differentiate from others”	Kucharska (2017)
personal branding	“managing an extended self”	Belk (2013)
	“a planned process in which people make efforts to market themselves” (self-promote)	Khedher (2014)
	“is the deployment of individuals' identity narratives for career and employment purposes”	Brooks and Anumudu (2016)
personal brander	“professional advisor on how to create a personal brand”	Talwar and Hancock (2010)

Source: Kucharska (2017)

Table 4: Summary of the hypothesis tests

Hypothesis		$\beta$	t-value	p-value	Supported?
H1	Self-Brand Expression positively influences on Personal Branding.	,436	5,704	***	YES
H2	Self-Brand Distinction positively affects Personal Branding.	,355	4,713	***	YES
H3	Self-Brand Distinction positively affects Self-Brand Expression.	,463	6,158	***	YES
H4	Personal Branding has a positive influence on personal Brand Performance.	,499	6,188	***	YES

note: estimation standardised, ML method, RMSEA= 0.064 (0.05;0.078) Cmin/df=2.45, CFI=0.95, TLI= 0.93, \*\*\*  $p \leq 0.001$

Table 5: Mediation analysis

Mediation	Total effect –	Direct effect	Indirect effect	Mediation type observed
Self-Brand Distinction -> Self-Brand Expression-> Personal Branding	,557 ***	,355***	,202***	partial mediation

note: estimation standardised, ML method, RMSEA= 0.064 (0.05;0.078) Cmin/df=2.45, CFI=0.95, TLI= 0.93, \*\*\*  $p \leq 0.001$

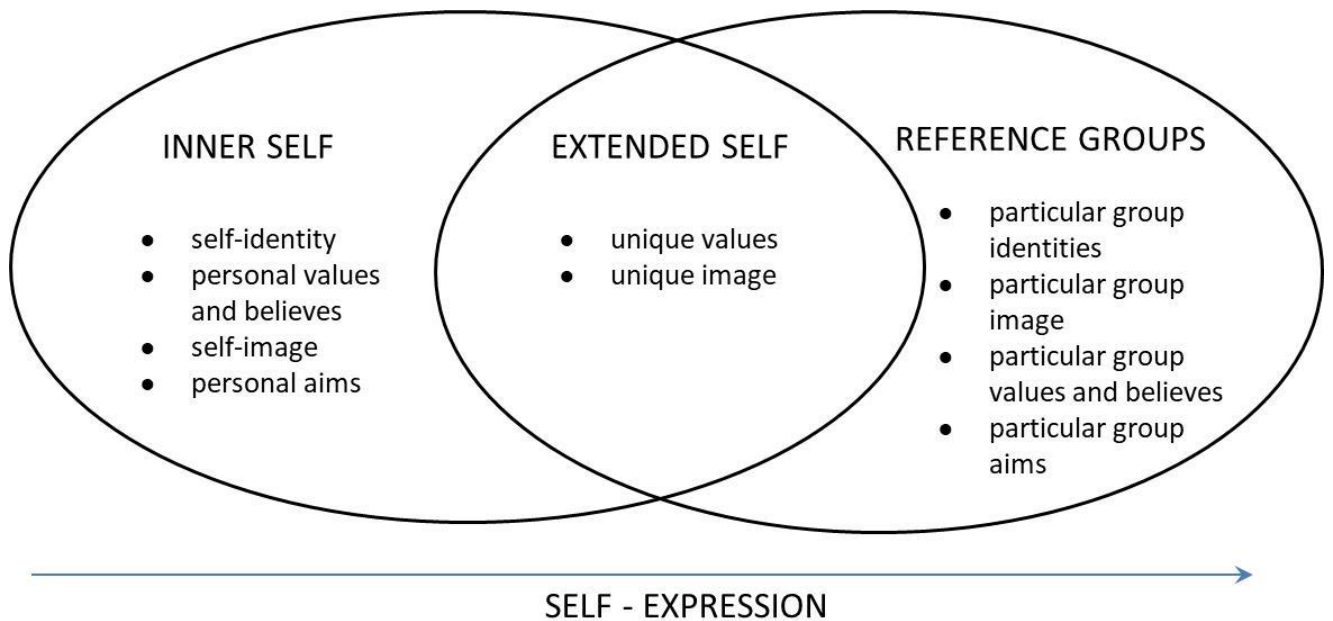


Figure 1: Personal branding framework  
Source: Kucharska (2017)

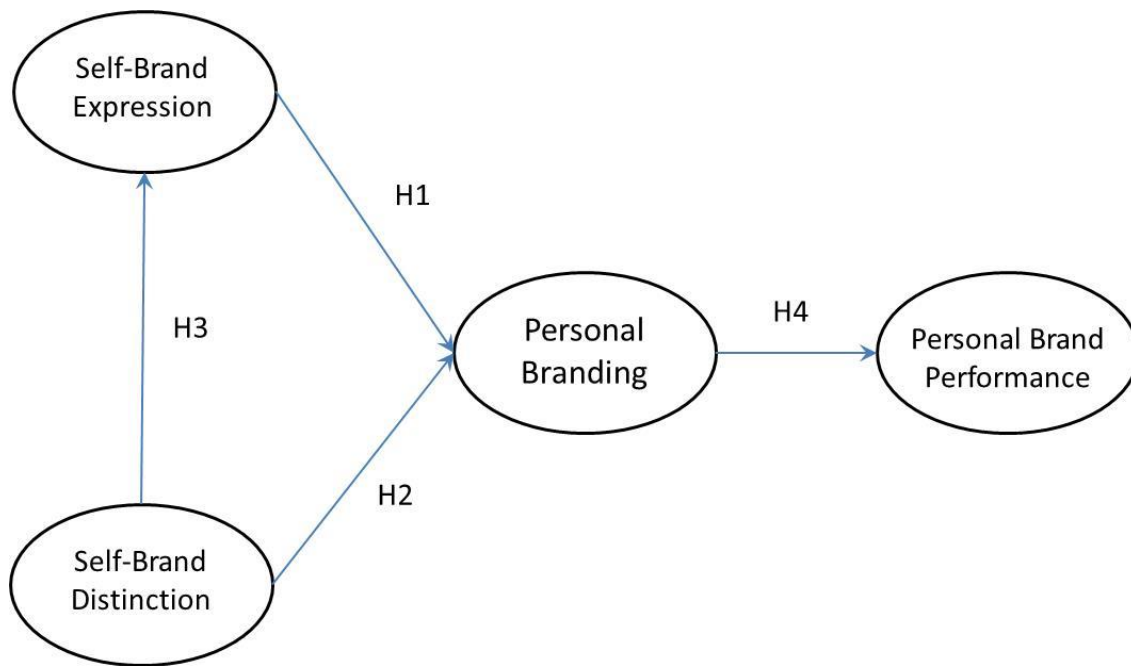


Figure 2: Conceptual framework

Source: authors' own study based on Ajzen (1991), Shepherd (2005), Khedher (2014), Kucharska and Dąbrowski (2016), Lampel and Bhalla (2007), Schawbel (2009), Vitberg (2009), Labrecque et al. (2011), Karaduman (2013), Aaker (1996), Wong and Merrilees (2007, 2008), Ambler (1997), Fadzline et al. (2014), Lai et al. (2010), Chapman (1993), Baumgarth (2010).

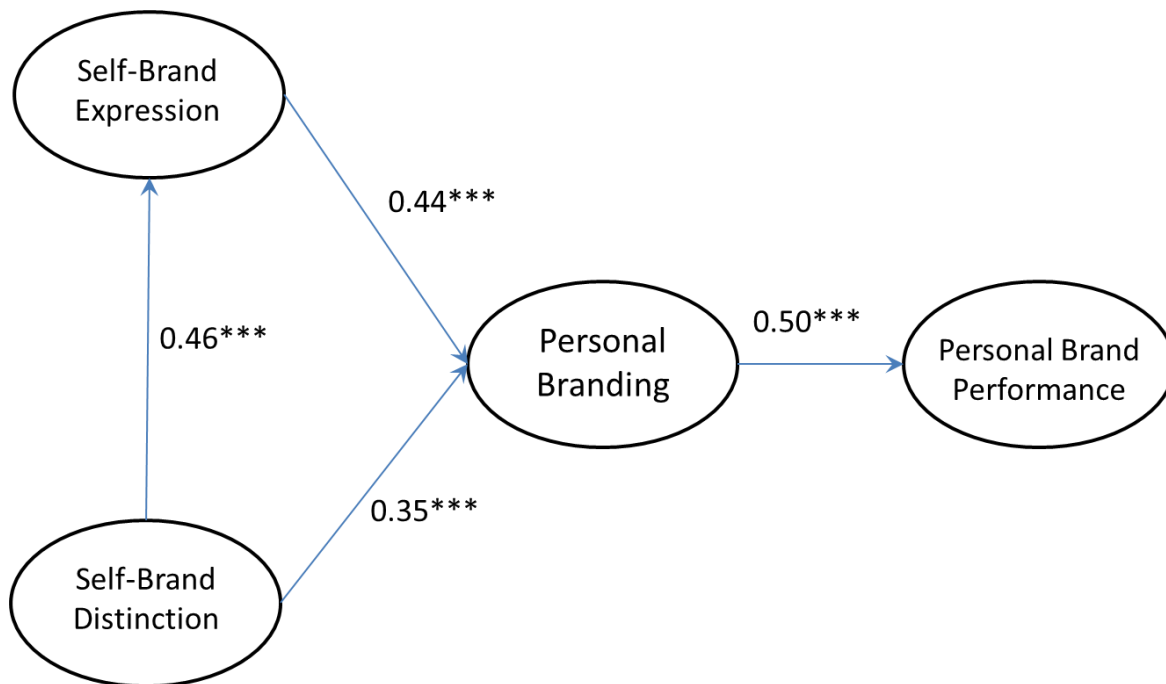


Figure 3: Graphical presentation of achieved results.

Source: authors' own study

Notes for model: Chi-square = 122,66, degrees of freedom = 50, \*\*\*  $p \leq 0.001$

RMSEA= 0.064 (0.05;0.078) Cmin/df=2.45, CFI=0.95, TLI= 0.93, estimation standardised, ML method



## Appendix 1 Constructs, scales and measurement model

Construct	Items/loadings	Weight	Reliability assessment of variable measurement
Self-brand distinction (SBD) adapted from Stokburger-Sauer <i>et al.</i> (2012) and Wong and Merrilees (2008).	I stand out among others.	0.714	AVE=0,52 CR=0,83 Cornbach alpha=0,76
	I am aware of features which make me unique.	0.526	
	The atmosphere I create around myself is unique.	0.698	
Self-brand expression (SBE) adapted from Kim, Han and Park (2001)	I undertake different actions to express myself.	0,720	AVE=0,53 CR=0,91 Cornbach alpha=0,77
	I consciously express my personality.	0,770	
	Purposely, I develop my expression and creativity.	0,691	
Personal branding (PB) based on Ajzen (1991, 2002); Babbie (2013)	I take advantage of circumstances which enable me to present my personality.	0.734	AVE=0,50 CR=0,75 Cornbach alpha=0,75
	I take advantage of circumstances which enable me to present my personal vision of myself.	0.752	
	Because of what I do and say, where and with whom I spend time, I can influence the way other people perceive me.	0.628	
Personal brand performance (PBP) based on Ajzen (1991, 2002); Babbie (2013)	I am satisfied with my achievements.	0.602	AVE=0,53 CR=0,82 Cornbach alpha=0,76
	My achievements give me a lot of satisfaction.	0.789	
	I am positive about what I have achieved so far.	0.781	

## Appendix 2

### Squared Multiple Correlations

	Estimate
Self-brand expression	0,215
Personal branding	0,459
Personal brand Performance	0,249

### Implied Correlations

	C3	C1	C2	D1	D2	D3	B3	B2	B1	A1	A2	A3
C3	1,00											
C1	,472	1,00										
C2	,461	,552	1,00									
D1	,245	,293	,286	1,00								
D2	,247	,296	,289	,616	1,00							
D3	,189	,226	,221	,470	,475	1,00						
B3	,261	,312	,305	,162	,163	,125	1,00					
B2	,290	,348	,339	,180	,182	,139	,533	1,00				
B1	,272	,325	,317	,169	,170	,130	,498	,555	1,00			
A1	,246	,295	,288	,153	,154	,118	,226	,251	,235	1,00		
A2	,240	,288	,281	,149	,151	,115	,220	,245	,229	,483	1,00	
A3	,270	,323	,316	,168	,169	,129	,247	,276	,258	,544	,530	1,00

Assessment of normality

Variable	min	max	skew	c.r.	kurtosis	c.r.
C3	1,000	7,000	-,744	-5,738	-,160	-,616
C1	1,000	7,000	-,778	-6,005	,076	,293
C2	1,000	7,000	-,737	-5,687	-,363	-1,399
D1	1,000	7,000	-1,185	-9,144	1,587	6,119
D2	1,000	7,000	-1,254	-9,677	2,047	7,895
D3	1,000	7,000	-1,096	-8,453	,964	3,716
B3	1,000	7,000	-1,600	-12,342	3,214	12,397
B2	2,000	7,000	-,931	-7,178	,712	2,747
B1	1,000	7,000	-1,061	-8,181	1,390	5,360
A1	1,000	7,000	-,884	-6,820	1,288	4,966
A2	1,000	7,000	-,817	-6,299	1,496	5,768
A3	1,000	7,000	-,928	-7,162	,827	3,191
Multivariate					72,006	37,111