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Personal Brand of the Founder: The Impact of Controversial Events on the Perception of a Fashion Brand

Master's Thesis format: Academic research

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RESEARCH MOTIVATION:

Personal brand has become a crucial attribute of **professional success** and **social presence** in the nowadays intense global competition (Kanasan and Rahman, 2024).

Managing a personal brand is essential for **differentiation in a competitive workplace** (Gorbatov et al., 2018)

The benefits of developing a personal brand expand beyond **the creation of trust with customers and improved communication with target audience** (Walczak-Skałeczka and Marchewka, 2024)

The motivation of the study is urged due to

- lack of clarity regarding the true nature of confusion, and understanding its emotional and behavioral consequences deriving from personal brand influence (Garaus and Wagner, 2016);
- controversial events surrounding fashion brand founders have a notable impact on the perception of the brands themselves (Temitope, 2024);
- consumers are more likely to choose products associated with brands they feel a strong emotional attachment to. **Particularly, the emotional value created by influence of personal brand shows its significance (Lui and Chelliah, 2025).**



RESEARCH GAP:

- The role of both positive and negative events, which happened with the owner of personal brand, kinds of emotions the audience gets and the impact on a brand is not studied completely (Lui and Chelliah, 2025)
- Controversial events, which happens with founders (holders of personal brand) can lead to a range of outcomes for their brands (companies), encompassing both negative and positive consequences (Huang et al., 2024).

The existing literature has provided foundational insights into the mechanisms of personal branding, however, there is a **gap in research exploring how controversial events affect consumer trust, communication and the benefits of personal brands.**



THE AIM OF THE RESEARCH

To explore how controversial events related to a fashion brand founder's personal brand affect customer perceptions, and the development of emotional connections with the brand.
How consumers emotionally react to such events by applying elements of the Appraisal Theory and using the Sentiment analysis.

To address gaps in the personal branding literature and literature correlated with appraisal theory and provide practical implications on companies' which operate in the fashion industry sphere due to their marketing strategy.



How exactly brand founders should leverage their personal brand in the context of controversial events.



RESEARCH QUESTION



How do controversial events related to the personal brand of a founder affect consumer perceptions of a fashion brand, and what strategies can be employed to manage these perceptions?



LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Definition of personal brand

- 1) Personal branding is linked to **one's personality** and the **emotional connections** established with others. It involves showcasing strengths and fostering trust-based relationships.
- 2) Personal brands are dynamic and evolve with **career development and personal growth**. It needs regular reassessment and adaptation to changing circumstances.
- 3) The critical role in shaping and maintaining personal brands is devoted to **social media platforms**, which provide opportunities for individuals to engage deeply with their audience, therefore to create and promote their image (Rangarajan et al., 2017).

Personal brand is how other people **perceive particular individuals** (Szántó and Radácsi, 2023). Personal brand is recognised as **a process of marketing and promoting the person** by itself or a special marketing team in order to achieve some benefits (Khedher, 2015).

2.2 Brand perception

Brand perception encompasses the **view** that consumers hold **regarding a particular brand**, shaped by a multitude of factors. These factors include direct interactions with the brand, exposure to its marketing and advertising efforts, word-of-mouth referrals, and personal experiences with the brand's products or services (Hollebeek et al., 2014).

Brand perceptions come from various sources, such as consumer experiences, marketing communications, and word of mouth. These perceptions can include **descriptive information, benefits, evaluations of specific aspects of the brand, and purchase/consumption situations**. Essentially, any information encountered with the brand name can become linked to the brand in memory if it is sufficiently processed (Romaniuk & Sharp, 2003).



THEORETICAL MODEL

Appraisal theory

Appraisal theories suggest that emotions arise from how individuals **interpret and explain particular events, regardless of their physical reactions** (Aronson, 2005). These models explain how people assess situations and therefore develop emotions.

This approach allows researchers and psychology therapists to explore **the origin of emotional responses** and develop strategies for **changing negative ways of thinking and destructing patterns**.

Appraisal Theory emphasizes the role of cognitive assessment in shaping the emotional experiences. It distinguishes itself by focusing on the complex cognitive structures involved in emotion and the interactive relationship between thought and feeling.



THEORETICAL MODEL

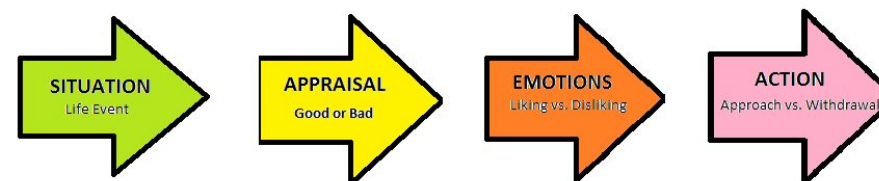
Structural appraisal theory by Richard Lazarus 1970 identifies several vital components of cognition that contribute to the respondents' emotional reaction

Primary appraisal: This initial evaluation focuses on the nature of the situation.

Secondary appraisal: Here, we assess our coping resources and ability to manage the situation. Factors like past experiences, self-efficacy, and available support systems influence this appraisal.

Coping potential: Based on the secondary appraisal, we evaluate our ability to cope effectively.

Re-appraisal: This ongoing process allows to re-evaluate the situation and adjust emotional response as needed.





LITERATURE REVIEW

2.4 Emotional Value in Branding

Consumers often connect with brands due to the symbolic values and benefits these brands represent, which evoke in customers **strong emotional responses**. This connection leads to the development of emotional brands, where the relationship extends beyond functionality (Bairrada et al., 2018).

By addressing consumers' higher-order and aspirational needs, these brands create **a psychological bond** that enhances loyalty and emotional attachment to the brand (Dwivedi et al., 2019).

This emotional value strengthens the connection between the brand and consumer purchase intentions, acting as a psychological bridge that motivates action (**purchasing decision**) (Lui and Chelliah, 2025).

2.5 Controversial events and their impact on personal brand

Controversial events are characterized by their ability **to provoke varied and conflicting responses from consumers** (Vredenburg et al., 2020). These reactions develop from a collision between the values a brand promotes and the personal beliefs of individuals (Sandes, 2024).

The influence of social networks on controversial events is shown in several aspects (Huang et al., 2024). They serve as a platform for expressing different points of view and opinions, which can lead **to social fragmentation and cultural divide, and increased conflicts** (Kim et al., 2015).

The consequences of controversial events for brands can be diverse and include both negative and positive effects.



METHODOLOGY

A methodology design based on Eisenhardt's method (1989)

The design of the study will be aimed at investigating the founder's personal brand perception and its influence on the fashion brand image in the context of controversial events and also to provide a wider view of application of the Appraisal theory on the transcribing.

The research is divided into several stages with mixed quantitative and qualitative methods.



Sentiment analysis

The first stage quantitative analysis will be performed in relation to the expert point of view through the prism of analyzing the general emotional coloring of the media rhetoric on time segments of the controversial events via sentiment analysis for

- **Preliminary view on the controversial events appearing and recognising**



In-depth interview

The second stage will be qualitative analysis of the consumer side and involve collecting in - depth interviews in both face to face and online formats with the customer base of the selected brands, for the subsequent development of insights.

- **Detailed view on the controversial events emotional reaction among the clients**



METHODOLOGY

Multiple case study

The choice of these examples of brands is conditioned, among other examples, by the fact that the authors of the study consider **different situations**, including foreign brands on the market (Alpha) and local brands (Beta), **approaches and perception** (more positive and more negative on the market) and its dependence on the degree of involvement in the fashion context. Thus expanding the frame by comparing both cases with similar mechanisms of advertising going towards working with controversial events related to the personalities of the creators, only in different contexts.

In describing the brands, the gender of the creator was also noted, as Alpha produces things for two categories of male and female customers, while Beta relies solely on the female audience.

Table 1. Descriptions of Personal brands under consideration

Brand name	Personal Brand and gender	Product	Position in the market	Description
Philipp Plein (Alpha)	Phillipp Plein (Male)	Fashion brand LLC	Foreign brand presented on the local market	Philipp Plein (Alpha) - Philipp Plein, like the German company of the same name, is one of the brightest examples of foreign brands widely discussed by both the international and Russian public. It is criticized and at the same time respected for its position of upholding classic masculine values like masculinity, open expression of wealth with various rather vivid examples of rhinestones and exclusive materials like crocodile skin, attracting models including Pamela Anderson and Irina Shayk in a candid context expressing in themselves
IronByClub/Predubezhdai (Beta)	Anastasia Mironova (Female)	Fashion brand LLC	Local brand	IronByClub/Predubezhdai (Beta) Anastasia Mironova is a Russian entrepreneur, blogger and media personality. Initially (about 8 years ago) Anastasia started a personal page in a social network, where she gained a large audience and maintains a blog to this day. She has opened 3 businesses, which she actively promotes on her personal page. Anastasia often posts photos in provocative outfits, as well as openly speaks on taboo topics and plays on many expressions and customs, this is part of her image and applies to all her businesses. The advertising campaigns of the sports and casual clothing store, as well as the cut of the sportswear are often built around being controversial, deliberate and feminine. The cosmetic brand also uses provocative context, erotic photos and double meaning in its advertising.

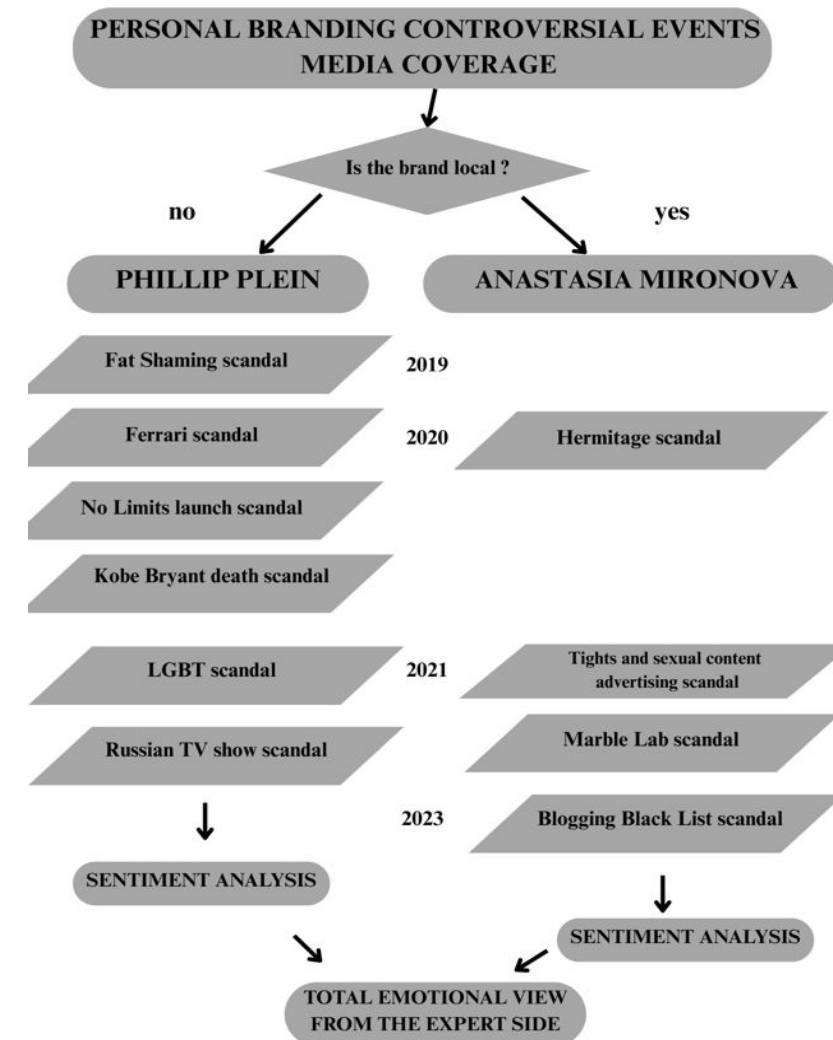
Source: author's own elaboration

Methods of data sampling and analysis

Sentiment analysis

- Full-fledged sentiment analysis of media publications,
- Time frame 5 years related to both selected brands were pointed out.
- For the Alpha brand 6 controversial events were chosen, and for the Beta brand 4 with completely different context of each individual one.
- Based on the sample of which, for each individual case the volume of articles (N=3) 30 texts of news items in total.
- Media Journals - both Russian and English language

necessary to analyze the tone of the text and to draw conclusions on the general attitude of the expert community to the brand were chosen.





Methods of data sampling and analysis

Sentiment analysis

The researchers of the study initially decided to examine the sentiment score, along with other factors, as well as natural language processing (NLP) in order to identify and analyze **the emotional tone of the text of each media source news item** with the help of :

The Python **Vader plugin** program working on the principle of **Ruled based character** for the analysis of english-language articles

Artificial intelligence **Deepavlov** with the help of which developers and researchers in the field of natural language processing create ready-to-use dialog skills with the help of **machine learning** for the russian language news.

```
import numpy as np
import pandas as pd
from vaderSentiment.vaderSentiment import SentimentIntensityAnalyzer
from tqdm import tqdm

def analyze_english_sentiment(text):
    if not isinstance(text, str) or not text.strip():
        return None
    score = vader_analyzer.polarity_scores(text)['compound']
    sentiment = "positive" if score >= 0.05 else ("negative" if score <= -0.05 else "neutral")

    return sentiment, score

# Load your dataset
df = pd.read_excel('data_for_sentiment.xlsx')

# Initialize models
vader_analyzer = SentimentIntensityAnalyzer()
# Apply sentiment analysis
sentiments = []
scores = []
for _, row in tqdm(df.iterrows(), total=len(df)):
    sentiment, score = analyze_english_sentiment(row['translated_text'])
    sentiments.append(sentiment)
    scores.append(score)

df['sentiment_type'] = sentiments
df['sentiment_score'] = scores

df
events = df.groupby('id').agg({'translated_text': lambda x: ' '.join(x)}).reset_index()

sentiments = []
scores = []
for _, row in tqdm(events.iterrows(), total=len(events)):
    sentiment, score = analyze_english_sentiment(row['translated_text'])
    sentiments.append(sentiment)
    scores.append(score)

events['sentiment_type'] = sentiments
events['sentiment_score'] = scores

events
```



Methods of data sampling and analysis

Sentiment analysis

VADER - score

DEEPAVLOV - marker

- unstable results by different models and the given results concerning the same text

DEEPAVLOV - NOT RELEVANT, because the last update was not made for two months, which is a really long period of time for the toolkit

- most of the news in Russian software defined in neutral emotional coloring on any of the texts and was inconsistent for the research

RUSSIAN TEXT - TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH

ONLY VADER WAS USED VIA FORMULA:

Analysis identified as the Main Sentiment Grade - **The Compound Score**

This is the most important output and is calculated as it is shown in the formula:

$$\text{compound} = \frac{\text{sum of all valence scores}}{\sqrt{\text{number of words}}}$$

It's a normalized score between -1 (most negative) and +1 (most positive).

Interpreting Compound Score:

By default:

$\text{compound} \geq 0.05$ - Positive

$\text{compound} \leq -0.05$ - Negative

$-0.05 < \text{compound} < 0.05$ - Neutral

After formulating this output, it was included in the code

The procedure of analyzing **each individual news item** was performed by the Vader, then the **news items were grouped**, as each individual news was related to a **separate controversial event** and the results were **summarized to the arithmetic mean of each one**.



Methods of data sampling and analysis

In depth interview

- The sample consists of 12 semi structured interviews

6 respondents for the Alpha company - Male and Female

6 respondents for the Beta company - Female only

- Tandem interview

Face to face / Online formats

- Each respondent was preliminarily offered and shown a brief description of all the controversial events that occurred
- In-depth interviews with brands' consumers who are **well familiar with the brand** as they were customers or subscribers of the founders

Interview Design: the questions are designed to provide a view of **how personal branding of the founder influence the fashion brand perception via Appraisal Theory**

Analytical approach: **Inductive** the obtained data processed using **coding**, by which it will be separated, conceptualized, and reconnected.

Theoretical background based on the Appraisal Theory:

Block 1 (Primary Appraisal)



Block 2 (Secondary Appraisal)



Block 3 (Coping Potential)



Block 4 (Re-Appraisal)



INTERVIEW DETAILS

Tables 4. Interview details

Company name	Interview date	Interview duration	Interviewers	Interviewee
Alpha	30.04.2025	25	Strakhov Alexander; Smirnova Elizaveta	Nikita
Alpha	30.04.2025	32	Strakhov Alexander; Smirnova Elizaveta	Alexey
Alpha	02.05.2025	25	Strakhov Alexander; Smirnova Elizaveta	Kira
Alpha	04.05.2025	37	Strakhov Alexander; Smirnova Elizaveta	Dmitriy
Alpha	04.05.2025	28	Strakhov Alexander; Smirnova Elizaveta	Alexander
Alpha	07.05.2025	35	Strakhov Alexander; Smirnova Elizaveta	Veronica

Source: author’s own elaboration

Table 5. Interview details

Company name	Interview date	Interview duration	Interviewers	Interviewee
Beta	02.05.2025	24	Strakhov Alexander; Smirnova Elizaveta	Nadiya
Beta	02.05.2025	25	Strakhov Alexander; Smirnova Elizaveta	Kristina
Beta	05.05.2025	34	Strakhov Alexander; Smirnova Elizaveta	Elizaveta
Beta	05.05.2025	29	Strakhov Alexander; Smirnova Elizaveta	Anastasia
Beta	06.05.2025	30	Strakhov Alexander; Smirnova Elizaveta	Anna
Beta	06.05.2025	32	Strakhov Alexander; Smirnova Elizaveta	Nicole

Source: author’s own elaboration



RESULTS

Sentiment analysis

Tables 7. Sentiment analysis for company Beta

Company name	id	translated_text	sentiment_type	sentiment_score
Beta	9	Hermitage scandal	negative	-0.9920
Beta	8	Sexual content scandal	positive	0.9994
Beta	7	Marble lab scandal	positive	0.9992
Beta	10	Bloggng Black list scandal	positive	0.7647

Source: author's own elaboration

Tables 6. Sentiment analysis for company Alpha

Company name	id	translated_text	sentiment_type	sentiment_score
Alpha	3	Fat shaming scandal	positive	0.9695
Alpha	2	Ferrari scandal	positive	0.9125
Alpha	1	No limits launch scandal	positive	0.9965
Alpha	4	Kobe Bryant death scandal	negative	-0.8780
Alpha	5	LGBT scandal	negative	-0.9995
Alpha	6	Russian TV show scandal	positive	0.9906

Source: author's own elaboration

The most important result revealed that reactions to different events differed within both brands and in fact each event carried a various emotional coloring, both negative and positive. This result indicates the relevance and applicability of sentiment analysis for monitoring public opinion reactions from the expert side in the context of controversial events related to the founder's personality. It significantly contributes to monitoring reactions and assessing brand perception.



RESULTS

In-Depth interview

Table 8 shows that customers recognize that **the founder's personal brand significantly shapes the company's image and influences consumer buying decisions**. Negative events or misalignment of values can damage a brand's credibility, while sincerity and alignment with customer beliefs enhance its success. Brands should avoid provocative tactics for attention and instead focus on maintaining a positive image through consistent actions and values. **Controversial events notably impact customer perception, as they can alter the initial image of the founder**, leading to feelings of misunderstanding, when expectations do not align with reality.

Tables 8. Primary appraisal section interpretation

Coding of Responses (first-order codes)	Interpretation	Company
"The founder's personal brand plays an important role in the decision to purchase products. If the founder's personal brand is associated with negative events or values that I am not close to, it can significantly influence my decision to not purchase. I believe it is important to support brands that share my beliefs and contribute positively to society." "First and foremost, I experience disappointment. I feel bad that a talented designer makes such mistakes that cast a shadow over his work and the brand as a whole. There is also a sense of frustration that the scandals distract from discussing the collections themselves and the creative achievements." "There is also some disgust about the brand's attempts to use provocation to attract attention. Overall, the emotions are more negative than positive." "Of course, these events have already changed and continue to change the public perception of the founder's personal brand. Firstly, scandals attract the attention of a wide audience, including those who were not previously familiar with the brand. Secondly, they create a negative image that is difficult to correct. Even if the brand takes steps to improve its reputation, the residue of past mistakes will remain. Thirdly, in today's world, where inclusivity and social responsibility are valued, brands involved in scandals involving discrimination risk losing consumer loyalty."	Customers admit that the founder's personal brand plays a key role in shaping the company's image at a whole and influencing consumer decisions. Negative events or a misalignment of values can significantly undermine a brand's credibility, whereas sincerity and alignment of beliefs with customers contribute to its success. It is important that brands avoid provocation for attention and focus on maintaining a positive image through their actions and values.	Alpha
"I don't really like the founder's content, the way she presents her photos and videos and how sexualized it is. It's like I said, overly explicit and intimate content, overly miming, a very rambling expression of her personality that wasn't there before." "Well, it seems to me, yes, because many people just make a conclusion about the brand through the main person, and if something very bright negative happens, but at the same time the person, if he did something bad, then this is a very hard imprint. Another thing is that I, for example, share this. That is, if I see that the product is of high quality and I like it, then I will most likely stay with this brand. But this, again, depends on the situation." "When I read about it, I mean the Hermitage case. I am not surprised, because she's a millionaire blogger (blogger with a million followers and they're always making some kind of hype out of nothing at all. So, I wasn't surprised, and it just reinforced my opinion that she is such a hardcore commercial person and not the most decent person." "The situation with the Hermitage didn't really move me, I'm a gullible person after all, maybe there really was an unfair situation there, maybe it's a hype. In any case, it is strange that she has such an intellectual image, and it is them who for some reason were detained and hit in the Hermitage."	Customers note that they are most often affected by controversial events, because it changes the perception of the image of the founder of the fashion brand after the initial perception of the context of the event. Cause of it is when a customer faced with such a situation, where expectations and the formed image do not come to unanimity - the emotion of misunderstanding is caused.	Beta

~ Source: author's own elaboration



RESULTS

In-Depth interview

Table 9 shows that customers initially had a neutral perception of the brand, but this shifted to a more critical stance following a significant event! that altered their understanding of the context. While their **overall attitudes** towards the brand remained **relatively unchanged due to its correlation with the founder's position**, they acknowledged that a **strong personal brand could enhance their confidence and emotional response to such events**. It potentially helps them navigate their emotional reactions more effectively.

Tables 9. Secondary appraisal section interpretation

Coding of Responses (first-order codes)	Interpretation	Company
"My previous experience with the brand has been neutral. I used to buy some items that I liked in terms of design and quality. However, given recent events, I have become more critical of the brand." "I view the brand's reactions and actions to controversial events rather negatively. They often seem insincere and belated. Instead of admitting mistakes and taking responsibility, the brand often resorts to making excuses or shifting blame to others. The lack of empathy and unwillingness to listen to criticism only exacerbates the situation." "However, given recent events, I have become more critical of the brand. No longer can I simply ignore the scandals and focus only on the aesthetic component. My past experiences no longer matter, as much as realizing the negative aspects associated with the brand and its founder."	Customers pointed out that the previous experience of referring to the brand was quite neutral, but after the event it changed its character to somewhat more critical, after realizing the context of the situation. Having made a secondary appraisal - changed its coloring towards negative.	Alpha
"I haven't seen the brand react in any way to the allegations against the founder. As for the sexualized content, but her brands support this kind of content and, for example, repost her photos on their pages." "I don't care to know the founder of the brand, or to have a personal brand to buy the product. But, of course, brands with a strong personal brand of the founder attract my attention, but that doesn't mean I will buy only those or in most cases products that have a media founder."	Customers noted that they have not particularly changed their attitudes as the nature of the brand is to some extent correlated with the position of the founder. However, they also noted that a strong personal brand of the founder could reinforce confidence and emotional response to the events and help to overcome emotional reactions.	Beta

Source: author's own elaboration



RESULTS

In-Depth interview

Table 10 shows that customers believe that **open discussion of problems can significantly enhance the emotional context of a situation**, as **avoiding issues** may lead to **increased negativity**. They suggest that after such discussions, it would be beneficial to establish concrete actions to address the problem. Furthermore, they emphasize the importance of transparent dialogue and view **the founder's honest communication on social media as a potential resolution**. Charity events are also seen as a way to improve emotional perceptions, alongside the continued production of high-quality, engaging products, which may help alleviate dissonance caused by controversial events.

Tables 10. Coping potential section interpretation

Coding of Responses (first-order codes)	Interpretation	Company
"The brand's ability to openly discuss controversial events and content has a positive impact on my perception. It shows that the brand is not afraid of criticism and is willing to engage in dialog. Honesty and transparency create a sense of trust and respect." "I believe that brands that avoid discussing issues only make matters worse and lose consumer trust." "To regain trust, a brand needs to take a series of concrete and meaningful actions, not just issue formal statements."	Customers during the realization of coping potential note that an open discussion of the problem would increase and improve the emotional coloring of the situation. In the alternative, in their opinion, the case could be aggravated by avoiding the problem and bringing even more negative reactions to what happened. After the dialog, a fairly correct directive would be to form a series of concrete actions to solve the problem.	Alpha
"It is very important to speak openly about the situation, when a brand glosses over some points, it always causes a negative reaction. This is a well-known fact, so if they somehow react in social networks and provide an alternative point of view, it is always a big plus." "It is very important how the leader of the brand and the leader of the company positions himself in social networks, in the media, what kind of image he has. This is, in principle, very important in any public company." "Classically, some charity events, some cool content or events, something that can get the point across. When a person puts out cool products after everything that happened, and you're like, oh, okay, we've already forgotten all about it." "Well, various ESG practices, some kind of charity, helping nature, what actions,	Customers also pointed out the importance of open dialog, and perceived the provision of coverage of an honest alternative position correlating with his principled position on social networks on the situation by the founder of the fashion brand as a possible way to solve the problem. In addition, they note that charity events will help to improve the emotional coloring of the situation. In addition, continuing to make an interesting quality product can also be a solution to the problem caused by the controversial event. Due to this factor some dissonance in opinion may be forgotten.	Beta

Source: author's own elaboration



RESULTS

In-Depth interview

Table 11 shows that customers emphasize the necessity of open dialogue and alignment between personal values and recognized human values for the fashion brand. They highlight **the importance of the founder's personal brand, noting that a stable personality behind the company fosters loyalty and emotional stability in customer-brand relationships**. Additionally, clients advise against creating artificial resonance from fictitious situations to attract attention, as such tactics are transparent and lead to negative perceptions of the brand.

Tables 11. Re-appraisal section interpretation

Coding of Responses (first-order codes)	Interpretation	Company
“This situation clearly demonstrated the huge importance of personal branding for the successful development of a business, especially in today's world. The founder's personal brand directly affects the company's reputation, customer loyalty and, ultimately, financial results. Negative behaviors or statements by the founder can cause serious damage to the brand, even if the company's products remain high quality and in demand “Unless it changes its behavior and takes real steps to improve its reputation, the brand may face customer churn, declining sales and a deteriorating image. In the long run, this can lead to serious problems for the business.” “The founder should change its image, become more reserved, responsible and considerate to the opinions of others. Emphasis on social responsibility. The brand should actively participate in social projects and support charitable organizations. Also it must provide transparency and openness.” “The brand should be transparent and open in its actions, ready to dialogue with customers and society.”	Customers after the past stages of the re-appraisal interviews point out and insist that an open dialogue and the correct positioning of personal values in combination with recognized human values should be aligned for the fashion brand, as well as closely follow the evaluation of personal branding.	Alpha
“It is very important how the leader of the brand and the leader of the company positions himself in social networks, in the media, what kind of image he has. This is, in principle, very important in any public company. Probably the most important lesson is how you react, how you continue to function further, you leave with shame or continue working” “And another important lesson, in my opinion, is that you shouldn't get high on made-up situations.”	Clients after Re-appraisal note that the personal brand of the founder is again important and note that creating a stable personality behind any company plays an important role in creating a loyal and emotionally stable picture of the relationship to the brand. In addition, they note that it is not worth creating a resonance out of fictitious situations to attract attention, because it is obvious and causes a negative coloration in the attitude towards the brand.	Beta

Source: author's own elaboration



RESULTS

The main insights and practical recommendations:

1. The importance of paying attention to the most negative events related to the violation of common human values, and open and honest reactions to them.

Providing the own perspective of the founder on each of the controversial events, rather than silencing the facts.

2. Using fictitious stories and scandals in personal brand marketing campaigns is inappropriate. Due to this fact revealing , it leads to a complete dissonance regarding the personality of the founder and a revision of the attitude towards him for the worse.

3. The use of charity events by the brand helps to overcome the influence of controversial events and bring the emotional coloring in a positive direction.

4. A strong personal brand of the founder is one of the possible motives about brand perception for choosing a fashion brand as a place to acquire a product.

5. Producing a high quality and outstanding product despite the scandal and not commenting on it, if it corresponds with the character of the personal brand of the founder can also be a winning tactic.



Discussion

- Controversial events that **are worth paying attention** to and to elaborate a detailed response to improve the overall attitude and brand perception to the brand..
- The attitude to personal branding of the creator **correlates** with the attitude and brand perception to the fashion brand and affects it in a positive and negative emotional way.
- *The research shows* that on regular scandals where in the implementation of marketing strategies are used either premeditated moves or prepared for PR situations can be used ignoring in their favor to **create an even positive reaction or bring the tone closer to neutral**. Even ignoring a controversial event and the associated response can in some cases **produce a positive effect on its emotional colouring**. As well as the context of utilising the uniqueness of the founder's personal branding and tracing the positions of the company responses and attracting respondents in one way or another adds emotional value and shapes brand perceptions.
- For some respondents it became obvious that they **cannot consider a brand with a strong personal brand of the founder in isolation from the very personality of the person behind the company**. If everything is calm and stable, then interest in the personality drops and accordingly there are either times of smooth and slow development or stagnation in sales (Harris and Rae, 2011; Holton and Molyneux, 2017). That is why the context of applicability of sentiment analysis remains relevant for further evaluation of potential steps to solve such problems in the emotional context of the reaction for the personal brand of the founder.



CONCLUSION

Theoretical contribution

The theoretical contribution to the research gap lies in the direct **applicability of sentiment analysis and Appraisal theory for monitoring public reactions.**

As it was confirmed as a result of data processing for a number of articles - the reaction in each individual case of a single media outlet is different and adds up the overall assessment of the sample in numerical data that differ from one case of controversial events to another.

This confirms that this type of analysis of natural language and emotional tone of the media news texts is possible in relation to the given context of applicability.

Theoretical contribution of Appraisal Theory, it was noted that people are actually willing to realize the news through the Structural Appraisal Theory pathway and the perceptual emotional pathway of re-awareness of the news - **to give a structured appropriate and constructive reaction and recommendation for action in relation to Controversial events and directly to the Personal Branding of the fashion brand founder.**

This concept of applicability has not previously been extensively addressed in the existing academic literature, but this study shows its applicability in the concept of Personal Branding part of the literature as well as marketing research.

Earlier in the paper the context of the Business environment of applicability of appraisal theory has been identified (Anninou, 2018). **The authors of the study research expand the scope of applicability of such a theoretical approach and give a wider picture of contextual use of it.**



CONCLUSION

Practical implication

- Sentimental analysis gives a better understanding of the nature of the news and helps the brand creator to better think about **the next steps** he will take in relation to the Controversial Event related to his or her personal brand and its impact on Brand Perception, **the more negative the news - the sharper should be the reaction of both the brand and the author.**
- An in-depth interview on emotional awareness, which correlates with the coloring of the news - will give practical insights on the way out of a particular case based on the correlation with the personality of the author and **how the client understands the creator and sees the further picture of his actions.**
- It allowed us to reveal a number of practical insights that help any such company to overcome various kinds of crisis moments and thus improve the emotional value of marketing strategy.



Limitations and Future research directions:

- The research is focused only on several cases of strong personal branding perception brands, which limits the external validity and capacity to generalize the results.
- Another limitation is that the in-depth interviews were conducted based on the convenience sample method, although the respondents are well-familiar with the brands included in the study and get the involvement into the context of the current research. Future research may concentrate on other groups of respondents.
- The next limitation - the interviews reveal client attitudes through reinterpretation of emotional reactions to an event, the interviews themselves were not examined with the applicability of sentiment analysis to them. In future studies by future authors, the reactions of reinterpretation in transcribing can also be presented as quantitative data and analyzed using dictionaries to determine the tone of the text.
- The last point of limitations and future directions could be to directly provide the founders' own reactions to controversial events for fashion brands and compare the reactions with the events and their ways of responding and getting out of them after a certain period of time.



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