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PERSONAL BRANDING: SHAPING AND MAINTAINING A SUCCESSFUL PERSONAL BRAND

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The present article studies personal branding as a strategic process in which individuals actively shape and promote their unique identities. By creating a personal brand, individuals aim to stand out, shape a likable and trustworthy public image and enhance their professional growth, leading to greater career opportunities. In today's digital world, the importance of developing a successful personal brand is increasing in order to thrive in the competitive environment. Skillfully presenting the personal brand on social media and various online platforms enables individuals to reach a wider audience, build credibility, foster trust and influence public opinion. The purpose of the research is to examine the efficient strategies that are used for creating a personal brand, the key elements and peculiarities of personal branding. Descriptive and analytical methods are used to analyse the linguistic and extralinguistic means employed by personal brand builders. In particular, Michelle Obama's personal brand, which exemplifies effective communication and branding strategies in both personal and professional spheres, is studied.

Keywords: *brand, branding, personal brand, public image, branding strategy, communication skills, effective communication, public opinion, influence.*

Introduction

In the contemporary digital age, the concept of personal branding has become a crucial aspect in both professional and personal development. Rooted in marketing principles, personal branding involves cultivating a unique and consistent public image to stand out in a competitive environment. This phenomenon has gained significant

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advancement with the spread of social media and digital platforms, which provide individuals with efficient tools to shape and promote their personal brands to a global audience.

Nevertheless, personal branding is more than self-promotion. It requires strategic and intentional efforts to project one's values, skills, and personality in a way that resonates with the target audience. Our study highlights the importance of linguistic and extralinguistic strategies in shaping a personal brand. The aim of this article is to examine how effective communication contributes to the construction and perception of a personal brand.

In order to study the process of creating a personal branding, we have chosen Michelle Obama's personal brand as a prime example. Michelle Obama's brand offers a rich case study due to her multifaceted approach, including her influential books *Becoming* and *The Light We Carry*, her various initiatives and active public presence across social media platforms. An attempt is made to examine how Michelle Obama efficiently communicates her values, engages with her audience, and maintains her relevance. By analyzing her speeches, books, social media presence and public engagement, the article illustrates how Michelle Obama skillfully employs both linguistic and extralinguistic strategies to shape her personal brand and connect with diverse audiences. This comprehensive study serves as a valuable insight into the interplay between language, identity and public perception, demonstrating the effectiveness of her branding strategies and the distinctive characteristics that contribute to her powerful and enduring personal brand.

Branding through the ages

The term "brand" originates from the Old Norse word "brandr," meaning to burn, and was later adopted into Anglo-Saxon culture. Early humans used burning to mark ownership on livestock. As trade developed, buyers used these brands to differentiate between farmers' cattle. A farmer with a reputable brand for high-quality animals would find their brand in high demand, whereas lesser-known brands were avoided or scrutinized. Thus, brands became a trusted guide for choices, a role that continues today.

Some of the earliest mass-produced items were clay pots, the remains of which are found around the Mediterranean region, particularly in ancient civilizations like Etruria, Greece, and Rome. Evidence of branding, in the form of potter's marks, is widespread among these remains. Potters marked their creations by imprinting a thumbprint into wet clay at the pot's base or using symbols like a star, cross or fish. These symbols are among the earliest visual brands (Clifton & Simmons, 2003; Holt, 2004).

Following the fall of the Roman Empire, the trade system connecting the Mediterranean and Western Europe declined, but local use of brands persisted.

Exceptions included marks used by royalty and governments, such as the fleur-de-lis in France, the Hapsburg eagle in Austria-Hungary, and the Imperial chrysanthemum in Japan. In the 17th and 18th centuries, with the growth of the production of fine porcelain, furniture, and tapestry in France and Belgium, factories increasingly used brands to signify quality and origin. Hallmarking laws for gold and silver objects were also strictly enforced to assure product quality (Clifton & Simmons, 2003).

The widespread use of brands emerged in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, driven by the advancements of the industrial Revolution. This period introduced the mass marketing of consumer products, with well-known brands such as Singer, Coca-Cola, Bass beer, Kodak, American Express, Heinz, etc. (Clifton & Simmons, 2003, p.14). The introduction of trademark legislation during this time allowed brand owners to legally protect their brands. Brands flourished with the collapse of communism, the rise of the internet, mass broadcasting, improved transportation and communication systems. Though brands became symbols of the demand-led economies, they also faced criticism, particularly from anti-globalization protests, which highlighted the responsibility of brand owners to society beyond just customers and shareholders (Clifton & Simmons, 2003; Holt, 2004).

The 20th century saw the evolution of branding from mere product identification to a strategic tool for differentiation and consumer engagement. Companies began investing heavily in advertising to communicate their brand values and create emotional connections with consumers. The advent of television advertising in the 1950s revolutionized branding, allowing companies to reach wider audiences and establish deeper brand identities. In the late 20th and early 21st centuries, the rise of the internet and digital technologies transformed branding once again. Brands now interact with consumers through social media, websites, and other digital platforms, creating interactive and personalized experiences. "An integrated marketing approach ensures consistency across all digital platforms, creating a unified and memorable brand experience for consumers" (Myers & Gerstman, 2004, p. 35). This transformation has turned branding from a cost center into a profit center, allowing companies to create sustainable competitive advantages and foster deeper customer relationships.

Globalisation has led to the unprecedented demand for individuals who are required to position and constantly promote themselves to remain competitive in the market. This need applies not only to freelancers but also to those who are in management positions.

The essence of branding

The American Marketing Association defines a brand as a distinctive name, term, design, symbol, or any other feature that identifies one seller's goods or services as distinct from those of other sellers (American Marketing Association, n.d.). However, many scholars argue against this perception. Holt suggests that a brand is the "culture

of the product” (Holt, 2003, p. 2). He believes that while a name, a logo, and other distinctive design elements define a brand, these alone are not enough for the brand to emerge and exist. Branding is more than just appealing names and designs. It involves the history behind these elements and their interconnections. According to Holt, material markers, like logos and symbols are empty and devoid of meaning without the stories and experiences behind them. While many brands are visually appealing, only those with a unique design that communicates the brand’s beliefs and values, stand out. These successful brands have a history, customer experiences and advertising campaigns that give material markers meaning (Holt, 2003).

Moreover, Kapferer emphasizes that branding encompasses developing an emotional connection with consumers, creating a strong and favorable perception in their minds. He notes that "a brand is not a product; it is the product's essence, its meaning, and its direction, and it defines its identity in time and space". A brand is a blend of rational and emotional perceptions in consumers’ minds (Kapferer, 2012, p. 35).

Clifton and Simmons distinguish two fundamental elements crucial for a brand: it must be “intrinsically striking” and leave a lasting, “indelible impression” (Clifton & Simmons, 2003, p. 17). Brands are designed to be noticeable, aiming to create a lasting impact. Visual uniqueness is achieved through various elements such as the name, letters, numbers, symbols, shapes, slogans, colors, or specific typefaces. Among these, the name holds the utmost importance as it serves as a universal reference in language and should remain unchanged, unlike other elements that may evolve over time. In today's developed economies, with a multitude of choices available, brands must clearly communicate their unique value proposition, ensuring quality, innovation, and trustworthiness. Differentiation is crucial, achieved through unique selling points, strategic market positioning, and adaptability to market changes. Branding also extends to sensory appeal, involving attractive packaging, signature sounds, enhancing the overall brand experience. Consistent brand management, regular performance evaluation, and sustainable practices are crucial for maintaining relevance and consumer loyalty (Clifton & Simmons, 2003).

Brands enable consumers to shop with confidence, navigating through a wide variety of choices without needing to be experts. Strong brands embed deeply in consumers' hearts and minds by consistently fulfilling their promises, creating a reliable relationship between seller and buyer. If the promise is kept, the buyer remains satisfied; if not, they seek alternatives in the future (Clifton & Simmons, 2003). A brand is the impression held by a purchaser or potential buyer. McNally and Speak describe a brand as “the embodiment of what businesses and their customers value, the means through which businesses get credit for the quality they represent and deliver” (McNally & Speak, 2011, p. 2).

In essence, branding is about creating a unique and enduring identity that distinguishes a product, service, or organization from its competitors. It is about

creating a cohesive and compelling identity that resonates with consumers, sets the brand apart, and fosters a lasting loyalty and engagement.

Personal branding as a new branch in branding

The digital age has given rise to personal branding, where individuals market themselves and their careers as brands. Platforms like LinkedIn, Twitter, Instagram and Snapchat have transformed personal branding by providing tools to create, manage and promote personal brands online, reach broader audiences, and engage in real-time communication. Consequently, many professionals and entrepreneurs now use personal branding as a tool for career development and business success, extending beyond traditional professional settings to include social media personas and influence.

The concept of personal branding was introduced and popularized by Tom Peters in his article *The Brand Called You*, published in *Fast Company* magazine in 1997. Peters argued that in the modern professional setting individuals should approach their careers with the same strategic mindset as companies use for brand management. He suggested the idea that individuals should treat themselves as brands, identifying their unique skills, strengths and values, and presenting them effectively to stand out in a competitive job market. Peters writes, “It is a new brand world. Regardless of age, regardless of position, regardless of the business we happen to be in, all of us need to understand the importance of branding. **You are the CEO of Me, Inc.** To be in business today, our most important job is to be head marketer for the brand called You.” (Peters, 1997, p. 83). Furthermore, he emphasizes that individuals **are responsible for their own careers, development and future and** outlines the following core elements of personal branding:

- *Self-Management: Viewing oneself as the CEOs of their own careers, taking proactive steps to market oneself and manage professional perceptions.*
- *Unique Value Proposition: Identifying and communicating unique strengths and skills to stand out in a competitive job market.*
- *Continuous Improvement: Engaging in ongoing efforts to improve skills, adapt to changes, and remain relevant in the field.*
- *Active Promotion: Strategically promoting oneself and maintaining a professional image (Peters, 1997).*

Peters believes that everyone has the potential to be remarkable and worthy of recognition as a personal brand. Personal branding is not limited to those in higher ranks but applies to anyone, regardless of their role within an organization. It suggests that an individual's value is not confined by their job title or position.

Peters' ideas have had a lasting impact on the field of personal branding and continue to guide how professionals build and manage their careers.

Theoretical perspectives on personal branding

Scholars offer various perspectives on personal branding, ranging from strategic positioning and communication of unique value to the importance of authenticity and effective management of one's professional image. Montoya and Vandehey argue that personal branding is essential for differentiating in a crowded marketplace. They emphasize that a strong personal brand enables individuals to employ their unique attributes, skills, and values to create a memorable and influential presence. They suggest that personal branding involves strategically positioning oneself to highlight distinct advantages and appeal effectively to target audiences (Montoya & Vandehey, 2002). Similarly, Purkiss and Royston-Lee highlight the importance of identifying and employing one's unique talents and strengths. They assert that a successful personal brand is built on what makes an individual distinct and valuable (Purkiss & Royston-Lee, 2012).

Schawbel views personal branding as a powerful tool for career advancement and professional success, describing it as a proactive and deliberate process that involves the identification of one's unique value proposition and strategic communication of this value to potential employers, clients, and networks (Schawbel, 2009). Kaputa emphasizes the importance of a clear and compelling personal brand that accurately reflects one's skills, values, and goals, which is vital for achieving business success and professional recognition (Kaputa, 2012). Similarly, Chritton highlights the connection of personal branding with an individual's characteristics, strengths, values, and goals, arguing that a well-crafted brand can create a meaningful, lasting impression, leading to success in various aspects of life. Her approach to personal branding is systematic, focusing on self-assessment, brand strategy development and execution of branding activities (Chritton, 2014).

Holt emphasizes the significance of authenticity in personal branding, stressing that it should involve presenting one's true self rather than creating a superficial or exaggerated persona. Authenticity fosters genuine connections and trust, which are essential for establishing a powerful and enduring personal brand (Holt, 2003). Purkiss and Royston-Lee also emphasize the importance of identifying and displaying unique talents and strengths to stand out effectively, noting that branding benefits an individual in three ways: building credibility as an expert in that field, reinforcing brand quality and value in the market, and creating market pull for new products or services (Purkiss & Royston-Lee, 2012).

To sum up, personal branding is strategic form of self-promotion, made possible through social media platforms that reflect one's professional identity. By employing strategic communication tactics, cultivating an online presence, and making use of networking opportunities, individuals can effectively build a compelling personal brand that authentically reflects their values, expertise, and aspirations. A strong personal brand can lead to numerous opportunities, including job interviews,

networking with professionals, finding work, getting promoted, forming partnerships, gaining professional recognition, etc.

Michelle Obama's personal brand

Michelle LaVaughn Robinson Obama, born on January 17, 1964, in Chicago, Illinois, is a lawyer, writer, and the wife of the 44th US President, Barack Obama. Her journey from modest upbringing to her influential role as the first African-American First Lady of the United States exemplifies ethical leadership and a deep commitment to humanism and social issues. Even after her time in the White House, she remains a prominent public figure. With a frequent presence in social media, public events and discussions, she remains a prominent public figure, widely respected and admired around the world. Her humble and humanitarian lifestyle reflects her core values of health, family, education, and public responsibility. Her attitudes and actions are still highly regarded and influential, serving as an inspiration to millions of people worldwide.

In the sphere of personal branding, Michelle Obama's personal brand stands out as one of the most prominent and influential. Her core values are deeply woven into her personal brand, shaping her personal branding strategies and establishing her as a role model for ethical leadership and public service. Beyond her role as the wife of President Barack Obama, she has built a *distinct identity*, characterized by advocacy, *a genuine commitment to social causes, visibility, consistency, authenticity and resilience*.

Advocacy and a genuine commitment to social causes are the core aspects of Michelle Obama's personal brand, highlighting her commitment to public service and positive change. As First Lady, she launched numerous initiatives focusing on critical issues like education, health, and women's empowerment. These efforts were not mere public relations tactics but sincere attempts to create meaningful and positive impact on society, effectively connecting with people from all walks of life. By addressing significant issues that affect individuals and families, Michelle Obama's personal brand has become associated with compassion, empathy, and a genuine desire to make the world a better place to live in.

Michelle Obama has always prioritized physical health and wellness, which are central themes in most of her initiatives. Her personal routine, including regular exercise, running, yoga, along with a focus on nutritious diet, reflects her commitment to maintaining a healthy lifestyle. This commitment is evident in both her personal habits and public speeches. A prime example is her *Let's Move!* campaign, launched in 2010 to combat childhood obesity and advocating for healthier lifestyles among American children (Obama, 2010). The initiative addresses the alarming increase in childhood obesity rates by encouraging physical activity, promoting nutritious food, and collaborating with schools, communities, and organizations to create healthier environments for children. In this connection, Michelle Obama states:

In the end, as First Lady, this isn't just a policy issue for me. This is a passion. This is my mission. I am determined to work with folks across this country to change the way a generation of kids thinks about food and nutrition.

(Obama, 2010)

Another significant aspect of Michelle Obama's life is her focus on education and hard work. She frequently participates in events and discussions that promote educational advancement and lifelong learning, highlighting the transformative power of education. Her commitment to learning and personal growth is reflected in her active engagement with educational initiatives. Through the *Reach Higher* initiative, launched in 2014, she aims to inspire young people to pursue higher education and vocational training (Obama, 2014). The initiative emphasizes the importance of education in unlocking opportunities and achieving higher standards, offering resources, support, and guidance to help students pursue their academic goals. In connection with this, Michelle Obama notes:

Reach higher encourages young people to complete their education and own their future. To achieve the 'American Dream' more students must complete their education past high school and take charge of their future through education.

(Obama, 2014)

Empowering Girls' Education Worldwide, Michelle Obama introduced the *Let Girls Learn* initiative in 2015, aiming to break down barriers hindering girls from receiving quality education in developing countries. By raising awareness and collaborating with governments, organizations, and communities, the initiative encourages young girls to become aware of their rights ("Let Girls Learn", 2015). In honor of International Women's Day on March 8, 2016, Michelle Obama delivered a speech celebrating the progress achieved on the one-year anniversary of *Let Girls Learn*. Stressing the importance of girls' education worldwide, she claims:

The only limit to the height of your achievements is the reach of your dreams and your willingness to work hard for them. Get a better education, have a better career, imagine a better future and live a better life [...] The ability to read, write and analyze, the confidence to stand up and demand justice and equality, the qualifications and connections to get your foot in that door and take your seat at the table - all of that starts with education.

(Obama, 2015)

This extract again reinforces Michelle Obama's advocacy for education and positive change. As she advocates pursuit of dreams despite various challenges, it highlights her personal resilience, the capacity to overcome difficulties and maintain a firm commitment to her values and mission in the face of challenges.

The Language Michelle Obama employs is a powerful tool in shaping her personal brand. Her speech conveys empathy, compassion and a deep sense of care. Her choice of words and sentence construction play a crucial role in conveying her messages with clarity, simplicity and directness, making complex issues accessible to a wide audience. Her language is straightforward, avoiding overly complex words and terms, which makes her messages clear and easy to grasp. She speaks with empathy and a deep sense of care when addressing issues close to people's hearts, such as physical well-being, education and women's rights. Her vocabulary includes words and expressions bearing positive, motivational connotations, such as *mission, determined, change, passion, reach higher, encourage, own their future, take charge of their future, complete education, height of achievements, the reach of your dream, confidence, demand justice, equality, take your seat at the table, get your foot in that door etc.* These phrases convey a strong sense of aspiration and purpose. By using action-oriented verbs, such as *complete, own, live, stand up, demand, get, take, she* encourages her audience to take concrete steps toward their goals. When mentioning the famous expression *American Dream*, she stresses the importance of education and persistence in achieving success. Her inspiring vocabulary and focus on self-belief, resilience, and the importance of education aim to encourage her audience, especially young people, to strive for excellence and overcome obstacles. Even when addressing serious issues, like childhood obesity, violation of women's rights, education inequality, racial injustice, etc. she maintains a positive and hopeful tone, empowering her audience to believe in the possibility of positive change and improvement. Michele Obama's motivational language evokes emotional responses, reinforcing her compassionate, devoted and caring personal brand.

Michelle Obama primarily employs declarative sentences to state facts or make clear assertions. To communicate her messages effectively and deliver powerful, memorable statements, she uses simple, straightforward sentence structures. For instance, she uses parallelism to emphasize key points and create rhythm in her speech. The sentence, *Get a better education, have a better career, imagine a better future and live a better life* uses parallel structures to highlight a sequence of actions leading to a positive outcome. The imperative structure of the sentences adds a sense of urgency and encourages action for a brighter future. The emphatic structure in the sentence *the only limit to the height of your achievements is the reach of your dreams and your willingness to work hard for them*, stressing the importance of ambition and effort in achieving success. The repeated phrase *this is* at the beginning of successive sentences *This is a passion. This is my mission*, is an example of anaphora which adds emphasis, creates a sense of unity and enhances the emotional impact of her speech. Through

these choices Michelle Obama emphasizes her deep commitment and personal connection to the issues she addresses, solidifying her role as a powerful advocate for change and empowerment.

Beyond formal initiatives, Michelle Obama leads an active public life and maintains a strong media presence, employing the strategy of visibility and consistence. By consistently appearing on various platforms and regularly sharing content and personal insights on social media platforms like Instagram, Twitter, Facebook and Snapchat she keeps her public persona in the spotlight. This approach makes her personal brand more recognizable, memorable and accessible to a wider audience. She also actively participates in public events and online discussions, demonstrating her core values and commitment to positive changes. By being genuine and transparent during discussions, she employs the strategy of authenticity, aiming to foster trust and credibility and form a strong connection with her audience.

Her advocacy, authenticity and visibility are exemplified by her participation in *Carpool Karaoke with James Corden*, a program known for its spontaneous, fun, and heartfelt talks (Corden, 2016). In this popular program, Corden, a British comedian and actor, drives around with a guest while singing favorite songs and engaging in warm discussions. Michelle Obama's appearance in this program, showed her charisma and relatability as she sang along to popular songs and discussed her work as First Lady and her experiences in the White House. The light-hearted and natural tone of the conversation humanizes her public image, making her more relatable to the audience on a personal level. Her energetic and enthusiastic participation, including dance moves and playful interactions, reveals a different side of her personality, connecting her with a younger audience and enhancing her down-to-earth public image.

During the ride, Michelle Obama discusses her educational initiatives, including her travels to Liberia, Morocco, and Spain, emphasizing the importance of education for girls worldwide. She states:

There are 62 million girls worldwide that aren't in school for a variety of different reasons. So much can be corrected in the world if girls were educated and had power over their lives. My message to kids here is - don't take your education for granted because there are girls around the world who would die to get the education that we have. They would do anything. They would move mountains to make it happen. So, I want our girls and our boys here to be aware of it.

(Obama, 2016)

Michelle Obama addresses the challenges faced by 62 million girls worldwide who are deprived of education, highlighting her role as a global advocate for education, gender equality, and social justice. In a less formal and engaging context, she reinforces her commitment to empowering young women and girls, inspiring them to

value their education and act for their better future. By expressing deep concern for less fortunate girls, she connects with her audience on an emotional level. This empathy strengthens her image as a caring and compassionate leader concerned with others' well-being.

Despite her light-hearted and simple tone during the ride, when speaking about the initiative, her tone becomes empathetic and serious, highlighting the urgency and significance of the issue. Phrases like *62 million girls worldwide, die to get the education, do anything, move mountains* convey a deep sense of urgency and sacrifice, emphasizing the immense value of education. Additionally, the contrast between the educational opportunities available to some children and the extreme efforts others must make to get an education is highlighted through hyperbole. Words and phrases like *power, much can be corrected, be aware* are motivational, aiming to inspire appreciation and action. The direct address *my message to kids here* and the imperative *don't take your education for granted* engage and motivate the audience, calling for awareness and action.

When Corden humorously asks her what she will miss the most and if she will miss the 24-hour room service and the luxury of a grilled cheese at 3:00 A.M., Michelle Obama responds:

I'm going to miss the people. These are people that you see every single day. They help you, they love you. You know their families and to walk away from people that you see every single day that's going to be hard. These things are nice, but the freedom we'll get for the privilege and luxuries for seven and a half is enough. I can make my own grilled cheese.

(Corden, 2016)

By emphasizing human relationships over luxuries and material comfort, Michelle Obama reinforces her image as a compassionate leader who values meaningful connections. She considers the luxuries nice, but downplays their importance compared to freedom and personal connections, fostering her independent, strong and self-sufficient image. By focusing on the emotional aspect of leaving behind familiar people and routines Michelle Obama uses words like *miss, help, love, family, nice, freedom, privilege* to express a deep personal connection with her audience. Mentioning the *grilled cheese* adds a touch of humor and casualness, showing her ability to blend humor with serious discussion. Her simplicity and straightforward, conversational tone help to convey genuine emotions, making her brand appear more authentic, relatable and modest.

During the conversation, they also discuss private topics, such as secret service code names. Michelle Obama openly shares both her and the president's code names, adding a humorous tone. Her response reflects her sense of humor and easy-going

nature, reinforcing her brand as authentic and sincere, even though the codes she mentions might be the results of her playful imagining rather than actual names.

Michelle Obama is a successful and influential writer, whose books serve as a source of inspiration for readers to find their own paths, embrace their identities, and make a positive change in the world. Through her memoir *Becoming* and her book *The Light We Carry* she expresses her personal values and mission, which significantly contribute to her personal brand.

Her memoir *Becoming* is a testament to her openness about her journey and experiences, as well as the values that guide both her public and private life (Obama, 2018). It has become one of the best-sellers of all time, enabling her to connect with millions of readers worldwide. In the memoir, Michele Obama invites readers into her world, shares intimate details and experiences that have shaped her life, from her childhood in Chicago to her role as First Lady. Her sweet memories about her upbringing, marriage, motherhood, and time in the White House offer an authentic and personal look into her life. This vulnerability strengthens her connection with readers, making her more relatable.

For me, becoming isn't about arriving somewhere or achieving a certain aim. I see it instead as forward motion, a means of evolving, a way to reach continuously toward a better self. The journey doesn't end. I became a mother, but I still have a lot to learn from and give to my children. I became a wife, but I continue to adapt to and be humbled by what it means to truly love and make a life with another person. I have become, by certain measures, a person of power, and yet there are moments still when I feel insecure or unheard. It's all a process, steps along a path. Becoming requires equal parts patience and rigor. Becoming is never giving up on the idea that there's more growing to be done.

(Obama, 2018, p. 333)

This extract emphasizes that Michelle Obama's personal brand is built on the idea that success is not a static achievement but a dynamic process of growth. This approach fosters her commitment to lifelong learning and constant self-improvement. Her openness and honesty about her vulnerabilities and struggles reveal that she is not just a figure of power but also someone who experiences the same uncertainties and challenges as others. Her language is reflective and philosophical, focusing on continuous personal growth and evolution. Words like, *evolving, forward motion, continue, grow*, the metaphoric expression *step along a path*, along with the repetition of the noun *becoming*, indicate her belief that success is a process rather than a final destination. Words and phrases like *better self, adapt, humbled, patience and rigor, never giving up* convey an encouraging and motivational tone, emphasizing the

importance of perseverance and continuous improvement. By using complex sentences, she aims to stress the nuanced and ongoing nature of personal growth. Through juxtaposition, she compares different stages of her life, contrasting the challenges and achievements associated with her roles as a mother, a wife, a person of power, each requiring *patience and rigor*. By sharing her own journey and addressing her personal growth and struggles, she not only humanizes herself, but also encourages her readers to persist in their personal development and strive for a better self. She stresses the idea that despite challenges and moments of doubt, one should continue to move forward, as there is always room for growth and improvement. This approach fosters her brand's authenticity and resilience, reinforces her image not only as an influential leader deeply committed to personal and collective progress, but also as a devoted mother and wife who deeply values family.

We tried to keep family routines intact, even when the world around us was anything but routine. Dinnertime was sacred, a moment for the four of us to reconnect, share our days, and just be together.

(Obama, 2018, p. 325)

Michelle Obama emphasizes the importance of spending quality time with her family - her husband Barack Obama and their daughters Malia and Sasha. Using emotionally charged words like *sacred, recollect, together, share*, she stresses her commitment to maintaining strong family bonds, despite busy career. This choice highlights the value of family support and togetherness, stresses the importance of these bonds for personal fulfillment, strengthening the authenticity and resilience of her brand.

Through *Becoming* Michelle Obama not only shares her personal history, but also offers a unique perspective on Barack Obama's presidency and her role as the first African American First Lady. She writes:

There's an age-old maxim in the Black community: you've got to be twice as good to get half as far. As the first African American family in the White House, we were being viewed as representatives of our race. Any error or lapse in judgment, we knew, would be magnified, read as something more than what it was."

(Obama, 2018, p. 254)

This extract once again highlights Michelle Obama's image as a role model who sets high standards and strives for excellence in both her professional and personal endeavors. Through juxtaposition in the expression *you've got to be twice as good to get half as far*, she starkly contrasts the immense efforts required by *the Black*

community with the unfair outcomes they often have, emphasizing the inequality and racial discrimination endured by African Americans. However, by noting their position as *the first African American family in the White House*, she highlights their unique and unprecedented role as a symbol of racial progress. Using synonymous words like *error and lapse*, she stresses the external judgment and scrutiny imposed upon them by the society because of their race, suggesting that for them no mistake, however minor, would go unnoticed. This highlights the idea that despite the racial bias, her ability to overcome obstacles and maintain grace under pressure significantly contributes to her strong and inspiring personal brand.

By sharing her triumphs and disappointments, struggles and successes, she tells her full story, presenting herself as an impactful individual and further enhancing her strong and inspiring personal brand. When discussing the challenges she faces and balancing her personal and public life, she also addresses the psychological barriers that can prevent success.

Failure is a feeling long before it becomes an actual result. It's vulnerability that breeds with self-doubt and then is escalated, often deliberately, by fear.

(Obama, 2018, p. 46)

With this short but deep insight into the psychological origins of failure, she suggests that managing the feeling of failure and self-doubt can help prevent the fear that leads to negative outcomes. This perspective encourages readers to take control of their thoughts and emotions, highlighting the power of mindset. By addressing her ability to overcome obstacles throughout her life, from her early years in Chicago to her time in the White House, she reinforces her personal brand of resilience. Her honesty about internal battles with fear and doubt not only strengthens her connection with readers who may have faced similar struggles, but also shows that even someone as accomplished as she is experiences challenges.

In her book *The Light We Carry*, she goes on offering advice on navigating challenges and uncertainties to achieve success and personal growth, drawing from her experiences. She delves deep into the concept of *inner light* as a source of strength and resilience, encouraging her readers to recognize and nurture their inner light as a guiding force for personal growth, success, and well-being. She writes:

I believe that each of us carries a bit of inner brightness, something entirely unique and individual, a flame that's worth protecting. When we are able to recognize our own light, we become empowered to use it. When we learn to focus that light, we can illuminate our paths, making it easier to move forward through uncertainty and fear. When we learn to foster what's

unique in the people around us, we become better able to build compassionate communities and make meaningful change.

(Obama, 2022, p. 22)

Using emotionally charged and inspiring words like *unique, flame, individual, empowered, move forward* and metaphoric phrases like *inner brightness, our own light, illuminate our path*, she encourages young readers to recognize their inner strengths and shape their unique identities. By focusing on self-esteem and confidence, she motivates them to strive for a brighter future. This approach highlights her commitment to authenticity and reinforces her role as a leader who values both individual and collective empowerment.

Even after her time in the White House, Michelle Obama's advocacy efforts did not diminish. She continues to use her influence to engage with various social causes, maintaining her relevance and impact. Through media projects, public speaking, talk shows and collaborations, she has extended the reach of her personal brand, remaining a powerful force for social change. In her final speech as First Lady, Michelle Obama delivers a powerful message to the youth, inspiring them to pursue their dreams.

Right now, you need to be preparing yourself to add your voice to our national conversation. You need to prepare yourself to be informed and engaged as a citizen, to serve and to lead, to stand up for our proud American values and to honor them in your daily lives. And that means getting the best education possible so you can think critically, so you can express yourself clearly, so you can get a good job and support yourself and your family, so you can be a positive force in your community. [...] I want our young people to know that they matter, that they belong. So don't be afraid — you hear me, young people? Don't be afraid. Be focused. Be determined. Be hopeful. Be empowered. Empower yourselves with a good education, then get out there and use that education to build a country worthy of your boundless promise. Lead by example with hope, never fear. And know that I will be with you, rooting for you and working to support you for the rest of my life.

(Obama, 2017)

This motivating message, reflecting Michelle Obama's core values, beliefs and attitudes, once again reinforces the key aspects of her personal brand. Using the phrases like *get the best education, think critically, express yourself clearly, get a good job, support yourself, be a positive force, empower yourself with a good education*, she emphasizes the importance of education, civic engagement, power of hope and positive

mindset.. The short parallel constructions *Be focused, Be determined, Be hopeful, Be empowered* are meant to inspire and motivate *young people*, reinforcing the idea of self-empowerment and resilience. Her words are a call to action for young people to overcome the challenges of their lives. This reflects her efforts to ensure that everyone feels seen, heard, and valued. Her promise to continue supporting the young people reinforces her lifelong dedication to public service, fostering her inspiring, empowering, motivating personal brand. With this she proves that she is more than merely a former First Lady. She is an eloquent communicator, a well-established professional, and a caring soul. Her personal brand is deeply rooted in creating a more inclusive and fair society, where every person has the opportunity to succeed and contribute to a better and safer future.

To sum up, Michelle Obama stands as a powerful example of how personal authenticity, resilience, and a commitment to positive change can shape a successful brand. Her personal brand is built on her core values of integrity, family and community, that are reflected in her advocacy for education, health, and the empowerment of women and youth, making her an influential and respected figure in contemporary society.

Conclusion

In conclusion, personal branding is the deliberate process of creating and managing a unique public image, a distinct professional identity. It involves demonstrating unique values, strengths, skills and experiences to stand out in the marketplace, using various communication channels such as social media, public speaking, writing and networking. Effective personal branding aims to enhance visibility, establish credibility, foster trust and build strong connections with the target audience, ultimately leading to increased opportunities, professional success, and a lasting impact in the professional field.

In the sphere of personal branding, Michelle Obama's personal brand is notably prominent and influential. She has skillfully crafted a personal brand that resonates deeply with millions of people worldwide. By sharing her life story with authenticity, she has established an image grounded on her core values. Her commitment to education, health, social justice, empowerment, and community service, combined with her strategic use of modern technology and media, has amplified her influence as a global leader and advocate for positive change.

Michelle Obama's brand is a successful blend of tangible and intangible elements that together create a powerful identity. Apart from being the wife of President Barack Obama, she has established a distinct personal brand characterized by her advocacy, genuine dedication to social causes, visibility, consistency, authenticity, and resilience. Her ability to connect with diverse audiences through honesty and heartfelt communication makes her a role model for those aiming to develop their own personal

brands. Through her books, public speeches, and initiatives, she consistently promotes values of hope, pursuit of goals and social responsibility, leaving a powerful and enduring impact on contemporary society. Her brand not only inspires but also serves as a guide for individuals aiming to align their lives with their values and make a meaningful difference in the world.

Conflict of interests

The author declares no ethical issues or conflict of interests in this research.

Ethical standards

The author affirms this research does not involve human subjects.

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Միրանուշ Ղալթախյան

Սույն հոդվածի նպատակն է ուսումնասիրել անձնական բրենդ ստեղծելու եղանակներն ու ռազմավարությունները, վեր հանել անձնական բրենդինգի առանձնահատկություններն ու դրա կարևորությունը ժամանակակից կյանքում: Անձնական բրենդավորման գործընթացում անձը ձգտում է լավագույնս ներկայացնել իր անհատականությունը, արժանիքները, ակտիվորեն կիրառում է հաղորդակցական հմտությունները՝ ինչպես անձնական, այնպես էլ մասնագիտական ոլորտներում տարբերվելու նպատակով: Հաջողված անձնական բրենդի շնորհիվ ձևավորվում է համակրելի, վստահելի և ազդեցիկ հասարակական կերպար, ինչն էլ դրականորեն է անդրադառնում անհատի մասնագիտական աճի և կայացման վրա: Հմտորեն ներկայացնելով իր անձնական բրենդը համացանցային տարաբնույթ հարթակներում՝ անհատին հաջողվում է ավելի լայն լսարան ձեռք բերել, նրանց վրա ներազդել և ցանկալի հասարակական կարծիք ձևավորել: Հոդվածում քննության է առնվում Միշել Օբամայի հասարակական կերպարը, ազդեցիկ անձնական բրենդ ստեղծելու արդյունավետ ռազմավարությունները, լեզվական և արտալեզվական միջոցները:

Բանալի բառեր՝ բրենդ, բրենդինգ, անձնական բրենդ, հանրային կերպար, բրենդինգի ռազմավարություն, հաղորդակցական հմտություններ, արդյունավետ հաղորդակցում, ներազդում: