THE GROWTH OF PERSONAL BRANDING IN GHANA:

MOTIVATIONS AND PRACTICES

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this research project is my original work towards the award of Master of Communication degree and that, it contains no material previously published by another person or material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree by the university except where due acknowledgement has been made in the text.

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ABSTRACT

Personal branding is gradually gaining attention in Ghana as various business executives, job seekers, celebrities and politicians apply the concept to their career and political lives. The knowledge of this concept is, however, heavily informed by self-help materials written and produced by non-academic writers and so-called experts on the topic. Empirical studies in this area of branding are lacking. This study uses interview data from people in the management teams of five famous Ghanaian celebrities, to tease out the motivations for building and managing a personal brand, as well as the strategies and resources that are applied while practicing this relatively novel concept in Ghana. The results suggested that celebrities in Ghana manage personal brands for marketing reasons. They viewed their identity as commodities that could bring them both social and economic returns. The research also identified that the practice of personal branding took a multidisciplinary approach and was not solely based on marketing principles as proposed by some advocates; 1) the processes involved in managing the brand, as applied by these five celebrities, mirrored the corporate branding process used by organisations to manage their reputation, 2) the inputs and resources applied to this concept where informed by Ervin Goffman’s theory of self-presentation.
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CHAPTER ONE  
INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND:

In 1997, an American writer on business management practices, Tom Peters, popularised the concept of Personal Branding in his article ‘The Brand Called You’, published by Fast Company. This novel idea was inspired by the traditional idea of branding as was already known as a marketing strategy for positioning goods, services and organisations. The article challenges all individuals and professionals to identify and market their unique strengths to stand out and succeed in the world of work. It encouraged the use of new media such as personal websites and emails to market one’s unique selling proposition (Peters, 1997).

Tom Peters defined personal branding as “the proactive effort of creating messages and strategies to promote the unique value of an individual” (Peters, 1997). Career counsellors and human resource executives increasingly advise and encourage job seekers to identify and promote a personal brand to increase their chances of securing a job in the competitive job market (Horton, 2011). “Developing your personal brand ensures that you are not left behind and that you develop the competitive advantage that positions you for the career opportunities you deserve” (Horton, 2011).

In Ghana, there is a growing awareness about the idea of personal branding as the concept is increasingly discussed at career fairs, professional training workshops, entrepreneurship and business conferences and at Continuous Professional Development Programmes (Lewin, 2018) (GhanaWeb, 2017). Both traditional and new media have also contributed to the
increased awareness and interest. Personal branding enthusiasts, marketing experts and career counsellors share their perspectives on the importance of building a personal brand and how it can be done through radio discussions, blog posts, podcasts and social media posts.

Albert and Comfort Ocran are well-known Ghanaian management consultants, executive coaches and authors of several personal development books such as Speak Like A Pro (2015), Mentoring for Success (2011), Career Starter Pack (2010) and Personal Branding & Reputational Equity. They have addressed the concept of personal branding from a career and life success perspective in their books, articles, podcasts and speeches which are organised annually throughout the country. In their article on ‘Crafting a Unique Selling Proposition or Personal Brand Statement’, the authors advise job seekers to consider themselves as a product, identify their unique selling proposition (USP) and communicate it effectively in order to stand out and be attractive to job recruiters. The USP becomes their personal brand.

“Whether you are applying for a new job or looking for a promotion within your present job, it all boils down to marketing your skills well. Just like products have to be marketed to consumers, candidates have to market themselves to employers. The USP should answer a commonly asked question at job interviews, ‘Why should we hire you?’ What employers are usually looking for is a unique skill that can help them in difficult situations” (Ocran & Ocran, 2015).

Another name that comes up in Ghana’s growing personal branding ecosystem is Emelia Bartels. She is a personal branding consultant and an executive coach who has made a name for herself as a personal branding expert, transforming the image and reputation of African
business executives (Osei, 2012). She is also a columnist who regularly shares her insights on personal branding and reputation management on two of Ghana’s major online news websites; myjoyonline.com and Ghanaweb.com. In one of her columns “What's so great about the 'Personal Brand Mix’?” Emelia, who is also a marketer, espoused the synergy between the marketing mix [Product, Price, Place and Promotion] and a personal branding mix. In the personal branding mix, she explains that the Product is the self, the personality. The Price is the value the personality commands and how it is distinguishable from other people. The Place is the distribution channels that are used to share key information about the person. Promotion is the way in which communication is undertaken; the strategies and tactics used in the various communication channels (Bartels, 2018).

Emelia Bartels considers personal branding to be an essential tool in career; ‘People may decide to do business with you based on the brand you exude and not so much on the job title you hold or the product or service you offer” (Bartels, 2018). She identifies personal branding as a “tool for unearthing your Unique Personal Attributes (UPA's); your talents, skills, strengths and your Unique Promise of Value (UPV's); your vision, purpose, passion and values to those who make decisions about you, that is your Stakeholders” (Bartels, 2018). She proposes the ‘Personal Branding mix as a strategy that “can aid in promoting the real you and expand your success” (Bartels, 2018).

The increase in personal branding advocacy and advocates may be as a result of the problem of unemployment in Ghana; where every year thousands of graduates compete for few job vacancies. Personal branding has become the strategy to be employed in order to stand out of the masses and secure a job. As acknowledged by Albert and Comfort Ocran,
“In a typical job selection process, the review panel often has to make a difficult choice between several equally matched candidates. This is because many candidates possess similar qualifications and experiences. So, why would an employer choose you unless you have something different to offer from the rest of the competition?” (Ocran & Ocran, 2015).

For many job recruiters, social media has become an essential tool for searching for potential job candidates, attracting top talents and in the recruiting process. In a 2015 global research on job recruitments and by Jobvite, it was found that about 92% of recruiters use social media in the recruitment process, with 87% of recruiters using professional network Linked In (Jobvite, 2015). The study also revealed that 56% of recruiters find some of their best candidates through social media (Jobvite, 2015). This recruitment method has also encouraged job applicants to use these same social media platforms to communicate their strengths and experiences, build a suitable image of themselves in order to stand out and attract the right jobs (Khedher, 2015, p. 20).

Business executives and job seekers are not the only personalities involved in building a personal brand. Local luminaries; performing artists, activists, radio personalities, politicians are examples of local personalities who apply the concept of personal branding.

Personal branding was strongly introduced into Ghana’s political arena during the country’s 2016 Presidential and Parliamentary elections (Opara, 2017). Promotion of the individual candidates was a key feature during the campaigning period. Leading politicians employed social media platforms to communicate their political messages to target audiences. These platforms also opened new possibilities for politicians to personally engage and present themselves to citizens. All seven presidential candidates had social media pages and 93 of the 275 members of parliament also had social media accounts (Penplus Bytes, 2016).
However, efforts at branding the two candidates from Ghana’s leading political parties (The National Democratic Congress and the New Patriotic Party) were the most obvious. As part of their campaign strategies, the two parties also employed specific tactics to position their flagbearers. They used different narratives to project their flagbearers as reputable individuals fit for the office of the president. The NPP camp consistently positioned Nana Akuffo Addo as a persistent dignified lawyer, distinguished public servant and a diplomat. On the other side was the incumbent John Mahama of the NDC camp who was projected as a youthful president and a product of the political mill of Ghana, who was seeking re-election on the backdrop of massive infrastructural development and a booming private sector industry. Both sides hired the services of communication professionals, social media experts and image professionals to handle their communication (Opara, 2017). The candidates run social campaigns to communicate these images and position themselves in the minds of the electorate. Hashtag campaigns like #Knowyourpresident were initiated from the Nana Akuffo Addo camp to showcase a man who has served his people all his adult life and was ready to continue on a presidential scale. #JMToaso was also used in the Mahama camp to highlight the transformative works of John Dramani Mahama (Opara, 2017).

1.1.1 Personal Branding in Ghana’s Entertainment Industry

Thomson Mathews (2006) argues that much of the success of the media and entertainment industry hinges on the successful positioning of its key assets: celebrities. The new crop of players in Ghana’s entertainment industry seems to agree with this line of thinking; as new tactics are devised to manage the impressions about and reputation of celebrities. Some Ghanaian celebrities are hiring the services of management teams, branding experts and
image architects to work on positioning them as well as their art through traditional media features and social media marketing (Junia, 2018). Social media platforms have also provided them with more leverage to showcase their brand and interact directly with their fans and consumers. In 2017 music, sports and movie personalities took the top eight positions as most influential Ghanaian personalities on social media in the Ghana Social Media Rankings coming before personalities such as the president of Ghana (Ghanaweb, 2018). New media has provided celebrity brands with more visibility as they gather millions of followers on social media (ChiefBlogger, 2017).

The reasons behind this upsurge in celebrity branding is a focus area of this study. However, it is worth noting that there could be potential economic benefits for a successful celebrity brand. In 2017, a PricewaterhouseCoopers’ (PWC) report provided insights into the fiscal worth of Ghana’s Entertainment & Media industry. The industry was worth US$685 million in 2016. This value is expected to more than double over the next five years; revenues of US$1 billion will be surpassed in 2019 and a total of US$1.5 billion is projected for 2021, (PwC, 2017) (Ayemoba, 2017). One could assume that the positioning and differentiation that personal branding allows for would enable celebrities to cash in on the market and fiscal potential of Ghana’s Entertainment and Media Industry.

Another economic benefit to personal branding could come in the form of endorsement deals. In Ghana celebrities from worlds of sports, music, cinema, broadcasting, are often employed as human brands for the marketing and promotion of other consumer brands. In 2012, Samsung Electronics appointed Ghanaian rap artiste Michael Owusu Addo, popularly known as Sarkodie as its brand ambassador to raise awareness about Samsung mobile devices within the West African sub-region and to position it as the preferred mobile brand (GNA, 2012).
Sarkodie’s endorsement deals, among other factors such as sales, investments and popularity have featured him as one of Africa’s Top 10 Richest Artistes by Forbes for three consecutive periods – 2013 (Twum, 2013), 2015 (Philma, 2015) and 2017 (CNBC Africa, 2017).

Aside from their active presence on social media and endorsement deals, some celebrities in Ghana have found other ways to engage stakeholders with their brands. In 2017, Ghanaian musician, Okyeame Kwame, and his brand management team released a book on his personal brand, ‘Okyeame Kwame Brand Book’. “The 36 paged-document details the basic particulars of the artiste, who is referred to as OK, plus the brand standards, style, an overview of its history, vision, personality, values among others” (NYDJ Live, 2017). This publication was released to “put out a collection of the brand elements to influence marketing campaigns, communication with stakeholders and products churned out from OK (Okyeame Kwame)” (NYDJ Live, 2017). At the launch of the book, it was explained that the book was a product of brand architects and years of research into how his fans and consumers view and interact with the musician (Ghanaweb, 2017).

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

There is a growing awareness of the concept and significance of personal branding in Ghana. The application of personal branding by different classes of people in the country demonstrates this growing awareness; individuals create personal blogs and social media accounts to communicate about their career and expertise to make them attractive to job recruiters. Politicians hire public relations consultancies to manage their public image and reputation during election periods. Celebrities manage social media platforms, websites and
run campaigns that promote their image as the best in their industries while allowing them to connect with their fans.

Some researchers have attributed the increased awareness and practice of personal branding to “the rising number of books on the subject, magazines, websites, training programs, personal coaches, and specialized literature about how exactly to brand oneself for success in the business world” (Khedher, 2015, p. 19). In Ghana, some marketing professionals, motivational speakers and career counsellors encourage people at all levels of their careers to identify their special qualities and communicate them to the right people for career success.

Outside Ghana, the concept of personal branding is gaining the attention and interest of academics. However, most writings and opinions on the concept of personal branding are found in self-help materials written by non-academic self-acclaimed experts, job recruitment specialists and career advisors (Shepherd, 2005, p. 592). Predominantly, knowledge about personal branding tend to be “intuitive and informal, and professional advice is often hype-ridden and rooted in uncorroborated case-study experience” (Shepherd, 2005, p. 592). Evidence-based studies on the concept are few. A similar situation exists in Ghana. In as much as the concept of personal branding has been preached at events, on radio, in articles and on podcasts in the country, evidence-based studies are lacking on the nature and use of the concept of personal branding in Ghana. Which means information about the nature and practices of personal branding exist outside the throes of academia and are not based on corroborated studies and analyses. People who manage a personal brand based on information provided by such sources are likely to deal with varied and unsupported opinions on how a personal brand should be managed.
Celebrities are one of the classifications of people in Ghana who actively manage a personal brand. Previous research works done on celebrity brands in Ghana, however, have been heavy on celebrity brand endorsements. It is essential that researchers investigate the antecedents of the personal branding of celebrity product endorsers i.e. what goes into building celebrity brands for them to be used as a marketing tool for promoting other brands. Studies like this one are required to help academics and non-academics alike to better understand personal branding in Ghana’s context.

Personal branding has been described as a strategic process and like any process, it has inputs, a method and intended outcomes (Zarkada 2012, p.4). This research delves into the inputs and methods as are employed by professionals and practitioners who apply the concept of personal branding in managing the reputation and image of people in Ghana. The research also considers the motivating factors behind branding a celebrity in Ghana.

1.3 OBJECTIVES
This research hopes to open the door to evidence-based studies on the concept of personal branding, human identity and reputation management in Ghana. The study will tease out the communication strategies, tactics, resources and objectives of celebrities who practice personal branding. The research will bring out the strategies and practices that are employed in managing celebrity brands to become celebrity product endorsers.
1.4 STUDY SIGNIFICANCE

This research will provide a preliminary understanding of the personal branding ecosystem in Ghana. This will, hopefully, inform other researchers and inspire them to carry out further research into the growing area of human identity management as a shift in focus from organisational identity management. This, we hope, will open up the practice of human identity and reputation management to more scrutiny, bringing in inputs from academia and practitioners that will enable it to grow in theory and practice. This research also hopes to lead the way to the development of best practices in human identity and reputation management for the benefit of industry players.

1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

After considering the existing knowledge on the concept of personal branding, we set out to answer the following questions from this research:

1. What are the motivating factors for building and managing a personal brand as a Ghanaian celebrity?

2. What are the practices that are employed in the brand management process?

3. Which stakeholders and resources are involved in building and managing a personal brand for a celebrity?
CHAPTER TWO
THEORY AND LITERATURE

2.0 INTRODUCTION
This section critically considers relevant literature and opinions on the theoretical underpinnings of personal branding, celebrity branding and personal branding practices. We provide insights from the literature on how people present themselves. We also delve into the literature that considers personal branding as a concept that applies the marketing principles of branding to humans. This section will also share alternative theories, concepts and frameworks on the processes, strategies and tactics used in personal branding.

2.1 THEORY
Shepherd (2005) proposes the use of Erving Goffman’s (1956) dramaturgical approach to understanding mundane human interaction as the theoretical basis for personal branding (Shepherd, 2005, p. 599). Goffman’s (1956) study interprets the interaction between people as a performance. He uses this metaphor borrowed from Shakespeare’s quote ‘All the world is but a stage’ to explain human interactions (Kivisto & Pittman 2013, p.272). Goffman (1956) develops two concepts, the front stage which is “that part of the individual’s performance which regularly functions in a general and fixed fashion to define the situation for those who observe the performance” (Goffman 1956, p.22 cited in Shepherd, 2005, p.599). Shepherd (2005) considers this as ‘eerily prescient of the concept of the personal brand image’ where people carefully construct and present themselves in a particular manner to manage the impression that people have of them (p.599). The back, as explained by
Goffman, is “the place where the performer can reliably expect that no member of the audience will intrude” (Goffman, 1956, p. 113). As Kivisto and Pittman (2013) put it, the backstage is ‘where props that will be used at other times are stored; and where the counterbalances, lights, and so on that make the scenery convincing to the audience are hidden’ (Kivisto & Pittman, 2013, p. 280). The back is separated and kept private, away from the public view. This is symbolic of the private lives of human brands, but also the planning and strategy phase where “only team members have access” (Kivisto & Pittman 2013, p.280).

Elaborating on the practicalities of the theory, Kivisto and Pittman (2013) pose a question on how the theory works; “How do people convince other people—specifically consumers—to adopt a particular understanding of various social scenes” (Kivisto & Pittman, 2013, p. 273)?

Goffman (1956) explains that convincing consumers to adopt a particular understanding of social scenes takes a collaborative effort that stages a convincing performance complete with roles, scripts, costumes, and a stage. Only when all these are employed to create a coherent picture of reality can a team be successful (Kivisto and Pittman 2013, p.273). The description here of team effort can be likened to the human brand co-creation process proposed by Centeno & Wang (2016) who demonstrate that the image and positioning of a human brand are achieved through a collaborative effort of various stakeholders. The script, costumes and stage Goffman (1956) describes, uncannily depicts the tactics, strategies and media platforms employed to convey the brand image of a person.

The theory is relevant to understanding the concept of personal branding because of its focus on the manner people communicate about themselves and the steps used to present themselves to an audience.
Goffman’s (1956) theory proposes a two-way unspoken interaction that takes place between individuals; ‘when an individual comes in contact with other people, that individual will attempt to control or guide the impression that others might make of him by changing or fixing his or her setting, appearance and manner. At the same time, the person the individual is interacting with is trying to form and obtain information about the individual’ (Trevino, 2003, p. 35). This description captures the idea that personal branding pushes forth, which is for individuals to construct and present an acceptable or saleable image of themselves in order to make an impression on their target audience i.e. the person they are interacting with. This research is however concerned with one side of this two-way interaction i.e. the actions and intentions of the person who tries to control the impression others have of him. The theory also helps us to understand that there are two sides to all forms of human interactions, the conspicuous and the hidden, what Goffman (1956) describes as the front and the back. Personal branding operates on this understanding and guides people to construct, behind the scenes, an impression of themselves they wish to put across publicly. The theory guides this research to probe these behind-the-scenes activities, teams and resources that human brands employ to construct the desired impression. The theory also guides this research to analyse the conspicuous ‘front’ where the brand impression is communicated and how it is done for consumers to adopt the image being communicated. The theory states that it takes “collaborative effort to stage a convincing performance” that persuades a consumer to take on a particular image of a person (Kivisto and Pittman 2013, p.273). This will guide the study to observe how stakeholders gather to deliver the brand image of a celebrity brand. Studying all sides of the personal branding coin will enable us gain a thorough understanding of the practices involved in managing the personal brand of Ghanaian celebrities.
2.2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.2.1 Brands and brand building

In literature, the term brand has either been defined as a physical representation of an entity or as a tool for emotional connection. Ghodeswar (2008) explains the representational aspect of a brand by defining it as a “distinguishing name and/or symbol (such as logo, trademark, or package design) intended to identify the goods or services of either one seller or a group of sellers, and to differentiate those goods or services from those of competitors” (Ghodeswar 2008, pg.4). Malcom McDonald (2007) also captures the emotional aspect of a brand as “an identifiable product, service, person or place, augmented in such a way that the buyer or user perceives relevant, unique added values which match their needs most closely” (McDonald, 2007, p. 197).

Belch & Belch capture these two aspects of a brand by describing it as “a combination of many factors, including the name, logo, symbols, design, packaging, and performance of a product or service as well as the image or type of associations that come to mind when consumers think about a brand. It encompasses the entire spectrum of consumers’ awareness, knowledge, and image of the brand as well as the company behind it” (Belch & Belch 2003 pg. 14).

The concept of branding is one that has been used by marketers for the positioning and promotion of companies, services and products. In 2003, Kevin Lane Keller acknowledged that had been an increase in the priority placed on branding among marketing and business executives. This, he said was due to the emergence of ‘savvier consumers, increased competition, decreased effectiveness of traditional marketing tactics and the emergence of new marketing tools’ (Keller, 2003, p. 595). A decade on, Akgun, Kocoglu and Imamoglu
(2011) attested to the fact that building strong brands was an ‘imperative marketing strategy that ensures success in a highly competitive environment’ (Akgun, Kocoglu and Imamoglu 2011, pg.504). The need to forge strong brand-consumer relationships in the process of branding has caused many marketing researchers to focus on the use of emotions to attract and retain customers while maintaining a strong bond with customers (Akgun, Kocoglu, & Imamoglu, 2011, p. 504).

Ghodeswar (2008) explored the concept of branding, specifically how strong, competitive brands could be built to achieve the goals of positioning, publicity and even sales. In his conceptual paper on ‘Building brand identity in competitive markets: a conceptual model’, he identified and assessed some brand building elements through literature review and case studies of successful brands. He reviewed written materials on marketing and branding by various experts and analysed the brand building activities of some big brand names in India. Ghodeswar (2008) then proposed the PCDL model, a framework for building strong brands in the order of positioning the brand, communicating the brand message, delivering the brand performance, and leveraging the brand equity.

The first step in this model proposed by Bhimrao M. Ghodeswar is positioning. Brand positioning involves creating the ‘desired perception in the target consumer’s mind’ (Ghodeswar 2008, p.6). In order for the brand to achieve the desired outlook, it must carefully combine both tangible and intangible factors. Tangible factors are the actual product features or the quality and desirability of the services on offer. Intangible factors are ‘the emotional associations, beliefs, values, and feelings that people relate to the brand’ (Ghodeswar 2008, p.6). Ghodeswar (2008) proposes that a strong brand personality is created when the functional factors are endowed with some psychological values eliciting feelings such as joy,
warmth, trust and so on. These values are delivered by making the brand offering relevant to the customer and by intentionally establishing a quality relationship with the target. Positioning has the ability to differentiate the brand from competition (Ghodeswar 2008, p.6).

After prioritizing the focus areas of the brand during positioning, Ghodeswar (2008) explains that the brand must go on to communicate the relevant themes that appeal to the target to achieve differentiation (Ghodeswar 2008, p.6). A brand must creatively employ the right messages to get noticed, to ensure top of mind awareness and to change or reinforce perceptions among the target audience (Ghodeswar 2008, p.6). The writer explains that “brand awareness is the ability of a potential buyer to recognize or recall that a brand is a member of a certain product category” (Ghodeswar 2008, p.7). This, he says, is successfully achieved by brands that creatively repeat the right themes across various channels i.e. advertisements, public relations, direct marketing, endorsements, sponsorships, integrated communications and sales promotions. Their themes and messages are consistent with the brand’s values and personality. Communication is also not a onetime activity but is ‘developed and implemented over a long-term’ (Ghodeswar 2008, p.7).

The next stage in building a strong brand identity is to deliver the brand performance. The target customers at this stage actually experience what the brand has to offer. Ghodeswar identified that strong brands ensure that their brand promise is not only delivered to customers at the point of sale but at every touchpoint. “A progressive company cultivates its brand philosophy across functional lines throughout the organisation, evaluates all contact points with customers, and streamlines organisational processes to meet customer needs and deliver a consistent brand experience” (Ghodeswar 2008, p.7). Brands must also keep an eye
on their performance on the market; are people actually consuming the brand offering as against that of competition and what is their feedback after experiencing the brand (Ghodeswar 2008, p.7). Ghodeswar (2008) proposes some metrics to help a brand measure its performance on the market. They are; level of purchasing, consumption, brand recognition, brand recall, advertising awareness and other means of accessing the brand’s output (Ghodeswar 2008, p.7). These metrics help the brand to access the effect of its campaigns and positioning strategies (Ghodeswar 2008, p.7).

Finally, brands must leverage their brand equity. This has been defined as a process of “linking the brand to some other entity that creates a new set of associations from the brand to the entity as well as affects existing brand associations” (Keller 2003, p.351 as cited in Ghodeswar 2008, p. 7). At this stage, the brand can “leverage the parent brand associations to new categories of products and chart a new growth path for their brands” (Ghodeswar 2008, p.10).

Ghodeswar (2008) concludes that brand building efforts by organisations should not be removed from their normal operationalization but be incorporated in all organisational processes to deliver consistent value to customers (p.10). Ghodeswar’s (2008) PCDL model gives as a practical insight into what branding entails and how branding is carried out. Such understanding is a prerequisite as we go further to discover and analyse how the principle of branding espoused here has been applied to humans. Ghodeswar’s (2008) concept paper will enable us to identify and classify the branding activities, strategies and tactics that are employed under the concept of personal branding.
Research findings and models that have been developed around the concept of branding have been readapted and applied to different entities and situations beyond corporate organisations. Destination branding is one of such adaptations of the concept of branding. Under this adaptation, a tourist location is given a specific identity and differentiated from other destinations in the minds of tourists (Qu, Kim, & Im, 2011, p. 465). Qu, Kim and Im (2011) explain that “the core of destination branding is to build a positive destination image that identifies and differentiates the destination by selecting a consistent brand element mix” (Qu, Kim, & Im, 2011, p. 465).

Fig. 1 PCDL Model (Ghodeswar B. M., 2008, p. 6)
Mathew Thomson (2006) also views human brands ‘as one of the several operationalisations of the broader concept of a brand’, which are usually used in connection with products, services and organisations (Thomson 2006, pg.104). His reasons are based on the fact that, human brands like other brands, ‘can be professionally managed and they have additional associations and features of a brand’ (pg. 105). "Your client, whether they are an athlete or an actor or an actress, has intangible assets: a name, a reputation, credibility and an image. All of those attributes may be combined into something that could be made into a brand” (Brian Dubin 2003 cited in Thomson 2006, pg. 104).

2.2.2 Motivations for Managing A Personal Brand

The first goal of this research is to identify the various reasons why people undertake to manage a personal brand. “It’s time for me — and you — to take a lesson from the big brands, a lesson that’s true for anyone who’s interested in what it takes to stand out and prosper in the new world of work” (Peters, 1997). This quote from Tom Peter’s (1997) article on personal branding, sold the concept as a means to career success. Shepherd (2005) shares similar views and identifies the concept as a number of activities that market an individual for gainful employment (Shepherd, 2005, p. 589). Shepherd (2005) also explains that Peters (1997) sold this concept on the idea that everyone has a personal brand, whether they like it or not, so if people do not take charge of managing their brands others will do so by associating them with whatever they deemed fit (Shepherd, 2005, p. 589). By employing fear with such threats, Peters (1997) hoped to encourage people to take charge of their identity (Shepherd, 2005, p. 590).
Khedher (2015) conducted a content analysis on various literature about personal branding to, among others, identify what people seek to achieve through personal branding. Khedher (2015) identified writers who provided various marketing goals for promoting and managing a personal brand, that showed a digression from Peter’s (1997) career focused objective. Differentiation is one of the objectives Khedher (2015) identified; ‘people who seek to manage a personal brand seek to acquire a distinctive identity and add value to themselves’ (du Gay, 1996 cited by Khedher, 2015, p.24). Personal branding was also a strategic way of gaining the objective of visibility in an overly populated industry (Wee and Brooks, 2010 cited by Khedher, 2015. p24). The concept of personal branding projects the idea of independence and control over one’s life, this, Khedher (2015) explains, makes him “believe that if he invests in establishing a personal brand, he will have a return in terms of personal and professional success just like any other investor” (Khedher, 2015, p. 24).

Shepherd (2005) identifies some social motives that drive people to manage a personal brand such as finding a partner, establishing connections and self-expression (Shepherd, 2005, p. 597).

2.2.3 Personal Branding

A personal brand, as espoused by its key proponent, Tom Peters, is the distinctive characteristics that are inherent in humans (Peters, 1997). Peter proposes that these signs of distinction must be managed and sold in order for individuals and professionals to stand out and succeed in their careers (Peters, 1997). Thus, the idea of managing and selling a personal brand is similar to how shoe manufacturer, Nike, will put in place strategies to promote the
unique features of its shoes to ensure that they secure a high market share. Thomson (2006) demonstrates this idea using the example of a politician, “The candidate’s message, public appearance, endorsements, and so on, are all controlled by consultants and political parties in the hopes of managing perceived quality and brand image to increase ‘market share’ at the polls” (Thomson, 2006, p. 105).

Just like this research, other studies have sought to understand the practices that make up the concept of personal branding and unearth the underlying reasons for its use. In doing so, some researchers have deconstructed literature to try and identify the theoretical basis of personal branding. They have reviewed and analysed the knowledge bases and disciplines that are at the foundation of personal branding in order to appreciate the actions that are performed when one is branding a person. Anna Zarkada is one of the researchers who has gone down this path. She defines personal branding as ‘a new marketing concept related to the marketing strategies that a person adopts in order to promote his or her major personal characteristics’ (Zarkada, 2012, p. 1). Zarkada (2012) conducted a literature review of popular press and academic perspectives on personal branding. By analysing definitions given to the personal branding concept, her research identified some literature as proposing psychotherapy-based personal development tactics for the practice of personal branding (Zarkada, 2012, p. 2). She identifies this ideology in the following definitions of personal branding by ‘so-called’ personal branding gurus and marketing experts:

“[personal branding is] understanding what is truly unique about you … and using that to differentiate yourself and guide your career decisions. Through unearthing the true you and consistently and constantly living your personal brand, you attract what you need to achieve your goals without having to ‘wrestle with the universe’ to acquire it” (Aruda 2009 cited by Zarkada 2012, p.2).
“Unlocking your inner genius and connecting it to your passion and addressing a specific problem that can lead to profitability - emotionally, mentally, psychologically (sic), spiritually, and economically” (Flemings 2007, cited by Zarkada 2012, p.3).

The study also identifies another stream of definitions that project marketing thoughts and tactics; “personal branding [is] all about delivering something of value to a customer and delivering it in such a way that it creates an emotional connection with that customer” (Thomas 2007 as cited by Zarkada 2012, p.3).

Under this category, some writers equate people to goods and services explaining that “personal brand, therefore, would also easily identify a product or service and is a seller’s promise to deliver consistently a specific set of features, benefits and services to buyers” through its “four important characteristics; attributes, benefits, values and personality” (Hughes 2007 as quoted by Zarkada 2012, p.3). Zarkada (2012) goes on to challenge the practicality of these proposed marketing tactics saying:

“Such an approach implies that people have the means and the knowledge to define and research their markets to great detail as they will need to assess not only existing and explicit (as in a job advertisement) but also emerging needs and desired benefits. It also assumed that the person to be sold can easily be fashioned to display the attributes desired by a correctly segmented target market and clearly positioned as such in relation to all competing persons. The impossibility of achieving such a task is evident since the fundamental assumption of full information about the market and the competition, which is hard to meet with respect to products, is totally unsustainable in the fluid labour or fame markets for individuals” (Zarkada, 2012, p.3).

The final category of definitions the study identifies offer vague descriptions that are open to varied interpretations. The definition offered by Mobray (2009) proposes “a proactive behaviour that influences your ability to be sought after, mentioned, valued and given a
second, third and fourth look” (Mobray 2009 cited by Zarkada 2012, p.3). Shepherd (2005) also proposes this understanding; “those varied activities undertaken by individuals to make themselves known in the marketplace, usually, (though not exclusively) for the purpose of obtaining gainful employment (Shepherd 2005, cited by Zarkada 2012, p.4). Zarkada (2012) concludes her study by proposing that personal branding should be considered as a process which employs personal identity as it’s input, communication as its method and achieving career objectives as its outcome (Zarkada, 2012, p. 6). She also identifies the practice of personal branding as falling within the corporate branding framework. Zarkada (2012) makes the above propositions as a means of overcoming the practical challenges posed by psychotherapy-based personal development tactics, marketing thoughts and vague definitions offered by some proponents of personal branding.

The insights that Zarkada (2012) provides about the practices and theoretical underpinnings of personal branding are however very narrow and limiting because of the type data and methodology she employs in her study. Written opinions on what personal branding consists of, provide only a narrow window into the full and actual operation of the concept which real-life examples would have offered. The researcher further reduces the strength of her evidence by focusing on a few definitions offered by some writers on the concept of personal branding. The study, however, helps us to identify the practical challenges that some marketing concepts transposed and adapted for personal branding will have on the practice of personal branding. For instance, Zarkada (2012) explains that under product branding, a product’s identity can be conjured up from scratch and stage-managed to elicit specific emotions and outcomes. However, in the case of branding a person, there is a fully-grown person with formed attributes, a personality, behaviours and a set history to be dealt with
(Zarkada, 2012, p. 4). Obviously, activities, tactics and strategies employed for the former (products) will not work well in the case of the latter (humans) because of their inherent differences. Zarkada (2012) rather proposes that the practice of personal branding should be conceptualised within the corporate branding framework because of certain similar characteristics between people and corporations.

“A person can create products for sale and can offer services in exchange for money but is much more than these potential offerings to society and the market, and as such, it functions in the socioeconomic system in a manner that resembles that of a corporation. A person has values and intrinsic qualities that may or may not be evident in the context of production and is visible, relevant and interdependent with a set of individuals and organisations that extends much beyond the confines of the actual and potential buyers of the products and services offered for sale – what is termed as ‘stakeholders’ in the case of corporations. Finally, both people and corporations have distinct histories, identities and reputations that can form the basis for branding but cannot be changed through branding” (Zarkada, 2012, pp. 4-5).

Despite these views, some researchers are sceptical about this idea that personal branding mirrors the product and corporate branding process. According to Shepherd’s (2005) study, personal branding comes with its conceptual and practical challenges, which make it difficult for it to be fully captured under the discipline of marketing alone (p.600). Shepherd’s (2005) study which examined the theoretical basis, as well as marketing strategies and principles used in personal branding, concluded that no coherent description of tactics and principles of personal branding emerged from analysing business self-help books and materials written by some marketing practitioners (Shepherd, 2005, p. 600). He identified challenges that limit the application of marketing principles on human brands. One of the challenges Shepherd
(2005) identified was that, although contemporary marketing proposes a consumer-oriented approach to marketing, personal branding advocates for a product-oriented approach (p.593). Thus, in contemporary marketing, products and services are created to satisfy specific customer demands. However, in personal branding, proponents encourage people to look into themselves (i.e. products) identify their unique and strong traits, rightly package them and communicate them to the world. This approach of personal branding is also advocated by Ghanaian management consultants and authors, Albert and Comfort Ocran, ‘You must figure out how to differentiate yourself from everybody else. You’ve got to put your finger on what's unique about you - and connect it to the needs of the market’ (Ocran & Ocran, 2015). This means that individuals do not have to shape their qualities (i.e. products) to respond to market needs. “The emphasis appears to be firmly placed on the individual constructing a product based on themselves that can then be marketed as effectively as possible” (Shepherd, 2005, p. 594). Shepherd’s (2005) study further reveals how people can effectively market their brand. The various literature examined further explains that in order for a person to ‘sell’ a personal brand that is relevant, individuals must undertake a self-audit having a good appreciation of their marketplace i.e. who they are targeting and what their competition is offering. This ensures that the personal brand that is constructed is not only a true reflection of the individual but a competing personal brand (Shepherd, 2005, p. 594).

Another practical challenge that practitioners of personal branding may face when trying to apply marketing principles is the need for consistency in branding. It is a marketing principle that brands must be simple, clear and consistent. Consistency across all messages and communication targeted at customers is deemed critical to any brand-building effort (Ghodeswar, 2008 p.10). Living by this principle may be challenging as a personal brand
because “despite the importance of developing a coherent brand image, it is normal for individuals to develop multiple roles, personas and self-images in their personal, social and working lives” (Shepherd, 2005, p. 7). Going by the mainstream marketing principle of coherent branding, a strategy that promotes multiple identities is likely to fail as there is a risk of one identity may overshadowing or undermining the other. Shepherd (2005) also argues that the alternative, promoting a single brand identity, may prove difficult for a person as they may feel constraint in an attempt to hide other aspects of themselves that are not being projected. On the other hand, an organisation will easily execute such a strategy; by employing a top-down communication strategy, the organisation can get all employees to stay on brand in their interactions with customers. These analyses provided by Shepherd (2005) forces us to pay attention to the inherent characteristics of people as we draw up strategies and tactics to manage human brands. We are challenged to see that what works for products and organisations may not always work for people because of naturally occurring human attributes. The analysis is however based on literature and concepts written and proposed by those authors Shepherd (2005) calls gurus. These are writers “whose books grace the bookshops of airport departure terminals, and frequently include a magic number (‘Three ways to…’, ‘Five principles of…’, or ‘Ten things you should…’). The gurus are often marketing practitioners who aspire to package their ideas and/or experience into a saleable product. Much of what they write is laced with the language of marketing, but it is frequently case-based, anecdotal and often highly generalised, usually written to appeal to a business audience, and typically aimed at showing members of that audience how to achieve (greater) business success” (Shepherd, 2005, p. 592). These are not academic writers nor are their works academic writings. Their works are not based on empirical studies which make
the Shepherd’s (2005) study limiting as it fails to show actual proof of tactics, strategies and concepts that work and those don’t work. No real-life examples were employed to demonstrate the practical consequences of applying marketing principles to managing human brands.

The literature reviewed in Shepherd’s (2005) study revealed that personal branding had some association with mainstream marketing. However, the concept of personal branding comes with some nuances, as discussed above, that do not allow it to be “satisfactorily embedded in a suitable theoretical marketing framework” (Shepherd, 2005, p. 599). To this, Shepherd (2005) proposes that the concept of personal branding be studied and practised using a multidisciplinary approach to understand other aspects of the concept (Shepherd, 2005, p. 599). In this regard, he proposes an identity theory from the field of sociology by Erving Goffman; the dramaturgical sociology already discussed under the Theories section of this research.

Khedher (2015) agrees with the multidisciplinary approach to studying and practising personal branding as proposed by Shepherd (2005). In Khedher’s (2015) research into the strategies and theoretical underpinnings of personal branding, he proposes a framework for studying and practising personal branding using different concepts and theories to explain the various aspects of personal branding. The literature we have engaged in so far have highlighted marketing principles that inform the tactics and strategies involved in managing a personal brand. Some have questioned the ability of the marketing discipline to fully guide and inform the practice of personal branding. Khedher’s (2015) study of literature on branding, identity, the professional self and reflexivity gives us a better understanding of the other concepts outside marketing that inform how a person’s brand can be managed. His
study findings and framework will enable us to get a broader insight into understanding other pieces of the personal branding puzzle. Khedher (2015) views personal branding as a process; “Personal branding is a planned process in which people make efforts to market themselves” (Khedher, 2015, p. 20). In this process, Khedher (2015) identifies three stages: Personal Brand Identity, Personal Brand Positioning and Personal Brand Image. He borrows and applies different theories to explain how each of these stages operates in the personal brand management process. Khedher (2015) borrows from Pierre Bourdieu’s concept of habitus which explains that “social agents develop strategies which are adapted to the needs of the social worlds that they inhabit” (Wikipedia, 2018). The concept explains that cultural and social capitals are competitive resources which agents strive to attain in order to fit in (Khedher, 2015, p. 21). Cultural capital is defined as “a form of knowledge, skills, education, and advantages that a person has, which give them a higher status in society” (Khedher, 2015, p. 22). Social capital, on the other hand, is viewed as “the sum of the resources, actual or virtual, that accrue to an individual or a group by virtue of possessing a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition” (Khedher, 2015, p. 21). Khedher (2015) explains that these resources are the inputs that feed the Personal Brand Identity stage of personal brand management. The goal here is for the personality to portray that he or she possesses the social and cultural capital, that is, the education, training, networks and memberships required to be recognised and respected in particular fields. According to Khedher (2015), Bourdieu’s theory suggests that it is crucial for an individual to invest and acquire both field-specific social and cultural capital in order to build a strong personal brand within their related fields (Khedher, 2015, p. 21).
The next stage in Khedher’s (2015) management framework, Personal Brand positioning, has to do with impression management. He borrows Goffman’s (1956) Dramaturgical sociology to explain how people can manage audience’ perception of their identity (Khedher, 2015, p. 22). Borrowing from Goffman’s (1956) idea of self-presentation, Khedher (2015) explains that at this stage people intentionally reveal information consistent with the impression they wish to give on-lookers while concealing those details that are inconsistent with their intended purpose. This is what Goffman (1956) refers to as ‘the arrangement of the front’ (Goffman, 1956). Khedher (2015) identifies some tactics that are used to manage impressions of personal brands as Artifactual displays, Personal appearance, Manner, Verbal impression management behaviour (Khedher, 2015, p. 22). Artifactual displays are written accounts that inform and market the brand’s career trajectory i.e. Curriculum vitae, autobiographies, Wikipedia pages, websites, publications on social media sites like LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter and others (Khedher, 2015, p. 22). These displays ‘provide additional advantages to increase visibility, accessibility and communications’ (Khedher, 2015, p. 22). Individuals also groom and wear appropriate clothing as an intentional step to portray an ideal look that will ‘regulate their appearance for self-presentation purposes to influence the impressions formed by others’ (Khedher, 2015, p. 22). The other two tactics Khedher (2015) identifies have to do with the use of verbal and non-verbal forms of communication to promote themselves whiles maintaining the impression they wish to give off. The final stage of Khedher’s (2015) proposed framework; Personal Brand Image focuses on the outcome of the tactics put in place under stage one and two. He draws from Schon’s (1983) concept of the reflective practitioner. It is proposed that to ensure professional improvement and career development, personal brands must periodically reflect on their actions, tactics and activities.
as a way of monitoring progress (Schon, 1984). Reflection helps brands to identify why certain actions worked and why others didn’t, the findings and lessons are carried forward and inform future decisions (Khedher, 2015, pp. 23-24). Reflexivity may be retrospective, reflection-on-action, or it may be done during an action; reflection-in-action (Khedher, 2015, pp. 23-24).

![Personal Branding Process](http://ugspace.ug.edu.gh)

Fig. 2 Personal Branding Process (Khedher, 2015, p. 21)

Other writers and advocates of the concept of personal branding propose a slightly different process that mirrors the corporate branding process (Shepherd, 2005, p. 590). “First, the individual is encouraged to look inside themselves to discover their key identifying attributes: “your unique promise of value” (Ibid). They then construct a compelling ‘personal brand statement’ around this attribute set. Finally, they create a strategy for making the brand visible to the outside world” (Shepherd, 2005, p. 590). Rangarajan et al (2017) agrees with this process and explains the process of personal branding as beginning with self-assessment for the identification of core values and competencies which influence the development of a brand vision and mission. These core competencies and values must also match the target audiences and needs of the market. Finally, the individual must create strategies to expose
the brand to the desired targets and marketplace (Rangarajan, Gelb, & Vandaveer, 2017, p. 659). Khedher’s (2015) framework, however, provides more insight into the tactics and strategies that are used to manage a brand and by that it provides this study with more insight. The alternative corporate branding process and Khedher’s (2015) framework provide us with bases for analysing the patterns from the data which will enable us assess if either of these processes or another will emerge from our findings.

2.2.4 Celebrities as Human Brands

In the popular sense, celebrity is a noun meaning ‘a famous person’ (Marwick & Boyd, 2011). More descriptions have been offered; a commodity, a cultural formation (Turner G., 2004), a human brand (Holmes & Redmond, 2014, p. 223).

Some writers explain that it is these representations that are produced through their activities that shape up their brand. They describe celebrity performances on- and offstage, off- and online, public or private, as a marketing and branding exercises. ‘Their everyday life choices and values are all actions that create brands and branding identities. Consequently, the human brand identities sell product brands through endorsements and persuasions by giving personality qualities to inanimate brands; and they encourage consumption through being an idealized consumer and a commodity vessel’ (Holmes & Redmond, 2014, p. 223).

Indeed, corporate organisations in Ghana often ride on celebrity popularity and image to persuade customers to purchase their products and services through brand endorsement deals. Popular footballer and Black Stars player Dede Ayew was made the brand ambassador for uniBank in 2016 ‘to use his image and value as a player to help boost the image of the bank
within and beyond the shores of Ghana’ (uniBank Ghana, 2016). Popular Ghanaian actress Nana Ama McBrown was recently made the brand ambassador for liquor producer Kasapreko’s Royal range of drinks because she embodies the “key attributions of the Royal range of soft drinks such as innovation and creativity, authenticity, passion, originality, and determination” (Aryee, 2018).

In Centeno and Wang’s (2016) research into Celebrities as Human Brands, they considered celebrities as a multidimensional concept whose brand identity is formed through a co-creation process by the various activities of their stakeholders. The stakeholders identified were; advertisers, media, talent management, broadcast networks, consumers/fans, and celebrities themselves. This literature has been considered in this study because identifying the people who work to create a personal brand image is part of this research. Under the section of our chosen theory, we identified that there must be a team working coherently in the background to deliver a consist impression at the front (Goffman 1956, cited by Kivisto and Pitman 2013, p.273). This literature is relevant for us to identify and analyse the roles of various members of the stakeholders or teams working with the Ghanaian celebrities to manage their personal brand. Centeno and Wang’s (2016) research used celebrity sponsorship and social media advertising to examine how these stakeholders ‘gather together in an assemblage of services in co-creating human brand identities’ (Centeno & Wang, 2016, p. 133). Through prior studies and data analysis of 304 total posts with 34,767 aggregated comments in a netnography (internet ethnography) study, the researchers identified three classifications for the stakeholders based on their roles and stakes in the co-creation process. These were; focal, primary, and instrumental stakeholder-actors.
Focal stakeholder-actors are the celebrities. By studying the social media posts and interactions of four Filipino celebrities, it was identified that celebrities ‘structure themselves according to how an ordinary person should enact one's self’ (Centeno & Wang, 2016, p. 133) and by so doing they build emotional connections with their fans and consumers. Celebrities’ active participation in the co-creation of their brand enables them to socially and economically benefit through their social influence of public actors (Centeno & Wang, 2016).

The Primary stakeholder-actors are the consumers (or fans). By studying thousands of comments on celebrity social media pages, the consumers were seen to be the freest, active and expressive stakeholder-actors who create value for the celebrity brand.

The instrumental stakeholder-actors are those who have business interests in celebrity brands. These are, the media, advertisers, and talent management are some of the instrumental stakeholder-actors. They mediate the consumer-celebrity co-creation process. As infomediaries, they influence the co-creation process between other stakeholders and consumers indirectly attribute their knowledge of the celebrities to instrumental stakeholders. The success of the celebrity human brand overtime goes to benefit all three stakeholders.

2.2.5 Managing a Celebrity Brand

Judy Motion’s (1999) study into public relations and human identity “examined the public relations practices for communicating personal identity” (Motion, 1999, p. 467). Motion (1999) explained that identity management in the field of public relations has been greatly applied to organisations (Motion, 1999, p. 467). Her study, therefore, sought to shift focus in
this regard and analyse how public relations was applied in the growing area of what she called personal public relations. She defines personal public relations as “the constitution, positioning, and promotion of individuals to form a public identity” (Motion, 1999, p. 466). Motion’s (1999) study is relevant to this study for a number of reasons. Motion’s (1999) study looks into the growing concept of human identity management and self-promotion, the study focuses on the communication aspect of human identity management and lastly, the study gathered data from people who had a public identity i.e. politicians. This study also focuses on the management of human identity but uses a more marketing-oriented term, personal branding, to investigate this phenomenon. This research is also interested in understanding the communication practices of identity management and focuses on people who actively manage a public identity, i.e. celebrities. Motion’s (1999) study interviewed nine public relations practitioners who worked with some of New Zealand’s female politician (Motion, 1999, p. 467). She employed standardized open-ended interviews to interrogate the public relations practices that the practitioners employed while managing and promoting these public figures.

Findings from the research showed that the practitioners were very strategic in deploying their management tactics. Motion (1999) described this as an heirloom of public relations’ inherent strategic approach to communication. The practitioners described their approach to management as involving setting objectives, carrying out research to inform their activities and developing strategies that will enable them to achieve those objectives. Both marketing and public relation techniques were also employed in their work. The marketing aspect considers the politician as a commodity to be sold, hence the practitioners work on the appearance, presentation and personality of the politician to suit the public. “If practitioners
work with the notion of individuals as products then the individual, not just the packaging, can be changed” (Motion, 1999, p. 469). Motion (1999) identified that research was one of the crucial first steps in the management process. As part of their research, the practitioners interviewed their clients to identify their strengths and weaknesses and give the client the opportunity to articulate themselves. This step is similar to the self-audit Shepherd (2005) identifies in his research or the self-assessment Rangarajan et al (2017) proposes for the identification of core values and competencies. The next step after this inquiry was to constitute the politician as a public personality with unique attributes. “Two key approaches to constituting the subject, the woman politician, emerged from the analysis of the approaches discussed by public relations practitioners. Public relations practitioners either actively constituted the public identity or proffered advice to individuals on how to constitute themselves. Therefore, personal public relations may be formative or advisory” (Motion, 1999, p. 472). Some practitioners actively created political platforms for the candidates by identifying issues and policies that people were passionate about and guided the candidate to espouse the issues in a way that will bring in public support. Motion (1999) describes this move saying, “the public relations’ objective is to get the person elected, even if it requires the formulation of what the person represents” (Motion, 1999, p. 473). Other practitioners viewed their roles as ‘communication experts offering advice on publicity and promotion, rather than as political experts suggesting which platforms to adopt and what to relate’ (Motion, 1999, p. 473). Motion (1999) describes these two approaches to constituting a public figure’s identity; “the formative role is more closely aligned with marketing principles of promotion and competitive positioning. In contrast, the advisory role aligns more clearly with public relations principles of communication counselling and relationship building”
The study looks to the role the public relations practitioner plays, in addition to the communication approaches they use. This provides the current study with some good bases to analyse the work brand management teams do for celebrities. Motion (1999) concludes that personal public relations employs an integrated communication approach which combines marketing’s promotional selling capabilities and three essential public relations practices; relationship building, generating goodwill and communication counselling.

In current times, the introduction of web 2.0 has opened up more platforms and tactics for personal brand promotion beyond the tactics Motion (1999) investigated. According to Marwick and Boyd (2011), the advent of social media has brought a shift the traditional understanding of celebrity brand management from a highly controlled and institutional model to one where celebrities actively interact with fans in a free and open environment. Increasingly, personalities use social media to develop and maintain an audience. “Popularity is maintained through ongoing fan management and self-presentation is carefully constructed to be consumed by others” (Marwick & Boyd, 2011).

The researchers interrogate celebrity brand management practices by looking into and analysing the activities of over 200 American celebrities on Twitter. They conclude that celebrity image is maintained through mutual recognition of the power differences between fans and celebrities, and maintenance of one’s fan base through performed intimacy, affiliation, and public acknowledgment (Marwick & Boyd, 2011). To achieve this, celebrities must skilfully give off the impression that they are sharing glimpses into their private lives. Some also respond to the individual comments of their followers. These tools have made it imperative for celebrities to maintain affiliations with fans in order to maintain their images.
and sustain their relevance and popularity. The findings of this research show how social media is influencing brand management strategies, which is a relevant consideration in the context of Ghana where celebrities are heavy users of social media. The context of the usage and outcomes may, however, differ because the research setting may inhabit certain cultural codes and ideals that may be inapplicable or unacceptable in Ghana.

Centeno and Wang’s (2016) research on celebrities as human brands provides further insights into celebrity brand management practices in this era of new media. Aside from identifying and examining the roles of the various stakeholder-actors, as has been discussed above, the research also examines the socio-cultural codes that facilitate stakeholders in their co-creation of human brands. These codes are signalling posts that inform celebrities and other stakeholders on the right strategies and approaches to take in order to successfully communicate their brands. These are social construction and negotiation of identities, parasocialization, influence projection, legitimization, and utilization of human brand identities.

Under *social construction and negotiation* of identities, the researchers identify that the image of a celebrity emerges as stories about the brand and conversations consumers have about it come together. Some of these stories emerge from conversations that the celebrities have with their consumers on their social media platforms, or how celebrities present themselves whiles interacting with consumers. Instrumental stakeholders make a greater impact in shaping the celebrity image by using more credible media platforms such as television and credible media contents such as documentaries to tell the stories of celebrity brands. It is essential that these social constructions are repeated and sold to different actors to cement these identities.
Legitimization is “a generalized perception or assumption that the actions of an entity (e.g., celebrity) are desirable, proper, or appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs, and definitions” (Suchman 1995, p. 574, as cited in Centeno & Wang, 2016). The social code of legitimacy considers whether the actions of the celebrity brand are socially acceptable or fit. Centeno & Wang (2016) identified talent/skill desirability, dominant social norms, shared values, national ideologies, and class-and-gender nuances as the fitness indicators for human brands. They explain that at the very basis the celebrity must be seen as a good performer in their talent arena; a celebrity’s talent and skills are fundamental to gaining social, cultural and economic worth. However, it is necessary for other themes to further legitimate this claim. For instance, locally, Sarkodie is recognised as one of Ghana’s leading rap artistes, having received the accolade of best rapper of the year five times since 2010 (Gbagbo, 2018). However, winning the Best International Act: Africa category at the Black Entertainment Television (BET) Awards in 2012 (Ghana Business News, 2012) and securing a nomination for the same category in 2014 legitimises the claim that he is a very talented artiste both in Ghana and internationally.

Under the utilization of human brand identities, the researchers identify that human brands have reflexive identities; thus, their identities vary depending on the context at play i.e. stage performance, or the product category they are trying to sell in a commercial. Their reflexive identities are used strategically to position the celebrity brand through the ways in which the human brand identity is utilised. The researchers employ multiple endorsement deals to show how celebrity brands can show such dynamic identities. A celebrity can be framed by an advertisement, as a “sexy, pretty teenager with confidence to carry herself” in all situations (in a panty liner commercial), as “an elegant fine woman” (in shampoo and property
development ads), as “a loving daughter “(in a pawnshop advertisement), as “a good singer and power belter” (cough syrup and karaoke advertisements), and as “a youth advocate” in a political campaign. Stakeholders must still be able to identify congruency and consistency in the celebrity’s brand. Consistency is a key mainstream branding concept, ‘brands should be simple clear and consistent’ (Shepherd, 2005) (Rangarajan, Gelb, & Vandaveer, 2017). This rule was borrowed into the personal branding arena.

**Parasocialisation** is when the social distance between celebrity brands and consumers are reduced creating more affinity and perceptions of similarity between stakeholders (Centeno & Wang, 2016, p. 137). The researchers found that most celebrities represent themselves as ‘ordinary, authentic and real human beings’ making themselves more relatable. Also, the use of multimedia platforms like social media allows stakeholders to interact, modify, and discuss identities. They conclude therefore that ‘this scheme provides a bigger and richer venue for consumers and other stakeholders to construct, project, sustain, and co-create celebrity brand identities (Centeno & Wang, 2016, p. 137).

**Projection of influence** is a co-creation code that refers to the power that stakeholders give to celebrities that enables celebrities to be able to persuade stakeholders culturally (e.g., role models), politically (e.g., voting preferences) and economically (e.g., purchase behaviors) (Centeno & Wang, 2016, p. 137). Celebrity endorsement literature confirms the fact that the images that celebrities project are a source of credibility, likeability, and attractiveness (Nyarko, Asimah, Agbemava, & Tsetse, 2015) (Centeno & Wang, 2016). They also have some behavioural influences on the consumers. ‘Such behavioural effects from celebrities, root from their human brands and the identification, relationship, and connection consumers can perceive towards them’ (Centeno & Wang, 2016). These behavioural effects were
evident in the research through the comments and reactions celebrity posts received. The researchers conclude that the power of human brands to affect human behaviour are engrained in the ability of the human brand to understand their environment and stakeholder needs and to structure themselves to be adaptive as the environment evolves.

The findings of Centeno and Wang’s (2016) research provide insights and implications for celebrity brand management. It provides an understanding of the social context and how interpretations are made about a brand to guide managers in what they communicate and how they communicate about a personal brand. It shows the processes involved in formulating and cementing human brand identities among stakeholders. The findings are also informative about the best ways to go about negotiating a personal identity in order for it to be considered socially acceptable.

The research was however conducted outside Ghana and in a different social context. Its findings may not be entirely applicable in the Ghanaian celebrity branding arena, for instance, the Ghanaian society may have a different set of codes and constructs for granting legitimacy to a human brand. It is therefore important for it to be considered as a broad framework for identifying and analysing the stakeholders involved in creating a human brand as well as the socio-cultural codes that facilitate the creation, negotiation and cementing of the human identity as we assess the practice of personal (celebrity) branding in the Ghanaian context.
2.2.5 Conclusion

This review considered various literature on the concepts of branding and personal branding that provide insights that significantly impact the study. The theoretical basis of personal branding has been considered from different literature. Some writers believe personal branding mirrors the corporate branding process and therefore it operates based on marketing principles. Other writers have proposed a multidisciplinary approach combining marketing and sociological theories as a better way to study personal branding. Because this study focuses on celebrity personal branding, literature on celebrity brands and people with public image were considered. The celebrity identity was proposed as a multidimensional concept, that means a celebrity’s identity is formed through a process of co-creation by multiple stakeholders. Celebrity interactions were also considered as contents embedded with socio-cultural codes that deliver certain impressions about the celebrity. The understanding gathered from literature provides a good starting point for interrogating personal branding further.
CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, we specify the methodological choices that guided this research. We discuss the guiding philosophy of this research and its approach to understanding the concept of personal branding. We go on to discuss the reasons for our choice of data collection and analysis methods. Finally, we explain the ethical considerations that guided the study.

3.1 METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH AND METHOD CHOICE

This research seeks to understand why and how celebrities go about developing and promoting an identity for themselves. Because the research is concerned with studying these social actors and seeks to interpret their brand building activities this research comes within the interpretative paradigm. As explained by Wimmer and Dominick “the aim of the interpretive paradigm is to understand how people in everyday natural settings create meaning and interpret the events of their world” (Wimmer & Dominick, 2011, p. 115). We will employ a qualitative approach in this regard since it closely connected to the interpretative paradigm (Wimmer & Dominick, 2011). Also, the subject of personal branding in Ghana is a relatively new concept, it is not a very well interrogated area with scarce literature and research studies. The research will be exploratory in nature, as such a qualitative methodology will provide the researcher with more flexibility to interrogate and analyse the personal branding concept (Barbie, 2007, p. 88).
Data was gathered through in-depth interviews which enabled the researcher to extensively probe the phenomenon of personal branding. In keeping up with the goal of maintaining flexibility throughout this research, the in-depth interviews allowed questions to be customized to individual respondents (Wimmer & Dominick, 2011, p. 139). These ‘intensive interviews also allow interviewers to form questions based on each respondent’s answers’ (Wimmer & Dominick, 2011, p. 139). A semi-structured interview guide was used to allow for follow up questions and further interrogation of the interviewees (Turner D. W., 2010, p. 756).

3.1.1 Population and unit of analysis

The research focuses on celebrities in Ghana’s entertainment industry because they mostly find themselves in the public eye; their career and personal activities are viewed and examined publicly (Holmes & Redmond, 2014). Among the classes of people, celebrities are the ones who are most likely to invest resources into creating and maintaining an impression of themselves because of the public nature of their work and even their private lives. In recent times, celebrities in Ghana have become one of the active practitioners of personal branding. Their outlook on personal branding and application of the concept make them a good area to focus this study as a step to appreciating the application of the personal branding concept in Ghana. This study investigated the personal branding practices of selected Ghanaian celebrities.
3.1.2 Sampling

As explained by Creswell, “the idea behind qualitative research is to purposefully select participants or sites (or documents or visual material) that will best help the researcher understand the problem and the research question” (Creswell, 2009, p. 178). As such a purposive sampling approach was used to select the respondents for this research. The purpose of this research is to interrogate the reasons for practicing personal branding, the strategies, tactics and resources employed in the brand management process here in Ghana. As such, the research identified well-known Ghanaian celebrities who have dedicated teams and mechanisms to manage their personal brands. With the criteria set as a guide, enquiries were made from some players in the creative arts industry, who recommended some celebrities. Also, online research helped us to identify some celebrities who had their celebrity branding efforts documented on the internet. We identified nine celebrities through this process. After approaching the brand management teams of these celebrities, only five accepted to participate in the interview. The celebrities; Sarkodie, Mr. Eazi, Okyeame Kwame, Wiyaala and Adomaa were chosen based on their popularity, their intentional approach to managing their personal brand image and the willingness of their brand managers to participate in the study. Brief biographies on these celebrities have been provided in Appendix A of this thesis. Appendix A also shows some of the personal branding activities of each celebrity brand that was interrogated.
3.1.3 Data gathering

Data was gathered through in-depth interviews with respondents from the brand management teams of the five famous Ghanaian celebrities identified. We conducted face to face interviews with four of the respondents and a phone interview with one of the respondents who was overseas. Each of these interviews went on for a full hour or more. A total of five hours 35 minutes was committed to gathering the data. These interviews were mostly held at the offices of the celebrity’s management team or a quiet location selected by the respondent.

3.1.4 Ethical Considerations

The confidentiality of the individuals interviewed as well as sensitive industry trade secrets which were shared were maintained throughout the research. The identities of the respondents were therefore not revealed.

3.2 ANALYSIS

After gathering data through the interviews, we prepared the data for analysis and interpretation by transcribing all five interviews. The research employed thematic analysis to identify similar ideas that were shared by the respondents during the interview.

Turner (2010) described the process; “during this phase, the researcher must make “sense” out of what was just uncovered and compile the data into sections or groups of information, also known as themes or codes” (Turner D. W., 2010, p. 759). These themes or codes are consistent phrases, expressions, or ideas that were common among research participants.
(Turner D. W., 2010). The thematic analysis followed the process proposed by Creswell (2007), as shown in figure 3. The major themes identified from the data were discussed in light of the literature that was reviewed at the beginning of the research.

Fig. 3 Data Analysis in Qualitative Research (Creswell, 2009, p. 185)
CHAPTER FOUR
RESULTS

4.0 INTRODUCTION
This chapter presents the findings from the interviews conducted with respondents from the brand management teams of five Ghanaian celebrities. In all, ten themes emerged from the data gathered. Some themes were more pronounced than others. The following sections discuss the various themes under the broad areas of motivation and practices in managing a personal brand.

4.1 MOTIVATION FOR MANAGING A PERSONAL BRAND
This section deals with what drives celebrities to consciously identify, constitute and communicate an identity alongside their core career. The research identified that the goals and potential outcomes of branding were the motivating factors for these celebrities. Four main themes emerged from the interviews with respondents from the brand management team of the five musicians we studied; establishing a distinct identity/differentiation, creating opportunities & revenue, longevity and brand endorsements. Each brand team respondent mentioned at least one of these reasons as the driver behind their brand building activities.

A respondent who is a member of the brand management team of Afro-pop singer Mr. Eazi identified longevity and attaining big opportunities in the music industry as a driver in building Mr. Eazi’s brand. The respondent indicated this while explaining the reasons why they have made investments towards projecting Mr. Eazi as a ‘global superstar’:
So, he could stand out and have appeal to a specific audience and that will help him with longevity. It has brought him revenue, it has kept him relevant for 3 to 4 years now and that’s what we wanted so that he stays long, and he’s built a good brand equity for himself, so people reach out to him for big shows and put him on festivals and staff, it’s been very very good. People pay for what’s good so if we’ve been able to build a brand that is paying, yes it will bring in money.

Sarkodie’s brand management team member indicated that brand associations and endorsements were some of the motivating factors for building Sarkodie as one of the most respectable brands in Ghana:

For us, I think … we want to be noted, not just for music, but for business and we don’t want to just end up doing music. Our main focus as a label is to project the brand Sarkodie. So, our investment is not into the kind of music that we do, but into the personality, so beyond the music there’s still an appeal, there are brands that want to work with you because they know there’s win-win in the end.

A respondent who is a member of the brand management team for Adomaa explained that revenue was a big driver of their branding strategy;

Aside positioning we seek to make a lot of money basically…you have to think about how you are going to make your money and so I’m thinking about people who pay for these kinds of things (afro-jazz, live band music); people in a certain class in Ghana, the middle class going. Some of the most successful mainstream artists in Ghana have been able to do both so they have mass audience appeal, but they have also branded themselves such that those who actually have money to pay for the shows can pay so like the Sarkodies, the Stonebwoys and Efys. So, for her, financial consideration is also another, that if we brand her a certain way, we will get corporate people to book her, weddings to book her, we will get some of these shows and concerts, awards people to book because those are the people who are willing to pay what they believe is her value.

Wiyaala’s brand management team member, also explained how he was motivated to promote Wiyaala as the fierce, strong ‘Lioness of Africa’, a brand that is strong and differentiates her:
Essentially the Lioness of Africa thing is because she is strong and she relies on herself and the qualities of a lioness it’s about ten of them but they include qualities like self-awareness, dominion, loyalty. All good and strong qualities and she embodies those qualities as the lioness of Africa and you see nobody can challenge it…it separates her from everybody else, it’s her identity, there is only one because there are several artists but basically, they are all doing the same thing how do you distinguish between them?

Creating and communicating a distinct identity was also a motivating factor in building Okyeame Kwame’s brand. It was a key strategy used by his branding team after making some interesting findings in their research on the artiste’s identity:

So, what we found from the research was that a lot of people thought that musicians were, in quote, hooligans, people who are school dropouts, they take solace in, music because they have nothing else to do and that is the better option. So, what we did was to communicate that that was not the case, because, when we did this research, Okyeame was in school, he was doing his first degree. He was also very intelligent, so we needed to communicate that, people didn’t know because he didn’t use to speak a lot back in the day. So, we needed to communicate his intelligence. For the regular artiste, there is a perception about them and Okyeame is different, so what we communicate is differentiation, using the artiste’s personality. That is what we are communicating.

4.2 PRACTICES IN CELEBRITY BRAND MANAGEMENT

Six distinct themes were identified in the study with respect to how celebrity brand management practices. These themes covered how the brand was constituted, communication strategies and tactics that were used as well as the resources that were invested in the brand building process.
4.2.1 Authentically Constituting a Marketable Brand

One of the initial steps involved in the branding process is determining the brand identity that should be projected. Respondents interviewed within this research project, considered authenticity as a key guiding principle at this stage. They identified the true personal attributes of the celebrities and shaped their messages and brand activations around the true nature of the personalities. As a respondent from Wiyaala’s management team said:

For me, branding as far as Wiyaala is concerned, is just all about Wiyaala who she really is. Neither of us is interested in projecting something that we think is current or trending or copying another look or style and that applies to her look. What she says and the music that she puts out there, the shows that she does, the stuff that we put on social media, releases for a more traditional type of media, it’s all about who she actually is… She is from a humble background much of the story that we tell is about her journey from that humble beginning to where she is now.

A team member of Okyeame Kwame’s brand management team stated that authenticity was maintained in all of the artiste’s communication:

Whatever we communicate, he insists on communicating whatever real activities he engages in, so he doesn’t want shiny flashy when that is not what he is doing. He wants the people to identify him as who he truly is, so whatever he is doing is actually what he wants to portray. If you listen to his lyrics he is not saying ‘I will gun you down’ when in actuality Ghana culture isn’t about guns, using cuss words, talking about things that aren’t happening in Ghana. So, he uses his environment to communicate what exactly is happening so that is what he wants to portray - reality.

A respondent from Mr. Eazi’s management team explained why sticking to the true nature of the artiste was a good strategy in managing his brand to ensure longevity and relatability:

For someone who will get up, leave his comfort and go into the bush to go and be chasing money, you can tell the kind of personality he is. He's very carefree, ‘kubolor’(deviant) and very down-to-earth so, you obviously cannot craft a brand which is very different from someone’s personality because at a point the audience will see through it. They’ll see through it because your real personality will start coming out, you get what I mean. We could have tried positioning him as a very
A flashy guy, give him ‘bling bling’ (ostentatious clothes/jewellery) put him in flashy cars but after a while, you start realising that, this is not the person that he portrays he is. So, you definitely always need to find a way to pick elements of the person and then use it to craft the person’s brand so that people can relate to it.

A respondent from Adomaa’s brand management also shared why authenticity was good for targeting the right people:

If you are yourself, you find people who are like you or who appreciate you and gravitate towards you. I don’t think we did anything to convince anybody we were authentic to who the person was, we just polished it up with whatever we did and we threw it out there and those whom it’s for gravitated towards it.

Although authenticity was crucial to constituting the brand, it was not the only thing. There was a need to ensure that the authentic attributes identified were marketable to the targeted audience. After authenticity, the identified attributes must also pass the target audience test.

A respondent from Adomaa’s brand management indicated this:

Aside authenticity…. there were financial considerations as well, authenticity comes first but also you have to think about how you are going to make your money and so I’m thinking about people who pay for these kinds of things…

A respondent from Mr. Eazi’s management team explained that considering your target audience when choosing the attributes to project were necessary to ensure relatability:

You need to have the right personality, it depends on what audience you are targeting when you identify your audience you know how to position your brand and we’ll know the right things to consider. So, if you are trying to consider the people on the street then you need to have a very rebellious, freedom-fighter kind of persona. So, your personality is very key because that is what drives interest and that is what drives people to relate to you. Because you only relate to a musician or star that sits in line with your beliefs or with what you are interested in.
For a celebrity brand like Wiyaala, building up marketability meant training to acquire essential skills that will appeal to her targets. A respondent from her brand management team tells of how Wiyaala had to perfect her performance in order to be allowed to play at international festivals:

The other thing that we did in Ghana which most artists don’t do is that we got her playing live band because I knew that if she couldn’t perform with live band then her chances of getting festival internationally is going to be reduced they don’t really accepted artist who mime, no matter how successful they are or apparently successful, if you mime or you just play with the DJ I don’t think in Europe you are really going to be taken seriously, so you have to do the job as a musician. So, we both insisted that she became first class with the live band

The need to remain authentic to the celebrity’s natural disposition and impressing the right audience influenced many brand decisions including endorsement deals. This was apparent when a team member from Sarkodie’s brand explained what the celebrity brand considers before entering into endorsement deals with advertisers or organisations:

The power of the brand, what the brand has done, the reputation of the brand, what effect it will have on us. I mean, we don’t even, Sarkodie doesn’t drink alcohol to endorse an alcoholic brand, then it means that there has to be a different way around it. So, we look at a lot. We look at the worth of the brand, we look at the social standing of the brand, even how the fans will feel about an endorsement like that, all of those things count. What the long-term effect of that endorsement will be not just because we are going to get paid money we just do it and then it’s gone, so we definitely look at it because there’re certain times you can even endorse something that might be a turn in your career may be a down slopping turn in your career, you can endorse a certain brand that might be like the boost of your career. So, we look at all of those things every time.
4.2.2 Content development and dissemination

Various forms of contents are developed and actively deployed to project the desired brand image. A tactic that emerged strongly from the interview data was the heavy use of non-verbal communication cues in these contents. The brand management teams employ subtle yet strong visual cues to pass on the impression they seek to communicate about the celebrities. A respondent from Mr. Eazi’s management team describes how they built and portray the ‘carefree, Afrocentric, down-to-earth’ identity of Mr. Eazi, through his music videos right from the start of the artiste’s career:

We portrayed a very carefree, different, unique, African, very African, more of African vibes. That’s why he doesn’t do all the ‘bling bling’ kind of thing, flashy videos, no. We were very intentional, that’s why we kept the hat in every video, we had a stylist in the very beginning, a student stylist from Legon who used to help him with very Afrocentric clothes and we kept it like that until now. So now you get a lot of people proposing to do those kinds of Afrocentric clothes.

A respondent from Wiyaala’s brand management team shared how Wiyaala employs her natural looks to give off the impression that she is relatable:

…she always appears to be very natural and so the fans can identify with somebody who is rather like them and doesn’t consciously seek to be a celebrity by looking like a celebrity; by driving expensive cars and things like that, always dressing up. So, you will also see a brand which is pretty down to earth. A lot of the time she doesn’t wear any makeup, she wears her hair naturally.

Sarkodie’s brand management also employs a lot of videos to communicate his brand on social media. The videos are used to share updates on the artiste’s activities and music collaborations. Some of these videos also feature him speaking directly to the fans.
respondent from Sarkodie’s management team also shared how they have invested in quality photography in order to give Sarkodie’s brand a serious and professional appeal:

We video everything because we don’t want people to be left out in the process and the journey. It’s just information we want to share with the fans. Your presentation matters, so it’s how you present yourself that’s how serious people take you, how you bring yourself to the people that’s what they accept you for and that’s what they take you for. So, we have a resident cameraman, he stays in our house, so he shoots everything. Everything we want to do he would shoot it, we’ll edit it properly, put the sound on it, we have a studio in the house whatever you want to say you go behind the microphone, record it, we mix it and put it under. It’s just the presentation.

The non-verbal cues were also present in the way Adomaa dressed up and presented herself on stage as an elegant afro jazz musician. A respondent from Adomaa’s brand management team described how they went about her photoshoots and stage appearance:

We started off taking pictures of her wearing a scalp, covering her face only and the eyes were communicating and later on, we started removing those things and it was more like long dresses and just things that are classy and giving her a classy look. We spoke to and worked with designers, stylists that will also understand what she was like… and then when we started doing shows we just make sure she has this look where it is very edgy and chic but it’s still classy just to give that differentiation between her as an afro jazz singer and somebody who is, for example, a dancehall artist, there just should be a difference between the dress they wear.

Aside her presentation on stage, Adomaa’s team also take proactive steps to provide relevant content and information about the artiste on the world wide web. They shared a number of tactics they use to ensure that the right image of Adomaa is projected should anyone search for her online:

So we created a website for her and also worked on plugging her information on Wikipedia so that when you google her name there are certain things that need to come out first before any other thing pops up…we tried to clear all the negatives on social media and online about her so at least you always see something nice, we
flooded social media with a lot of good pictures about her so if you are looking for information about Adomaa and her image it shouldn’t be hard to get.

In as much as non-verbal communication cues were heavily used in creating relevant brand contents, some celebrity brands used verbal communication tools as well. For Okyeame Kwame’s brand, verbal communication was a great way of showing one of his key attributes as an intelligent and well-read musician. A respondent from his brand management team explained how this tactic was used to create content for the brand:

We needed to communicate his intelligence so we set out to do that, every time we needed to put him out, we made sure that there was an element of intelligence he was displaying, so he’s widely read anytime he goes to an interview he doesn’t go and join the bandwagon, he makes sure that he contributes something unique, something that has not been heard and we get the feedback that’s amazing. So, every time he goes for an interview, he is refreshing.

Sarkodie’s brand also shows another example of how verbal communication is creatively employed by celebrities. A respondent from his brand management team explained how Sarkodie uses his music lyrics to connect to his target audience and create content that they appreciate:

Sarkodie is that kind of artiste that would touch on a bit of everything that’s happening. he’s like a people for the people because he’s also one of the people and he goes through the same pain or the same hardships and everything, so he would hit it right. So, the content of the music, things that are happening and even the choice of words. At a certain point in time, there are certain words that you can’t even miss, everybody will be saying something in that light, so when you use a word like that, … When Akuffo Addo came to say, ‘all die be die’ it became a very big issue, for an artiste to use that in his music people relate to him easier and when they relate to it, it’s like reflex, their love, their attention gets drawn to it because people know that thing.
4.2.3 Use of social media

One of the most common practices among all five celebrities was the use of social media platforms for promoting their personal brands. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube were the platforms that came up throughout this research as tools used in various ways during the personal branding process.

Adomaa’s brand management employed her use of social media platforms as a strategy to communicate the ‘millennial’ and ‘girl next door’ attributes of her brand identity. A respondent from Adomaa’s management team explained the strategy:

We are just trying to project somebody who is a millennial, somebody who understands what is going on in today’s world, somebody whom you can relate to and somebody who lives in today’s world even if you look at the mediums that we used to achieve that which is the YouTube, that is a very millennial thing. We engaged with people. Sticking with the girl next door thing…she was very engaging, first, she was on Facebook, then Instagram and then Twitter. We wanted to be the kind of artist that if people hit up or commented on their post we will respond. They can ask questions, they can comment for you to like just to be more engaging, so that was another strategy that we used to deploy the girl next door, millennial idea.

Aside using social media as a strategy to deploy a certain brand impression, these platforms have given the artistes’ brands a lot of visibility. The visibility and attention they have from their following give their brands a sense of influence and authority which other brands ride on to gain attention. Sarkodie’s brand is one of such brands that have gained a lot of influence through social media and a respondent from his brand management team explained how:

I think in recent times our most powerful tool would be social media because of the numbers that we’ve been able to gather on social media and the fact that we don’t abuse our social media for unnecessary things, so the moment that Sarkodie tweeted one time about Kwesi Arthur and the next minute Kwesi Arthur is one of the biggest artistes in Ghana. Sarkodie tweeted about Supa, Ghana’s Tupac and now he’s a sensation that should tell you the worth. The guy has been able to preserve himself
… and his social media so it comes with a lot of worth. I have calls from people that say tweet a poster for us our bank is running a campaign for a Kiddie account, just a tweet. You’d be surprised to know the kind of figures that we talk about.

Social media was a key tool in the early stages of Mr. Eazi’s brand. The platform was free and therefore, it was a very helpful medium at a time when the brand had inadequate financial resources. A respondent from his brand team shared this:

We used social media a lot, his personal social media page. Basically, that was the only platform we had, because obviously, we didn’t have any budget down. So, a lot of engagement, we used to rally people to be behind us, please share this. I remember posts he sharing posts saying, ‘oh, this is a young boy from Ghana trying to do this, share for me’ and people started seeing the humility in it, we realized that people loved artistes who are humble so even as he blew up, we played on the humility thing to push our agenda.

A respondent from Wiyaala’s management shared how the various social media platforms were used by the celebrity;

If you go on social media you just know twitter is just used to make announcements about songs or shows she is doing. Facebook and Instagram she projects an image of who she is with photos, with little videos where she makes her own dress or doing something you know just doing some ordinary things and … so that how social media is used we don’t advertise likes or anything like that we just let the thing grow organically. If you look at her Facebook for example or Instagram, she is always putting examples of herself up. There is a recent one of her cooking and playing guitar at the same time. At her odd moments, she would sit on the toilet and sing a song. So, she always appears to be very natural and so the fans can identify with somebody who is rather like them.

Some celebrity brands have also been able to utilise social media to build a strong brand with commercial influence. Sarkodie’s brand management team member description of the artiste’s influence on social media is indicative of this;

The guy has been able to preserve himself … and his social media so it comes with a lot of worth. I have calls from people that say tweet a poster for us our bank is running
a campaign for a Kiddie account, just a tweet. You’d be surprised to know the kind of figures that we talk about.

4.2.4 Use of an integrated communication approach

A recurring theme throughout all the interviews was the use of both marketing approaches and public relations tactics to position the celebrity brands. There were marketing strategies that were used to identify the right market, position the artiste for that niche and promote the brand in that regard. A respondent from Adomaa’s management team explained how they identified a dearth in the market and developed a solution in the form of Adomaa for this niche:

looking at the dearth in the market we felt like there was a hole that had to be filled, there weren’t enough people in the alternative sphere of the music industry, there are a very few people doing alternative music so if you can brand somebody and make her appealing to people who actually like alternative stuff, is just that they don’t know anybody in Ghana to follow, so they actually go outside. If you can brand somebody here in Ghana, then they have somebody that they can gravitate towards who is doing something different from what the mainstream is doing so that hole in the market was also like a big consideration in deciding that ok this is where we are positioning her.

Adomaa’s brand management also employed the public relations strategy of relationship building to ensure a constant flow of media publications on Adomaa’s brand as demonstrated below:

Its key for us to establish, one, relationships with traditional media owners so that at any point in time we can always engage them. So, for us relationship is key. It’s not just about knowing that media platform is available, it’s about knowing that there’s somebody there who understands what you intend to do and the frequency of always putting the brand Adomaa on their platform so for us relationship is very key.
A respondent from Okyeame Kwame’s management also shared a strategy of using the media as influencers to reach the celebrity brand’s main targets:

I employ the media and all other things that will get it to reach the consumers. So, I divide them into two, so we have the influencers and the users. I devise a means to reach the influencers which is usually pretty basic and, on the surface, then I devise a means to reach the users so that the users can actually get to experience his things. The influencers are usually the radio presenters, the bloggers, the stakeholders that are around, but the users are people who actually consume his things. So, the influencers are a mechanism to send the information to the users, so they are the drivers.

Aside using this public relations strategy to reach the brand’s target, the management team also employed marketing principles to develop a brand book with which they sell the brand to potential partners who may want to work with Okyeame Kwame’s brand;

So basically, the brand book is to tell people who Okyeame is, what he will do, what he won’t do and then how to use him as an artiste if ever you want to use his image, or logo or font.” I take it to all companies that I think have similar brands with Okyeame Kwame. So, they’ll go through and then they’ll see that he does A, B, C. It’s part of the reason why he is the artiste with, if not the most, one of the most endorsements in the country. So he has endorsed a lot of things, because when they see you as an artiste, they know what you put out but they don’t know the nitty gritty of who you are and sometimes they don’t have the time to delve into who you are, they don’t care, but then if you make that effort of showing them who you are, sometimes they realise they even need you without knowing they need you. So, you send them the brand book and it pretty much sums up who you are and what they want to do with you. Then they come calling.

For Mr. Eazi, the right associations with the right people and places was a way to communicate the right appeal and reach the right audience. A respondent from Mr. Eazi’s team shared an example of such associations:

So, we want him to be a global superstar… Now we try to project Mr. Eazi as a superstar by making him look like he doesn’t belong to one specific place. If you listen to his album or even the mixtape that’s about to come out you see influences of Zambia, Kenya, Mr. Eazi lives in the UK, He’s been living in the UK for two years
straight now, he doesn’t affiliate himself to Nigeria or Ghana or any place, He says he has influence from Ghana, he was born in Nigeria, he’s trying to blow in the UK so that’s why he’s staying in the UK too, so he’s on the UK charts As we are speaking now, he’s on tour with the biggest YouTube artiste called J Balvin and he’s in the US now opening for J Balvin and this lets you see that he’s trying to touch every place. When he goes to Zambia, Kenya he fills stadiums.

Aside building brand associations, Mr. Eazi’s team employed below-the-line marketing tactics like experiential events in his brand promotion:

As the brand grew bigger, we had labels and we had support and we had budget, so for some of the campaigns we did billboards, we did experiential events like Detty Rave, that projects his brand.

This tactic was also similarly applied by Adomaa. A respondent from Adomaa’s brand management team explains how they went about promoting her brand with an event:

I remember last year … we did this thing called the Twelve Stops of Adomaa, …so Adomaa was going to do pop-up performances at different places. So, during the Christmas season, the festive we just located certain areas high traffic areas and she performed. So Adomaa did a pop-up performance at a banking hall, just when everybody was busy talking about money, here was a lady sitting in a corner who just starts singing with microphone, cool music, at that minute, instantly when we were done the number of people who came to ask us “who is she, who is she?” and to me that was perfect feedback… Adomaa had massive response and she was always busy with shows, so revenue was good so to me that was a way of advertising on the ground. That was a BTL (below-the-line) activation that we did and then looking at other areas like movies, where she loved and plugging her in there as well, that is beyond music, then regular television and radio interviews were flowing.

A basic yet strong promotional strategy which was also identified was the use of consumers’ word of mouth. A respondent from Wiyaala’s management team explained how they rely more on the consumers’ word of mouth to promote the artiste as a more efficient way to advertise the artiste:
…she did a concert in London, that was more of club show than a concert, in London on Saturday… people who saw her last Saturday will talk to other people and say ‘you should see that girl she is worth, worth going to watch’, that is what I really rely on more than anything because I think that the more you get around, the more you do, the more your opportunity.

Some of the celebrities studied also employ the public relations strategy of reputation building in their brand management tactics. They voluntarily engage in projects that address and solve societal issues. A team member of Wiyaala’s brand management team gave an instance of some of the goodwill projects Wiyaala is involved in:

In Wiyaala’s case, some of the things she is engaged in the north are that she fights against early child marriage and she is associated with UNICEF and various causes like that in order to put that message across that early child marriage is not right and the girls should stay in school. Yes, that is another aspect of her branding that I have never mentioned before ok.

A respondent from Sarkodie’s management team also shared details about a national issue that his artiste was passionately embarking on and using his influence to get the right people and policies in place in order to reduce road accidents in the country:

Ours is not just a one-off campaign that people try to do a song and it ends. We are actually trying to push to the extent that it’s actually passed in parliament to do a dual carriage road to link every regional capital. Because, trust me, …we did our analysis, the number of people that die from road accidents every day and they are all almost head-on collisions every time, but if we have two roads on this side they are all going in one direction, two on the other side all going in one direction there won’t be any head-on, so we can’t eliminate accidents but we can reduce the number of accidents, and we feel it’s very doable and as influential people if the bill is passed we can actually front this. We’ve done a summation how much it’s going to cost in total from every regional capital, we are going to raise funds, they’ll pass it in parliament, so they’ll be like a budget set aside for that and it’s doable. So, we formed a committee, we put people on board, people that we feel are really knowledgeable about these things.
Aside helping to solve problems in their societies, these goodwill projects bring reputational and promotional advantages for celebrity brands. A respondent from Wiyaala’s management team explains how Wiyaala uses such projects as a strategy to build a strong reputation that enables her music to sell in the crowded market of the music industry:

Besides the music, it’s much about her the personality as it is about the music …you see music is the problem there is a million track upload every day because it’s easy to do now …how are you going to compete? Unless you can bribe the DJs and all the people to play your songs and you need a lot of money to do that… so what do you do? You concentrate on the brand why is this person remarkable? In Wiyaala’s case some of the things she is engaged on in the north. There is a limit on the amount of money you can spend on projecting the music or the brand you have to have a strong personality, you have to stand for something and so by doing that she signs on opportunities for herself and gets her name known.

The respondent from Wiyaala’s management team provided a practical example of how this strategy has played out in promoting the artiste:

When she goes on the BBC, they have done their research and they have seen some notes that we might have sent, and they say ‘huh Wiyaala you came from the village and what were the problems in the village?’ Early child marriage and the rest of it so BBC on World Service or on Radio 4 or something they will talk about this …they talk about her and they talk about her music but in some ways, they are more interested in the personality than they are in the music. So, one hopes as the personality gets to be better known … and they say, ‘here is some of the music’ and with luck, the music will catch on and become popular.

4.3 TEAMS AND RESOURCES

A majority of the respondents acknowledged that there were different people whose works, both directly and indirectly, impacted the brand. A respondent from Adomaa’s brand management team identified the following people and roles:

So, in Adomaa’s management, there are just two people…the project manager and … the road manager and then Adomaa has [a group] responsible for her creatives,
her songs, her recordings, they are responsible for that. So that is how we operate, but her management supervises everything that is happening around her. Because the thing is that one person can’t do it, and for Adomaa she is not one of those rappers that you can say she just rap so just find her a pair of shoes and jeans and let her go and do her lines, there is a lot of things that goes into her, how she looks, how she sings and who talks on her behalf so one person can’t do everything so you to find extra hands to help …and then on a project that we did she in bed with Aftown and BBnZ to get those creatives done properly. Aftown is a streaming service, so whatever they do as part of their service is they take an artist and the do a project with you the artist and they put the content their platform and sell and make the revenue and BBnZ is a record label, so they have their artists, but they have partnered Aftown to do this project.

Aside the various categories of people working on the brand, the insight given indicated that the resources dedicated to project the celebrity brand, may vary, depending on the type of image the artiste wants to project. The gender of the artiste may also play a role as indicated by a respondent from Adomaa’s brand management team who mentioned some of the resources that are committed to delivering Adomaa’s brand identity:

[If] brand Adomaa is making an appearance at a radio station, she needs makeup, she needs hair, she needs clothes, she needs to look good. She has two interviews that means two sessions of a makeup artist, that means cost. Adomaa doesn’t drive so if she is going to go somewhere; transportation, rented vehicle or a very nice-looking Uber or a team member has to pick her up and always dealing with a female artiste is more engaging than a male artist, a male can wear anything, comb their hair anyway and they’re gone. So, her day to day movement comes with a lot of costs. Financial commitment is high, for Adomaa. We’ve rolled in a stylist onto the team so there is a dedicated stylist and …when you (Adomaa) wear it you don’t wear it again. So, there is a dedicated fashion resource to Adomaa, a dedicated financial resource to her upbringing and there is a dedicated makeup artist.

At the beginning of an artiste’s career, there may be few people doing all the work involved in establishing the brand successfully. The nature of the music industry in Ghana makes it difficult for artistes to get the right support they need to grow their brand. These challenges were shared by a member of Mr. Eazi’s brand team:
In the beginning stages of an artiste in Ghana’s life, the manager is the one who does everything for him, in the sense of helps him with bookings. In the beginning, you help the artiste look for opportunities, help him to get on shows, help them with their look, liaise with people who want to interact with them, basically help them to blow out. That was my role, so I was doing his creatives for him, liaising with people who wanted him on the shows. I was supervising his video shoots, helping with the concepts, doing everything logistics for him. In the beginning, most of the times, the artistes are involved, especially in this market because in this market we don’t have proper music label structures or music labels, where they pick someone, and they give you an advance like money and they have people like A and R (Artists and repertoire) and people who are road managing. So, he was also part of the process of blowing himself out. So, I was everything, I was doing PR, everything at all.

The respondent also provided details of the teams currently managing the artiste, now that his brand has attained much success and renown. The respondent identified an internal group and an external group of people that work on the brand:

There’s a proper team behind it, we have people in every market. His core team made up of the road managers, top managers, they are the major stakeholders of the brand, they basically push everything Mr. Eazi does. We have external people like the media and bloggers that we reach out to, we’ve labels and stuff that help him per song. So, every song has a different label we give to promote, some of them came public like Colombia was working on ‘London Town’.

The respondent also shared details on the work they do to impact Mr. Eazi’s brand:

The road manager is basically the person who does all the run around during a show or a tour. He is the one talking to people, making sure the sound must be right, making sure that his rider is ok. Then they have the executive manager who makes decisions or goes to sit into meetings; if maybe Sony wants to meet him today it is the executive manager who will go and sit in that meeting and tell the road manager that we want you to take him here so get a car take him here at this time. There are stylists, there are creative directors and stuff like that. The investors don’t like to be mentioned, so they are behind the scene. So, right now, what I do for him is … if there’s anything off brand or doesn’t sit well with his brand, I call it out. Like I had to pull out a video that they shot recently because it looked like he was an underground artiste… so we had to reshoot and do a video which now fits within his status now as an afrobeat artiste on a global scale.
A respondent from Sarkodie’s management also described a similar list of people involved in the brand management process of the artiste:

Everybody who is a part of the team from top management to the artiste, the creative head himself; the artiste, label head, security, DJ, technician like the technical head, production head, PR, stylist, directors, producers everybody who is a part of the process is key in everything for us. Everybody; shareholders, whoever, everybody is key. When I say everybody, I mean once we are in contact if you’re going to do an artwork for me, you become part of the circle, so you are key also because your output would have an effect on the brand eventually. So, everybody.

A respondent from Okyeame Kwame’s team explained how they as a team, collaborate with the media to ensure his brand is communicated to the right people:

So, once we had his brand image, we conducted the research and found his unique propositions and created his creative elements and all those things, then I needed to communicate it to the audience, so now I employ the media and all other things that will get it to reach the consumers. So, I divide them into two, so we have the influencers and the users. I devise a means to reach the influencers which is usually pretty basic and, on the surface, then I devise a means to reach the users so that the users can actually get to experience his things. The influencers are usually the radio presenters the bloggers the stakeholders that are around, but the users are people who actually consume his things. So, the influencers are a mechanism to send the information to the users, so they are the drivers.

Besides the media, other organisations come on board for collaborations that promote specific identities of the brand. A respondent from Wiyaala’s brand team shared how the artiste’s collaboration with a global female music band is promoting her attributes on female empowerment:

…she is working with Grrrl which an international girl group which is also helping to project her image. I mean she is also about female empowerment because she does everything for herself she doesn’t rely on the men in the industry to do anything she shouldn’t, so they saw her they saw some of her live performance they saw that she was a fierce young woman they saw she has been on the BBC and the rest of it, two years ago they invited her to join the tour when they had to let her go around the world Brazil, Zimbabwe, Bangladesh, Colombia that sort of thing and put them
together as a group and then last year they refined them to a brand called Grrrl and they toured last year and they toured this year, now it helps because if you go and perform at the Common Wealth games in Australia which she did this year with girl and some big festivals then you as a member will benefit gain more connections.

Figure 4 lays out the various teams and their specifics roles. The intersections show overlapping roles by some of the teams.

Fig. 4 Celebrity brand teams and roles
4.4 LOW USE OF RESEARCH INSIGHTS

I find it necessary to highlight the low use of research even though it is not a dominant theme in this data. This is because research is an integral element in marketing, public relations and communication generally. I will like this study to highlight how this crucial element was found to be poorly utilised for developing communication strategies and tactics by a majority of the celebrity brands interrogated. Out of the five brand managers that were interviewed for this study, only two indicated research as part of their branding process. A respondent from Adomaa’s management team demonstrated how they employed research to internally identify the attributes and goals of Adomaa. He explained the following:

We had to sit her down and we basically interviewed her on whom she thought she was and whom she would also like to be perceived as because I believe in authenticity so that is where we started from and we did SWOT analysis, her strength, weakness, opportunities and threats and opportunities.

A respondent from Okyeame Kwame’s brand management team explains how insights from a nationwide research about Okyeame Kwame’s identity and career as a rap musician informed their brand communication strategies:

So, in the first place he had been an artiste for quite some time, but then when he decided that he wants to communicate who he truly is, because he was a member of a group, so when we decided to communicate exactly who he was as an individual, we had to do a research. So, what we found from the research was that a lot of people thought that musicians were, in quote, hooligans, people who are school dropouts, they take solace in music because they have nothing else to do and that is the better option. So, what we did was to communicate that, that was not the case, because, when we did this research, Okyeame was in school, he was doing his first degree. He was also very intelligent, so we needed to communicate that, people didn’t know because he didn’t use to speak a lot back in the day. We did this research about eight-nine years ago and when we did it, people knew his songs, people knew his rap but always mentioned his name differently. So, it was important, that is one of the reasons why we called him OK. Because we realised that it was easier to call him ok, after a while when we went back, we realized that the OK worked.
CHAPTER FIVE
DISCUSSION

5.0 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, we realise the objectives of this study, which is to identify the motivations and communication practices of celebrity brands in Ghana. We will achieve this by discussing the findings outlined in Chapter four in light of the concepts, theories and frameworks about personal branding discussed in chapter two of this study. We conclude by stating the theoretical underpinnings that are applicable in the area of personal branding. We close off this chapter with some recommendation for future research.

5.1 MOTIVATIONS FOR MANAGING A PERSONAL BRAND

Literature from chapter two identified three main areas that drive people to manage a personal brand; employment, marketing and social reasons. Underemployment people seek to attain career success or job opportunities by managing a personal brand. For marketing reasons, people are looking to identify their target audience and position themselves in the minds of their consumers (Khedher, 2015, p. 24). Differentiation is another marketing reason why people build brands; they seek to distinguish themselves from other personal brands within a particular space or industry (Khedher, 2015, p. 24). Promotion is the third marketing reason identified in the literature (Khedher, 2015, p. 24). By this, people seek to attain visibility and fame amongst their target audience to increase the reach of their influence. Some social reasons for developing a personal brand are dating, building connections and contacts and self-expression (Shepherd, 2005, p. 597).
All respondents in this study indicated at least one goal their personal branding efforts sought to achieve for the celebrities they manage; differentiation from other celebrity brands on the market, opportunity and revenue in the music industry, longevity and endorsement deals. All the reasons outlined here fall under marketing reasons as identified through literature.

5.2 CONSTITUTING A CELEBRITY BRAND

All respondents explained that the true nature of the celebrity i.e. their character, personality, interests, strengths was what shaped the identity of the brand that was put out. They also ensured that the personality traits that were focused on were qualities that their target audience could relate to in order to make them marketable. An artiste like Adomaa was described as the “girl next, very affable and a happy go lucky. Also, she grew up quite middle class and her sensibilities and all of that... she is not a ghetto youth”. However, in projecting her brand identity, her management focused on her middle-class status, positioning her as a classy, edgy afro-jazz goddess in order to appeal to her primary targets. Her primary targets were middle class and higher Ghanaians, corporate organisations and Ghanaians in the diaspora who were deemed to be the people who can afford her kind of music. In as much as brand authenticity was key, there were crucial marketing undertones that sought to ensure that the brand was marketable at the end of the day. This reflects literature that was reviewed in chapter two which claims that the first step in personal branding is to carry out a self-audit to identify the strengths and qualities of the personality (Shepherd, 2005, p. 594). In order to ensure that the identity constructed is not only authentic but marketable, Shepherd (2005) concludes that the self-audit must be done with a good appreciation of the market space (Shepherd, 2005, p. 594).
Khedher (2015) proposed in his framework that the first step in personal brand management is the personal brand identity stage. This stage is where inputs are made; field-relevant knowledge and skills are acquired, and networks are built in order for the personality to fit into the industry, in this case, the music industry. There is evidence from this research that indicates an effort to acquire these cultural and social capitals. Wiyaala trained to be a proficient live band performer at the beginning of her career with the intention of gaining entry to perform at international music festivals. Her brand management team member explained that these festivals rarely accept artistes who mime. In an attempt for Mr. Eazi’s brand to attain international recognition, he joined one of YouTube’s biggest artiste called J Balvin on tour, opening the shows of J Balvin’s concerts in the US. Adomaa’s brand management team member explained that after constructing her brand identity, they made conscious efforts to build relationships with event organisers. This enables the artiste to get invitations to perform at events that host her target audience. Sarkodie has made a lot of influential networks in business and music. A respondent from his brand management team attributes this connection to powerful people as a result of the artiste’s respectable brand.

Aside Wiyaala and Adomaa’s scenario, there is not much evidence to show that the celebrities studied made the effort to acquire social and cultural capitals at the beginning of the brand building process as Khedher (2015) suggests. For Sarkodie, acquiring social capital i.e. connections with influential business people has not been an input but an outcome of his brand-building efforts. For Mr. Eazi, building such international connections came as a step towards in building a global career after attaining renown locally.

In constituting the celebrity brand, there is more evidence from this study to show that the celebrities employed the corporate branding approach as proposed by most advocates and
also identified in Shepherd’s (2005) study. The artiste first identifies their key attributes, they package themselves and strategically communicate their brand identity.

5.3 COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES

The findings of this study showed that various communication tactics and strategies were employed to give off the desired impression of the brands studied. Most of the communications were conscious efforts that creatively informed the target audience on the key attributes of the celebrity brand. We identified the application of non-verbal communication tactics. For instance, Adomaa’s management ensures that, even though she doesn’t have a car of her own, the artiste attends every performance in an elegant car “to be portrayed as independent and she is of a certain worth”. Tactics like this show an arrangement of the front, as Goffman’s (1956) dramaturgical sociology describes human interactions. There is a conscious effort to conceal certain information and make visible the desired details that will give the audience the desired impression.

This theory is also applied by Khedher (2015) in the second stage of his framework for personal brand management. The second stage in this framework is the personal brand positioning. Artifactual displays, personal appearance, manner, verbal impression management behaviour are tactics that are used at this stage to consistently share information that gives off the desired impression (Khedher, 2015, p. 22). These tactics were used by the celebrities that were studied in this research and evidence of these can be identified across this study. Below are examples of each:
Artifactual displays were defined as written accounts that inform and market the brand’s career trajectory (Khedher, 2015, p. 22). An example of a communication tactic using artifactual displays was exhibited by Adomaa’s team who created a website and Wikipedia page filled with relevant information about the artiste.

Khedher (2015) explained that under verbal impression management people use either an assertive tactic to “create images that promote desirable qualities” of the brand or a defensive tactic (Khedher, 2015, p. 23). The defensive tactic is used to protect or repair one’s image (Khedher, 2015, p. 23). An example of assertive verbal impression management tactic is employed by Okyeame Kwame to show how intelligent the artiste is. Before every interview, Okyeame Kwame made adequate preparations in order to share insightful ideas which will show-off his intelligence.

Sarkodie also employs assertive verbal impression management to communicate and promote a relatable brand. As discussed earlier, the artiste creatively talks about everyday issues, politics and uses popular social jargons in his music to connect with the everyday man listening to his music.

Khedher (2015) described mannerism as attitudes that are conveyed to get others to form certain impressions about us (Khedher, 2015, pp. 22-23). We identify this in an example given during the early stages of Mr. Eazi’s brand. His humble manner when communicating on social media was used to promote him as an upcoming artiste with raw talent. The tactic also helped him get a lot of shares on social media, thereby promoting his work and increasing his fan base.
Personal appearance refers to “the level of hygiene, personal grooming, and appropriate dress of an individual” (Khedher, 2015, p. 22). Personal appearance has been one of the key tactics identified as being used by celebrities like Wiyaala, Adomaa and Mr. Eazi. Through their dress styles or accessories, they present a look that is natural, classy or relatable so as to appeal to their target audience.

It is however not very certain if the tactics proposed by Khedher (2015) under the brand positioning stage (i.e. artifactual displays, appearance, mannerism and verbal impression management) are exhaustive. Apart from the four tactics Khedher (2015) proposes, the research also identified other brand communication tactics used in promoting the celebrity brands. Respondents from Mr. Eazi and Adomaa’s teams shared instances where they employed below the line and experiential events to position the celebrity brands. Mr. Eazi’s team organised the Detty Rave and Adomaa’s team organised the Twelve Stops of Adomaa during the Christmas festivities which effectively promoted the brands. Perhaps the use of experiential events like these can be considered as a combination of all the four tactics Khedher (2015) proposes.

5.3.1 Social media and socio-cultural codes

Social media platforms were used by the celebrities in different ways to make their brands visible. A majority of the respondents deemed social media as an economical and, arguably, the most powerful brand communication tool they employ in managing personal brands. For instance, Adomaa employed her use of social media itself as a strategy to communicate her status as a connected and interactive millennial. Social media platforms can also be
considered as artifactual displays because they allow the artistes to share written information about their brand (Khedher, 2015, p. 22). These writings and posts that are shared on social media platforms have codes embedded in them that can impact the brand. Apart from the personal branding theories and frameworks that were discussed in chapter two, the chapter also highlighted certain socio-cultural codes that Centeno and Wang (2016) considered impactful in negotiating celebrity brands to their targets. The authors identified these codes as social construction and negotiation of identities, parasocialisation, influence projection, legitimization, and utilization of human brand identities. Out of these four, we identified two codes that were employed by some celebrities to negotiate their brand identities with their audience on social media i.e., parasocialisation and influence projection. Parasocialisation is when the social distance between celebrity brands and consumers are reduced creating more affinity and perceptions of similarity between stakeholders (Centeno & Wang, 2016, p. 137).

We identify the use of this socio-cultural code when Wiyaala’s brand management team member explained how she depicts herself as a relatable personality by showing herself cooking and playing the guitar on social media.

Projection of influence is a co-creation code that refers to the power that stakeholders give to celebrities that enables celebrities to be able to persuade stakeholders culturally (e.g., role models), politically (e.g., voting preferences) and economically (e.g., purchase behaviours) (Centeno & Wang, 2016, p. 137). As we identified earlier, Sarkodie’s brand has been able to gain such influence to the extent that his management team receives requests from banks to promote their services on Sarkodie’s twitter account.
5.3.2 Integrated Communication approaches

As stated in chapter 4, the study identified the use of both marketing and public relations strategies in communicating and promoting the brand. This finding is confirmed by Motion’s (1999) research on personal public relations. Motion (1999) realised from her study that, public relations practitioners who managed the public identity of female politicians employed both marketing and public relations principles in managing the brands. In this study the marketing strategies were employed in the constituting of the brand identity, that is, for identifying the right personality trait, targeting the right market and positioning the brand. This is what Motion (1999) referred to as the formative mode (Motion, 1999, p. 472). Marketing strategies were also used for promoting and selling the celebrity brands to the targets in the current research. Public relations strategies were employed for building relationships, fostering goodwill and managing reputation for the celebrity brands. Motion (1999) identified public relations practitioners as employing the public relations principles of communication counselling and relationship building in an advisory manner (Motion, 1999, p. 475). However, in this study, there is little evidence to show that the brand managers applied public relations principles to advise the celebrity brands. The findings from this study, however, show that public relations principles of reputation management and relationship building were actively employed to build celebrity brand reputation, establish goodwill while establishing beneficial relationships with stakeholders such as the media.

5.4 TEAMS AND RESOURCES

We identified that the brand goes beyond the individual celebrity that is normally the subject of the personal branding effort. Majority of the respondents interviewed, identified multiple
people and categories of people who help in the brand management process. This situation is reflective of Centeno and Wang’s (2016) description of celebrity brand identity as multidimensional. Through their research, they concluded that “human brand identities can take place as collective, collaborative, and performative aspects of a social co-creation process involving multiple providers of identity” (Centeno & Wang, 2016, p. 133). Centeno and Wang (2016) identified three categories of stakeholders whose actions and interactions impact the identity of celebrity brands. These are the focal, primary, and instrumental stakeholder-actors (Centeno & Wang, 2016, p. 135). The focal stakeholder-actor is the celebrity. Celebrities are identified as, not passive, but active creators of their own identity. Through interactions with their fans, they create their identity and shape how people view them (Centeno & Wang, 2016, p. 135). As part of the studies, a respondent from Mr. Eazi’s team gave an account of how the celebrity’s humble mannerisms on social media presented him as a humble artiste and won him the heart and support of his fans.

The next set of stakeholders identified by Centeno and Wang’s (2016) research are the primary stakeholder actors. This class of people is made of consumers and fans of the celebrity brand. Consumers co-create the celebrity’s brand identity by sharing their opinions on the brand, reacting to information shared about the celebrity brand and even motivating the celebrity (Centeno & Wang, 2016, p. 135). There was no actual example of how consumers had influenced the brand. However, there were indications from the respondents on the consumers’ power to influence the way the celebrity brand is viewed by others. A team member of Adomaa’s brand management team deemed the fans as influencers who were supposed to help promote Adomaa to other consumers. Another respondent from Sarkodie’s team acknowledged that it was consumers who confirm and promote the
celebrity. They identify and approve of a celebrity’s brand and even give celebrities feedback on their activities. Wiyaala’s team also relied on her consumer’s word of mouth as a very effective way of promoting her brand.

The third group of people is the instrumental stakeholders. These are identified as the media, advertisers, and talent management, who mediate between the consumer and celebrity brand creation process (Centeno & Wang, 2016, p. 135). They are facilitators of the identity creation process. They are resource providers and they have a stake in the celebrities’ brand identity. This class of people fits the description of the background team Goffman (1956) identifies as working in the background to create a coherent image of the artiste. A good number of teams and people under this group were identified throughout the study and have been highlighted in chapter four. We will put these people into classifications to identify exactly how they influence the brands’ co-creation processes. We identified people who were directly involved in the grooming and development or the artiste’s musical talent as well as the promoting and selling of the artiste works. The people identified under this category were road managers, executive managers, tour managers, songwriters, music labels and investors. We will call them talent managers.

There is the second group that is responsible for the constitution of the brand, they draw up strategies and deploy tactics for promoting the brand. These usually include brand managers, creative directors, photographers, stylists, makeup artistes. We will call these brand image managers. The media is the third group of people whose work impact the brand. They are the link between celebrities and consumers. They provide information updates on the celebrities and help to create buzz around them. Most consumers will attribute their knowledge about celebrities to the media. Finally, there are organisations and advertisers
who adopt the key personalities of celebrities and use them to influence other stakeholders (Centeno & Wang, 2016, p. 135). We identified how these organisations can affect the celebrity’s brand. Wiyaala’s collaboration with the international female band, Grrrl, for female empowerment, is an example of how an organisation can use a celebrity brand to promote an idea or a cause. For Sarkodie’s brand team, there were a number of considerations before going ahead with an endorsement deal. As earlier mentioned, they ensure the endorsement is in line with his brand attributes and his very nature, they consider the worth of the product or organisation and also ensure that the endorsement will be marketable to his targets. All of these are to ensure that the endorsement deal has no negative impact on Sarkodie’s brand. The outlook of Sarkodie’s brand team is indicative of how these collaborations and endorsements can influence and shape the way a celebrity brand is viewed.

The activities of all the teams identified under the instrumental stakeholders have been described as having the potential to bring celebrities more social and economic benefits (Centeno & Wang, 2016, p. 135).

From our literature, we are informed by Goffman’s (1956) theory on the presentation of self that, for a brand to give off a particular impression, people and resources must come together in a coherent fashion to create that impression. Also, as Goffman describes that these people and resource work together backstage to create the desired impression at the front. The talent managers, brand image managers, media and advertisers identified above were the teams identified for working in the background to promote the key attributes of the celebrity brand identity.
Aside the people and organisations that operate behind the scenes, resources such as money, play a very big role in executing brand positioning and promotion tactics. We identified these when a respondent from Adomaa’s brand management team shared the resources committed to delivering the celebrity’s brand identity. Some of these were a constant supply of clothes, makeup and transportation.

Aside these resources that enhance appearance and physical appeal, a respondent from Mr. Eazi’s brand management team, also mentioned that he uses roadmaps and budgets as essential tools for achieving brand goals for Mr. Eazi’s brand.

The descriptions given about the brand communications, the resources that are invested in brand activities and the teams that work behind the scenes to make it all come together, are reflective of the backstage that Goffman (1956) proposes in his theory on the presentation of self.

5.5 CONCLUSIONS

This research set out to explore the low researched area of personal branding as it is practiced by Ghanaian celebrities. Three key factors this research sought to uncover were 1) the motivations behind building and managing a personal brand as a Ghanaian celebrity, 2) the practices that were employed in the brand management process and 3) the teams and resources involved in building and managing a personal brand for a celebrity.
For the first research question:

5.5.1 What are the motivating factors for building and managing a personal brand as a Ghanaian celebrity?

This research identified four motivating factors for building a personal brand. At least, one of these factors were demonstrated by each celebrity that was studied. The celebrities invested in the management of a personal brand, in order to develop a distinct identity that would differentiate them from the crowded space of the music industry. Secondly, they viewed a strong personal brand as a way of making themselves available for great opportunities that will lead to revenue generation in the music industry. Thirdly, they believed a strong and authentic brand will ensure the artiste attained longevity in the industry. Finally, they considered personal branding to be a way of building strong attributes that will earn the celebrity mutually beneficial endorsement deals that will further promote their brand identities. All the motivating factors identified were marketing oriented goals.

On the second question:

5.5.2 What are the practices that are employed in the brand management process?

This study has identified that the practice of personal branding, by the five celebrities studied, was rooted in the theory of corporate branding. This is because the key processes involved in the personal brand managing process, uncovered through this study, mirrors the process applied in the corporate branding process. The process entails three broad steps; identifying the personality traits that are marketable, constructing a compelling description of the brand and applying strategies and tactics to make the brand identity visible to the target audience.
This outcome was reflective of processes identified and proposed by researchers such as Shepherd (2005) and Zarkada (2012).

The research identified that Goffman’s (1956) theory on the presentation of self, offered a good theoretical basis for the explanation of the communication facet of personal branding. Just as described by the theory, the study showed a consistent attempt by the celebrity brands to project a desired image while concealing information that was inconsistent with the impression they sought to project. The research identified the front where all the desired messages were communicated to as well as the backstage. The backstage, as Goffman (1956) described, entails all the resources, activities and teams who operate in the background to project the front.

The study also identified the use of an integrated communication approach amongst all five celebrity brands. The brands employed marketing principles and strategies for identifying the right personal attributes, promoting, positioning and selling the celebrity brand. Principles in public relations were also applied alongside marketing principles to establish goodwill, manage reputation and establish relationships.

Finally, social media emerged the most widely used communication tool for projecting the brand identity of the five celebrities studied.
On question number three:

5.5.3 Which stakeholders and resources are involved in building and managing a personal brand for a celebrity brand?

Three main groups of stakeholders were identified as playing various distinct roles in the celebrity identity building and management process. The celebrities themselves were identified as stakeholders. Their interactions with consumers on platforms such as social media was one of the key ways they shaped their own identities. Consumers of the celebrity brands were identified as key stakeholders who contributed to celebrity brand identity building by sharing their views on the celebrity brands, giving feedback to the celebrities and influencing other consumers to follow and support and the celebrity brand. The final group identified were the teams that worked behind the scenes to moderate the brand building interactions between the celebrity and the consumers. Under this stakeholder group, four subcategories of people identified in this study; the talent managers, the brand identity managers, the media and organisations or advertisers.

These findings were reflective of Goffman’s (1956) theory of self-presentation, which proposes that, for a coherent impression to be made at the front, there must be a team working coherently in the background to make this happen. Centeno and Wang’s (2016) research on celebrity brand co-creation was also very instrumental in coming to these conclusions on how the various teams operate to build and manage the brand identity of a celebrity.

Aside the significant number of human resources involved in the branding process, finance was also found to be a key resource in the personal branding process.
5.6 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE STUDIES

This was an exploratory research into the nature of personal branding as it is practiced by five well-known Ghanaian artistes. The sample size of this research was small, thereby limiting its generalisability. An investigation that expands the sample size of the research and also involves other classes of people that manage a personal brand in Ghana, will be beneficial for a comparative analysis of the various strategies and tactics used by each group.

Also, the scope of this research – motivations, practices and resources – should be expanded in future researches to analyse the impact of the communication strategies and tactics that are employed by the research participants.

This research identified various groups that are involved in the branding process as well as their roles by interviewing only one section of those stakeholders. A follow-up research which involves all the other stakeholders identified will provide a more elaborate understanding of the roles and impact of each stakeholder group.
REFERENCES


Wikipedia. (n.d.). *Sarkodie*. Retrieved October 24, 2018, from Website:


APPENDIX A

BRIEF BIOGRAPHIES AND BRANDING ACTIVITIES OF CELEBRITIES IN THIS RESEARCH

Sarkodie:

Michael Owusu Addo professionally known as Sarkodie is a Ghanaian hip hop recording artist and entrepreneur. Sarkodie is one of Africa’s well-paid music brands. His brand has been commercially successful in promoting top brands such as Samsung and Fun Milk across the continent. The artiste constantly updates his social media with behind-the-scenes videos of his on-stage and off-stage activities. He is constantly seen engaging and interacting with his fans on Twitter. His business outlook is constantly highlighted through his associations with top business men in Ghana.

Wiyaala

Noella Wiyaala is an international touring artist from Ghana. Her music is a potent fusion of West African folk songs and stadium Afro-pop which she brings to life through energetic traditional dance moves (Wiyaala.com, n.d.). Wiyaala is currently one of the top brands from Africa making a big impact on global stages. She consistently presents a unique afro-centric appeal and is popularly featured by global media organisations such as the BBC. Wiyaala is also a Goodwill Ambassador for the United Nations. She was also the brand ambassador for Pepsi and Converse All-Stars in 2013 and 2014 respectively.
Okyeame Kwame

Okyeame Kwame was born on April 17, 1970, as Kwame Nsaia-Apau. He is also known for his work on awareness creation about hepatitis B. In 2017, Okyeame Kwame’s brand management team published the Okyeame Kwame Brand book. First of its kind, the book was designed to communicate the artiste’s brand attributes with all who wish to engage his brand. Aside his music, the artiste displays his creativity through his stage show; Versatile and short videos featuring him and his family via social media.

Mr. Eazi

Oluwatosin Oluwole Ajibade popularly known as is the Nigerian-Ghanaian Pop Star the crooning singer and rapper sits on the symbolic border of two distinct cultures and countries: Nigeria and Ghana (Frank, 2017). In 2013 Mr. Eazi appointed a well-known marketer to manage his brand image, showing a conscious effort to communicate a particular brand reputation. The artiste came onto the music scene with a unique style which he has maintained till date. His laid-back look and street-style personality is consistently depicted through his choice of clothes, music, videos and interaction with fans and media.

Adomaa

Joy O. Adomaa Serwaa Adjeman, known simply as Adomaa is a female artiste from Accra, Ghana. She is one of the few Afro-Jazz artistes in Ghana who has become well-known for her sultry music. She came into the limelight through her Adonai mashup video which went viral. She has since then positioned herself through viral videos on social media, pop-up music activations and a youthful bubbly persona on social media. In 2016, she won the Vodafone Ghana Music Awards Unsung Artiste award (MusicinAfrica.net, 2015).
APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW DESIGN:

These questions will be used to probe and gain insights on what brand management teams do, how and why they do it while practising personal branding in Ghana.

Constituting the brand

1. What factors did you consider when building (celebrity’s name)’s personal brand?
2. What brand image/identity do you seek to project in (celebrity’s name)?
3. How did you determine the appropriate image to construct about (celebrity’s name)?
4. What processes/stages did you go through to develop (celebrity’s name) personal brand?

Strategies and tactics applied to manage the brand

5. Kindly highlight the strategic approaches you use in constructing and building (celebrity’s name) personal brand?
6. Kindly highlight the strategic approaches you use when communicating the brand image of (celebrity’s name).
7. What are some of the marketing and communication approaches that guide the work you do for (celebrity’s name)?
8. What are some of the marketing and communication approaches that guide the work you do for (celebrity’s name)?
9. How do you employ these tools and practises in building the brand?
   a. Traditional Media
   b. Advertisement
c. Social media
d. Celebrity endorsements
e. Public Relations

10. What goes into the day to day management of the (celebrity’s name) brand?

11. What has been the outcome of your communication strategies?

Resources for managing a brand

12. What resources do you employ in building and managing the personal brand?

13. Who are the key players/stakeholders/actors in the celebrity brand building process?

14. What are the roles of each of the players/stakeholders/actors identified?

Motivating factors for building a personal brand

15. What is the driving force behind constituting and communicating a brand for (celebrity’s name)?

16. Why was it necessary for (celebrity’s name) to intentionally build and manage a personal brand?

17. What does (celebrity’s name) seek to achieve through personal branding?

18. In what ways has the personal brand of (celebrity’s name) been beneficial?