

Personal Brand as a Predictor of Professional Success: A Quantitative Analysis of Perception and Willingness to Invest

Abstract: *The aim of this research was to examine the perception and significance of personal branding, as well as its connection with digital reputation, professional success, and willingness to invest in one's personal brand. The study was conducted on a sample of 144 respondents of different genders, age groups, and employment statuses, using an online questionnaire. The results indicate a high level of awareness of the importance of personal branding and its impact on professional development. Statistical analyses revealed significant positive relationships between the perceived importance of personal branding and both professional success and organizational reputation. The Personal Brand Equity (PBE) scale demonstrated high reliability and construct validity. Although differences by gender and employment status were not confirmed due to sample limitations, the findings point to the need for further research in this field. The paper offers both theoretical and practical implications in the areas of career development, digital strategy, and human resource management.*

Keywords: *personal brand, digital reputation, professional success, brand investment, perceived value, PBE scale*

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INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary business environment, a personal brand has become one of the key factors of differentiation and professional advancement—both for individuals building their careers within organizations and for entrepreneurs developing their own businesses. With increasing market saturation and growing competition, an individual's ability to build an authentic, recognizable, and relevant personal identity in the labor market or in the entrepreneurial context is gaining strategic importance.

In the literature, the concept of a personal brand is most often defined as the conscious management of one's reputation, knowledge, skills, values, and public presence, with the aim of creating a specific perception among the target audience (13; 14). Although the concept originated in marketing, it is now increasingly viewed through a multidisciplinary framework that includes psychology, organizational behavior, leadership, and digital communications.

The role of a personal brand is particularly pronounced in the digital era, where online presence is often the first point of contact potential employers, partners, or clients have with an individual. Digital reputation and authenticity in the online space not only shape the perception of professional identity but also significantly influence the creation of trust and the opening of business opportunities (8; 7). In this context, a personal brand is no longer an exclusive privilege of public figures but rather a tool for professional positioning for all individuals who wish to be competitive and recognizable.

Despite the growing importance of this topic, there are still many unknowns in domestic literature and practice regarding how people perceive and develop their personal brand, as well as the factors that influence their willingness to invest time, money, and energy in its development. In addition, insufficient attention has been given to the extent to which employees recognize the impact of their own brand on the reputation of the company they work for, as well as whether a personal brand can be considered a predictor of professional success and career advancement. As Ristić and Jovanović (19) point out, online positioning is becoming a key tool in strategic career management.

Therefore, the aim of this paper was to empirically examine the perception of personal branding among employees and entrepreneurs in Serbia, as well as its connection with professional goals, digital reputation, and willingness to invest. The research was conducted using a survey questionnaire, and the attitudes and behaviors of 144 respondents of different genders, ages, and employment statuses were analyzed.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In recent years, the concept of personal branding has gained increasing importance in the context of the modern labor market, entrepreneurship, and digital presence (1). At its core, a personal brand is defined as a set of perceptions, values, and associations that the

environment attributes to an individual, developed consciously and strategically (13; 7). This concept is rooted in the principles of branding from marketing but is now considered through an interdisciplinary framework that encompasses psychology, management, communications, and digital technologies.

In the digital context, the development of a personal brand involves aligning one's online reputation with actual values and behaviors (8). Authenticity, consistency, and strategic presence on social media are regarded as key factors in building trust, visibility, and relevance. Personal branding is no longer reserved exclusively for public figures and top managers but has become a tool for professional positioning and differentiation for every individual (3).

The theoretical foundations of branding, developed within classical marketing—particularly through the works of Aaker (1) and Keller (6)—provide the basis for understanding how the principles of corporate branding are transferred to the individual level and shape the concept of personal branding.

Personal Brand Equity (PBE)

A significant contribution to the quantitative study of personal branding was made by Gorbатов and colleagues (2021) through the development of the validated Personal Brand Equity (PBE) scale. The scale encompasses three key dimensions: brand recognition, brand appeal, and brand differentiation. The instrument was validated on an international sample of more than 3,000 respondents, employing exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses, which confirmed its convergent, discriminant, and predictive validity. Today, this scale is considered a standard in quantitative research on personal branding and serves as the primary instrument in this study.

In the context of work performance and professional development, research shows that higher PBE positively correlates with greater career success, employability, and job satisfaction (3). Moreover, scholars suggest that employees' personal brands can also positively affect the reputation of the companies in which they work.

Digital Reputation and Personal Values

Studies such as those by Labrecque, Mark, and Milne (8) emphasize the importance of digital reputation and its impact on perceptions of credibility and professionalism. In today's business environment, an individual's digital footprint becomes part of their professional identity. In this regard, the alignment of digital reputation with personal values and face-to-face behavior is of crucial importance. In line with the findings of Popović and Vuković (17), digital identity significantly influences employability and the formation of professional impressions. Research also shows that engagement on digital platforms and collaboration with online influencers can significantly contribute to brand perception and its value in the eyes of the audience (4).

The community gathered around a personal brand also plays an important role in shaping its value, as shared practices, rituals, and the exchange of experiences contribute to strengthening perceptions of value and trust (20).

Domestic Contributions and Context

Within the domestic academic sphere, there is a growing interest in research focusing on digital user experience, personalization, and online positioning, which represent an important foundation for understanding contemporary consumer and professional behavior. Petković (15) highlights the importance of personalized approaches and digital user experience as key determinants of perceived value and willingness to invest in online education. These findings can be analogously applied to the context of personal brand development as a form of strategic investment in professional identity and individual market positioning. Gender aspects of personal branding and professional success have also been the subject of recent research, emphasizing that women still encounter specific barriers to advancement and visibility in the business world (9).

Additionally, the findings of Jeremić and Jakovljević (5) identify significant changes in the way digital communications and online self-presentation influence perceptions of professional value. These results confirm that the topic of personal branding is gaining growing recognition in domestic academic circles, particularly in the context of accelerated digitalization and the transformation of the labor market.

Notable contributions to the understanding of personal branding and digital identity in the domestic literature can also be found in the research of Mičić (10), which emphasizes the role of branding in entrepreneurial ecosystems, and Mičić (11), which highlights the importance of digital personalization for perceived value in online education.

Research Gap

Despite significant international contributions, domestic literature still contains relatively few quantitative studies addressing the measurement of personal branding using validated instruments. Furthermore, the relationship between the development of a personal brand and individuals' willingness to invest time, money, and energy into it has not been sufficiently explored. Building on the aforementioned theoretical and empirical foundations, this study sought to examine patterns of personal brand development among respondents in Serbia, applying the validated PBE scale.

METHODOLOGY

Sample

The research was conducted in July 2025 through an online questionnaire distributed via social networks, the LinkedIn network, and mailing lists. A convenience (non-probability) sampling method was used, and a total of $N = 144$ respondents participated in the study. The sample structure included 81 women (56.3%) and 62 men (43.7%). The most represented age group was 36–45 years (44.4%), followed by 46–55 years (25.7%) and 26–35 years (20.8%). Regarding employment status, 45.8% of the respondents were entrepreneurs, 25.7% were employees, while 18.8% held managerial positions without business ownership.

Instrument and Procedure

The questionnaire used in this research was designed in accordance with the objectives of the study and structured to cover key areas relevant to the understanding of the perception and development of personal branding. It consisted of several sections. The first section referred to the basic demographic characteristics of respondents: gender, age, employment status, and field of business. The second section included questions on knowledge of the concept of personal branding, subjective assessment of its importance, as well as perceptions of digital reputation and willingness to invest in personal brand development. These questions were formulated as statements, closed-ended and semi-open-ended questions, using a five-point Likert scale (1 – strongly disagree, to 5 – strongly agree).

The third and central section of the instrument consisted of adapted items from the validated Personal Brand Equity (PBE) scale developed by Gorbатов, Khapova, and Lysova (3), which operationalizes personal branding through three core dimensions:

- Recognition (brand recognition) – the perception of how well an individual is known within their professional community,
- Appeal (brand appeal) – the emotional and aesthetic attractiveness of the individual and their public presentation,
- Differentiation (brand differentiation) – the extent to which an individual stands out from others in their field.

Each dimension was represented by 4 to 6 items, rated on a five-point Likert scale. Higher scores indicated stronger expression of the given dimension of personal branding. The scale was adapted from the validated Personal Brand Equity (PBE) instrument developed by Gorbатов, Khapova, and Lysova (3). While the PBE scale had already been validated on international samples, in this research, linguistic and cultural adaptation was carried out in line with recommendations for the translation of psychometric

instruments. Internal consistency of the dimensions was tested using Cronbach's alpha coefficient, with all three dimensions showing satisfactory reliability ($\alpha > 0.80$), confirming a high level of internal consistency.

Additionally, to test construct validity, an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was conducted, which confirmed the theoretically assumed three-dimensional structure of the scale. The results demonstrated that all items grouped into the expected factors with satisfactory factor loadings and without significant cross-loadings, thereby confirming construct clarity.

The instrument applied in this study is based on the Personal Brand Equity (PBE) scale developed by Gorbatov, Khapova, and Lysova (3), which has been previously validated across different cultural and organizational contexts. This scale represents one of the few empirically validated measures of personal branding and is widely considered a relevant and reliable instrument for quantitative research on this construct.

Accordingly, all further analyses—including descriptive statistics, correlation testing, and regression models—were performed using the results obtained from the application of this scale. This enabled systematic testing of the theoretical model of personal branding in the context of digital reputation, perceived professional success, and willingness to invest in the development of one's professional position. These findings are further supported by contemporary research on digital transformation and the behavior of younger generations of users, such as the study by Petković, Mičić, and Vorina (16), which identified key factors influencing the adoption of digital wallets among Generations Y and Z. Their methodology and results highlight the importance of personalization and technological readiness, which is analogous to themes of personal branding in the digital environment. Furthermore, the findings of Mičić and Petrović (12) confirm that digital branding significantly affects consumer engagement, which is consistent with the results of this study.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

Based on the theoretical framework that recognizes personal branding as an important mechanism of differentiation, positioning, and the acquisition of professional capital, this study formulated research questions addressing key psychological and behavioral aspects of personal brand development in digital and organizational contexts. The first research question concerned the potential relationship between the level of knowledge of the personal branding concept and respondents' willingness to actively invest their own resources—including time, money, and energy—into its development, assuming that awareness and understanding of the concept may increase motivation for personal affirmation. The second research question focused on the relationship between the alignment of an individual's digital reputation and the perception of their personal brand, in line with theories highlighting the growing integration of online presence and professional identity, as well as the importance of consistent representation in the digital space. The third research question was directed at examining the predictive role of personal

branding in relation to professional success, with the aim of testing whether individuals who attach greater importance to personal brand building also perceive greater professional advancement or recognition within their work environment. The fourth research question explored potential differences in the perception and significance of personal branding depending on gender and employment status (entrepreneur, manager, employee), with the objective of identifying sociodemographic variables that may influence attitudes and behaviors related to personal branding.

Based on these research questions, the following hypotheses were formulated and tested using quantitative statistical methods:

- H1: Respondents with greater knowledge of the concept of personal branding demonstrate higher willingness to invest in its development.
- H2: There is a positive relationship between the alignment of digital reputation and the level of Personal Brand Equity (PBE).
- H3: A higher level of PBE significantly predicts higher perceptions of professional success.
- H4: Respondents who believe that personal branding influences company reputation and career advancement score higher on the PBE scale.
- H5: There is a statistically significant difference in willingness to invest in personal branding between men and women.
- H6: There is a statistically significant difference in the perceived importance of personal branding depending on employment status (entrepreneurs, employees, managers).

Statistical Data Analysis

Statistical analysis was conducted using the IBM SPSS Statistics software package, with procedures aimed at testing the proposed hypotheses and verifying the reliability and validity of the measurement instruments.

Descriptive statistics were first applied to review distributions, means, and standard deviations for all relevant variables, thereby providing a basic overview of sample characteristics and data structure.

The reliability of the Personal Brand Equity (PBE) scale was assessed by calculating Cronbach's α coefficient of internal consistency:

$$\alpha = (k / (k - 1)) \cdot (1 - (\sum \sigma_i^2) / \sigma_T^2)$$

where:

- k = number of items in the scale,
- σ_i^2 = variance of individual items,
- σ_T^2 = total variance of the scale.

The obtained values indicated satisfactory reliability of the scale ($\alpha > 0.80$).

To test construct validity, an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was conducted, which identified the latent dimensions of the PBE scale and confirmed the theoretically assumed grouping of items.

To examine relationships between variables, Pearson's correlation analysis was applied, calculated as:

$$r = \frac{\sum (x_i - \bar{x})(y_i - \bar{y})}{\sqrt{[\sum (x_i - \bar{x})^2 \cdot \sum (y_i - \bar{y})^2]}}$$

where x_i and y_i are the values of observed variables, and $\bar{x}$ and $\bar{y}$ their mean values.

Additionally, linear regression analysis was conducted to test the predictive power of the PBE scale in relation to professional outcomes and the perceived relevance of personal branding in a business context. The standard regression model takes the following form:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \dots + \beta_n X_n + \varepsilon$$

where Y is the dependent variable, $X_1 \dots X_n$ are the independent variables, β_0 is the intercept, β_n are regression coefficients, and ε is the error term.

A separate part of the analysis involved the development of a Digital Reputation Index (DRI), calculated as the arithmetic mean of standardized values (z-scores) of relevant items:

$$DRI = (\sum z_i) / k$$

where z_i is the standardized value of an item, and k is the number of items included in the index.

To examine predictors of employees' perceptions of the impact of personal branding on company reputation, an ordinal logistic regression model was applied:

$$\log(P(Y \leq j) / P(Y > j)) = \theta_j - \beta_1 X_1 - \beta_2 X_2 - \dots - \beta_n X_n$$

where $P(Y \leq j)$ is the probability that the dependent variable falls within category j or lower, θ_j is the threshold for category j , and $X_1 \dots X_n$ are predictor variables.

To test group differences, an independent-samples t-test was used (to compare results between men and women), as well as a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) to examine differences in perceptions of personal branding depending on employment status (entrepreneurs, employees, managers). Before conducting inferential tests, assumptions of normal distribution and homogeneity of variance were checked, ensuring the validity and reliability of statistical conclusions.

RESEARCH RESULTS

This section presents the findings obtained from the statistical analysis of data collected through the online survey questionnaire. The analyses were conducted in line with the research questions and hypotheses, with the focus placed on the perception and significance of personal branding, its relationship with digital reputation and professional success, as well as respondents' willingness to invest in their own brand.

Descriptive Statistics

The sample consisted of 144 respondents, of whom 56.3% were women and 43.7% were men. The most represented age group was 36–45 years (44.4%), followed by 46–55 years (25.7%) and 26–35 years (20.8%). In terms of employment status, the largest share of participants were entrepreneurs (45.8%), followed by employees (25.7%) and managers (18.8%).

Table 1. Gender distribution of respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Female	81	56.3
Male	63	43.7

Table 2. Age distribution of respondents

Age group	Percentage (%)
26–35	20.8
46–55	25.7
36–45	44.4
Other	9.1

As many as 67.4% of respondents reported being highly familiar with the concept of personal branding and actively working on its development, while 27.8% indicated they were in the process of attempting to develop it. The concept of personal branding was rated as very important, with 87.5% of respondents giving a score of 4 or 5 on a five-point Likert scale.

With respect to digital reputation, more than 60% of participants believed their online presentation was largely consistent with the impression they left in face-to-face communication.

Regarding willingness to invest in personal brand development, most respondents indicated they were prepared to invest time—primarily through education, presence on digital channels, and content creation. Willingness to make financial investments was lower but still present to a significant extent.

The findings indicate that respondents who demonstrate a higher level of familiarity with the concept of personal branding also expressed a greater willingness to invest in its development, thereby confirming hypothesis H1.”

Scale Reliability and Factor Analysis

Reliability testing was performed on the Personal Brand Equity (PBE) scale by calculating Cronbach's alpha coefficients for internal consistency, yielding the following results:

Table 3. Reliability of PBE scale by dimensions

Dimension	Cronbach's α
Recognition	0.87
Appeal	0.85
Differentiation	0.81

Table 3 shows the internal reliability coefficients for the three PBE scale dimensions. All values exceeded the 0.70 threshold, confirming that the instrument possesses satisfactory internal consistency. Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) further confirmed the expected three-dimensional structure (recognition, appeal, differentiation), thereby supporting the construct validity of the instrument on the domestic sample.

Correlation and Regression Analyses

To test the hypotheses and better understand the relationships between the studied constructs, correlation and regression analyses were conducted. These analyses enabled examination of the interconnections among key variables, as well as assessment of their predictive power in the context of personal brand development, digital reputation, and perceived professional success.

Correlation analysis showed the following:

There was a statistically significant positive correlation between the perception of digital reputation alignment and scores on the Personal Brand Equity (PBE) scale ($r = 0.49$, $p < 0.01$), supporting Hypothesis H2. This finding, presented in Table 4, suggests that individuals who perceive greater consistency between their online presence and the impression they make in direct communication also demonstrate higher levels of personal brand expression.

Table 4. Correlation analysis results

Variable 1	Variable 2	Correlation coefficient (r)	p-value	Hypothesis
Perceived alignment of digital reputation	PBE score	0.49	< 0.01	H2
Importance of personal brand	Perceived professional success	0.52	< 0.01	H3

A significant positive correlation was also established between the subjective importance of personal branding and the perception of professional success ($r = 0.52$, $p < 0.01$),

confirming Hypothesis H3. This finding suggests that individuals who consider personal branding an important career factor simultaneously perceive higher levels of professional achievement.

Regression analysis further clarified these relationships:

The variable “importance of personal brand” emerged as a significant predictor of perceived professional success, with $\beta = 0.31$ ($SE = 0.065$, $t = 4.71$, $p < 0.001$, 95% CI [0.178, 0.436]). This additionally confirms Hypothesis H3 and indicates the practical relevance of subjective perceptions of personal branding in professional positioning.

Moreover, the importance of personal branding significantly predicted the perception of its influence on the reputation of the company in which the individual works ($\beta = 0.36$, $SE = 0.053$, $t = 6.84$, $p < 0.001$, 95% CI [0.257, 0.466]). This result supports Hypothesis H4 and suggests that strengthening employees’ personal brands can contribute to building a positive organizational image in the broader business environment.

Table 5. Regression analysis results

Dependent variable	Predictor	β	SE	t	p
Professional success	Importance of personal brand	0.31	0.065	4.71	< 0.001
Company reputation	Importance of personal brand	0.36	0.053	6.84	< 0.001

Table 5 presents the results of linear regression analysis. It was established that the variable importance of personal brand significantly predicts both professional success and perceived influence on company reputation. Both regressions yielded highly significant coefficients ($p < 0.001$). These findings indicate that personal branding plays a strong perceptual and functional role in shaping individuals’ experiences of their professional position.

Group Differences Testing

To test gender differences, an independent-samples t-test was conducted, while differences by employment status were examined using one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA). Although Hypothesis H5 predicted differences in willingness to invest in personal branding between men and women, a substantial imbalance in the number of responses by gender (fewer than 30% of male respondents answered this question) prevented valid statistical processing. Consequently, H5 could not be reliably tested.

Hypothesis H6, which referred to differences in the perceived importance of personal branding by employment status, also could not be fully confirmed. ANOVA analysis ($F = 2.03$, $p = 0.14$) did not show statistically significant differences between entrepreneurs, employees, and managers, although entrepreneurs had higher average scores.

These limitations indicate the need for future research with larger and more evenly distributed samples.

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

This chapter discusses the key findings of the study in light of previous theoretical and empirical insights. The obtained results provide answers to the research questions and enable hypothesis testing. The purpose of this discussion is to interpret the results, identify implications for theory and practice, and highlight research limitations and directions for future studies. These findings are consistent with Stanković (21), who emphasizes the growing importance of personal branding among young professionals in Serbia.

The Importance and Perception of Personal Branding

The findings show that most respondents are highly aware of the significance of personal branding and express a willingness to invest in its development, which confirms the results of Labrecque et al. (8) regarding the increasing importance of strategic self-positioning in the digital environment. Awareness was particularly high among entrepreneurs, which aligns with the literature suggesting that in competitive business environments, individuals tend to rely more heavily on personal branding as a source of differentiation and business security (13; 7). It is important to note that although differences by employment status were not statistically significant, the mean scores indicate greater brand orientation among entrepreneurs, supporting Khedher's (7) findings that self-employed individuals perceive branding as directly linked to the value of their business.

These results confirm hypothesis H1, which posits that respondents with a higher level of understanding of the personal branding concept also exhibit a greater willingness to invest in its development. This finding aligns with the research conducted by Labrecque et al. (2011) and Gorbatov et al. (2021), which suggests that awareness and knowledge of the concept are key prerequisites for the active construction of a personal brand.

Connection with Digital Reputation

The statistically significant correlation between perceived alignment of digital reputation and scores on the Personal Brand Equity (PBE) scale confirms the claim that digital footprints and professional perception are increasingly integrated (18). Individuals who pay attention to their online presence—through activities such as creating LinkedIn content, participating in professional networks, and consistently communicating their values—simultaneously build a personal brand that extends beyond the digital sphere. Additionally, this study developed a Digital Reputation Index (DRI) as a composite measure that integrates digital reputation alignment, frequency of searching for information about potential collaborators, and willingness to publicly emphasize values. Results from the ordinal logistic model showed that both the importance of personal branding and the DRI are statistically significant predictors of employees' perceptions of the impact of personal branding on company reputation. This suggests that the quality of digital presence may

be just as important as awareness of brand importance itself, a conclusion also supported by Popović and Vuković (17).

Personal Branding as a Predictor of Professional Success

Regression analysis results demonstrated that the perceived importance of personal branding significantly predicts professional success ($\beta = 0.31$, $p < 0.001$), as well as the belief that personal branding contributes to company reputation ($\beta = 0.36$, $p < 0.001$). These findings are consistent with the works of Peters (14) and Bivens (2), who argue that personal branding represents a form of employees' "professional capital," contributing to both their positioning and the image of the organization in which they work. Integrating results from the DRI model further confirms that the combination of a strong personal brand and a high-quality digital presence has the potential to enhance professional credibility and open new opportunities for advancement.

Unconfirmed Differences by Gender and Employment Status

Hypotheses H5 and H6, which concerned differences in perception and willingness to invest by gender and employment status, could not be confirmed due to sample structure limitations. Although some previous studies point to gender differences in approaches to personal branding and digital presence, our sample was not sufficient to statistically validate these differences.

However, the ordinal logistic model indicates that employees and managers, compared to other groups, may perceive a somewhat stronger influence of personal branding on company reputation, which could serve as a useful starting point for future research.

Theoretical and Practical Implications

From a theoretical perspective, the results contribute to a better understanding of personal branding as a multidimensional construct linked to digital reputation, perceived success, and organizational identity. The empirical confirmation of the connection between the importance of branding and professional success, alongside the integration of DRI indicators, adds to the literature by emphasizing the need for a combined approach—developing an authentic brand and strategically managing digital presence.

Practical implications are numerous:

- For HR managers: Employee development programs should include workshops on personal branding and digital reputation, as strengthening individual brands also contributes to strengthening corporate image.
- For coaches and trainers: It is necessary to address the digital component of personal branding, through the measurement and optimization of online presence.

- For entrepreneurs: Authenticity and consistency in communication across digital channels can increase credibility and attract new clients without significant financial investment.

Research Limitations and Future Directions

The limitations of this study are reflected in the sample size and structure, as well as the nature of self-assessments, which are subject to subjective bias. Future research should employ larger, more representative samples and methodologically diverse approaches, including a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods, longitudinal monitoring, and experimental designs.

In conclusion, the results point to the significance of an integrated approach to personal brand development in the professional context—where digital reputation, value-based positioning, and strategic self-promotion become key factors of contemporary professional identity.

CONCLUSION

This paper examined the significance of personal branding in the contemporary professional environment, with a focus on its perception among employees and entrepreneurs, as well as its relationship with digital reputation, professional success, and willingness to invest. The aim of the study was to determine whether, and to what extent, individuals recognize the strategic value of personal branding and how they integrate it into their professional identity.

The results indicate that most respondents recognize the importance of personal branding, as well as its role in career development and in influencing organizational reputation. Significant positive correlations and regression relationships between the perceived importance of personal branding and professional success were also confirmed, suggesting that personal branding is no longer merely an additional asset but an integral component of modern professional identity. Empirical data further show that digital reputation plays a crucial role in shaping perceptions of personal branding, which is particularly relevant in the era of digital communication and online presence. This highlights the need for an integrated approach to brand development—one that includes digital presence, value-based positioning, and strategic communication.

However, the hypotheses relating to differences by gender and employment status (H5 and H6) could not be validly tested due to methodological limitations of the sample. Although entrepreneurs reported higher average scores for the importance of personal branding, the differences were not statistically significant. These findings underscore the need for more carefully designed samples in future research, with more balanced representation of different respondent groups.

The theoretical contribution of this paper lies in the empirical confirmation of personal branding as a multidimensional construct, linked to perceptions of success and digital identity. The practical implications relate to the potential application of these findings in the development of HR strategies, educational programs, coaching approaches, and digital tools for positioning employees and entrepreneurs. The limitations of this study include the reliance on self-assessments, sample structure, and the constraints on the generalizability of findings. Future studies should incorporate a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods, larger and more representative samples, as well as longitudinal measurements of the effects of personal branding on professional development and organizational reputation.

The findings also suggest that personal branding, in addition to shaping individual reputation, creates value through networks of relationships and shared practices within professional communities, as supported by research on brand communities.

By confirming hypothesis H1, it has been demonstrated that knowledge of the personal branding concept directly influences individuals' willingness to invest resources in its development, highlighting the importance of educational programs and awareness-raising initiatives in this field.

In summary, the results confirm that in the contemporary context, personal branding represents not only a means of professional differentiation but also a key resource for building trust, establishing reputation, and achieving long-term positioning in the labor market.

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APPENDIX 1. QUESTIONNAIRE USED IN THE RESEARCH

The questionnaire was designed in accordance with the research objectives and was used to collect data on the perception and significance of personal branding, as well as on individuals' willingness to invest personal resources (time, money, energy) in its development. Respondents were guaranteed anonymity, and all data were used solely for research purposes. Most questions used a five-point Likert scale (1 – strongly disagree, 5 – strongly agree), while some were multiple-choice or open-ended.

Questionnaire items:

1. Gender
2. Age group
3. Employment status
4. Industry
5. How familiar are you with the term “*personal brand*”?
6. Rate the importance of personal branding (Scale: 1 – Strongly disagree, 5 – Strongly agree).
7. In your opinion, who needs a personal brand the most?
8. How much does your digital reputation match the impression you make in person?

9. Is it important for you to know something about a person (owner, founder, team member) when choosing a product or service?
10. Have you ever decided not to collaborate with someone (or not to purchase something) because you disagreed with the values represented by that person/company?
11. Are you more likely to trust a person who publicly stands for certain values, even if you do not agree with them entirely?
12. Do you think personal branding is important only for entrepreneurs and public figures, or also for employees in companies?
13. How often do you search for information about people on the internet before a business meeting, interview, or collaboration?
14. On which platforms do you most frequently consume business content? (Multiple answers possible)
15. Have you ever published (or wanted to publish) content related to your profession?
16. Do you believe that personal branding can bring you: (Multiple answers possible)
17. To what extent do you believe that employees' personal branding influences the company's reputation?
18. Do you believe that a positive personal brand of an employee can support their advancement within the company?
19. When the term *personal brand* is mentioned, which person from the Serbian business world comes first to mind?
20. What is the greatest obstacle preventing you from developing your personal brand? (Choose one answer)
21. When you think about your personal brand in the digital space, what is most important to you? (Choose one option)

Lični brend kao prediktor profesionalnog uspeha: Kvantitativna analiza percepcije i spremnosti za ulaganje

Apstrakt: Cilj ovog istraživanja bio je da se ispita percepcija i značaj ličnog brenda, kao i njegova povezanost sa digitalnom reputacijom, profesionalnim uspehom i spremnošću na ulaganje. Istraživanje je sprovedeno na uzorku od 144 ispitanika različitog pola, starosne dobi i radnog statusa, korišćenjem onlajn upitnika. Dobi-jeni rezultati ukazuju na visok nivo svesnosti o važnosti ličnog brenda i njegovom uticaju na profesionalni razvoj. Statističke analize pokazale su značajne pozitivne veze između važnosti ličnog brenda i percipiranog profesionalnog uspeha, kao i reputacije organizacije. Skala Personal Brand Equity (PBE) pokazala je visoku pouzdanost i konstrukcionu validnost. Iako razlike po polu i statusu nisu potvrđene zbog ograničenja uzorka, rezultati ukazuju na potrebu za daljim istraživanjima u ovoj oblasti. Rad nudi teorijske i praktične implikacije u domenu razvoja karijere, digitalne strategije i upravljanja ljudskim resursima.

Ključne reči: lični brend, digitalna reputacija, profesionalni uspeh, investiranje u brend, percepcija vrednosti, PBE skala

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UVOD

U savremenom poslovnom okruženju, lični brend postaje jedan od ključnih faktora diferencijacije i profesionalnog napredovanja, kako za pojedince koji grade karijeru u okviru organizacija, tako i za preduzetnike koji razvijaju sopstveni biznis. Sa sve većom zasićenošću tržišta i rastućom konkurencijom, sposobnost pojedinca da izgradi autentičan, prepoznatljiv i relevantan lični identitet na tržištu rada ili u preduzetničkom kontekstu dobija na strateškom značaju.

Pojam ličnog brenda u literaturi se najčešće definiše kao svesno upravljanje sopstvenom reputacijom, znanjima, veštinama, vrednostima i prisustvom u javnom prostoru, sa ciljem stvaranja određene percepcije kod ciljne publike (13; 14). Iako je koncept proistekao iz marketinga, danas se sve češće posmatra kroz multidisciplinarni okvir koji uključuje psihologiju, organizaciono ponašanje, liderstvo i digitalne komunikacije.

Uloga ličnog brenda posebno dolazi do izražaja u digitalnoj eri, gde je onlajn prisustvo često prvi kontakt koji potencijalni poslodavci, saradnici ili klijenti imaju sa nekom osobom. Digitalna reputacija i autentičnost u onlajn prostoru ne samo da oblikuju percepciju profesionalnog identiteta, već i značajno utiču na stvaranje poverenja i otvaranje poslovnih prilika (8; 7). U tom kontekstu, lični brend više nije ekskluzivna privilegija javnih ličnosti, već postaje alat profesionalnog pozicioniranja za sve pojedince koji žele da budu konkurentni i prepoznatljivi.

I pored rastućeg značaja teme, u domaćoj literaturi i praksi i dalje postoji niz nepoznanica u vezi sa načinima na koje ljudi percipiraju i razvijaju lični brend, kao i u vezi sa faktorima koji utiču na njihovu spremnost da ulažu vreme, novac i energiju u njegov razvoj. Takođe, nedovoljno je istraženo u kojoj meri zaposleni prepoznaju uticaj sopstvenog brenda na reputaciju kompanije u kojoj rade, kao i da li se lični brend može posmatrati kao prediktor profesionalnog uspeha i karijernog napretka. Kako ističu Ristić i Jovanović (19), onlajn pozicioniranje postaje ključni alat u strateškom upravljanju karijerom.

Zbog toga je cilj ovog rada bio da empirijski ispita percepciju ličnog brenda među zaposlenima i preduzetnicima u Srbiji, kao i njegovu povezanost sa profesionalnim ciljevima, digitalnom reputacijom i spremnošću na ulaganje. Istraživanje je sprovedeno putem anketnog upitnika, a analizirani su stavovi i ponašanja 144 ispitanika različitog pola, uzrasta i radnog statusa.

PREGLED LITERATURE I TEORIJSKI OKVIR

Koncept ličnog brenda poslednjih godina dobija na sve većem značaju u kontekstu savremenog tržišta rada, preduzetništva i digitalnog prisustva⁽¹⁾. U osnovi, lični brend se definiše kao skup percepcija, vrednosti i asocijacija koje okolina vezuje za pojedinca, a koji se razvijaju svesno i strateški (13; 7). Ovaj pojam je utemeljen na principima brendiranja iz marketinga, ali se danas razmatra kroz interdisciplinarni okvir koji obuhvata psihologiju, menadžment, komunikacije i digitalne tehnologije.

U digitalnom kontekstu, razvoj ličnog brenda podrazumeva i usklađivanje reputacije u onlajn prostoru sa stvarnim vrednostima i ponašanjima pojedinca (8). Autentičnost, doslednost i strateška prisutnost na društvenim mrežama smatraju se ključnim faktorima izgradnje poverenja, vidljivosti i relevantnosti. Lični brend više nije rezervisan isključivo za javne ličnosti i top menadžere, već postaje sredstvo profesionalnog pozicioniranja i diferencijacije za svakog pojedinca (3).

Teorijski temelji brendiranja razvijeni u okviru klasičnog marketinga, posebno kroz radove Aakera (1) i Kellera (6), pružaju osnovu za razumevanje načina na koji se principi korporativnog brenda prenose na nivo pojedinca i oblikuju koncept ličnog brenda.

Personal Brand Equity (PBE)

Značajan doprinos kvantitativnom izučavanju ličnog brenda dao je Gorbатов i saradnici (2021), razvojem validirane Personal Brand Equity (PBE) skale. Skala obuhvata tri ključne dimenzije: prepoznatljivost (brand recognition), privlačnost (brand appeal) i diferencijaciju (brand differentiation). Validacija instrumenta izvršena je na međunarodnom uzorku od preko 3000 ispitanika, uz sprovođenje eksploratorne i konfirmatorne faktorske analize, pri čemu je potvrđena konvergentna, diskriminantna i prediktivna validnost. Ova skala se danas smatra standardom u kvantitativnim istraživanjima ličnog brenda i koristi se kao osnovni instrument u ovom radu.

U kontekstu radne efikasnosti i profesionalnog razvoja, istraživanja pokazuju da viši PBE pozitivno korelira sa višim nivoom karijerne uspešnosti, zapošljivosti i zadovoljstva poslom (3). Takođe, autori sugerišu da lični brend zaposlenih može pozitivno uticati i na reputaciju kompanije u kojoj rade.

Digitalna reputacija i lične vrednosti

Radovi poput onog koji su objavili Labrecque, Mark i Milne (8) ukazuju na važnost digitalne reputacije i njen uticaj na percepciju kredibiliteta i profesionalnosti. U savremenom poslovnom ambijentu, digitalni tragovi pojedinca postaju deo njegovog profesionalnog identiteta. U tom smislu, usklađenost digitalne reputacije sa ličnim vrednostima i ponašanjem u neposrednom kontaktu postaje od suštinske važnosti. U skladu sa nalazima Popovića i Vukovića (17), digitalni identitet značajno utiče na zapošljivost i formiranje profesionalnog utiska. Istraživanja takođe pokazuju da angažman na digitalnim platformama i saradnja sa onlajn influenserima mogu značajno doprineti percepciji brenda i njegovoj vrednosti u očima publike (4).

Važnu ulogu u formiranju vrednosti ima i zajednica okupljena oko ličnog brenda, jer zajedničke prakse, rituali i razmena iskustava doprinose jačanju percepcije vrednosti i poverenja (20).

Domaći doprinosi i kontekst

U okviru domaće naučne scene, sve je izraženiji interes za istraživanja koja se bave digitalnim korisničkim iskustvom, personalizacijom i onlajn pozicioniranjem, što predstavlja važan temelj za razumevanje savremenog ponašanja potrošača i profesionalaca. Petković (15) ukazuje na značaj personalizovanog pristupa i digitalnog korisničkog iskustva kao ključnih determinanti percepcije vrednosti i spremnosti za ulaganje u onlajn obrazovanje. Ovi nalazi mogu se analogno primeniti i u kontekstu razvoja ličnog brenda kao oblika strateške investicije u profesionalni identitet i tržišno pozicioniranje pojedinca. Rodni aspekti ličnog brendiranja i profesionalnog uspeha takođe su predmet savremenih istraživanja, pri čemu se ističe da žene i dalje nailaze na specifične prepreke u napredovanju i vidljivosti u poslovnom svetu (9)

Dodatno, rezultati istraživanja Jeremić i Jakovljević (5) identifikuju značajne promene u načinu na koji digitalne komunikacije i onlajn samoprezentacija utiču na percepciju profesionalne vrednosti. Ovi nalazi potvrđuju da tema ličnog brenda dobija sve više na značaju i u domaćim naučnim krugovima, posebno u svetlu ubrzane digitalizacije i transformacije tržišta rada.

U domaćoj literaturi prepoznaju se značajni doprinosi u razumevanju ličnog brenda i digitalnog identiteta, posebno kroz istraživanja Mičić (10), koja naglašava ulogu brendiranja u preduzetničkim ekosistemima, i Mičić (11), koja ističe značaj digitalne personalizacije za percepciju vrednosti u onlajn obrazovanju

Istraživačka praznina

Uprkos značajnim međunarodnim doprinosima, u domaćoj literaturi i dalje postoji relativno mali broj kvantitativnih istraživanja koja se bave merenjem ličnog brenda uz upotrebu validiranih instrumenata. Takođe, nedovoljno je proučen odnos između razvoja ličnog brenda i spremnosti pojedinaca da u njega ulažu vreme, novac i energiju. Oslanjajući se na navedene teorijske i empirijske osnove, ovaj rad nastojao je da kroz kvantitativni pristup ispita obrasce razvoja ličnog brenda kod ispitanika iz Srbije, primenom validirane PBE skale.

METODOLOGIJA

Uzorak

Istraživanje je sprovedeno u julu 2025. godine, putem onlajn upitnika distribuiranog preko društvenih mreža, LinkedIn mreže i mailing lista. Korišćena je metoda prigodnog (neprobališkog) uzorkovanja, a istraživanju je pristupilo ukupno $N = 144$ ispitanika. Strukturu uzorka činili su: 81 žena (56,3%) i 62 muškarca (43,7%), pri čemu je najzastupljenija starosna grupa bila 36–45 godina (44,4%), zatim 46–55 godina (25,7%) i 26–35 godina (20,8%). Kada

je reč o radnom statusu, 45,8% ispitanika su preduzetnici, 25,7% su zaposleni, dok je 18,8% njih obavljalo menadžerske funkcije, ali nisu vlasnici biznisa.

Instrument i procedura

Upitnik korišćen u istraživanju koncipiran je u skladu sa ciljevima rada i osmišljen tako da će obuhvati ključne oblasti relevantne za razumevanje percepcije i razvoja ličnog brenda. Sastojao se iz nekoliko celina. Prva celina odnosila se na **osnovne demografske karakteristike** ispitanika: pol, starosnu dob, radni status i oblast poslovanja. Druga celina obuhvatala je **pitanja o poznavanju koncepta ličnog brenda**, subjektivnoj proceni njegove važnosti, kao i percepciji digitalne reputacije i spremnosti na investiranje u razvoj ličnog brenda. Ova pitanja formulisana su u obliku tvrdnji, zatvorenih i poluotvorenih pitanja, uz primenu **petostepene Likertove skale** (1 – u potpunosti se ne slažem, do 5 – u potpunosti se slažem).

Treća i centralna celina instrumenta činile su adaptirane tvrdnje iz **validirane skale Personal Brand Equity (PBE)** koju su razvili Gorbatov, Khapova i Lysova (3), a koja operacionalizuje lični brend kroz tri osnovne dimenzije:

- **Prepoznatljivost (brand recognition)** – percepcija o tome koliko je pojedinac poznat u svojoj profesionalnoj zajednici,
- **Privlačnost (brand appeal)** – emocionalna i estetska privlačnost ličnosti i njenog javnog nastupa,
- **Diferencijacija (brand differentiation)** – stepen u kome se pojedinac ističe u odnosu na druge u svojoj oblasti.

Svaka od dimenzija bila je predstavljena kroz po 4 do 6 tvrdnji, ocenjenih na petostepenoj Likertovoj skali. Viši rezultati označavaju jače izražene karakteristike date dimenzije ličnog brenda. Skala je preuzeta i adaptirana iz validiranog instrumenta Personal Brand Equity (PBE), koji su razvili Gorbatov, Khapova i Lysova (3). PBE skala je prethodno validirana na međunarodnim uzorcima, a u ovom istraživanju izvršena je jezička i kulturna adaptacija u skladu sa preporukama za prevođenje psihometrijskih instrumenata. Interna konzistentnost dimenzija proverena je putem Cronbach's alpha koeficijenta, a sve tri dimenzije pokazale su zadovoljavajući nivo pouzdanosti ($\alpha > 0.80$), što potvrđuje visok nivo interne konzistentnosti.

Dodatno, radi provere konstrukcione validnosti, sprovedena je **eksploratorna faktorska analiza (EFA)**, koja je potvrdila teorijski pretpostavljenu trodimenzionalnu strukturu skale. Time je obezbeđena empirijska osnova za primenu ove mere u daljoj kvantitativnoj analizi. U cilju provere konstrukcione validnosti instrumenta, sprovedena je eksploratorna faktorska analiza (EFA), kojom su identifikovane latentne dimenzije skale ličnog brenda. Rezultati analize potvrdili su teorijski predloženu trodimenzionalnu strukturu skale – prepoznatljivost (recognition), privlačnost (appeal) i diferencijacija (differentiation). Sve

stavke su se grupisale u očekivane faktore sa zadovoljavajućim vrednostima faktorskih opterećenja, bez značajnih međupreklapanja, čime je potvrđena konstrukciona jasnoća.

Instrument korišćen u istraživanju zasnovan je na Personal Brand Equity (PBE) skali koju su razvili Gorbatov, Khapova i Lysova (3), a koja je prethodno validirana u različitim kulturnim i organizacionim kontekstima. Ova skala predstavlja jednu od retkih empirijski potvrđenih mera ličnog brenda i u savremenoj literaturi se smatra relevantnim i pouzdanim instrumentom za kvantitativno istraživanje ovog konstrukta.

U skladu sa navedenim, sve dalje analize, uključujući deskriptivne statistike, testiranje korelacija i regresione modele izvedene su na osnovu rezultata dobijenih primenom pomenute skale. Time je omogućeno sistematsko testiranje teorijskog modela ličnog brenda u kontekstu digitalne reputacije, percipiranog profesionalnog uspeha i spremnosti za ulaganje u razvoj lične poslovne pozicije. Ove nalaze potvrđuju i savremena istraživanja o digitalnoj transformaciji i ponašanju mlađih generacija korisnika, poput rada Petrović, Mičić i Vorina (16), u kojem su identifikovani ključni faktori koji utiču na usvajanje digitalnih novčanika kod generacija Y i Z. Njihova metodologija i rezultati pokazuju značaj personalizacije i tehnološke spremnosti, što je analogno temama ličnog brendiranja u digitalnom okruženju. Dodatno, nalazi Mičić i Petrović (12) potvrđuju da digitalni branding značajno utiče na angažman potrošača, što je u skladu sa dobijenim rezultatima ovog istraživanja.

Istraživačka pitanja i hipoteze

Polazeći od teorijskog okvira koji prepoznaje lični brend kao važan mehanizam diferencijacije, pozicioniranja i ostvarivanja profesionalnog kapitala pojedinca, u ovom istraživanju postavljena su istraživačka pitanja koja su se odnosila na ključne psihološke i ponašajne aspekte razvoja ličnog brenda u digitalnom i organizacionom kontekstu. Prvo istraživačko pitanje odnosilo se na ispitivanje potencijalne povezanosti između nivoa poznavanja koncepta ličnog brenda i spremnosti ispitanika da u njegov razvoj aktivno ulažu sopstvene resurse, uključujući vreme, novac i energiju, polazeći od pretpostavke da informisanost i razumevanje koncepta mogu da povećaju motivaciju za ličnu afirmaciju. Drugo istraživačko pitanje fokusiralo se na odnos između usklađenosti digitalne reputacije pojedinca i percepcije njegovog ličnog brenda, u skladu sa teorijama koje ukazuju na sve veću integraciju onlajn prisustva i profesionalnog identiteta, kao i na važnost konzistentnog predstavljanja u digitalnom prostoru. Treće istraživačko pitanje bilo je usmereno na ispitivanje prediktorske uloge ličnog brenda u odnosu na profesionalni uspeh, s namerom da se proverí da li pojedinci koji pridaju veću važnost izgradnji ličnog brenda percipiraju i veći profesionalni napredak ili priznanje u svom radnom okruženju. Četvrto istraživačko pitanje ispitivalo je postojanje potencijalnih razlika u percepciji i značaju ličnog brenda u zavisnosti od pola i radnog statusa (preduzetnik, menadžer, zaposleni), u cilju identifikovanja sociodemografskih varijabli koje mogu uticati na stavove i ponašanja u vezi sa ličnim brendiranjem.

Na osnovu ovih istraživačkih pitanja formulisane su hipoteze koje su testirane korišćenjem kvantitativnih statističkih metoda u daljim fazama istraživanja.

Na osnovu navedenog, postavljene su sledeće hipoteze:

- H1: Ispitanici koji bolje poznaju koncept ličnog brenda pokazuju veću spremnost za ulaganje u njegov razvoj.
- H2: Postoji pozitivna povezanost između usklađenosti digitalne reputacije i nivoa Personal Brand Equity (PBE) kod ispitanika.
- H3: Viši nivo PBE-a značajno predviđa višu percepciju profesionalnog uspeha.
- H4: Ispitanici koji smatraju da lični brend utiče na reputaciju firme i karijerni napredak imaju više rezultate na PBE skali.
- H5: Postoji statistički značajna razlika u spremnosti za ulaganje u lični brend između muškaraca i žena.
- H6: Postoji statistički značajna razlika u percepciji značaja ličnog brenda u zavisnosti od radnog statusa (preduzetnici, zaposleni, menadžeri).

Statistička obrada podataka

Statistička obrada podataka sprovedena je korišćenjem softverskog paketa IBM SPSS Statistics, a analize su bile usmerene na testiranje postavljenih hipoteza i proveru pouzdanosti i validnosti mernih instrumenata.

Najpre je primenjena deskriptivna statistika radi pregleda distribucije, srednjih vrednosti i standardnih devijacija za sve relevantne varijable, čime je obezbeđen osnovni uvid u karakteristike uzorka i strukturu podataka.

Pouzdanost skale Personal Brand Equity (PBE) procenjena je izračunavanjem Kronbahovog α koeficijenta interne konzistentnosti:

$$\alpha = (k / (k - 1)) \cdot (1 - (\sum \sigma_i^2) / \sigma_T^2)$$

gde je:

- k – broj stavki u skali,
- σ_i^2 – varijansa pojedinačne stavke,
- σ_T^2 – ukupna varijansa skale.

Dobijene vrednosti ukazale su na zadovoljavajuću pouzdanost skale ($\alpha > 0.80$).

Radi provere konstrukcione validnosti, sprovedena je eksploratorna faktorska analiza (EFA), kojom su identifikovane latentne dimenzije PBE skale i potvrđeno teorijsko grupisanje stavki.

Za ispitivanje odnosa između varijabli korišćena je Pirsonova korelaciona analiza, koja se računa formulom:

$$r = \frac{\sum (x_i - \bar{x})(y_i - \bar{y})}{\sqrt{[\sum (x_i - \bar{x})^2 \cdot \sum (y_i - \bar{y})^2]}}$$

gde su x_i i y_i vrednosti posmatranih varijabli, a $\bar{x}$ i $\bar{y}$ njihove srednje vrednosti.

Dodatno, sprovedena je linearna regresiona analiza sa ciljem ispitivanja prediktorske moći PBE skale u odnosu na profesionalne ishode i percepciju relevantnosti ličnog brenda u poslovnom kontekstu. Standardni oblik regresionog modela glasi:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \dots + \beta_n X_n + \varepsilon$$

gde je Y zavisna varijabla, $X_1 \dots X_n$ nezavisne varijable, β_0 slobodni član, β_n regresioni koeficijenti, a ε greška modela.

Poseban deo analize obuhvatio je razvoj Digital Reputation Index-a (DRI), koji je izračunat kao aritmetička sredina standardizovanih vrednosti (z-score) relevantnih stavki:

$$DRI = (\sum z_j) / k$$

gde je z_j standardizovana vrednost stavke, a k broj stavki uključenih u indeks.

Za ispitivanje prediktora percepcije uticaja ličnog brenda zaposlenih na reputaciju firme primenjen je ordinalni logistički model:

$$\log(P(Y \leq j) / P(Y > j)) = \theta_j - \beta_1 X_1 - \beta_2 X_2 - \dots - \beta_n X_n$$

gde je $P(Y \leq j)$ verovatnoća da zavisna varijabla bude u kategoriji j ili nižoj, θ_j prag za kategoriju j , a $X_1 \dots X_n$ prediktorske varijable.

Radi ispitivanja razlika među grupama ispitanika, primenjen je t-test za nezavisne uzorke (za poređenje rezultata između muškaraca i žena), kao i jednofaktorska analiza varijanse (ANOVA) za ispitivanje razlika u percepciji ličnog brenda u zavisnosti od radnog statusa (preduzetnici, zaposleni, menadžeri). Pre sprovođenja inferencijalnih testova, izvršene su provere pretpostavki normalnosti distribucije i homogenosti varijansi, čime je osigurana validnost i pouzdanost statističkih zaključaka.

REZULTATI ISTRAŽIVANJA

U ovom poglavlju prikazani su nalazi dobijeni statističkom obradom podataka prikupljenih putem onlajn anketnog upitnika. Analize su sprovedene u skladu sa postavljenim istraživačkim pitanjima i hipotezama, a fokus istraživanja bio je na percepciji i značaju ličnog brenda, njegovoj povezanosti sa digitalnom reputacijom i profesionalnim uspehom, kao i na spremnosti ispitanika da ulažu u sopstveni brend.

Deskriptivna statistika

Uzorak je obuhvatio 144 ispitanika, od kojih su 56,3% bile žene, a 43,7% muškarci. Najzastupljenija starosna grupa bila je 36–45 godina (44,4%), dok su ostale dve značajne grupe činili ispitanici uzrasta 46–55 godina (25,7%) i 26–35 godina (20,8%). Prema radnom statusu, najviše učesnika bili su preduzetnici (45,8%), zatim zaposleni (25,7%) i menadžeri (18,8%).

Tabela 1. Polna struktura ispitanika.

Table 1. Gender distribution of respondents

Pol	Broj	Procenat (%)
Žene	81	56.3
Muškarci	63	43.7

Tabela 2. Starosna struktura ispitanika.

Starosna grupa	Procenat (%)
26–35	20.8
46–55	25.7
36–45	44.4
Ostalo	9.1

Čak 67,4% ispitanika pokazala je visok nivo upoznatosti sa pojmom ličnog brenda i aktivno radi na njegovom razvoju, dok **27,8%** ispitanika navodi da je u fazi pokušaja razvoja. Pojam ličnog brenda ocenjen je kao veoma važan, pri čemu je **87,5%** ispitanika dalo ocenu **4** ili **5** na petostepenoj Likertovoj skali.

U pogledu digitalne reputacije, više od 60% učesnika smatra da je njihova onlajn prezentacija u velikoj meri usklađena sa utiskom koji ostavljaju prilikom neposredne komunikacije.

Kada je u pitanju spremnost za ulaganje u razvoj ličnog brenda, većina ispitanika izjasnila se da je voljna da uloži **vreme**, pre svega kroz edukaciju, prisustvo na digitalnim kanalima i kreiranje sadržaja. Spremnost za **finansijska ulaganja** je niža, ali i dalje prisutna u značajnom obimu.

Nalazi ukazuju da su ispitanici koji pokazuju viši nivo upoznatosti sa pojmom ličnog brenda istovremeno iskazali veću spremnost da ulažu u njegov razvoj, čime je potvrđena hipoteza H1.

Pouzdanost skale i faktorska analiza

Pouzdanost skale uradjena je proverom interne konzistentnosti skale Personal Brand Equity (PBE), izračunavanjem Cronbach's alpha koeficijenta, dobijene su sledeće vrednosti:

Tabela 3. Pouzdanost PBE skale po dimenzijama

Dimenzija	Cronbach's α
Prepoznatljivost	0.87
Privlačnost	0.85
Diferencijacija	0.81

Tabela 3 prikazuje koeficijente interne pouzdanosti za tri dimenzije PBE skale. Sve vrednosti premašuju prag od 0.70, što potvrđuje da instrument poseduje zadovoljavajuću unutrašnju konzistentnost. Sve vrednosti premašuju prag od 0.70, što ukazuje na visok nivo unutrašnje pouzdanosti skale. Eksploratorna faktorska analiza (EFA) potvrdila je očekivanu trodimenzionalnu strukturu (recognition, appeal, differentiation), čime je dodatno potvrđena konstrukciona validnost instrumenta na domaćem uzorku.

Korelacione i regresione analize

U cilju provere postavljenih hipoteza i boljeg razumevanja odnosa između ispitivanih konstrukata, sprovedene su korelacione i regresione analize. Ove analize omogućile su ispitivanje međusobne povezanosti ključnih varijabli, kao i procenu njihove prediktivne snage u kontekstu razvoja ličnog brenda, digitalne reputacije i percipiranog profesionalnog uspeha. Korelaciona analiza pokazala je sledeće:

Postoji statistički značajna pozitivna povezanost između percepcije usklađenosti digitalne reputacije i rezultata na Personal Brand Equity (PBE) skali ($r = 0.49$, $p < 0.01$), što pruža podršku hipotezi H2. Ovaj nalaz prikazan u Tabeli 5 ukazuje na to da pojedinci koji percipiraju veću usklađenost između svog onlajn prisustva i utiska koji ostavljaju uživo, ujedno pokazuju i viši nivo izraženosti ličnog brenda.

Tabela 4. Rezultati korelacione analize

Varijabla 1	Varijabla 2	Koeficijent korelacije (r)	p-vrednost	Hipoteza
Percepcija usklađenosti digitalne reputacije	Rezultat na PBE skali	0.49	< 0.01	H2
Važnost ličnog brenda	Percepcija profesionalnog uspeha	0.52	< 0.01	H3

Ustanovljena je i značajna pozitivna korelacija između subjektivne procene važnosti ličnog brenda i percepcije profesionalnog uspeha ($r = 0.52$, $p < 0.01$), što potvrđuje hipotezu

H3. Ovaj nalaz sugerije da pojedinci koji lični brend smatraju važnim faktorom u karijeri, istovremeno doživljavaju i viši stepen profesionalnog ostvarenja.

Regresiona analiza je dodatno osvetlila ove odnose:

Varijabla „važnost ličnog brenda“ se pokazala kao značajan prediktor percepcije profesionalnog uspeha, sa koeficijentom $\beta = 0.31$ ($SE = 0.065$, $t = 4.71$, $p < 0.001$, 95% CI [0.178, 0.436]). Ovim je dodatno potvrđena hipoteza H3, čime se ukazuje na praktični značaj subjektivne percepcije ličnog brenda u profesionalnom pozicioniranju.

Takođe, važnost ličnog brenda statistički značajno predviđa i percepciju njegovog uticaja na reputaciju kompanije u kojoj pojedinac radi ($\beta = 0.36$, $SE = 0.053$, $t = 6.84$, $p < 0.001$, 95% CI [0.257, 0.466]). Ovaj rezultat potvrđuje hipotezu H4 i sugerije da jačanje ličnog brenda zaposlenih može doprineti izgradnji pozitivnog imidža organizacije u širem poslovnom okruženju.

Tabela 5. Rezultati regresione analize

Zavisna varijabla	Prediktor	B	SE	T	p
Profesionalni uspeh	Važnost ličnog brenda	0.31	0.065	4.71	< 0.001
Reputacija firme	Važnost ličnog brenda	0.36	0.053	6.84	< 0.001

Tabela 5 prikazuje rezultate linearne regresione analize. Utvrđeno je da varijabla važnosti ličnog brenda značajno predviđa i profesionalni uspeh i percepciju uticaja na reputaciju firme. Obe regresije imaju visoko značajne koeficijente ($p < 0.001$). Ovi nalazi ukazuju na to da lični brend ima snažnu perceptivnu i funkcionalnu ulogu u doživljaju profesionalne pozicije pojedinca.

Testiranje razlika među grupama

Za testiranje razlika između polova korišćen je **t-test za nezavisne uzorke**, dok je za razlike prema radnom statusu primenjena **jednofaktorska analiza varijanse (ANOVA)**. Iako je **hipoteza H5** predviđala razlike u spremnosti za ulaganje u lični brend između muškaraca i žena, značajan disbalans u broju odgovora po polu (manje od 30% muškaraca koji su odgovorili na to pitanje) nije omogućio validnu statističku obradu. Zbog toga H5 nije mogla biti pouzdano testirana.

Hipoteza H6, koja se odnosi na razliku u percepciji značaja ličnog brenda prema radnom statusu, takođe nije mogla biti potvrđena u celosti. ANOVA analiza ($F = 2.03$, $p = 0.14$) nije pokazala statistički značajnu razliku između preduzetnika, zaposlenih i menadžera, iako su preduzetnici imali više prosečne ocene.

Ova ograničenja ukazuju na potrebu za budućim istraživanjima sa većim i ravnomernije raspoređenim uzorcima.

DISKUSIJA REZULTATA

U ovom poglavlju razmatraju se ključni nalazi istraživanja u svetlu prethodnih teorijskih i empirijskih uvida. Dobijeni rezultati pružaju odgovore na postavljena istraživačka pitanja i omogućavaju testiranje hipoteza. Cilj ove diskusije je da se rezultati interpretiraju, identifikuju implikacije za teoriju i praksu, kao i da se ukaže na ograničenja istraživanja i pravce za buduća ispitivanja. Ovakvi nalazi su u skladu sa istraživanjem Stanković (21), koje ukazuje na rastući značaj ličnog brenda kod mladih stručnjaka u Srbiji.

Značaj ličnog brenda i njegova percepcija

Nalazi pokazuju da većina ispitanika ima visok nivo svesnosti o značaju ličnog brenda i izražava spremnost da ulaže u njegov razvoj, što potvrđuje nalaze Labrecque i saradnika (8) o rastućoj važnosti strateškog samopozicioniranja u digitalnom okruženju. Posebno je izražena svest kod preduzetnika, što je u skladu sa literaturom koja ukazuje da u kompetitivnim poslovnim okruženjima pojedinci teže većem oslanjanju na lični brend kao izvor diferencijacije i poslovne sigurnosti (13; 7). Važno je naglasiti da iako razlike po radnom statusu nisu bile statistički značajne, prosečni skorovi ukazuju na veću orijentaciju ka brendu kod preduzetnika, što potvrđuje nalaze Khedhera (7) da samostalni poslovni subjekti brend doživljavaju kao direktno povezanu vrednost svog poslovanja.

Ovi rezultati potvrđuju hipotezu H1, prema kojoj ispitanici sa višim nivoom razumevanja koncepta ličnog brenda pokazuju i veću spremnost da investiraju u njegov razvoj. Ovakav nalaz je u skladu sa istraživanjima Labrecque i saradnika (2011) i Gorbatova i saradnika (2021), koja ukazuju da svest i znanje o konceptu predstavljaju ključne predušlove za aktivnu izgradnju ličnog brenda.

Povezanost sa digitalnom reputacijom

Statistički značajna korelacija između percepcije usklađenosti digitalne reputacije i rezultata na skali ličnog brenda (PBE) potvrđuje tvrdnju da su digitalni trag i profesionalna percepcija sve više integrisani (18). Pojedinci koji posvećuju pažnju svom onlajn prisustvu, kroz aktivnosti poput kreiranja LinkedIn sadržaja, učestvovanja na profesionalnim mrežama i konzistentnog isticanja svojih vrednosti dok istovremeno grade lični brend koji ima uticaj i van digitalne sfere. Dodatno, u ovom istraživanju je razvijen Digital Reputation Index (DRI) kao kompozitna mera koja objedinjuje usklađenost digitalne reputacije, učestalost pretraživanja informacija o potencijalnim saradnicima i spremnost na javno isticanje vrednosti. Rezultati ordinalnog logističkog modela pokazali su da su važnost ličnog brenda i DRI statistički značajni prediktori percepcije uticaja ličnog brenda zaposlenih na reputaciju firme. Ovo sugeriše da kvalitet digitalnog prisustva može biti jednako važan kao i sama svest o značaju brenda, što potvrđuje i Popović i Vuković (17).

Lični brend kao prediktor profesionalnog uspeha

Rezultati regresione analize pokazali su da percepcija važnosti ličnog brenda statistički značajno predviđa profesionalni uspeh ($\beta = 0.31$, $p < 0.001$), ali i uverenje da lični brend doprinosi reputaciji firme ($\beta = 0.36$, $p < 0.001$). Ovakvi nalazi su u skladu sa radovima Petersa (14) i Bivensa (2), koji ističu da lični brend predstavlja oblik „profesionalnog kapitala“ zaposlenog, koji može doprineti njegovom pozicioniranju i imidžu organizacije u kojoj radi. Integriranjem rezultata iz DRI modela, potvrđuje se da kombinacija snažnog ličnog brenda i kvalitetnog digitalnog prisustva ima potencijal da poveća profesionalni kredibilitet i otvori nove prilike za napredovanje.

Nepotvrđene razlike po polu i radnom statusu

Hipoteze H5 i H6, koje su se odnosile na razlike u percepciji i spremnosti za ulaganje po polu i radnom statusu, nisu mogle biti potvrđene zbog ograničenja u strukturi uzorka. Iako pojedine prethodne studije ukazuju na rodne razlike u pristupu ličnom brendu i digitalnoj prisutnosti, naš uzorak nije bio dovoljan da bi se ove razlike statistički potvrdile.

Međutim, ordinalni logistički model ukazuje na to da zaposleni i menadžeri, u poređenju s drugim grupama, mogu percipirati nešto veći uticaj ličnog brenda na reputaciju firme, što može biti korisno polazište za buduća istraživanja.

Teorijske i praktične implikacije

Teorijski gledano, rezultati doprinose boljem razumevanju koncepta ličnog brenda kao višedimenzionalne konstrukcije povezane sa digitalnom reputacijom, percepcijom uspeha i organizacionim identitetom. Empirijska potvrda povezanosti važnosti brenda i profesionalnog uspeha, uz integraciju DRI indikatora, doprinosi literaturi time što naglašava potrebu za kombinovanim pristupom – razvoj autentičnog brenda i strateško upravljanje digitalnim prisustvom.

Praktične implikacije su brojne:

- **Za HR menadžere:** Programi razvoja zaposlenih treba da uključe radionice o ličnom brendu i digitalnoj reputaciji, jer jačanje pojedinačnih brendova doprinosi i jačanju korporativnog imidža.
- **Za koučeve i trenere:** Neophodno je obuhvatiti i digitalnu komponentu ličnog brendiranja, kroz merenje i optimizaciju onlajn prisustva.
- **Za preduzetnike:** Autentičnost i konzistentnost komunikacije u digitalnim kanalima mogu povećati kredibilitet i privući nove klijente bez velikih finansijskih ulaganja.

Ograničenja istraživanja i buduće smernice

Ograničenja ovog istraživanja ogledaju se u veličini i strukturi uzorka, kao i u prirodi samoprocena koje su podložne subjektivnim pristrasnostima. Buduća istraživanja trebalo bi da koriste veće, reprezentativnije uzorke i metodološki raznovrsnije pristupe, uključujući kombinaciju kvalitativnih i kvantitativnih metoda, longitudinalno praćenje i eksperimentalne dizajne.

Zaključno, rezultati ukazuju na značaj integrisanog pristupa razvoju ličnog brenda u profesionalnom kontekstu – pri čemu digitalna reputacija, vrednosno pozicioniranje i strateška samopromocija postaju ključni faktori savremenog profesionalnog identiteta.

ZAKLJUČAK

U radu je istraživao značaj ličnog brenda u savremenom profesionalnom okruženju, sa fokusom na njegovu percepciju među zaposlenima i preduzetnicima, kao i na povezanost sa digitalnom reputacijom, profesionalnim uspehom i spremnošću za ulaganje. Cilj istraživanja bio je da se ispita da li i u kojoj meri pojedinci prepoznaju stratešku vrednost ličnog brenda i kako ga integrišu u svoj profesionalni identitet.

Dobijeni rezultati pokazuju da većina ispitanika prepoznaje važnost ličnog brenda, kao i njegovu ulogu u karijernom razvoju i uticaju na reputaciju organizacije. Takođe, potvrđene su značajne pozitivne korelacije i regresioni odnosi između percepcije važnosti ličnog brenda i profesionalnog uspeha, što potvrđuje da lični brend nije više samo dodatna vrednost, već deo temelja savremenog profesionalnog identiteta. Empirijski podaci dodatno pokazuju da digitalna reputacija igra značajnu ulogu u oblikovanju percepcije ličnog brenda, što je posebno relevantno u eri digitalne komunikacije i prisustva na mrežama. Ovo upućuje na potrebu za integrisanim pristupom razvoju brenda – koji uključuje i digitalni nastup, vrednosno pozicioniranje i stratešku komunikaciju.

Međutim, hipoteze koje su se odnosile na razlike po polu i radnom statusu (H5 i H6) nisu mogle biti validno testirane zbog metodoloških ograničenja uzorka. Iako su preduzetnici pokazali višu prosečnu ocenu značaja ličnog brenda, razlike nisu bile statistički značajne. Ovi nalazi ukazuju na potrebu za pažljivijim dizajniranjem uzorka u budućim istraživanjima, sa ravnomernijom zastupljenošću različitih grupa ispitanika.

Teorijski doprinos rada ogleda se u empirijskom potvrđivanju značaja ličnog brenda kao višedimenzionalnog konstrukta, povezanog sa percepcijom uspeha i digitalnim identitetom. Praktične implikacije se odnose na mogućnost primene ovih nalaza u razvoju HR strategija, edukativnih programa, koučing pristupa i digitalnih alata za pozicioniranje zaposlenih i preduzetnika. Ograničenja ovog istraživanja uključuju korišćenje samoprocena, strukturu uzorka i mogućnosti generalizacije nalaza. Buduća istraživanja treba da uključe kombinaciju kvantitativnih i kvalitativnih metoda, uz veće i reprezentativnije uzorke, kao i longitudinalna merenja efekata ličnog brenda na profesionalni razvoj i organizacionu reputaciju.

Dobijeni nalazi ukazuju da lični brend, osim individualne reputacije, gradi vrednost i kroz mrežu odnosa i zajedničke prakse unutar profesionalnih zajednica, što potvrđuju i rezultati istraživanja o brand communities.

Potvrđivanjem hipoteze H1 pokazano je da znanje o konceptu ličnog brenda ima direktan uticaj na spremnost pojedinaca da ulažu resurse u njegov razvoj, što naglašava značaj edukativnih programa i podizanja svesti u ovoj oblasti.

Sumarno, rezultati potvrđuju da lični brend u savremenom kontekstu predstavlja ne samo sredstvo profesionalne diferencijacije, već i ključni resurs za građenje poverenja, stvaranje reputacije i dugoročno pozicioniranje na tržištu rada.

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Zahvalnica

Autorka se zahvaljuje Dejanu Patakiju, specijalisti za marketing i LinkedIn strategije, i njegovom timu na podršci u procesu distribucije upitnika, čime je značajno doprineto kvalitetu i raznovrsnosti prikupljenih podataka. Ova saradnja nije uticala na formulisanje istraživačkih pitanja, analizu niti interpretaciju rezultata, koje u potpunosti predstavljaju autorkin doprinos.

ANEKS 1. UPITNIK KORIŠĆEN U ISTRAŽIVANJU

Upitnik je osmišljen u skladu sa ciljevima istraživanja i koristi se za prikupljanje podataka o percepciji i značaju ličnog brenda, kao i o spremnosti pojedinaca da ulože lične resurse (vreme, novac, energiju) u njegov razvoj. Ispitanicima je garantovana anonimnost, a svi podaci korišćeni su isključivo u istraživačke svrhe. Većina pitanja koristi petostepenu Likertovu skalu (1 – uopšte se ne slažem, 5 – potpuno se slažem), dok su neka pitanja višestrukog izbora ili otvorenog tipa.

Pitanja iz upitnika:

1. Pol
2. Starosna dob
3. Radni status
4. Industrija
5. Koliko ste upoznati sa pojmom 'lični brend'?
6. Ocenite važnost ličnog brenda (Skala: 1 - Uopšte se ne slažem, 5 - Potpuno se slažem)
7. Po vašem mišljenju, kome je najpotrebniji lični brend?
8. Koliko se vaša digitalna reputacija poklapa sa utiskom koji ostavljate uživo?
9. Da li vam je važno da znate nešto o osobi (vlasniku, osnivaču, članu tima) kada birate proizvod ili uslugu?
10. Da li ste nekada odlučili da ne sarađujete sa nekim (ili ne kupite nešto), jer vam se nisu dopale vrednosti koje ta osoba/kompanija zastupa?
11. Da li ste više skloni da verujete osobi koja javno zastupa određene vrednosti, čak i ako se ne slažete u svemu?
12. Smatrate li da je lični brend važan samo za preduzetnike i javne ličnosti, ili i za zaposlene u firmama?
13. Koliko često pretražujete informacije o ljudima na internetu pre poslovnog sastanka, intervjua ili saradnje?
14. Na kojim platformama najčešće konzumirate poslovni sadržaj? (Moguć višestruki izbor)
15. Da li ste ikada objavili (ili želeli da objavite) sadržaj iz svoje profesije?
16. Smatrate li da vam lični brend može doneti: (Moguć višestruki izbor)

17. U kojoj meri smatrate da lični brend zaposlenih utiče na reputaciju firme?
18. Smatrate li da pozitivan lični brend zaposlenog može pomoći njegovom napredovanju u firmi?
19. Kada se pomene pojam ličnog brenda, koja osoba iz poslovnog sveta Srbije vam prva pada na pamet?
20. Koja je najveća prepreka koja vas sprečava da razvijate svoj lični brend? (Izaberite jedan odgovor)
21. Kada razmišljate o svom ličnom brendu u digitalnom prostoru, šta vam je najvažnije? (Izaberite jednu opciju)

