



Developing a Model for Personal Brand among the Entrepreneurs in Isfahan

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Abstract

Objective: Previous studies have only investigated the antecedents of branding and disregarded its consequences as well as the individual brand of the entrepreneurs; they have also implemented quantitative approaches. In addition, the foreign research has only examined the factors affecting the formation of individual brand. Therefore, it was necessary for a comprehensive analysis of all the factors affecting individual branding and its outcomes in order to categorize these factors and propose them in the form of a conceptual model. This study intends to identify the set of factors that have played a role in branding of the entrepreneurs in order to provide the grounds for individual branding of other entrepreneurs. Therefore, the main purpose of the present research is to develop a comprehensive model to identify the factors affecting the individual branding of the entrepreneurs in Isfahan and its consequences. The results of this study can be useful for the formation of brands for the people, especially entrepreneurs who seek to develop personal brand, reputation, popularity and business success and even seek to improve the brand of their own product.

Methodology: This research is developmental in term of purpose and fundamental-exploratory in terms of method. Moreover, it has used a mixed method approach (combination of qualitative and quantitative methods), which is qualitative in the first phase and is presented in a quantitative manner in the second phase. Thematic analysis was used for the qualitative part of the study; however, purposeful sampling method was applied in the qualitative part of this research. The statistical population of this study included the entrepreneurs who have been identified by the Chamber of Commerce, industry experts, and the unions as individual brands in the field of entrepreneurship in

Isfahan. According to the saturation approach, a sample size of 18 people was considered adequate for this study. The data were collected through a researcher-made questionnaire, whose validity was confirmed by human resources experts, in the quantitative part and its reliability was confirmed by Cronbach's alpha value of 0.86.

Findings: In this study, 225 primary codes were identified in the interview process. The initial codes were then packaged and sorted until 97 selection codes were obtained. As a result, 12 sub-themes and 4 main themes were extracted. Based on the obtained model, two categories of factors have been effective in formation of the individual brand among the entrepreneurs in Isfahan: internal factors including personality, competence and appearance factors as well as external factors including organizational, social, and family factors. The consequences of Individual brand also included individual, organizational, and social implications; finally, individual brand dimensions included the influence, reputation, and trust of the individual brand.

Conclusion: The results showed that it is necessary to pay attention to both internal and external factors for the formation of individual branding. Internal factors are related to the individuals and the external factors are related to the environment. The results also showed that the most important element of individual branding is the distinction of that particular individual from the others which can be observed in a specific field or an individual competence in a particular field. Individual branding will not make sense as long as there is no individual distinction. The results further indicated the important role of society and community in word-of-mouth advertisement and the power of social networks that can be important and effective in individual branding. Such individual brands can also have consequences which can benefit themselves, the organization, or even the community.

Keywords: Brand, Individual Brand, Entrepreneur and Business.

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