A Review on Personal Branding as Innovative Strategy for Global Recognition: 'I am Jackie Chan'

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Abstract

Purpose: This study reviews available literature on how Jackie Chan applied the personal branding concept as an innovative strategy for him to gain global recognition and a megastar position.

Design/methodology/approach: This is a literature search type study focusing on Jackie Chan as the case subject of successful personal branding. Various literature sources including Jackie Chan's (1998) own autobiography ('I am Jackie Chan: My Life in Action') and published news reportage are used for content analysis.

Findings: Five factors are identified as drivers of Jackie Chan's personal branding success: a) the ambition that has been conceived and announced to the world, b) co-authored his own autobiography in English, c) creating unique values to differentiate himself from others as a way of defining his own identity, d) negotiating between the role of a celebrity and a star, and lastly, e) strategy to utilize social media and participating in it. In sum, his strategic and innovative use of personal branding actions helped him to promote his aforesaid uniqueness and persona to amass global recognition, thereby developing his great stardom for the last four decades.

Research limitations/implications: The study relies heavily on the content of Jackie Chan's autobiography which may limit the study's comprehensiveness of review and analysis. Personal encounters of the subject person might be too unique and situational to be generalized.

Practical implications: Strategies used by Jackie Chan in how he builds his personal branding benefit performing artists to be used as their pre-requisite skill set in the film industry rather than totally dependent upon film production companies.

Originality/value: This study has built on Jackie Chan's example to demonstrate the liberation of performing artists in unleashing their potential energies and personal uniqueness; establishing and promoting themselves strategically toward their targeted audience; and innovatively steering their fate and future in view of different challenges under different contexts along their career journey.

Keywords: Personal Branding, Strategy, Innovation, Global Recognition, Performing Artists

Introduction

The Closer Economic Partnership Arrangement (CEPA) that was signed on 29 June 2003 between Hong Kong and China governments study has opened a new market for Hong Kong's performing artists and film industry as they now can expand their careers in mainland China. To take up on this golden opportunity, performing artists in Hong Kong must now focus on building or enhancing their personal branding as a way to be recognized by both Hong Kong and China's target audiences both for survival and professional growth. The strategy to innovatively re-negotiate their personal brand upon migrating to a new arena like the mainland China market may be rewarding with them getting positive career achievements such as "perceived employability and career satisfaction" (Gorbatov, Khapova and Lysova, 2018), social capital (Gandini, 2016; Paivi and Back, 2017; Tarnovskaya, 2017), and financial rewards (Close et al., 2011; Rangarajan et al., 2017).

This study attempts to review the concept of personal branding as an innovative strategy for an individual to gain global recognition. The literature has identified individual personal branding as a popular issue, particularly in recent years (Tarnovskaya, 2017). Many individuals including Jackie Chan have been used as examples of their personal branding's strategic outcome and success stories. It is for this reason that this study has decided to select one successful individual and analyze how s/he managed to do that from the relevant set literature review. For this study, the case subject chosen is Jackie Chan who started as an ordinary Hong Kong film actor but managed to reach a megastar celebrity position globally at the end. His case is interesting since his journey towards the celebrity megastar status in the world has not been smooth sailing throughout; he was caught up with a few setbacks before he successfully steered his filmmaking career and managed to maintain his stardom for nearly four decades from the 1980s (Lau, 2016; Farquhar, 2010, Chan and Yang, 1998).

Using a literature review approach, this study will analyze Jackie Chan's case to answer the following research questions:
(1) How did Jackie Chan create his personal brand?
(2) How did he promote his personal brand in a strategic and innovative manner to gain global recognition?

Literature Review
Personal branding

Personal branding refers to a positioning process as individuals use their unique attributes to differentiate themselves from others (Ahmad, 2022). It is said to originate from marketing theory that focuses on the branding of goods and services (Shepherd, 2005; Labrecque, Markos & Milne, 2011) which is why Chau et al. (2022) notes researchers like Lair et al. (2005) described personal branding as the promotion of products, goods, and services while other researchers like Kheder (2014) regarded it as a new marketing concept and a useful strategy for individuals to market him/herself in the marketplace.

Peters (1997) may be regarded as the person who helped to popularize the concept of personal branding when he throws 'the brand called you' idea recommending everyone to create their own brand to make them different from others. The concept has since been applied and accepted by practitioners as a self-help genre and practice (Shepherd, 2005; Lair, Sullivan & Cheney, 2005; Chen, 2013, Arruda, 2019) and attracted much more academic discourse (Tarnovskaya, 2017, Gorbatov et al., 2018). As reported by Coy (2021) in Bloomberg Businessweek (February 2021), recent findings suggest that individuals with a strong personal brand are the ones that have higher chances to get a job. Further review of the literature indicates researchers' common view (e.g., Arruda, 2019, Gorbatov et al., 2018; Khedher, 2015; Gander, 2014; Peters, 1997) that personal branding is powered by ambition for career

development, thereby forming a planned and strategic process for the individuals' personal brand management. Gorbatov, Khapova, and Lysova (2018) even make a clear differentiation between a personal brand's "what" (the component that is unique) and personal branding's "how" (the strategic process emphasizing the perspectives of the target audience on an individual's employability or marketability for their talents or services).

According to Arruda (2019), the construct of personal branding comes from a three-stage process. The first process is to extract an individual's unique value which is to be used as a key differentiation strategy of that individual from others and to define his/her own identity. The second process is to express, i.e., to find ways how to communicate the individual's uniqueness and value (personal brand) to others in the marketplace. The last process is to exude, i.e., to implement the strategy to show the individual's personal brand to the audience targeted in the marketplace. Other academics from the sociocultural school like Nolan (2015) and Khedher (2015) takes the multidisciplinary approach to explain the personal branding phenomenon. According to Khedher (2015), personal branding can be explained as a three-stage process involving brand identity building, brand positioning, and brand image setting from available theories. The brand identity-building stage, for instance, is as per Bourdieu's (1983) social and cultural capital theory, the positioning of the brand is explained through the theory of self-presentation (Goffman, 1959); while the setting of the brand image is drawn from the theory of reflexivity (Schön, 1983).

The literature notes that the act of defining and signaling is very much required in personal branding as a way of communicating the brand identity (Labrecque, Markos, and Milne, 2011; de Chernatony & McDonald, 2003; Connelly, Certo, Ireland & Reutzel, 2011). Communicating an individual's uniqueness is also stressed (Peters, 1997; Rampersad, 2008; Montoya, 2005) to ensure clear (individual) brand positioning is achieved (de Chernatony & McDonald, 2003). In short, the development of a personal brand is based on how stakeholders perceive whether the branded individual's personality and abilities can help build up relationships between them (Rampersad, 2008; Gandini, 2016). In this regard then, personal branding infers to the individual's reputation or his/her personal brand image that s/he carries (Gander, 2014).

Personal branding attributes

A review of the literature managed to identify many personal branding attributes that emphasize on demonstrating an individual's strengths, unique values, career goals, and personality in their personal branding (e.g., Peters, 1998; Rampersad, 2008; Montoya, 2005; Arruda, 2009; Arruda, 2019). Rampersad (2008) for instance stresses on brand promise and a personal brand story of individuals that can make targeted stakeholders generate positivity in their emotional reaction. Arruda (2009) emphasizes on three key qualities, namely, clarity, consistency, and constancy. Authenticity is also considered an imperative aspect of personal branding (Labrecque, Markos & Milne, 2011, Rampersad, 2008; Arruda, 2009; Montoya, 2005). Others stress on attributes that can help create "favorable impressions" (Lee and Cavanaugh, 2016) on stakeholders and for the individual to be "desired by the target audience" (Phua and Caras, 2008). The importance of managing to create favorable impressions among fans is crucial in the case of performing artists, mainly because they should be seen as an influencer to their fans' choice vis-à-vis so that they can compete with many other artists in the entertainment market as favorable personal brand (Hearn, 2008b; Gorbatov, Khapova and Lysova, 2018).

Innovation

According to Merriam-Webster Dictionary, *innovation* can refer to 'something new or to a change made to an existing product, idea, or field' while the *invention* is 'usually something which has not previously been in existence'. People may therefore say that branding for products or services was an *invention*, and personal branding an *innovation*. *Strategy* in the same dictionary can refer to 'a careful plan or method' or 'the art of devising or employing plans' or 'a cleverly contrived trick or scheme for gaining an end'. Borrowing the concept of organizational "innovative strategy" (Pisano, 2015), Hong Kong performing artists, need to prioritize, align and execute persistently all their actions and behavior in a new way or manner in view of different situations towards their pre-set goals, that is to take up opportunity of China's new open market as well as to gain global recognition in their own right (personal branding).

From the 2010s onwards there has been abundant literature about the omnipotence of social media tools (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram, and YouTube) for personal branding (Harris and Rae, 2011; Patel, 2016; Poeppelman and Blacksmith, 2014; Wetsch, 2012). Their widespread popularity was driven by their effectiveness and low costs in promoting one's expertise and establishing trust with the target audience (Trybulkevych et al., 2021). The recent literature about personal branding also has also been highlighting the growing popularity of employing professional storytelling as another way of building a personal brand due to its power in creating emotional rapport and loyalty among the target to differentiate the owner's brand uniqueness and strengthen its memorability in the target audience's mind (Brooks & Anumudu, 2016; Kleppinger and Cain, 2015; Walter & Gioglio, 2019).

The impact of reputation on a personal brand's durability and its representation of a person's success story is reportedly so great that the targeted audience's key decision-making will be "based on the results of tracking one's online presence expecting it to be strong and positive" (Labreque et al., 2011; Stanton and Stanton, 2013; Ward and Yates, 2013). Graham and Moore (2007) point out that "a good reputation can form a positive virtuous cycle, increase the willingness of fan participation", "attract new fans and followers" (Gardberg & Fombrun, 2002), and ultimately turn into higher value in the relevant market (Smith et al., 2010). With this virtuous cycle in mind, self-branded celebrities can build their reputation, which may help them to become and remain competitive (Whitmer, 2019).

Apart from the drive for digital technology advancement in general and the use of social media tools in particular, neoliberalism has been researched to explore its impact on the need for personal branding (Trybulkevych et al., 2021). Here, personal branding through social media can be interpreted as to retain and assert personal calamity and power vis-à-vis economic uncertainty and fluctuation. Thus, the "neoliberal notions of individual efficacy and responsibility" are advocated and the personal brand builders' autonomous labour is enshrined. With the widespread and new normal competition for attention in the media world, individuals' self-control and commitment to building their own brand is regarded as a kind of "empowerment" (Senft, 2013, p.350).

Method

Academic discourse and theories regarding personal branding and innovation strategies were examined in order to help explore how Jackie Chan has been building and maintaining his global recognition in the past four decades. The existent literature has built a rich and solid research-based knowledge about the origin, raison d'être, and suggested strategies for personal branding; thus, were found useful for review. Analysis was made through the process of reviewing many documents found on him, including his autobiography entitled "I am Jackie

Chan" (Chan and Yang, 1998), journal articles, websites (e.g., factsanddetails.com), and newspaper reportage. The autobiography for instance was considered a good source to be studied because it helped to shed light on how Jackie Chan had risen from "zero" in an opera academy in Peking to a hero locally, nationally, and to his globally megastar status.

Findings
This section focused on answering the two research questions posed earlier.

How did Jackie Chan create his personal branding?

Jackie Chan was born in a poor Hong Kong family in 1954. As his father failed to make ends meet although he had tried very hard to feed his family, his parents decided to send him to enter the boarding Peking Opera in China from the age of 7 to 17. He received an inhuman and sadistic treatment during his young apprenticeship in the Opera academy which he described as "savage thrashings for even minor offenses" (Mackerras, 1997:6) and as "10 years of hell" (Chan and Yang,1998:57).

Following his two successful debut martial art films "*Snake in Eagle's Shadow*" and "*Drunken Master*" in the 1970s, Jackie Chan entered the American film industry but without success. He returned to Hong Kong in the 1980s where he made the grossing film "Police Stories" and three sequels. After making a series of Hong Kong film hits in the 1990s, he re-entered the USA film market. He was successful this time by filming "Rumble in the Bronx" in 1996. His apex in America came in 1998 with the film "Rush Hour" and in 2001 with "Rush Hour II and III". From the early 2000s to the 2010s, although Jackie Chan was still mainly making action films, he expressed his wish to produce acting-oriented films rather than action-focused ones. This trend can be witnessed in his films in recent years.

Despite the presence of setbacks in America in the late 1970s and declining reliance on his fame-building action movies after 2010, Jackie Chan was still regarded among the most popular movie stars in the world (Willis, 2004) as well as the highest-paid Asian actor in the 2000s (Mandle, 2015).

Reviewed studies that analyzed Jackie Chan's great stardom success seems to focus on *what* attributes he has. For instance, his unique talents, such as martial art skills (Chan and Yang, 1998:76; Farquhar, 2010:187; Lau, 2016:232), his hard work demonstrated by his tough training in the Peking Opera School (Farquhar, 2010:180), tolerance of pain as evidenced by his serious injuries sustained from his stunts performance over the past forty years (Farquhar, 2010:181), authentic leadership (Ken, 2012), and brave stunt acts (Yu, 2015). In short, Jackie Chan has been found to craft his uniqueness as a comedic martial-art actor to (strategically) differentiate himself apart from his predecessor, Bruce Lee, who stood as an unprecedentedly real Chinese Kung Fu star in the world before his premature death in 1973 (Chan and Yang, 1998; Farquhar, 2010).

How did Jackie Chan promote his personal brand persona innovatively and strategically to gain global recognition?

The review exercise found that little attention has been put on *how* Jackie Chan has used personal branding concepts and skills to win global recognition and to create his megastar status. However, further depth review of the literature found that Jackie Chan's innovative strategy to promote his personal brand persona for global recognition include the following:

(a) Ambition conceived and announced

Jackie Chan had set his ambition at an early career stage to become comparable to or even surpass his predecessor, Brue Lee in the international arena (Chan and Yang, 1998:173; 204-5). He intentionally adopted the name with characters *Cheng Long (in Mandarin) or Sing Lung*

(in Cantonese) in that the character 'Long', having the meaning of a dragon. This was to recuperate Lee's Chinese name Li Xiaolong or 'Little dragon' while 'Cheng', having the meaning of 'become', to 'transcend' Lee's legend (Farguhar, 2010: 184). However, he also revealed in his autobiography that if he had the chance, he would like to show the Little Dragon (Bruce Lee's Chinese name) what Jackie Chan, as a boy from Shandong Province in China could do (Chan and Yang, 1998:167). Since Lee had already been globally recognized as a legendary Chinese martial arts star before and after his premature death in 1973, Jackie Chan's conspicuous comparison with him signified his mental and practical journey to gain the same or higher level of global recognition. It is observed that Jackie Chan showed his ambition for career advancement and formed a planned and strategic process for individual personal brand management as per the view of Arruda (2009; 2019), and Khedher (2015).

(b) Autobiography co-authored in English

Jackie Chan's other strategic and innovative personal branding step to gain global recognition was writing his autobiography in 1998. Autobiography is a "written account of a person's life in their own words" (Merriam-Webster Dictionary) or a personal story of Jackie Chan. This action matches Rampersad's (2008) idea for a branded individual to tell a personal brand story for inviting a positive emotional reaction from the target audience. According to Farguhar (2010:181), Jackie Chan published his autobiography in English because he wanted to 'transfer his Hong Kong star persona to a global audience as he transitioned from Hong Kong to Hollywood in the 1990s'. His autobiography can be regarded as 'integral to the construction of Chan's global star persona' (Farguhar, 2010:181) and a 'reconstruction of the self, … that touch audiences around the world' (Farguhar, 2010:187). It seems that Jackie Chan had recognized that his poor English-language ability (Farguhar, 2010:182) would become his stumbling block if he wanted to gain global recognition. He, therefore, co-authored his autobiography with Jeff Yang (Farguhar, 2010:182); and took the time while being a construction worker in Australia to learn English (Lau, 2016:236) to equip himself with the language ability to win international recognition (Chen, 2019:1219 & 1230; Rao, 2019:75).

(c) Creating his unique value/key differentiation/defining the identity

Jackie Chan started his movie career as an extra and stunt artist in some of Bruce Lee's movies. He was given roles such as *New Fist of Fury* (1976) where he was chanted as the next Bruce Lee. But he was only able to attain box-office success when he made some comedy-themed movies, such as "*Snake in Eagle's Shadow*" and "*Drunken Master*" in the 1970s.

What is found is that Jackie Chan had tried very hard to separate himself from his idol and to be known for himself rather than as a predecessor of Bruce Lee. This wish not to copy the path of Bruce Lee is clearly stated in his autobiography (quote: 'If I got the chance, I'd show the Little Dragon (Bruce Lee) what a Shangdong (Jackie Chan's hometown in China) boy could do' (Chan, 1998:167)). To do this, he created his own style and *extracted* his unique value/key differentiation/defining the identity. He made use of his early childhood's painful training in the Peking Opera Academy to build his hardcore persona carrying high tolerance for pain. He demonstrated such uniqueness when performing the extremely dangerous stunts on his own (without a stunt double). He overturned the image of star work from the negative 'all play and no work' image (McDonald, 1998:195) to a positive one of 'both work and play' through his hard training, 'bodily contortions, humiliation, outrageous stunts, cheekiness, and pain' in the childhood and adolescent period (Farguhar, 2010:181); as well as his strenuous outdoor work of shifting bricks in construction sites in Australia (Farguhar, 2010:183). Jackie Chan *expressed* his ambition and uniqueness in his autobiography and then *exuded* his key differentiation of outrageous stunts by showing his serious injuries sustained from the killing and breath-taking stunts over the past 40 years in his autobiography (Chan and Yang, 1998:1-2; 325-6); and as a form of his popular 'outtakes of stunts-gone-wrong' at the end of his action

movies (Farguhar, 2010:183). His disclosure of the injuries sustained from deadly stunts enhanced the authenticity and credibility of his brand persona in front of the world audience and show his vulnerability as a human. The disclosures also present him with strategic advantage which can further set him apart from and even atop the old legend of Bruce Lee, who was famous for his authentic and invincible martial arts.

Jackie Chan had chosen to take away most of the bloody scenes in his movies to differentiate himself from other martial arts movie stars. He once said he hated violence. He wanted to show his fans that he loved the action, but not violence. He added that he loved to make people laugh (factsanddetails.com: Jackie Chan's Role Film). As a result, Chan created a branded kung-fu comedy as a separate movie sub-genre since his two debuts in 1978 (Farguhar, 2010:183).

Apart from highlighting his unique brand persona, Jackie Chan was observed to be committed to keeping his brand promise of providing 'extreme bodily performances that play with pain' but diluting with 'burlesque and happy endings' (Chan and Yang, 1998). He demonstrated this commitment and courage when he took the world's most dangerous stunt on his own (without a stunt double) by sliding down a 21-story skyscraper without the help of a safety harness in Rotterdam in the 1998's film 'Who am I?' just for the sake of creating a few seconds of excitement and a few more screams' (Chan and Yang, 1998:1-2; 325-6; Farguhar, 2010:181) from the audience. But of course, the injuries sustained from the act would be kept and shown in the well-received outtakes at the movie's end.

(d) Participation in and Utilization of social media

With growing popularity and ease of use (Farguhar, 2010; Lau, 2016; Marwick, 2016; Khamis, Ang, & Welling, 2017), social media has become a rising arena for 'star construction and star-fan dynamics' (Lau, 2016:233). Many performing artists and film stars start to pay increasing attention to this new site for promoting their artist or star persona and negotiating their simultaneous presence in cinema and in cyberspace (Lau, 2016:233). Facing the challenge of losing traditional control over the star texts or activities in social media, Jackie Chan and his team took strategic and innovative steps in manipulating the 'participatory and open nature' of the cyber environment. They launched 'fan' accounts on different social media sites, such as Flickr. This website welcomes users' comments and tags to others' pictures or photos, thus facilitating topic-specific groups. This sharing site has been utilized by Jackie Chan to promote Chan 'as a Chinese star who goes global' (Lau, 2016:234). In addition, Jackie Chan and his personnel would post 'desirable' texts and photos with a view towards managing Jackie Chan's personal brand for 'reinvigorating his fluctuating fame' (Lau, 2016:233). The fluctuation and embarrassment were often caused by Chan's pendulum between his politically controversial and attention-seeking remarks antagonizing China on the one hand, and disappointing those people disliked by China on the other. For instance, Jackie Chan once made a negative comment on China's television sets quality that they might explore (Foreman, 2009); but also said in a panel discussion at the annual Boao Forum for Asia in 2009 that more freedom means more chaos in Hong Kong (Lau, 2016:232). Jackie Chan is perhaps not that savvy in social media tools in view of his limited English language ability, but he was innovative enough to accept the new communication tool of social media; and willing to strategically enlist the help of his personnel to help him based on his awareness of the social media's power in generating and maintaining global recognition nowadays (Shelton, 2012; Marwick, 2016; Lau, 2016; Khamis, Ang and Welling, 2017).

(d) Negotiating between the role of a celebrity and a star

In gaining global recognition, a performing artist may have multiple routes to take, such as being an internationally renowned star, a charitable advocate, an ambassador, a global environmentalist, a humanitarian advocate, an animal welfare protector, a nationalistic patriot

for one's home country, or a human rights guardian, just name a few. Jackie Chan arguably performed many of these roles, except the last one. He tried twice to enter the Hollywood film market because it has been the largest one in the world. Being recognized in USA, a film star could be regarded as an international star. That is why in the recent decade 'Hollywood is still the destination of various journeys of desire for many non-Hollywood stars' (Yu, 2015), be they Asians or Europeans. Jackie Chan was ultimately successful in winning his position in USA in 1995 on his second attempt through the *Rumble in the Bronx* (1994), the *Rush Hour* and two sequels (1998, 2001, 2007), *Shanghai Noon* (2000) and *Shanghai Knights* (2003), which generated for him a cult-like fandom, which is rare for Chinese Kungfu film stars (Yu, 2016: 231). He received the honorary Oscar award, the highest honor one can in the film industry, from the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences in November 2016, making him the first Chinese person to receive such an honor. He received two Guinness World Records (GWR) certificates in Shanghai for Most credits in one movie and Most stunts by a living actor from the GWR Greater China President Rowan Simons in December 2012.

Apart from becoming an international film star, Jackie Chan was also successful in other realms. For instance, he is a UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador; and has championed charitable works and causes. He was able to strategically negotiate the positions as an ambassador in Australia and Cambodia while being a star and patriot in China (Lau, 2016). He was invited by Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd to be the guest of honor for the launch of the *Jackie Chan Science Centre* at the John Curtin School of Medical Research of the Australian National University. He also supports *Save China's Tigers* movement by being its ambassador. The movement endeavors to save the endangered South China tiger by means of breeding and releasing them into the wild. In sum, Jackie Chan is willing and smart in taking different routes to enhance his global recognition, be it through his star attraction or his celebrity influence.

(e) Exchanging International Popularity for National Status to Enhance Global Recognition
Jackie Chan shows his skills in acting as the middleman between the Chinese Government and the Western world. By selling his symbolic brand power in his films in the global arena, especially in the USA (Williams, 1984), he could allure state support for building his global recognition. He was very smart in keeping his 'Chinese nationalism' for enhancing the tie between China and the overseas Chinese communities and with the Western countries. He was also able to exchange his international exposure for his appointment as the Hong Kong Tourism Ambassador, literally as 'an icon of the city' (Lau, 2016:233) since 1995. In view of Hong Kong's precious position as a world-class cosmopolitan city and one of the four international financial centers in the world, such an iconic appointment could help him in gaining more global recognition. When he was given the honor of bearing the torch at the eye-catching 2008 Beijing Olympics, all global leaders and people of the whole world witness his influence in China, which was widely regarded as the locomotive for global economic recovery from the 2008 financial tsunami aftermath. Cleverly, it was at this very moment, Jackie Chan's funded new science education center at the Australian National University was opened. During the thank you dinner hosted by the Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd and attended by some diplomats from China and America, Jackie Chan invited Rudd to attend the Games. In return, Rudd requested Chan to help strengthen Australia's trade ties with China. These ambassadorial acts demonstrated Chan's strategic utilization of his personal branding to further enhance his global recognition. In 2010, Jackie Chan's appointment as the Promotion Ambassador for the Shanghai World Expo once again helped him raise his international popularity for his status as a 'representative of China', which in turn pushed up his global recognition.

Discussion

The case analysis on Jackie Chan's success indicate that his personal branding process closely followed the path advocated or theorized by practitioners and academics. Firstly, he had in mind his ambition to become a great star surpassing Bruce Lee. He had the independent will to be his own, rather than Bruce Lee's copycat. He had disclosed his ambition during the exchanges with close friends or working companions. But, having mental desires is one thing, designing and implementing them is another. That requires the branded individual's commitment, consistency and energy as described by Arruda (2009). Jackie Chan's personal branding actions have been studied by the authors and found to be quite a match with the ideas mentioned in the extant literature. In addition, Jackie Chan had aspired to become an international film star. He, therefore, aimed toward Hollywood, which was the largest film production hub and international film appreciation arena providing the most sought-after awards and recognition.

This study found that Jackie Chan was clear about his unique values, key differentiation, and the brand identity he wanted to create. He was so well equipped with his tough 10-year training from childhood that he could face every challenge in his later career life. He realized his difference from his predecessor and so he developed his new path to success, which is the martial arts comedy intertwined with the breath-taking personal stunt.

All this self-awareness had been instrumental for him to create his personal brand. He was observed to be a man with high self-understanding, especially his own limitation – the English language ability. But due to his steadfast commitment to the pre-set goals, tough personality, and never-give-up mentality, Jackie Chan would take alternative methods to achieve the goals with innovative strategies, such as learning English on his own; and co-authoring his autography with a friend proficient in written English.

After ironing out his personal brand uniqueness and aspiration, Jackie Chan started his personal branding process. He recognized the importance of being authentic in his brand persona, so he showed the outtakes of stunts gone wrong and injuries sustained from such extreme stunt acts. The combination of pain tolerance and authenticity through outtake disclosure enhanced his credibility and approachability. His approachability was further polished by his sharing of his childhood stories. He became a man next door because he would feel pain and was vulnerable to failure. Only through his stamina was the adverse situation turned around, the triumph finally belonged to him. This would create an emotional attachment with the audience as advocated by Rampersad (2008). His consistency, persistence, and perseverance along his global stardom had been clearly demonstrated through his commitment to doing what he planned to do at all costs, even at the risk of losing his life.

When it came to gaining global recognition, Jackie Chan further used personal branding strategically and innovatively. He utilized or even manipulated social media to reduce or dilute the negative comments levied on him online. Despite his limitation in using social media due to his English barriers, he strategically employed savvy personnel in the USA, Australia, and Cambodia to help him.

Based on his aspiration for global recognition, Jackie Chan saw the alternative route: becoming a celebrity in various aspects, such as a charitable advocate, ambassador, global environmentalist, animal welfare protector, or politician. But his multiple roles in so many capacities are not that easy which sometimes put him in a very embarrassing situation. In 2009 for instance, although he was named an "anti-drug ambassador" by the Chinese government, his son was arrested in Beijing for cannabis use in 2014. In 2009, his comment on freedom for the Chinese during a panel discussion at the annual Boao Forum for Asia prompted angry responses from several prominent figures in Taiwan and Hong Kong. Although his public

relationship spokesman tried to defuse the 'bomb' by explaining that Jackie Chan was referring to freedom in the entertainment industry, rather than in Chinese society at large, the damage for him was hard to remove. In 2012, Chan supported that demonstrators' rights in Hong Kong should be limited. Just in the same month, he remarked during an interview with Phoenix TV that the United States was the "most corrupt" country in the world. Apart from creating a furious response from the online community, his comments were quoted and shared linking his career and life in the United States, including his past endeavors for the American film markets and mentioning his fleeing to the USA due to potential dangers from the Hong Kong triads. As remarked by the critics (Gamson, 1994:61; Turner, 2007:194), he needs the visibility for maintaining his global recognition as celebrity, but it also brings about the 'instability and ambiguity' (Tolson, 1996:129). It is like a double-edged sword requiring him to ceaselessly negotiate along the balance beam placed over the troubled water of multiple roles.

Through his being the middleman between China and other countries, Jackie Chan was able to maintain or even enhance his global recognition. He made use of his popularity in China to entice Hollywood to rely on him to open the mainland Market. He utilized his achievements in the USA to allure China to give him more important representative roles so that he can multiply his impacts globally.

Conclusion

From the findings, the study conclude that personal branding is a useful innovative strategy for individuals like performing artists to apply to gain global recognition. Analysis made on Jackie Chan's case managed to identify five winning factors for his continued personal branding success: ambition conceived and announced, written autobiography in English, creation of unique values for differentiation strategy and defining own identity, negotiating between the role of a celebrity and a star, and utilization of social media. As they worked on Jackie Chan, it is believed that the same factors can help other individuals to promote their uniqueness and persona value (personal brand) to targeted audiences in the marketplace.

To extend this study further, future researchers could take up a qualitative approach and include methods such as in-depth and semi-structured interviews with Jackie Chan's fans and co-workers to understand how he managed to arrive at the different stages of his winning global recognition from their own perception. The semi-structured in-depth interview, irrespective of a face-to-face or group type, is a qualitative research tool frequently used in the social sciences to analyze the needs, attitudes, or perceptions of the interviewees towards certain research issues (Magaldi & Berler, 2020).

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