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Szymon Maziarz

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Synergy of corporate and personal branding: The example of Stal Mielec FC and Jacek Klimek

Szymon Maziarz  Independent Researcher, maziarzszymon50@gmail.com
personal branding, corporate branding, image management, media studies

ABSTRACT

The aim of this article is to verify the synergy effect between the personal brand of an organization's leader and the corporate brand in the context of communication activities and a political campaign. The example of Jacek Klimek, the president of the football club Stal Mielec and a candidate for mayor of Mielec, was used. The impact of his branding activities on the perception of the corporate brand and the use of the club's image in constructing a political narrative was discussed. The study used an analysis of several hundred press publications from the pre-election campaign period, taking into account visual and thematic elements. The results indicate the important role of synergy in enhancing the image of both the leader and the organization while highlighting the need for careful image management in the political context. The article contributes to the literature on social communication and media sciences by providing empirical findings on the integration of personal and corporate brands.

Introduction

Building a corporate and personal brand is a challenge that requires harmonizing the expectations of companies, leaders and audiences. In the age of digitalization and dynamic changes in marketing communications, brand management takes on a new dimension. The globalization of markets, the intensification of competition and the growing importance of social media are forcing organizations and leaders to redefine branding strategies constantly. Understanding how corporate and personal brands can support each other and reinforce their value in the eyes of consumers, business partners, and other stakeholders is becoming a key aspect of the field.

Although the literature contains numerous analyses of the effectiveness of corporate branding efforts, relatively little attention has been paid to the synergies between personal and corporate brands. These relationships, while intuitively obvious, are complex and multidimensional. Organizational leaders in public and media roles significantly impact the perception of the organization they represent. At the same time, their personal actions, values and reputation can both support and undermine the corporate brand. Contemporary research indicates that the synergy between personal and corporate brands can become a key success factor, but its effective use requires proper management and an understanding of interaction mechanisms.

The topic remains almost unexplored in Polish literature, indicating a significant research gap. In the context of the growing interest in branding, both in academia and in practice, there is a need for more

detailed analyses and case studies that demonstrate how the interaction of a leader's personal brand and a corporate brand can shape their shared values. In the face of changing societal and cultural expectations, incorporating these relationships into branding strategies is becoming not only a need but also a necessity.

The article attempts to fill this gap by analyzing the relationship between personal and corporate brands, using the example of the football club Stal Mielec and its president, Jacek Klimek. Stal Mielec, one of Poland's most recognizable sports brands, is distinguished by its rich history and strong roots in the local community. In turn, Jacek Klimek, as the organization's leader and a public figure, has become the club's ambassador, building its image locally and nationally. This analysis provides an understanding of how the mutual support of the two brands - corporate and personal - can lead to an increase in their value, as well as the challenges of managing this relationship.

The article aims not only to introduce the theoretical aspects of the synergy between personal and corporate branding but also to show the practical implications of this phenomenon in the context of the Polish sports market. Thus, this work can inspire further research and development of branding strategies in other sectors of the economy.

Overview of definitions

Branding is defined ambiguously in the literature of the topic area. American Marketing Association (AMA) defines branding as „a tool to identify a particular object and differentiate it from competitors”, noting aspects such as creating a unique identity, value and

perception that distinguishes it from competitors. For almost 30 years, there has been a shift in terminology and a move from ,marketing' to the dominant use of ,branding'. Some authors have sought to distinguish ,branding' from ,marketing'. Historically, marketing is thought to have preceded the development of branding. On the other hand, T. Sammut-Bonici (2003) points out that the aim of branding strategies is to create brands that are different from the competition, thereby reducing the number of substitutes in the market. When high brand value is achieved through brand differentiation, the price elasticity of demand becomes low, allowing the company to raise its price and improve profitability.

Other definitions also emphasize that a brand can be defined as a set of tangible and intangible attributes designed to create awareness and identity and build the reputation of a product, service, person, place or organization. The holistic perspective of branding as a long-term strategy encompasses a broad set of activities, from product innovation to marketing communications. Branding means more than just giving a name and signalling to the outside world that such a product or service has been stamped with an organization's mark and imprint. Branding is about transforming product categories; it requires a long-term corporate commitment and a high level of resources and skills (Kapferer, 2004).

Moreover, branding is defined extremely ambiguously in literature due to the diversity of research perspectives and practical applications of the concept. American Marketing Association (AMA) defines branding as „a tool to identify a specific object and differentiate it from competitors”, noting its primary functions: creating a unique identity, building value and shaping perceptions that distinguish the brand in the eyes of consumers. This definition points to the essence of branding as a process to ensure recognition and competitiveness in a dynamically changing market.

For almost 30 years, there has been an evolution in the terminology associated with branding. The difference between ,marketing' and ,branding' is increasingly recognized in literature and business practice. Marketing, which is the historical foundation of promotional activities, focuses on creating and delivering value to consumers. On the other hand, branding focuses on the long-term construction of brand identity, which is a key element of competitive strategy. As T. Sammut-Bonici (2003) points out, branding seeks to create unique and difficult-to-replace brands, thus reducing the number of available substitutes in the market. High brand value, achieved

through brand differentiation, leads to lower price elasticity of demand. This allows companies to gain greater control over the price of their products, resulting in increased profitability.

In other words, branding is a complex set of activities that build brand awareness, identity, and reputation. According to the holistic approach, a brand is a system of interrelated tangible (e.g. logos, products) and intangible (e.g. values, emotions) elements that together create a unique audience experience. Kapferer (2004) emphasizes that branding means more than just giving a name and differentiating a product from the competition - it represents a process of transforming a product category, requiring a long-term commitment from the organization. Successful branding requires adequate resources and the ability to strategically plan and implement activities consistent with the organization's mission and values.

Contemporary literature also emphasizes the diversity of approaches to branding depending on the context to which it relates. Hence, approaches such as:

- Employer branding focuses on building an organization's image as an attractive employer. Research indicates that a strong employer brand attracts the best candidates and increases employee engagement (Backhaus and Tikoo, 2004).
- Corporate branding focuses on shaping the image of the organization as a whole. In this view, the corporate brand reflects the company's values, mission and strategy, influencing how customers, business partners and the community (Hatch and Schultz, 2001) perceive it.
- Personal branding is related to the branding of an individual who seeks to highlight their unique qualities, competencies and values. Literature indicates that personal branding is particularly relevant in the context of organizational leaders, as their actions and reputation can influence perceptions of the organization as a whole (Zarkada, 2012).

Corporate branding

According to Hatch and Schultz (2001), corporate branding is based on the synergy of three key elements: strategic vision, organizational culture and corporate image. The strategic vision reflects the main goals and aspirations of the organization, which should be clearly defined and communicated both internally and externally. On the other hand, organizational culture encompasses the core values that define how the organization operates, creating

a unique identity code for its members. Corporate image refers to the brand's perception by external stakeholders such as customers, investors or business partners. De Chernatony (1999) elaborates on this concept, suggesting that effective corporate branding requires minimizing the gap between brand identity and brand reputation. The brand identity encompasses internal values and assumptions, while reputation reflects how the external environment perceives the brand. Bridging this gap allows organizations to build authenticity, which becomes a key element of long-term corporate strategy. Kapferer (1995) emphasizes that the corporate brand acts as an 'invisible contract' between the organization and its stakeholders. Clarity of vision, credibility and authenticity are key elements that influence an organization's ability to build long-term trust. The functions of corporate branding also include enhancing competitive positioning, building added value and increasing customer loyalty. Kapferer points out that consistency of branding activities with an organization's mission and values is fundamental to building a relationship of trust.

The literature on the topic indicated the importance of internal brand resources, such as employees and organizational culture, in the process of building a coherent brand identity. Backhaus and Tikoo (2004) emphasize that the involvement of employees in realizing the organization's vision is crucial for successful corporate brand management. Employer branding, which is one of the offshoots of corporate branding, plays an important role here, building a bond between employees and the organization's brand, which translates into consistency in external communication.

Contemporary approaches to corporate branding consider developments in technology and globalization, which are changing how we communicate with stakeholders. Digitalization allows organizations to communicate more directly and interactively while raising brand transparency and authenticity expectations.

Personal branding

Personal branding has gained prominence in recent decades as a key tool for leaders, entrepreneurs, and professionals to build their visibility and authenticity. According to Zarkady (2012), personal branding involves the use of marketing strategies by an individual to highlight their unique qualities, competencies and values. Unlike traditional branding, which focuses on products or services, personal branding focuses on the individual as a carrier of values and competencies.

Scheidt and co-authors (2018) define personal branding as the process of long-term creation, maintenance and development of a 'human brand' (brand). They emphasize that personal branding is crucial in building trust in a market environment. Leaders who manage their image effectively can become ambassadors of the values of the organization they represent, enhancing its reputation and credibility.

The key elements of personal branding are consistency in communication, authenticity and relationship management skills. Rampersad (2009) points out that effective personal branding requires conscious planning, which includes identifying goals, building a unique image and using digital platforms effectively. Social media, such as LinkedIn, Twitter and Instagram, have become key tools in the personal branding process, enabling leaders to reach a wide audience.

The topic literature indicates that personal branding plays a particular role in environments with high public visibility, such as the sports sector, entertainment or politics. In these contexts, leaders often become the faces of the organizations they represent; thus, they must skillfully combine personal values with organizational values.

Relationship between corporate and personal branding

The synergy between corporate and personal brands is an important area of research in the marketing literature, particularly in the context of dynamic changes in the business environment and the increasing role of organizational leaders. Authors such as Ind and Watt (2005) point out that organizational leaders act as corporate brand ambassadors and shape the corporate brand image through their actions, attitudes and values. Their authenticity, competence and ability to build relationships with stakeholders are crucial in enhancing the corporate brand identity.

The synergy process between a leader's brand and the organization's brand is based on the mutual reinforcement of the values of both entities. A strong leader's personal brand can enhance the organization's prestige by attracting customers, business partners and talented employees. At the same time, a corporate brand can provide a foundation for building a leader's credibility, especially if the organization enjoys an established market position. Examples of such relationships are particularly evident in the sports sector, where club presidents, coaches or even players become the 'face' of the organization, creating its

image in the eyes of fans and the media.

The literature on the analyzed topic points to a number of benefits of combining a leader's personal brand with a corporate brand. Firstly, leaders who are corporate brand ambassadors contribute to the credibility and authenticity of the corporate brand. Research by Scheidt and co-authors (2018) shows that the interplay between a personal brand and a corporate brand can lead to an 'endorsement' effect, in which the two brands reinforce each other's perception in the eyes of stakeholders. For example, a highly respected leader can attract an organization's media and consumer attention, resulting in a better perception of its products and services. Secondly, a combination of both types of branding can increase customer and business partner loyalty. Leaders who identify with the organization's values and consistently communicate them become a source of inspiration and trust. Their presence in the media and active participation in the event industry build positive associations with the corporate brand, which consequently contributes to its lasting rooting in the minds of audiences.

Despite its many benefits, the interpenetration of personal and corporate branding also presents significant challenges. De Chernatony (1999) points out that over-identifying the corporate brand with the leader can increase reputational risk. In the event of a crisis, negative information about the leader can quickly spill over to the corporate brand, reducing its credibility and market value. We see examples of this in situations where leaders are embroiled in scandals or make controversial decisions that are not in line with the organization's values. An additional challenge is to balance the autonomy of the leader's personal brand with its connection to the corporate brand. The literature of the subject area indicates that too much subordination of the personal brand to corporate goals can limit a leader's creativity and ability to build his or her own authenticity. Conversely, too much separation between the two brands can lead to a blurring of the corporate identity and a loss of consistency in marketing communications.

The relationship between personal and corporate brands is particularly evident in sectors with high media visibility, such as sports, fashion, or technology. In the sports sector, leaders, such as club presidents or coaches, are often seen as brand ambassadors, and their actions can contribute to enhancing the organization's positive image. For example, a club's sporting success is often attributed to the leaders' effective management, which builds their local and global reputations. However, the sector context

can also influence the specificity of brand synergy challenges. In sectors with intense media competition, such as the entertainment industry or politics, leaders need to be particularly careful about how they present their personal brand to avoid unintended conflicts with the organization's values.

Research methodology

The research subject was the analysis of synergies between the Stal Mielec club's corporate brand and its president's personal brand, Jacek Klimek, in the particular context of his candidacy for a mayor of Mielec. The research focused on the pre-election campaign period when Jacek Klimek's personal branding activities could be linked to the club's image.

The corporate brand of Stal Mielec

Stal Mielec, as a football club with a rich tradition and roots in the local community, was a significant element of Jacek Klimek's image. The research included an analysis of the club's media communication, with a particular focus on mentions that could indicate its use in activities supporting the president's candidacy. The corporate brand was examined in the context of its potential impact on increasing the credibility and recognition of Jacek Klimek as a political candidate.

Jacek Klimek's personal brand

As a club leader and public figure, Jacek Klimek used a personal branding strategy in his sporting and political activities. The analysis focused on publications appearing in the electronic media, which indicated the use of his achievements in managing Stal Mielec to build the image of an effective leader during the election campaign.

The aim of the research was to identify and analyze the interplay between Jacek Klimek's personal brand and the corporate brand of Stal Mielec during the pre-election campaign period. Key research questions are as follows:

- Has the corporate brand of Stal Mielec been used, and if so, to what extent in activities supporting Jacek Klimek's candidacy for mayor of Mielec?
- How has Jacek Klimek's personal brand affected the perception of the club in the electronic media?
- What visual and communication elements were used most frequently in the materials analyzed?

The Brand24 system was used to analyze the material, enabling the monitoring and categorizing of media content during the campaign period. The tool allowed for:

- Identification of media mentions related to Jacek Klimek and Stal Mielec.
- Analysis of publication sentiment (positive, neutral, negative).
- Tracking the occurrence of visual elements such as photos of the chairperson, the club logo and photographs related to sporting events.

Publications appearing in electronic media, such as news portals, social media and blogs, were examined between 12 February and 6 April 2024. These materials included content related to both the club's activities and Jacek Klimek's activity as a candidate for mayor of Mielec. Key search keywords were „Jacek Klimek”, „Stal Mielec”, „election campaign”, and „ the president of Mielec”. The analysis was based on two approaches: quantitative and qualitative.

Quantitative analysis, which included:

- Counting the number of publications mentioning Jacek Klimek and the club Stal Mielec.
- Categorization of content by topic (e.g. sporting successes, managerial activities, election campaign).
- Assessment of the frequency of visual elements (photos of the president, club logo, team photos).

Qualitative analysis, which included:

- An examination of the context in which Jacek Klimek's actions were mentioned, e.g. whether they referred to his managerial successes at the club or to political activities.
- Analysis of the rhetoric and narrative in publications to identify possible links between the president's image and the election campaign.
- Identification of potential strategies for using the club brand to promote the candidate.

The research period from 12 February to 6 April 2024 was selected to capture the intense pre-election campaign phase. The material analyzed included both publications related to the club's activities and those directly relating to the candidacy of Jacek Klimek. The chosen period allowed for the examination of communication patterns and their evolution in the time leading up to the election.

Research limitations included the following:

- Scope of data: The research relied on publicly available electronic publications, which may limit

the full picture of the marketing and communication activities of the entities surveyed.

- Local context: The analysis focused on Mielec and its surroundings, which may affect the limited generalizability of the results to other regions or contexts.
- Short research period: the election campaign covered a relatively short period of time, which may not reflect the long-term impact of brand synergies.

Findings

Based on an analysis of 140 press publications about the president of Stal Mielec, the following key subject areas can be distinguished:

- **Presence of the president in the media (99 publications):** The largest number of publications (71% of the total) referred to the mention of Jacek Klimek as the club president. This result indicates the central role he plays in Stal Mielec's media communication. The high number of publications may be the result of the president's active presence in the media and the conscious use of his image to build the club's corporate brand.

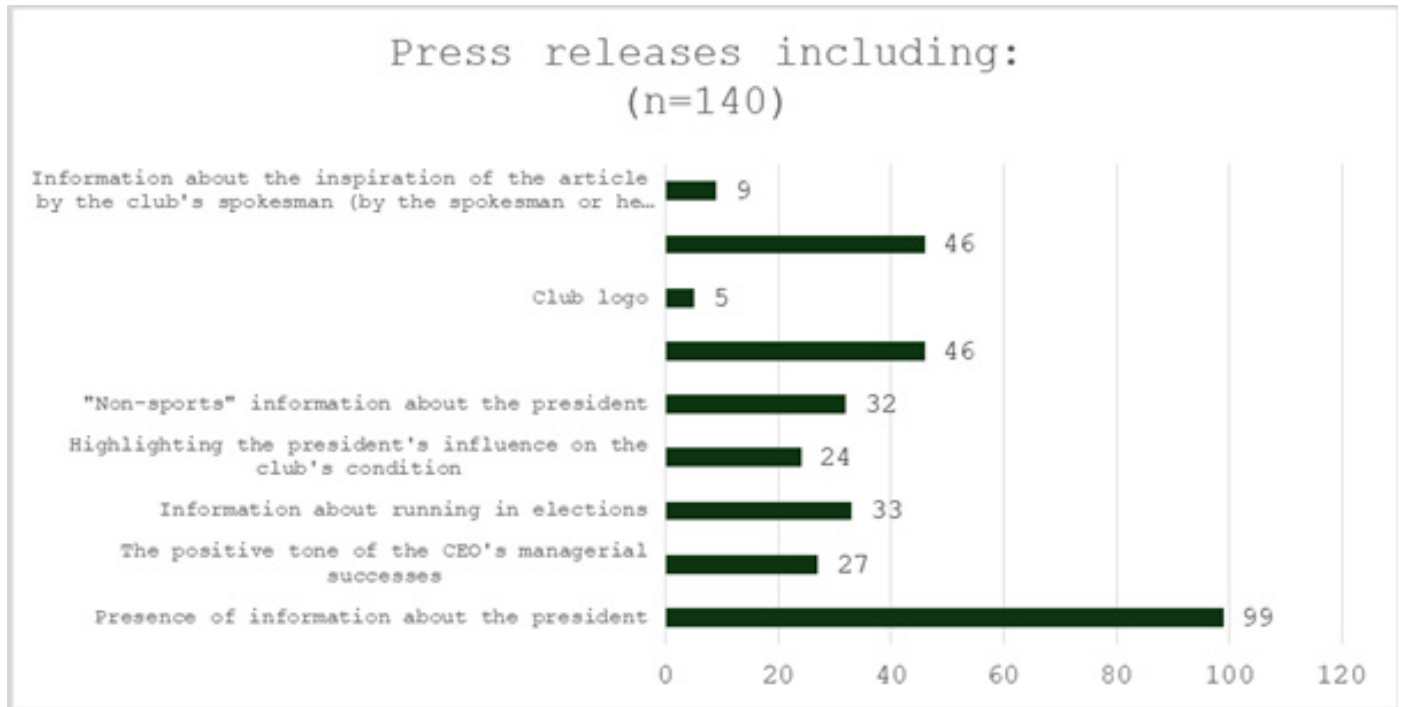
- **CEO's managerial successes (27 publications):** The number of articles focusing on Jacek Klimek's managerial successes represents 19%. This result suggests that the media recognize his management activities as important, highlighting his impact on the club's development. This may indicate a skilful use of the organizational success narrative in both sporting and managerial contexts.

- **Content not directly related to sport (46 publications):** More than 32% of the publications covered non-sports topics, such as Jacek Klimek's social activities. This may be due to his local activity, which allows him to build a positive image in the urban environment, which is important in the context of his candidacy for mayor of Mielec.

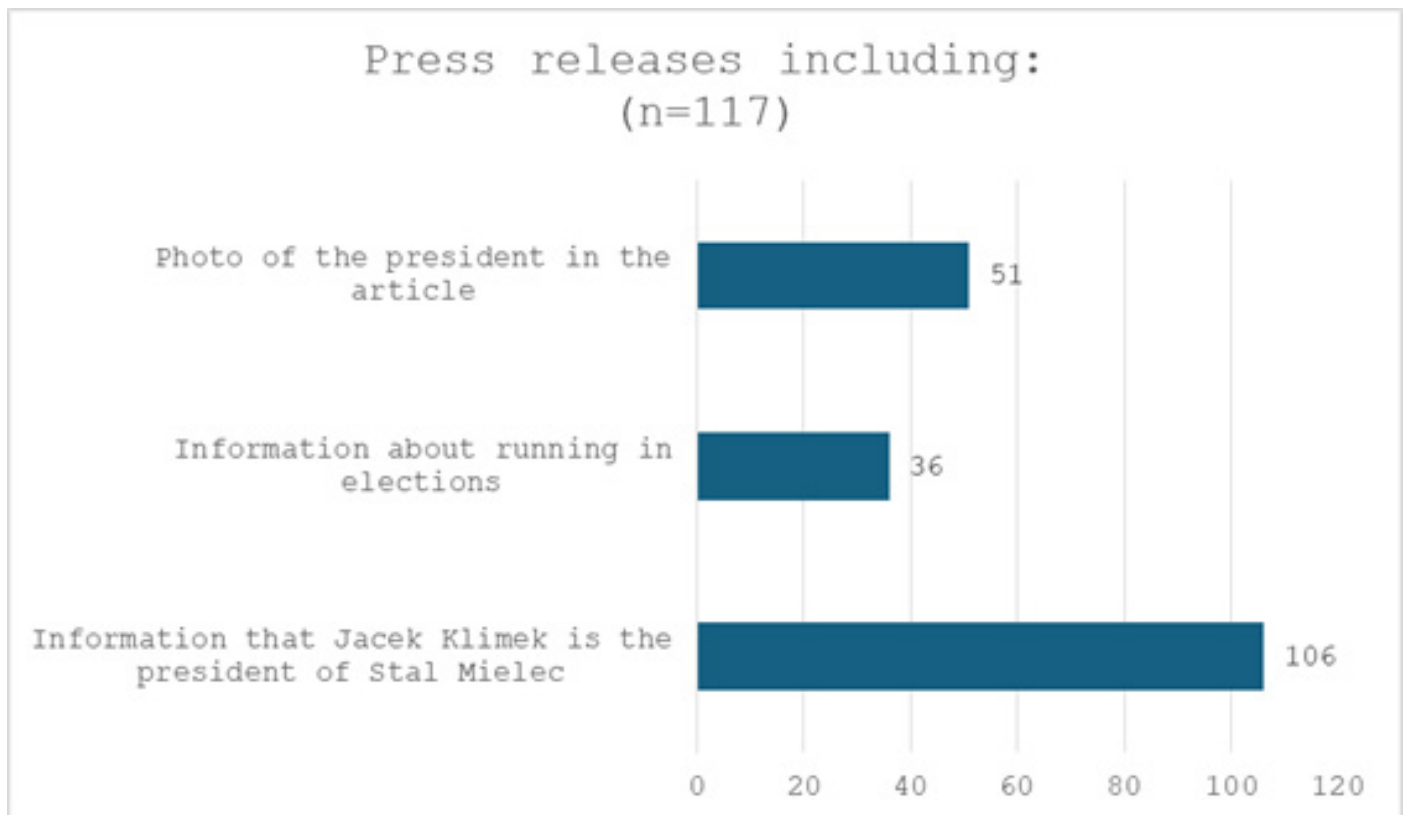
- **Visual elements:** The club's logo appeared in 46 publications, suggesting that the corporate brand of Stal Mielec was strongly featured in the context of mentions of the president. At the same time, images relating to the club only appeared in 9 articles, which may indicate that the club's visual representations were less important than the CEO's personal image. Figures 1 and 2 show the results obtained.

Figure 1:

Content of press releases concerning Stal Mielec FC

**Figure 2:**

Content of press releases on Jacek Klimek



The following statistics were recorded for publications about Jacek Klimek (117 publications):

- **Mentions of the function of the president (106 publications):** The most often recurring theme in the analyzed materials was the function of Jacek Klimek as the president of the club. The

high number (90.6% of publications) indicates that his role as leader of the organization was the main point of reference in the media. This may be due to the deliberate prominence of his position in the club's communication activities, highlighting his importance as a brand ambassador.

- **Political context (36 publications):**

The moderate number of articles referring to Jacek Klimek's pre-election campaign (30.7% of publications) suggests that the media did not fully focus on his political activities. This may be due to a deliberate strategy to limit political content in media communications to avoid controversy or conflict with the club's corporate brand value.

- **Visual elements:** Photos of Jacek Klimek appeared in 51 publications (43.6% of the total), highlighting the importance of the visual representation of the president in building his image. This may indicate that Jacek Klimek's personal image was used as a key element in branding activities, both in a sporting and political context.

The analysis strongly suggested that Jacek Klimek was perceived primarily as the president of the sports club Stal Mielec. The results suggest that his personal brand was deliberately linked to the club's corporate brand, which may have been a strategy to reinforce both entities' images mutually.

The small number of publications on Jacek Klimek's candidacy for mayor of Mielec indicates a possible strategy to avoid excessive entanglement of the club in political issues. Such a practice might have been aimed at maintaining image neutrality, minimizing the risk of conflicts or divisions in public perception.

The high number of publications containing the club's logo and photos of the president underlines the importance of visual aspects in communication. The results suggest that the image of Jacek Klimek as a leader was a key element in building credibility and trust, especially in the local environment.

A significant number of publications relating to Jacek Klimek's social activities have been identified. This indicates the use of a holistic approach to building his image, encompassing both sporting activities and local social involvement. The results suggest that this strategy was aimed at positively shaping the image of the candidate for mayor of Mielec in the eyes of the local community.

The findings point to a well-thought-out communication strategy based on combining personal and corporate branding, avoiding political connotations in the context of the club and using visual and social aspects in image building.

The results presented in Figures 1 and 2 indicate a significant synergy between Jacek Klimek's personal brand and the corporate brand of Stal Mielec. The club's brand was consistently used as a foundation in building the CEO's image, both in the sporting and social context. At the same time, Jacek Klimek's

personal branding activities strengthened the image of Stal Mielec as an organization managed by an effective leader.

These findings indicate that branding strategies were consciously integrated during the period under study, allowing the two brands to reinforce each other's values. However, the limited link between political activities and the club's media communication may suggest that efforts were made to avoid potential controversies that could negatively affect the corporate image.

The analysis of the results makes it possible to formulate answers to three key research questions about the relationship between Jacek Klimek's personal brand and the corporate brand of Stal Mielec:

- How does Jacek Klimek's personal brand influence the perception of the Stal Mielec brand? The results indicate that Jacek Klimek's personal brand, which is an integral part of the club's communication activities, significantly strengthens the image of Stal Mielec as a professionally managed organization. The high number of publications highlighting his role as the president and his managerial successes indicates that audiences perceive the club through the prism of the leader's competence. Jacek Klimek's strong media presence has built up an image of the club as

a dynamic and credible institution, which in turn could increase its attractiveness in the eyes of business partners and the local community.

- How does the club's corporate brand support the president's personal branding activities? The corporate brand of Stal Mielec was effectively used as a platform to reinforce the narrative about Jacek Klimek as a leader and political candidate. The prominence of the club's logo in 46 publications and the use of the club's sporting and organizational successes in the media proves that the corporate brand was an important element in the CEO's credibility-building strategy. In this way, the sports club promoted its values and supported the leader's personal branding activities in a manner consistent with the corporate identity.

- What are the key visual and communication elements used in the synergy of the two brands?

Key visual elements included images of Jacek Klimek (51 publications) and the logo of Stal Mielec (46 publications). Their presence indicates the importance of visual representations in building associations between personal and corporate brands. At the same time, content related to the CEO's social activities exemplified a holistic approach to communication, integrating the club's values with local activities. These elements supported the

coherence of the narrative, building a positive image of both the president and the club.

The results indicate that the synergy between the two brands was deliberately designed, and its effects reflect the conscious image management of both Jacek Klimek and Stal Mielec.

Discussion

The results of the research confirm the key role of the synergy between Jacek Klimek's personal brand and the corporate brand of the Stal Mielec club, especially during the pre-election campaign period. Ghodeswar (2008) emphasizes that a corporate brand, in order to be effective, should be based on the distinct identity of a leader who embodies the values and mission of the organization. In the case of Stal Mielec, the function of the CEO performed by Jacek Klimek was the dominant element of the media narrative - as many as 71% of publications referred to his role at the club. This result confirms that the leader's brand was a key element in the club's corporate communications while also underpinning his political campaign activities.

Jacek Klimek's extensive media presence can be explained by his activity in both sporting and social contexts. According to Kapferer's (1995) theory, a corporate brand, supported by a recognizable leader, can gain authenticity and increase its value in the eyes of stakeholders. In the case analyzed, Jacek Klimek's managerial successes at the club, highlighted in 27 publications, became an important element in building his image as an effective leader, which was also important in the context of his candidacy for mayor of Mielec.

Research by Balmer and Greyser (2006) indicates that corporate identity and reputation can be used as strategic tools in the actions of political leaders. In the case of Jacek Klimek, his function as the club president was prominently featured in the media (106 publications), highlighting his management skills and effectiveness in action. However, the moderate number of publications relating directly to the election campaign (36 articles) may indicate caution in linking the club's image to the political narrative. As a public institution, a sports club needs to remain neutral so as not to risk its reputation from political controversy. This result is in line with the findings of Fombrun and Van Riel (2004), who emphasize the importance of reputation management in situations where the corporate brand is strongly linked to the political activities of leaders.

The analyzed materials highlighted visual elements' important role in building synergies between personal and corporate brands. Jacek

Klimek's photographs appeared in 51 publications, indicating their importance in building a leader's image. As Rein, Kotler and Stoller (2006) point out, visual elements of the personal brand, such as photographs, are a key tool in the process of building recognition and credibility. In this case, visualizing the chairperson's activities in the context of the club may have been an effective way to reinforce his narrative as a local leader.

At the same time, the analysis indicated that the club's logo appeared in 46 publications, while images of the team or stadium were much less present (nine publications). This may suggest that Jacek Klimek's personal brand was more prominently displayed than the club brand itself, which may have been a deliberate effort to personalize the media coverage and focus attention on his activities.

Similar studies point to the benefits of synergies between a leader's personal and corporate brands. Ghodeswar (2008) and Rein, Kotler and Stoller (2006) highlight that recognizable leaders can reinforce the brand value of their organization. Examples of well-known leaders, such as Elon Musk in the context of the Tesla brand, indicate that a leader's media visibility and personal narrative can contribute to building a positive image of the organization. The findings regarding Jacek Klimek are consistent with these findings - his managerial successes at Stal Mielec were consistently linked to his personal image in the election campaign.

On the other hand, literature warns against the risk of excessively linking personal and corporate brands. Zarkada (2012) points out that such linkages can lead to a situation where a leader's reputation becomes the sole pillar of the corporate brand. In the case of Jacek Klimek, the moderate use of the Stal Mielec brand in the political narrative may have been a conscious strategy to avoid this risk, indicating thoughtful image management of both brands.

The political marketing literature emphasizes that candidates often use their professional standing to build narratives of effectiveness and credibility (Lees-Marshment, 2009; Scammell, 2014). The Mielec presidential election provided a unique context in which to analyze the relationship between personal and corporate branding. As leader of a local sports club, Jacek Klimek effectively used his managerial achievements to highlight his competence in managing local affairs. However, the limited association of the club's image with a direct political narrative may have been driven by a desire to maintain the club's neutrality and avoid image conflicts.

Conclusion

The analysis of the relationship between Jacek Klimek's personal brand and the corporate brand of Stal Mielec revealed a significant synergy, which strengthened both images in the eyes of stakeholders. The research results confirm that the effective integration of the leader's personal branding activities with the corporate brand communication can bring tangible benefits, both in the context of building the organization's credibility and the leader's image.

Based on his management successes at the sports club, Jacek Klimek's personal brand was an important tool for promoting his candidacy for mayor of Mielec. At the same time, the corporate brand of Stal Mielec, supported by the president's image, gained authenticity and recognisability. The prominence of the club's logo, the highlighting of managerial successes and the use of visual elements contributed to the construction of a coherent narrative that integrated sporting, social and political values.

The limited association of the club's image with political activities indicates a deliberate strategy to manage image risk, which allowed the club to remain neutral as a sporting institution. These results are in line with brand management theory, which emphasizes the importance of communication consistency and minimizing potential conflicts between brand identity and reputation.

The research enriches the existing literature on the synergies between personal and corporate brand, especially in local political campaigns. At the same time, they provide an example for other organizations on how to manage the relationship effectively between leader and organization in an integrated and long-term value-building oriented manner.

In the future, it is worth considering long-term studies that could explore the sustainability of this synergy in changing social and political conditions. An analysis of the relationship between personal and corporate brands in other economic sectors or in an international context could provide valuable insights into the universality of these mechanisms. Thus, this research provides a starting point for further exploration of brand management in highly complex and dynamically volatile environments.

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