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RULER, LOVER, OR OUTLAW? ARCHETYPAL DIVERGENCE IN ELITE TRACK AND FIELD ATHLETES' DIGITAL SELF- PRESENTATION

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Abstract: *This study examines the importance of developing a cohesive personal brand in the modern sports industry, where athletic performance must be complemented by clear marketability to ensure long-term commercial success and sponsorship opportunities. The main objective is to identify the dominant brand archetypes of six professional track and field athletes with strong social media presence. The theoretical framework draws on Jungian psychology as adapted for marketing by Mark and Pearson. Methodologically, the study combines sentiment analysis of public comments from athletes' Instagram profiles with qualitative data from two focus groups. The first group consisted of experienced athletics fans, while the second included individuals with no regular interest in athletics, allowing for a broader perspective on public perception. Participants assigned three archetypes to each athlete and identified the most dominant one. The results confirmed a clear dominant archetype for each athlete. Femke Bol was identified as the Hero, Alica Schmidt as the Lover, Armand Duplantis and Noah Lyles as the Ruler, Emmanouil Karalis as the Jester, and Sha'Carri Richardson as the Outlaw. The findings highlight that a clearly defined and consistent brand archetype is crucial for athletes seeking sustained relevance and increased commercial value in the digital era. While traditional archetypes such as Hero and Ruler prevail among top performers, the presence of diverse archetypes (Lover, Jester, Outlaw) plays a key role in differentiation and audience engagement. The results also suggest that gender may influence the public attribution of archetypes.*

Keywords: Brand Archetypes, Personal Brand, Social Media, Athlete's Brand, Digital Branding

JEL Classification: M31, M37

INTRODUCTION

The contemporary professional sports environment dictates that athletic excellence must be synergized with strategic marketability and narrative coherence. Unlike team sports, which often rely on collective identity and institutional history, individual athletes find that cultivating a robust and distinctive personal brand is paramount to career success and long-term financial stability. This branding is critical for effectively communicating with fans and, more importantly, securing relationships with essential sponsors. In the modern digital era, athletes predominantly rely on social networks to connect with and maintain a broad, loyal audience. However, succeeding in this highly saturated sphere requires tools that move beyond simple promotion and tap into deeper psychological resonance.

This need to forge profound emotional connections has led to the increased application of brand archetypes, a framework adapted from the foundational psychological theories of C. G. Jung. Archetypes enable individuals to construct a memorable public identity, ensuring consistency in their values and communication, which, in turn, helps the audience identify with and understand their public persona on social media platforms. The strategic use of archetypes can thus optimize an athlete's market value by converting short-term performance into long-lasting personal brand equity. Consequently, the main objective of this research is to identify the brand archetypes of six selected professional track and field athletes. The motivation for this study stems from the imperative to understand how these archetypes manifest in the digital space and how they influence public perception, loyalty, and commercial opportunities within the highly competitive sports industry.

This paper proceeds as follows. The initial sections establish the theoretical background, detailing the evolution of the personal brand and differentiating the concept from fleeting image, before fully exploring the framework of brand archetypes. Subsequently, the methodology section outlines the subjects selected and the mixed-methods approach utilized, specifically the combination of quantitative sentiment analysis of social media (Instagram) and qualitative research derived from two distinct focus groups. The results detail the determined dominant archetypes for each athlete, followed by a comprehensive discussion of the findings and final conclusions.

LITERATURE OVERVIEW

The pervasive commercialization of elite sport and the explosion of digital communication have transformed high-performance athletes into complex, managed entities often referred to as human brands (Laub et al. 2018; Berndt 2021; Rai et al. 2021; Biz and Schubert 2024). For individual athletes, unlike team organizations relying on collective identity, establishing a distinctive personal brand is paramount to securing marketability, long-term financial stability, and sponsorship opportunities (Su et al. 2020; Doyle, Su, and Kunkel 2022).

Athlete Brand Image and Identity Management

The fundamental characteristic of a brand is its differentiation from competitors, providing a measure of reputation and awareness (Biz and Schubert 2024). A favorable athlete brand translates directly into tangible benefits, including increased media visibility, sponsorship agreements (Akranglyte et al. 2019), and potentially higher wages

(Su et al. 2020; Doyle et al. 2022). A critical distinction must be maintained between the enduring personal brand (identity) and the fleeting image (Ramya 2017). Brand identity is a long-term, strategic process based on core values, authenticity, and consistent communication, fostering trust and distinguishing the athlete (Lobpries, Bennett, and Brison 2017; Ramya 2017; Hasaan, Biscaia, and Ross 2021). Conversely, image is the temporal, external perception formed automatically by consumers based on superficial elements like appearance or current behavior (Ramya 2017). The explicit effort applied to constructing and managing this public persona has been noted in various sporting contexts (Berndt 2021).

Scholarly efforts to systematize the components of an athlete's marketable identity led to the Model of Athlete Brand Image (MABI) (Arai, Ko, and Kaplanidou 2013; Arai, Ko, and Ross 2014; Akranglyte et al. 2019; Na, Kunkel, and Doyle 2020). The MABI proposes that consumer perceptions of an athlete's brand are determined by three structural dimensions (Arai et al. 2013; Mahmoudian et al. 2020; Doyle et al. 2022) - Athletic Performance (defined by sub-dimensions such as athletic expertise, competition style, sportsmanship, and rivalry), Attractive Appearance (including physical attractiveness, symbol, e.g., clothing, style, and body fitness), Marketable Lifestyle (encompassing the athlete's life story, role model behavior, relationship effort, and ethical conduct) (Arai et al. 2013; Akranglyte et al. 2019; Linsner et al. 2021). Notably, research suggests that the marketable lifestyle component, reflecting the athlete's personality and broader social perception, contributes the highest value to the overall athlete brand image (Arai et al. 2013; Na et al. 2020; Linsner et al. 2021; Shin and Lee 2021). These structural elements, when strategically managed, provide competitive advantages (Akranglyte et al. 2019).

Archetypal Framework for Brand Storytelling

The application of archetypes provides a psychological framework for constructing a cohesive and resonant brand identity (Mark and Pearson 2001; Tsai 2006). Derived from the psychological work of Carl Gustav Jung, archetypes are recognized as universal mental models (Stevens 2006; Becker and Neuberg 2019; Pera, Viglia, and Furlan 2022) or "unconscious primary forms" embedded in the collective unconscious (Jung et al. 2017). Jung asserted that these forms, which are collective rather than purely individual, manifest spontaneously, similar to instincts, and serve as roots for conscious thought, influencing perception even subconsciously (Jung et al. 2017). The most prominent adaptation of Jungian psychology in marketing is the framework developed by Mark and Pearson (Mark and Pearson 2001; Xara-Brasil, Miadaira Hamza, and Marquina 2018; Pera et al. 2022). This model classifies twelve primary archetypes based on four fundamental human motivational clusters (Mark and Pearson 2001; Broek 2014; Johnson 2016):

1. Stability and Control (e.g., Ruler, Creator, Caregiver).
2. Risk and Mastery (e.g., Hero, Magician, Outlaw).
3. Independence and Fulfillment (e.g., Innocent, Explorer, Sage).
4. Belonging and Connection (e.g., Everyman, Jester, Lover).

By linking a brand or individual persona to one or a combination of these archetypes, marketers can signal the fulfillment of deep emotional and psychological needs, fostering emotional bonding and consumer loyalty (Mark and Pearson 2001;

Xara-Brasil et al. 2018; Maatota, Lapien, and Tielung 2019). While Mark and Pearson (2001) propose that a brand should strive to become a consistent carrier of meaning and an icon of a single archetype, practitioners sometimes use extended models, such as that by Hartwell and Chen (Hartwell and Chen 2012), which encompasses 13 archetypal families and sixty subtypes for more nuanced brand personality definitions.

The power of archetypes is strongly interwoven with brand storytelling (Herskovitz and Crystal 2010; Xara-Brasil et al. 2018; Maatota et al. 2019; Pera et al. 2022). Storytelling provides meaning to a brand, creates emotional connections (Sanders and van Krieken 2018; Maatota et al. 2019; Pera et al. 2022), and, at a personal level, acts as a predictor of digital reputation (Pera et al. 2022). In the context of online self-presentation, powerful storytelling is structured around defined phases and conflicts, culminating in a metaphorical or symbolic “lesson learned” (Pera et al. 2022). Research on online self-narratives suggests that the presence of the Ruler and Sage archetypes confers significant reputational power, particularly due to their connection to expressing leadership, competence, and wisdom (the “Post-Journey” phase) (Pera et al. 2022; Scholz 2025).

Digital Platforms and Archetypal Enactment

The contemporary athlete brand is inextricably linked to the digital sphere (Doyle et al. 2022; Charaf 2025). Social media platforms (such as Instagram) have become crucial tools for elite athletes to pursue branding initiatives, achieving fame, financial stability, and influence (Su et al. 2020; Bredikhina, Gupta, and Kunkel 2023). This marks a fundamental shift, granting athletes independent control over their narrative (Charaf 2025). The process of building an online athlete brand involves strategic impression management (Doyle et al. 2022; Biz and Schubert 2024), where athletes selectively emphasize specific characteristics or achievements they wish to be associated with (Shreffler, Hancock, and Schmidt 2016; Doyle et al. 2022). This deliberate presentation aligns with Goffman’s theory of self-presentation (Akranglyte et al. 2019; Doyle et al. 2022). Content analysis reveals that athletes utilize specific content categories to manage their online presence, notably differentiating between the MABI components (Athletic Performance, Attractive Appearance, Marketable Lifestyle) and Offstage Content (content not directly related to or depicting the athlete) (Arai et al. 2014; Doyle et al. 2022). Research indicates that Athletic Performance content typically attracts the highest rate of consumer engagement (likes and comments) (Ferreira, Crespo, and Mendes 2021; Doyle et al. 2022). Moreover, fan engagement is maximized when content is perceived as authentic and diverse, often including personal histories and behind-the-scenes material (Charaf 2025). For elite athletes, growth metrics—such as follower count, which serves as a proxy for popularity and brand monetization (Su et al. 2020; Brison and Geurin 2021; Bredikhina et al. 2023)—are often dictated less by posting frequency (a common tactic for general social media influencers, or SMIs) and more by strategic exposure and brand networking (e.g., tagging master brands or influential team members) (Bredikhina et al. 2023).

Congruence and Endorsement

When an athlete secures a sponsorship, the effectiveness of the partnership relies on the Meaning Transfer Theory (Kim, Seo, and Chang 2017; Roy 2018; Rai et al.

2021), where the image, credibility, and associations consumers hold of the celebrity are transferred to the endorsed product (Arai et al. 2013; Kim et al. 2017). This transfer is optimized by the match-up hypothesis, which dictates that congruence between the endorser's image and the brand is essential (Arai et al. 2013; Kim et al. 2017). Research distinguishes the transferability of image attributes based on the advertising context (Kim et al. 2017). Professional Expertise – attributes derived from athletic performance (e.g., technical skill, achievement) are transferred most effectively when the athlete is presented in a context-congruent advertisement (e.g., actively competing or training) (Kim et al. 2017; Nimmermann 2020). Sociocultural Influence – attributes based on general lifestyle or appearance (e.g., positive image, charisma) may transfer effectively even in context-incongruent advertising (e.g., smiling in a suit advertisement unrelated to sports) (Kim et al. 2017; Nimmermann 2020). This latter form of transfer leverages the athlete's existing positive image developed through their broader public life (Kim et al. 2017; Kunkel, Doyle, and Na 2022).

In essence, the choice of a dominant archetypal persona must be consistently articulated through strategic digital self-presentation to maximize both fan engagement and commercial congruence.

METHODOLOGY

This research employs a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative analysis of social media engagement with in-depth qualitative analysis derived from focus groups. This strategy was selected to achieve the primary objective: to identify the brand archetypes of six selected professional track and field athletes. The methodology is designed for maximum clarity and precision, ensuring that the process is transparent and allows for validation and testing by subsequent authors.

Subjects of Analysis

The subjects of this analysis are six world-class track and field athletes who maintain a significant public presence on social media platforms. The selection criteria prioritized global prominence and varied styles of digital self-presentation, enabling a study of contrasting archetypal manifestations. The athletes were paired for thematic comparison: Femke Bol versus Alica Schmidt, Armand Duplantis versus Emmanouil Karalis, and Sha'Carri Richardson versus Noah Lyles.

Quantitative Data Collection: Sentiment Analysis

The initial quantitative phase involved a sentiment analysis primarily focused on data collected from the Instagram platform. This method was utilized to assess the prevailing emotional context of public reception, which served as a crucial input for the subsequent qualitative discussion. For each athlete, comments were extracted from their last three unpinned Instagram posts (data collected by April 7, 2025). If the existing posts did not yield sufficient data, additional posts were included until a minimum threshold of 1200 valid comments was achieved.

The raw comment data was copied into Notepad++ and subsequently processed and categorized using Artificial Intelligence (ChatGPT versions 4.0 and 4.5) to classify the sentiment (positive, neutral, or negative). Crucially, the process included filtering out content devoid of emotional coloring, such as conjunctions and pronouns. The

analysis prioritized subjective text elements, focusing on adjectives, verbs, and adverbs, along with relevant emoticons, to accurately quantify emotional valence. Furthermore, specific keywords demonstrably linked to the 12 Mark and Pearson brand archetypes (e.g., words associated with the Jester or the Ruler) were analyzed for frequency of occurrence.

Qualitative Assessment: Focus Groups

The quantitative findings informed the core qualitative phase, which consisted of two distinct Focus Groups (FGs). This approach facilitated a deeper understanding of how the athletes' digital personas are perceived by different public segments. Both FGs were composed exclusively of 12 individuals belonging to Generation Z, selected due to their native daily use of social media, and maintained equal gender representation (three men and three women in each group) to enhance output validity.

1. FG 1 (Athletes): Comprised fans of athletics who had followed the sport long-term, most possessing at least two years of personal athletic experience.

2. FG 2 (Non-Athletes): Consisted of individuals who do not follow athletics and prefer other sports.

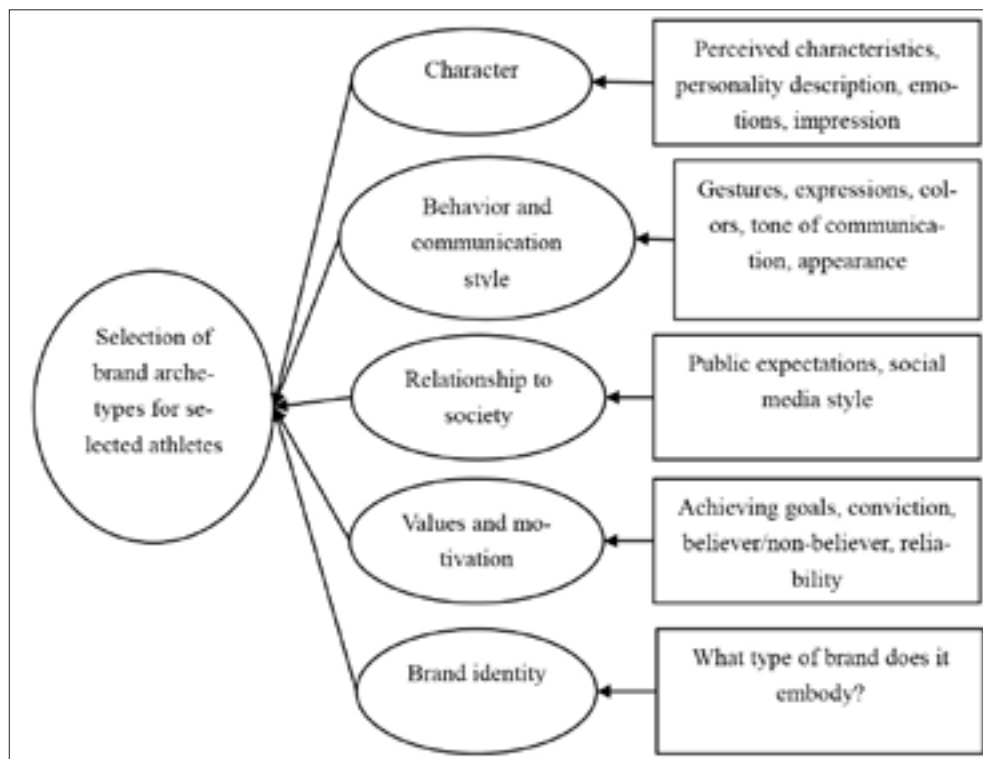


Figure 1. Operationalization

Source: own data

Participants were provided with the sentiment analysis results, visual archetype cards, and introductory material explaining the 12 brand archetypes of M. Mark and C. S. Pearson. Following the introduction to the topic of brand archetypes, the focus was

subsequently directed toward the selected athletes. For each athlete, participants were instructed to open the specific athlete's Instagram profile and perceive the individual not only as a sports figure but also as an overall personality. Throughout both Focus Groups (FGs), the discussion was systematically guided toward determining the brand archetypes of the selected athletes using a prepared set of questions. This collection of questions was formulated using operationalization (see Figure 1). The purpose of these questions was to help participants reflect on the topic discussed and facilitate the final determination of the archetypes.

During the first six questions, the emphasis was placed on team discussion, and participants were actively encouraged to engage in conversation. For the final question, each respondent answered individually. First, they designated three archetypes that, in their opinion, best fit the athlete. From these selected options, the participant then chose one archetype they considered to be the most dominant. This segmentation made it easier to determine the athlete's brand archetype that appeared most frequently.

The final results from both Focus Groups were subsequently compared. The archetype exhibiting the highest frequency (highest cumulative score) was ultimately selected as the dominant one, determined by a simple weighted calculation. Specifically, the archetype that respondents positioned as the dominant choice was assigned two points. The remaining two selected archetypes were each assigned one point, as their relative ranking was considered irrelevant. All accumulated points were then totaled for each archetype separately, and the archetype with the highest cumulative score was definitively designated as the dominant brand archetype for the respective athlete.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter integrates the findings from the quantitative sentiment analysis and the qualitative focus group research to identify and interpret the dominant brand archetypes of the six selected athletes. The sentiment analysis served as foundational, data-driven material, providing crucial insights into the immediate emotional reception of the athletes by their social media audience, thereby informing the subsequent contextual interpretations made by the focus group participants.

Sentiment Distribution and Archetype Frequency

The overall sentiment regarding the athletes was heavily skewed toward the positive, though notable differences existed: Alica Schmidt had the highest positive score (98%), while Sha'Carri Richardson registered the lowest (42%). See Table 1.

Table 1. Sentiment Distribution and Archetype Frequency

Athlete	Positive Sentiment	Most Dominant Archetypes (by Word Frequency)
Femke Bol	90%	Hero ("Unstoppable," "Champion"), Ruler, Magician
Alica Schmidt	98%	Lover ("beautiful" 39x, "love" 30x), Hero, Creator
Armand Duplantis	95%	Ruler (GOAT 16x, "King"), Hero, Lover
Emmanouil Karalis	95%	Hero , Lover, Caregiver
Sha'Carri Richardson	42%	Lover , Ruler ("Queen"), Hero
Noah Lyles	68%	Jester , Lover, Hero

Source: own data

The detailed analysis of word frequency and related emoticons revealed distinct patterns:

Femke Bol: The analysis confirmed the Hero archetype with frequent terms like “Legend” and “Amazing,” but also showed elements of the Ruler (“Ruler of 400 m”). Negative comments (2%) focused primarily on comparisons to rival Sydney McLaughlin-Levrone.

Alica Schmidt: Her high positive rate is attributed to her role as an influencer/model, with fan praise heavily focused on physical attractiveness and affection (Lover). Negative comments (0.5%) occasionally criticized product promotion or questioned her athletic success.

Armand Duplantis: The dominance of the Ruler archetype was evident through frequent use of GOAT (Greatest Of All Time). The prevalence of the Lover archetype was potentially inflated due to cross-posting with his fiancée, Desiré Inghander.

Emmanouil Karalis: Comments were highly emotive and expressed national pride. While Hero terms dominated, critics occasionally pointed out the frequent appearance of alcohol on his profile.

Sha’Carri Richardson: Despite her public “rebel” reputation, the most frequent words in comments aligned with the Lover archetype (admiration for confidence and attractiveness), and no words associated with the Outlaw archetype were found in this quantitative sample.

Noah Lyles: Terms related to the Jester archetype were the most dominant, viewing him as a positive showman. Negative comments (5%) were often critical or abusive (“wasteman,” “corny”).

Evaluation of Focus Group Outcomes

Initial observations suggested that the “Non-Athletes” group produced more dynamic, sometimes controversial, discussions, while the “Athletes” group exhibited greater initial restraint. A significant disparity in opinion often arose between the two groups regarding an athlete’s perceived authenticity or charisma. The results highlight that athletes are associated with a diverse range of archetypes beyond the commonly expected Hero or Ruler. The final calculated dominant archetypes were: Femke Bol as Hero, Alica Schmidt as Lover, Armand Duplantis as Ruler, Emmanouil Karalis as Jester, Sha’Carri Richardson as Outlaw, and Noah Lyles as Ruler. See Table 2.

Table 2. Sentiment Distribution and Archetype Frequency

Athlete	FG Dominant Archetype	Key Qualitative Findings
Femke Bol	Hero	Unanimous agreement: perceived as “hard worker”, disciplined, and an icon. Group 2 saw her as a role model focusing solely on sport.
Alica Schmidt	Lover	Overwhelmingly seen as an influencer/model rather than primarily an athlete. Associated with luxury brands (Dior, Mercedes, Armani). Group 1 described her using strong negative terms (“fake,” “artificial”).
Armand Duplantis	Ruler	Perceived as highly dominant, sovereign, and the GOAT, continually pushing boundaries. Associated with luxury brands (Rolex, RedBull).

Athlete	FG Dominant Archetype	Key Qualitative Findings
Emmanouil Karalis	Jester	Seen as highly positive, friendly, and a comedian/showman ("yolo"). Group 2 designated him "always the best second" compared to Duplantis. Associated with colorful, fun brands (Skittles, M&M's).
Sha'Carri Richardson	Outlaw	Evoked strong, polarizing reactions; seen as extravagant, artificial, and a rebel. Associated with conspicuous luxury and distinctive brands (Fenty Beauty).
Noah Lyles	Ruler	Group 1 ("Athletes") saw him as a Jester (showman, arrogant). Group 2 ("Non-Athletes") consistently assigned the Ruler archetype, viewing him as the current leader and dominant victor.

Source: own data

Consistency and Discrepancy between Quantitative and Qualitative Findings

For Femke Bol, Alica Schmidt, and Armand Duplantis, the results of the sentiment analysis (most frequent archetype words) generally aligned with the final dominant archetype determined by the focus groups. However, significant discrepancies arose for the other three athletes:

1. Emmanouil Karalis: Sentiment analysis linked him strongly to the Hero archetype. Yet, the focus groups assigned the Jester. This may stem from the perception that, despite his athletic success, his frequent inclusion of alcohol and humorous self-presentation on social media (which Group 2 noted makes him "always the best second" to Duplantis) shifts the collective brand perception away from a serious Hero towards a less serious Jester.

2. Noah Lyles: The sentiment analysis indicated the Jester was most frequent in comments. Conversely, the focus groups ultimately determined the Ruler archetype as dominant. This stark difference highlights the variance in perception based on athletic knowledge: the "Athletes" group, familiar with his behavior, leaned toward Jester/showman, while the "Non-Athletes" group saw him unequivocally as the dominant leader of his discipline (Ruler).

3. Sha'Carri Richardson: The largest discrepancy occurred here. The sentiment analysis showed the Lover archetype dominating comment frequency. However, the focus groups unanimously assigned the Outlaw. This indicates that while social media commentary may focus on immediate, positive emotional attributes (beauty/attractiveness), the qualitative, contextual interpretation of her overall brand—defined by controversy, rule-breaking, and rebellious self-expression—overrides these immediate reactions. The Outlaw archetype attracts an audience seeking individuality and authenticity, often at the price of controversy.

Across all focus group assignments, the archetypes of Ruler (mentioned 35 times total) and Hero (mentioned 33 times total) were the most frequently selected, regardless of their dominant placement. This suggests that specific traits associated with control, dominance, perseverance, honor, and stability (characteristics of the Ruler and Hero) are fundamentally expected and highly recognized by the public in the context of professional athletes (Mark and Pearson 2001; Hartwell and Chen 2012).

The findings also support the observation that gender may play a role in archetype association (Dominici et al. 2016; Mateo-Orcajada et al. 2021), as Alica Schmidt

(female) was strongly determined as the Lover, while Armand Duplantis and Noah Lyles (males) were linked to the Ruler, and Femke Bol (female) to the Hero.

Ultimately, the utilization of brand archetypes provides a framework for understanding how athletes build emotional connection and loyalty with their fans, extending beyond mere performance metrics to encompass personal stories, values, and consistent communication. These results confirm that a diverse range of archetypes (Dominici et al. 2016; Xara-Brasil et al. 2018), not limited to Hero or Ruler, can be successfully deployed by modern athletes to build a strong personal brand.

Limitations of the Study

Despite the effort to achieve a complex and comprehensive methodological approach, this research possesses several identifiable limitations that should be acknowledged when interpreting the results. These limitations pertain to sample size, qualitative methodology constraints, and potential cultural and geographical bias. The primary limitation is the relatively small sample size of respondents participating in the qualitative phase. Although twelve respondents participated across the two focus groups (FGs), providing two distinct perspectives (Athletes vs. Non-Athletes), these results cannot be generalized to the wider population. Future research addressing archetype determination should consider expanding the quantitative phase. While the contrasting perspectives of the two groups (Athletes vs. Non-Athletes) offered valuable comparative data regarding perception, the focus group setting likely suffered from result distortion. This is because respondents mutually influenced each other's opinions during the discussion, a known characteristic of qualitative group research. However, the group discussions concurrently yielded valuable information for contextualizing the assignment of individual archetypes. Another constraint identified is potential cultural bias. The cultural environment can influence how individual archetypes are perceived. The geographical origin of the selected athletes may also have influenced the archetype assignment. The study included four athletes from various countries in Europe and only two athletes from America. A more balanced geographical representation might yield different archetype classifications. A final limitation was the potential lack of detailed knowledge among discussion participants regarding the theoretical framework. Although participants received preparatory materials on archetype theory well in advance, some respondents occasionally struggled to articulate what each archetype represented during the discussion. For better research validity, it would be advantageous to conduct a dedicated lecture or detailed preparatory session on the topic of archetypes prior to the focus group implementation.

Significance and Potential Implications

This research confirms the critical role of brand archetypes in the contemporary sports environment, illustrating that success in the digital era necessitates more than athletic performance alone. Strong athlete branding, guided by clearly defined archetypes, is instrumental in achieving market dominance, fostering fan loyalty, and attracting lucrative sponsorship opportunities. The findings underscore the complexity of athlete branding, challenging the conventional assumption that professional athletes must exclusively align with the Hero or Ruler archetypes. The results have significant implications for commercial strategy. Companies benefit from this identification pro-

cess as they seek athletes who clearly embody values consistent with their corporate strategy, making the selection process more efficient.

CONCLUSION

The principal objective of this study was the identification of the dominant brand archetypes for six selected professional athletes: Femke Bol, Alica Schmidt, Armand Duplantis, Emmanouil Karalis, Sha'Carri Richardson, and Noah Lyles. These individuals were chosen based on the distinct styles of personal presentation they employed across social media platforms. The research emphatically confirmed that archetypes constitute a vital component of an athlete's personal brand, enabling them to achieve memorability and cultivate loyal fan bases. It was observed that the Hero and Ruler archetypes appear more frequently within the sports context. Furthermore, the findings suggested that gender plays a considerable role in archetype determination, as the process of public perception is intricate and influenced by numerous factors. Based on the calculation of archetype assignments made by the focus group participants—who were required to select three and designate one as dominant—a single definitive archetype was determined for each athlete. In an era where social media serves as a pivotal tool for achieving popularity and securing financial viability, the strategic construction of a personal brand is critical. The comprehension and strategic deployment of archetypes offer athletes a methodology to target their content effectively, continuously expanding their sphere of influence and ensuring relevance. Athletes who successfully utilize social media to showcase not only their exceptional performance but also their human elements are often rewarded with vast followings, which are instrumental in negotiating significant sponsorship agreements and cementing their status as global icons.

The findings provide several avenues for further academic exploration. Future studies should track the development and shift of archetypes over the course of an athlete's professional career, particularly in response to major life events, victories, or public scandals (e.g., doping allegations). There is potential utility in utilizing this research to identify the most suitable and sustainable archetype for starting athletes, providing them with a strategic tool to secure sponsorship and broad audience reach early in their careers. An essential implication is the need to study the long-term impact of consistent archetype adherence on the athlete's psyche. Research could investigate whether strict adherence to a single archetype leads to burnout or loss of authenticity, or whether it promotes overall personal growth. This would also address the question of the long-term sustainability of basing a personal brand entirely on a single archetype.

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