Constructing Credibility: How Aggrandizement Helps Perform an Identity of Legitimacy and Self-Worth in a Creative Industry

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Abstract
This study contributes to an understanding of the role of aggrandizement in constructing a credible identity within an industrial context characterized by uncertainty and risk-taking, the popular music industry. Specifically, this paper focuses on the extent to which creative personalities draw on real and imaginary justifications to portray themselves as having attained greater success than they have actually achieved in order to construct a credible identity both to themselves and to others. As a positive self-illusion lends psychological benefits as well as the means to achieving self-fulfilling high performance, we conclude that aggrandizement may enhance the individual’s performance both professionally and personally. Although the extant literature highlights how positive self-illusions can influence identity construction, the role aggrandizement plays in this process within a creative context does not appear to have been researched.

Keywords: aggrandizement, identity construction, self-illusion popular music, music industry, creative industries

David Schreiber is an Assistant Professor and Chair of the Creative & Entertainment Industries program at Belmont University in Nashville, Tennessee. His research interests include decision-making practices within music industry micro-enterprises, identity construction within creative industries, and the role of strategic sexual performance as it is used in creative and cultural industry organizations. He recently co-authored a textbook with Paul Saintilan on Managing Organizations in the Creative Economy: Organizational Behavior for the Cultural Sector through Routledge Publishing in the U.K. Furthermore, David is a member of the Academy of Management (AOM), European Group of Organization Studies (EGOS), the Music and Entertainment Industry Educators Association; is a reviewer for the Journal of Small Business Management, has served as an Associate Editor of the MEIEA Journal.

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