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Personal branding in contemporary electronic music:

Identity, authenticity, and engagement

Gestão de marca pessoal na música eletrônica contemporânea:

Identidade, autenticidade e engajamento

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Abstract

This study analyzes the personal branding strategies employed by DJ and music producer Blazy in building his personal brand within the electronic music scene, particularly in the psytrance genre. The research seeks to understand how his digital presence contributes to visibility and audience engagement. It is characterized as an exploratory and descriptive study, using content analysis as its primary methodological procedure. Data were collected through the mapping of Blazy's official Instagram profile, considering posts published between January and June 2025. The analysis focused on post formats, engagement levels, themes, and interaction strategies. The results indicate that the humanization of communication, combined with aesthetic and narrative consistency, strengthens the artist's personal brand. The study concludes that personal branding and strategic digital communication play a fundamental role in increasing visibility, fostering engaged communities, and consolidating careers in the contemporary electronic music industry.

Keywords: Electronic Music. Psytrance. Personal Branding.

Resumo

O presente estudo analisa as estratégias de personal branding utilizadas pelo DJ e produtor musical Blazy na construção de sua marca pessoal no cenário da música eletrônica, com foco no psytrance. A pesquisa busca compreender como sua presença digital contribui para a visibilidade e a conexão com o público. Caracteriza-se como um estudo exploratório e descritivo, utilizando a análise de conteúdo como procedimento técnico. A coleta de dados foi realizada por meio do mapeamento do perfil oficial de Blazy no Instagram, considerando publicações entre janeiro e junho de 2025. Foram analisados formatos de postagens, níveis de engajamento, temáticas e estratégias de interação. Os resultados indicam que a humanização da comunicação, associada à consistência estética e narrativa, fortalece a marca pessoal do artista. Conclui-se que o personal branding e a comunicação digital estratégica são fundamentais para ampliar a visibilidade, engajar comunidades e consolidar carreiras na indústria da música eletrônica contemporânea.

Palavras-chave: Música Eletrônica. Psytrance. Personal Branding.

1 Introduction

The electronic music scene is characterized by constant transformations, both sonic and visual, requiring artists not only to demonstrate musical creativity but also to develop consistent brand-building strategies. Among its various genres, psytrance occupies a prominent position as a culture that transcends the musical dimension, being associated with values such as spirituality, freedom, and collective experiences. In this context, understanding how DJs structure their identities becomes essential for analyzing the factors that enable differentiation within a highly competitive market.

Henrique Janelli, better known as Blazy, is one of the artists who clearly exemplifies this dynamic. Born in Pelotas, Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil, the DJ has built a distinguished international career in psytrance, breaking digital sales records and cultivating an engaged community across social media platforms. His trajectory extends beyond music production, encompassing the consolidation of a distinctive visual identity, the development of digital communication strategies, and the establishment of a brand positioning that resonates directly with his audience.

In this regard, personal brand management becomes a central element for understanding how Blazy has achieved global recognition and relevance. By distinguishing himself in a market often characterized by artist saturation, the DJ demonstrates how branding and music production complement one another, influencing both perceived value and the development of emotional connections with fans.

Against this backdrop, this study aims to analyze how Blazy differentiates himself within the electronic music landscape by investigating the personal branding strategies that support his identity and contribute to the strengthening of his personal brand. Its relevance lies in the opportunity to understand how the strategic management of a personal brand can constitute a competitive advantage in a market that frequently exhibits high levels of saturation and relative aesthetic homogeneity.

Although previous studies have examined personal branding, digital communication, and branding strategies in creative industries, comparatively little attention has been devoted to understanding how personal branding is publicly constructed through the digital communication of electronic music artists, particularly within the psytrance scene. By focusing on the Instagram profile of Blazy, this study seeks to contribute to this discussion by strengthening the dialogue between branding studies, music studies, and digital culture.

Based on this context, the study is guided by the following research question: How is Blazy's personal brand constructed through the communication strategies observable on his Instagram profile, and how do these strategies contribute to his symbolic positioning within the psytrance scene?

Within the electronic music industry, the extensive supply of artists and productions increasingly demands strategies focused on strengthening identity and enhancing audience connection. Accordingly, the analysis of Blazy's Instagram communication provides empirical insights into how branding elements are publicly articulated throughout his artistic trajectory, contributing to the construction of an image of authenticity, audience

engagement, and symbolic positioning. Furthermore, the study offers academic and professional contributions to discussions on the role of personal branding within the creative industries, highlighting possibilities and pathways for artists seeking to stand out in dynamic and competitive cultural environments.

Accordingly, this study is organized as follows. First, the methodological procedures adopted for conducting the research are presented. Next, the theoretical framework is outlined and structured around two main axes. The first addresses Personal Branding and the Construction of the Personal Brand, also encompassing the specificities of personal branding in digital environments and the role of emotional branding in audience engagement. The second axis discusses artistic identity and differentiation processes in electronic music, emphasizing strategies that contribute to the construction of uniqueness and recognition within this context. Subsequently, the results obtained from the analyses are presented and discussed. Finally, the concluding remarks and the references used throughout the study are provided.

2 Methodological Procedures

From the perspective of its objectives, this research is characterized as both Exploratory and Descriptive. It is Exploratory because it seeks to investigate the communication practices and strategies employed by Blazy in the construction of his personal brand, with an emphasis on identifying visual, discursive, and symbolic elements that contribute to his differentiation within the electronic music scene. At the same time, it is Descriptive, as it organizes, systematizes, and analyzes information related to post content, audience interactions, and the resources mobilized to strengthen the artist's positioning and engagement around his brand.

Regarding technical procedures, the study is grounded in content analysis, as proposed by Bardin (2016), since this method enables the systematic and interpretive examination of communication materials, allowing for the identification of patterns, recurrences, and discursive strategies. This approach is particularly suitable for understanding how processes of symbolic construction and brand positioning are structured within digital environments.

Data collection was conducted through a systematic mapping of Blazy's official Instagram profile, a social media platform widely used by artists as a tool for communication, promotion, and audience engagement. The period analyzed spans from January to June 2025, during which all posts published on the artist's profile were recorded. For each publication, information regarding content format, including photographs, videos, carousels, and reels, as well as the number of likes and comments, was collected. The corpus therefore comprised all posts published during the selected period, without prior sampling. Each post was treated as a unit of analysis and examined considering its visual content, caption, publication format, observable engagement metrics (likes and comments, when publicly available), and thematic focus.

In addition, the themes addressed in the posts were examined, including content related to live performances, behind-the-scenes moments, releases, and personal experiences, as well as the forms of interaction

established with the audience. The analysis also considered recurring visual patterns, communication style, and interaction prompts directed to followers, allowing the identification of symbolic and communicational elements associated with the artist's personal branding. This mapping process made it possible to identify recurring characteristics in the artist's communication and to understand how his digital presence contributes to the construction of his personal brand. Table 1 presents the systematization of this mapping, including the months analyzed, the number of posts, and the levels of interaction observed.

Following data collection, the material was analyzed according to the stages of content analysis proposed by Bardin (2016). The process began with the pre-analysis phase, which involved preliminary reading and the organization of the material. During this stage, all posts were catalogued and subjected to repeated reading and observation in order to identify recurrent communicational characteristics. Subsequently, the material exploration phase was carried out in order to identify patterns, recurrences, and relevant elements. The coding process focused on identifying recurring themes, visual resources, communicative approaches, and branding-related elements present across the corpus. Finally, data treatment and interpretation were conducted, seeking to understand the meanings embedded in the communication strategies adopted by the artist, establishing connections between the empirical evidence and the theoretical framework adopted in the study.

Table 1. Months, Posts, and Interactions¹

Month	Number of Posts	Number of Likes	Number of Comments
January	18 (11)	114.189	3.835
February	18 (7)	171.137	3.281
March	26 (15)	53.834	2.188
April	14 (9)	27.779	1.431
May	16 (6)	127.315	3.108
June	14 (5)	97.160	3.409
Total	106	591.414	17.252

Source: Prepared by the authors (2026).

¹ It should be noted that not all analyzed posts displayed the number of likes publicly at the time of data collection. This is due to an Instagram platform feature that allows this information to be hidden. In such cases, only visible metrics, such as the number of comments and other available elements, were considered, making it impossible to tally the total number of likes for these posts.

Based on this process, three analytical categories were defined, through an iterative process that combined the theoretical framework adopted in the study with the recurrent patterns identified during the examination of the empirical material. Thus, the categories resulted from the articulation between deductive elements derived from the literature and inductive evidence emerging from the analyzed posts. These categories enabled an integrated examination of personal brand-building strategies, forms of audience engagement, and elements related to the DJ's artistic identity and positioning, as presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Analytical Categories of the Research

Category	Description	Analytical Objective
Personal Brand Construction	Content related to the promotion of projects, professional positioning, and career development	To analyze how the artist builds and strengthens his brand in the digital environment
Audience Engagement and Relationship Building	Posts that demonstrate interaction, proximity, and appreciation of fans	To understand the strategies used to strengthen audience connection and engagement
Artistic Identity and Symbolic Positioning	Visual, aesthetic, and narrative elements that express uniqueness and authenticity	To examine how the artist constructs his identity and differentiates himself within the electronic music scene

Source: Prepared by the authors (2026).

It should also be noted that Instagram currently allows users to hide the number of likes on individual posts. Consequently, engagement metrics were recorded only when publicly available. For this reason, quantitative indicators were interpreted as complementary evidence and were analyzed together with qualitative aspects of the posts, avoiding conclusions based exclusively on incomplete engagement data.

Based on these stages, the research seeks to understand how personal brand management within the context of digital social media is publicly expressed through communication practices and symbolic resources observable on Instagram. In this sense, the analysis focuses on the relationship between digital communication, symbolic construction, and artistic differentiation, which are understood as fundamental dimensions of personal brand construction in digital environments. Finally, the adopted method makes it possible not only to describe the artist's communication practices but also to interpret them through the lens of personal branding strategies, providing insights into the processes of personal brand construction in the context of contemporary electronic music.

3 Theoretical Framework

3.1 Personal Branding and the Construction of the Personal Brand

The concept of personal branding has gained increasing relevance across different professional fields, particularly those in which public visibility and symbolic differentiation play a central role. According to Peters (1997), who pioneered the term, personal branding consists of the strategic management of one's own image with the aim of building a clear, positive, and memorable perception among audiences. Personal brand management therefore involves a set of practices that articulate communication, identity, positioning, and relationships. Rather than representing merely a promotional activity, personal branding may be understood as an ongoing process through which individuals deliberately communicate values and attributes in order to establish a distinctive position within a given social and professional context.

In this sense, the individual comes to be understood as a brand capable of generating symbolic and social value. According to Kotler and Keller (2012), brands are symbolic structures built through mental associations that audiences develop over time. When this principle is applied to an individual, the personal brand corresponds to the set of perceptions, meanings, and expectations associated with their professional identity. While Peters (1997) emphasizes the strategic management of the individual as a brand, Kotler and Keller (2012) broaden this perspective by highlighting that brands derive their value from the meanings attributed to them by audiences. Together, these approaches suggest that personal branding depends not only on intentional communication but also on the symbolic interpretations produced through social interaction.

The construction of a personal brand therefore involves a strategic process of differentiation. As Ortega (2010) argues, personal branding consists of identifying unique attributes and transforming them into a recognizable value proposition capable of positioning an individual distinctly within a given professional field. In this context, consistency among discourse, behavior, and visual identity becomes fundamental to establishing a coherent and trustworthy image.

In contemporary society, characterized by overexposure and the logic of social media, personal branding has become a key asset for artists, content creators, and cultural professionals, as visibility depends not only on technical competence but also on how individuals communicate, present themselves, and differentiate themselves (Montoya; Vandehey, 2009). Consequently, strategic brand construction incorporates visual and narrative elements, symbolic values, and forms of interaction that reinforce a coherent and recognizable identity. Digital platforms intensify this process by transforming communication into a continuous performance of identity, in which audiences actively participate in interpreting, reinforcing, and circulating the meanings associated with a personal brand.

Furthermore, a personal brand can be understood as a system of meanings that organizes how an individual is socially perceived. According to Holt (2004), culturally strong brands are those capable of articulating symbolic narratives that resonate with collective values and cultural identities. Applied to the artistic context, this principle suggests that personal branding is not limited to self-promotion but also involves the construction of an identity narrative capable of resonating with specific communities. From this perspective, the symbolic strength of a personal brand emerges from its capacity to connect individual narratives with broader cultural values, allowing audiences to recognize themselves within the meanings conveyed by the artist.

Within the field of music, this dynamic becomes particularly evident, as artists often act as symbolic figures embedded in particular cultural movements. According to Frith (1996), an artist's public image plays a fundamental role in how music is interpreted and consumed by audiences. Attributes such as visual aesthetics, discourse, behavior, and media presence become part of the musical experience and directly influence public perceptions of the artist.

Thus, the construction of a personal brand in the artistic field can be understood as a continuous process of management in which identity, narrative, and positioning are articulated to generate recognition. A personal brand is formed not only through the artist's individual characteristics but also through how these characteristics are communicated, interpreted, and shared within a specific cultural context.

Accordingly, personal branding becomes a central strategy for creative professionals seeking to consolidate their presence in highly competitive markets. By aligning identity, communication, and symbolic values, artists build brands capable of generating identification, recognition, and cultural relevance among their audiences. Therefore, understanding personal branding requires considering both the strategic actions undertaken by artists and the symbolic processes through which audiences interpret and attribute meaning to these communicative practices.

3.1.1 Personal Branding in the Digital Context

With the rise of social media, personal brand management has increasingly been mediated by platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube, which play a central role in artists' visibility and processes of symbolic legitimation. The digital environment encourages practices of self-promotion, content curation, and constant interaction with audiences, all of which are essential for maintaining a strong and coherent image (Khamis; Ang; Welling, 2017). Rather than functioning merely as promotional tools, these platforms operate as spaces where artists continuously negotiate their identities through interactions with audiences and the circulation of symbolic meanings.

For DJs, social media platforms function not only as promotional channels but also as performative extensions through which artists present their aesthetics, communicate their professional routines, share behind-the-scenes aspects of tours, and establish interpersonal relationships with audiences. The personal brand is therefore constructed through a fragmented yet continuous narrative in which each post contributes to reinforcing desired attributes such as authenticity, proximity, innovation, or spirituality. In this sense, visibility results not only from the frequency of publication but also from the coherence established between visual language, discourse, and the symbolic values communicated throughout the artist's digital presence.

The algorithmic logic of these platforms also requires consistency, frequency, and visual alignment, demanding communication and management skills that extend beyond the musical dimension. In this way, digital environments become strategic spaces for differentiation and central components of contemporary artistic identity.

From this perspective, personal brand construction within the psytrance scene occurs through a process of emotional identification that transcends the dominant commercial logic of the conventional music industry. This process may be interpreted through different theoretical lenses. Turner (1974) associates collective experiences with liminality, whereas Maffesoli (1987) emphasizes the formation of neotribes based on shared symbolic values and affective bonds. Although these concepts emerge from distinct theoretical traditions, both contribute to understanding how collective identities can be reinforced through shared cultural experiences. Consequently, the DJ's identity may be strengthened through a complex semiotic system that combines psychedelic visual elements, specific sound aesthetics, and discourses related to sustainability or spirituality, which can contribute to reinforcing a sense of belonging among audiences. In this context, engagement is not limited to digital environments but may also extend to offline experiences, where participants recognize common values associated with the artist's public identity.

Moreover, personal brand management within this segment requires authenticity capable of sustaining the artist's narrative across both physical and digital environments. According to Jenkins (2008), convergence culture enables the co-creation of meanings, and within the psytrance context this participation is expressed through fans' appropriation of sets, remixes, and visual elements, expanding the brand beyond the artist's direct control. This perspective complements Bourdieu's (1989) notion of symbolic capital, since the value attributed to an artist is continuously negotiated through social recognition and audience participation. Thus, the success of online personal branding is linked to the DJ's ability to manage this symbolic capital (Bourdieu, 1989), transforming artistic recognition into a resource capable of reinforcing his public positioning within the field.

From this perspective, personal branding in psytrance may be understood as a process of symbolic mediation through which artistic identity is negotiated between the artist and the community. Rather than assuming that engagement necessarily reflects cohesion or loyalty, it is more appropriate to interpret interactions as indicators of participation that, when analyzed alongside visual and discursive elements, contribute to understanding how the artist publicly constructs meanings around his personal brand.

The construction of personal branding in contemporary psytrance represents a process of symbolic mediation in which the artist's authority is recognized through the capacity to transform technical skill into charismatic capital. Engagement within these communities does not emerge solely from commercial stimuli but from a dynamic of reciprocity grounded in gift theory, where the DJ's performance is perceived as a ritual offering that strengthens the community (Turner, 1974). In this sense, the personal brand ceases to function as a unidirectional communication tool and instead operates as an element of neotribal cohesion, navigating the tension between maintaining a countercultural ethos and adapting to the digital infrastructures of convergence culture.

Building a personal brand in the contemporary psytrance world can be understood as the construction of a symbolic bridge. Artists gain recognition when they demonstrate the ability to transform technical talent into something capable of capturing people's attention. Participation in these communities is not driven solely by economic interests but also by a reciprocal exchange resembling a gift relationship. The DJ's performance is

perceived as a symbolic practice that may strengthen bonds with audiences (Turner, 1974). Consequently, the personal brand becomes more than a means of communication with audiences; it can function as an element that fosters community cohesion, balancing foundational values with the need to maintain a meaningful presence in digital environments.

3.1.2 Emotional Branding and Audience Engagement

Branding literature highlights that effective brands are not limited to functional communication but instead establish emotional bonds with their audiences (Gobé, 2001). In the artistic field, this relationship is particularly important because music constitutes a symbolic product that directly influences individuals' sensitivity, memory, and identity. From Gobé's (2001) perspective, emotional branding is grounded in the capacity of brands to create meaningful experiences, suggesting that audience engagement depends not only on product quality but also on the symbolic and affective relationships established over time.

For electronic music artists, especially within the psytrance scene, engagement is deeply associated with emotional and experiential dimensions. Festivals, aesthetic rituals, psychedelic visual elements, and collective experiences contribute to strengthening the sense of belonging, fostering connections that extend beyond music consumption.

According to Jenkins (2008), digital communities amplify this relationship by allowing fans to participate in the symbolic construction of the artist, sharing content, co-creating narratives, and reinforcing brand image across multiple spaces. Thus, a DJ's identity is shaped not only by their own actions but also by audience interpretations and interactions. In this sense, Gobé's (2001) emphasis on emotional connection and Jenkins' (2008) concept of participatory culture are complementary, since emotional engagement is continuously reinforced through the collaborative circulation and reinterpretation of content in digital environments.

In this sense, artists who develop consistent personal branding strategies tend to enhance the creation of engaged communities. The combination of a recognizable aesthetic, a coherent narrative, and an active digital presence becomes a key element in strengthening emotional bonds, encouraging audience participation, and expanding reach, and consolidating a personal brand.

In today's electronic music landscape, standing out depends on an artist's ability to create a narrative that extends across multiple media platforms. Music forms part of this process, functioning as a universe rich in meanings. A well-defined identity enables audiences to recognize the artist not only through sound but also through the authenticity expressed in all aspects of their work.

Artists must manage their image as a personal project. Every detail, from the sound of a synthesizer to communication style, reveals who they are within their musical niche. Differentiation therefore becomes a continuous effort, requiring the maintenance of distinctive characteristics that set the artist apart from the commonplace and transform personal identity into a culturally meaningful asset.

Building this identity online is a major challenge for artists in electronic music. Social media presence is not merely an additional component of a career but rather a stage on which artists present who they are. The challenge lies in transforming everyday content into material that strengthens artistic identity without eliminating the sense of mystery that has traditionally contributed to prestige within the scene. By combining performance with behind-the-scenes narratives that communicate artistic intentions, DJs and producers establish relationships of trust with audiences, where music becomes the soundtrack of a lifestyle. In this way, artistic identity is consolidated as a complex construct in which sound serves as the foundation and digital behavior provides the context through which differentiation acquires cultural value.

According to Bourdieu (1989), symbolic capital is accumulated through social recognition and legitimacy within a particular field. Applied to the context of electronic music, this perspective suggests that artistic recognition depends not only on technical competence but also on the capacity to establish distinctions that are acknowledged and valued by audiences and peers.

When artists successfully transform their way of being into something culturally valuable, they may strengthen their symbolic position within the field. According to Bourdieu (2007), distinction is not merely an objective but a form of symbolic power that defines what is considered legitimate and authentic within a given context. In the electronic music market, this may be reflected in the artist's ability to present a worldview and a unique sound as references for both audiences and peers.

When identity, narrative, and behavior are aligned, artists evolve beyond being mere producers of beats and become recognizable symbolic references whose names may become associated with distinctive experiences. Artistic identity is not solely what artists present but also how audiences perceive and interpret them as unique figures within a system characterized by similarity. This perception of uniqueness transforms music from a mere product into an element capable of acquiring broader cultural meanings within the scene.

In the contemporary electronic music landscape, identity consolidation extends beyond musical technique and is rooted in the integration of sonic aesthetics and strategic image management. By transforming personal characteristics into cultural assets, artists perform what Bourdieu (1989) describes as the alchemy of symbolic capital: the conversion of personal traits and stylistic choices into recognition and reputation within a field. This differentiation not only contributes to securing a relevant position in the market but also may reinforce the perception that the artist's work constitutes an authentic and coherent narrative rather than a disposable product.

Identity in electronic music functions as a system that gives permanence to what is otherwise transient. When sound, narrative, and digital actions converge synergistically, producers cease to be mere suppliers of rhythms and become symbolic actors within the cultural field. This transformation allows their presence to be perceived as a valuable contribution to the scene, where music connects a broader system of meanings. Consequently, differentiation ceases to be merely a marketing strategy and becomes a symbolic resource through which artists may reinforce their cultural relevance within the genre.

3.2 Artistic Identity and Differentiation in Electronic Music

Artistic identity corresponds to the set of symbolic, aesthetic, and behavioral strategies that shape the perception of an artist within the collective imagination. This identity is constructed through a continuous and dynamic process involving sonic and visual choices, discursive positioning, and narratives that situate the artist within a specific cultural context, in this case, psytrance culture. Rather than being fixed, artistic identity is continuously negotiated through interactions between artists, audiences, and the cultural contexts in which these relationships develop.

In electronic music, identity assumes an even more central role, as the scene is characterized by a multiplicity of styles, a large number of artists, and the intense circulation of content (Thornton, 1995). Psytrance, in particular, constitutes a culture strongly associated with psychedelic imagery, spirituality, and the notion of collective experience, requiring artists to develop identity elements capable of engaging with these symbolic expectations. Thornton's (1995) notion of subcultural capital helps explain how recognition within musical scenes depends not only on technical competence but also on the ability to embody values, aesthetics, and practices considered legitimate by the community.

As Frith (1996) argues, an artist's image and aesthetics are not mere accessories but fundamental components of how audiences understand music and relate it to values, emotions, and lifestyles. Identity construction therefore involves the articulation of sound, performance, visuality, and discourse, elements that together enable audiences to recognize and assign meaning to the artist. This perspective complements Thornton's (1995) discussion by suggesting that artistic identity is shaped through symbolic distinctions that become meaningful only when socially recognized by audiences and peers.

For contemporary DJs, this identity extends to digital platforms, where behind-the-scenes content, interactions, and personal positioning reinforce perceptions of proximity and authenticity. Within this context, differentiation emerges from the artist's ability to align aesthetics, narrative, and behavior in a continuous and coherent manner. Consequently, digital communication becomes an extension of artistic identity, allowing symbolic elements traditionally associated with live performances to be continuously reinforced through online interactions.

Psytrance is a subgenre of electronic music that emerged in the late 1980s in Goa, India, and is characterized by fast beats, powerful basslines, and psychedelic soundscapes. Beyond the music itself, psytrance culture encompasses a distinctive visual aesthetic strongly connected to psychedelic elements, spiritual symbolism, and collective experiences at festivals and ritualistic gatherings. These cultural characteristics provide the symbolic environment within which artists construct and communicate their identities. In this context, the identities of DJs and producers extend beyond music production and include visual communication, performance, and community engagement. Consequently, the construction of the personal brand of artists such as Blazy can be understood as engaging with these cultural elements, fostering authenticity, differentiation within the music scene, and stronger audience engagement. Rather than assuming that these elements directly determine audience engagement, this study considers them as symbolic resources that contribute to understanding how artistic identity is publicly

represented through digital communication. Accordingly, the articulation between music, visual aesthetics, and online communication provides the analytical basis for examining how personal branding is constructed within the contemporary psytrance scene.

3.2.1 Genesis and Evolution of Psytrance

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In electronic music, identity assumes an even more central role because the scene is characterized by a multiplicity of styles, a vast supply of artists, and an intense circulation of content (Thornton, 1995). Psytrance, in particular, constitutes a culture strongly associated with psychedelic imagery, spirituality, and notions of collective experience, requiring artists to develop identity elements capable of engaging with these symbolic expectations. According to Thornton (1995), participation in musical subcultures is also associated with the accumulation of subcultural capital, whereby legitimacy is achieved through the recognition of shared values, aesthetics, and practices. This perspective helps explain why identity construction occupies such a central position within the psytrance scene.

As Frith (1996) argues, an artist's images and aesthetics are not merely accessories but fundamental components of how audiences understand music and relate it to values, emotions, and lifestyles. Identity construction therefore involves the articulation of sound, performance, visuality, and discourse, elements that together enable audiences to recognize and assign meaning to the artist. Taken together, the perspectives of Thornton (1995) and Frith (1996) suggest that artistic identity is not established solely through musical production but also through symbolic distinctions that become socially recognized within a cultural community.

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Psytrance is a subgenre of electronic music that emerged in the late 1980s in Goa, India, and is characterized by fast beats, powerful basslines, and psychedelic soundscapes. Its development was strongly influenced by the expansion of international festivals and by the circulation of artists across different countries, contributing to the consolidation of a global scene while preserving values associated with spirituality, collective experience, and alternative lifestyles. Beyond music itself, psytrance culture encompasses a distinctive visual aesthetic strongly linked to psychedelic elements, spiritual symbolism, and collective experiences at festivals and ritualistic gatherings. In this context, the identities of DJs and producers extend beyond musical production and include visual communication, performance, and engagement with the community.

Consequently, the construction of the personal brand of artists such as Blazy must engage with these cultural elements, fostering authenticity, differentiation within the music scene, and stronger audience engagement. Rather than assuming that these elements necessarily generate audience engagement, this study considers them as symbolic resources through which artists publicly communicate their identities and reinforce their positioning within the psytrance scene. This connection between culture, aesthetics, and collective experience is essential for understanding how the artistic identities of contemporary DJs are formed and extended through digital platforms, where behind-the-scenes content, interactions, and personal positioning reinforce perceptions of authenticity and closeness with audiences.

4 Analysis

4.1 Personal Brand Construction

The analysis of Henrique Janelli's, known professionally as Blazy, communication strategies reveals a close alignment with what Peters (1997) defines as the strategic management of one's own image. During the period analyzed (January to June 2025), the "Blazy" brand emerges not merely as an artistic name associated with music production but as a symbolic structure (Kotler; Keller, 2012) carefully constructed to generate differentiation and value within the highly saturated psytrance market.

Based on the mapping presented in Table 1, posting frequency appears to be one of the pillars sustaining brand consistency. This digital presence extends beyond the promotion of performances and functions as a process of "identifying unique attributes" (Ortega, 2010). The qualitative examination of the posts indicates that communication is structured around recurring themes, including performances at major festivals, backstage moments, releases, interactions with fans, and personal experiences, reinforcing a coherent narrative throughout the analyzed period. The data indicate that Blazy's personal brand is built upon several key dimensions:

Presence and Authority: The significant volume of interactions, exceeding 500,000 during the analyzed period, suggests a prominent position within the genre, reflecting the recognition attributed to the artist by his audience and illustrating what Bourdieu (1989) describes as the accumulation of symbolic capital.

Career Narrative: Posts do not operate in isolation; rather, they form a continuous narrative documenting his journey from Pelotas, Brazil, to major international stages, humanizing the brand and establishing what Montoya and Vandehey (2009) define as a memorable identity.

Visual Aesthetic Consistency: Analysis of the collected content reveals chromatic and linguistic uniformity, with frequent use of visual elements associated with the psychedelic universe, standardized graphic identity, and communication patterns that facilitate immediate recognition of the artist across publications.

The management of the Blazy brand performs what Bourdieu (2007) describes as the "alchemy of symbolic capital." By promoting not only the final product but also the process and backstage aspects of his tours, the artist

transforms his routine and lifestyle into resources of prestige. Examples observed in the corpus include posts documenting rehearsals, travel routines, backstage moments, and interactions with audiences during festivals, all of which contribute to constructing an image of accessibility while maintaining professional recognition. This transfer of the personal into the public sphere, guided by refined aesthetic curation, suggests that audiences are invited to engage not only with the music itself but also with the symbolic universe associated with the artist. Consequently, the brand transcends its role as a commercial label and may be interpreted as an element that reinforces the perception of authenticity and continuity throughout the artist's communication.

The strength of the personal brand is directly reflected in the observed levels of engagement, which can be interpreted through the lens of neotribalism (Maffesoli, 2006). The more than 17,000 comments recorded during the period (Table 1) indicate expressive audience participation and may suggest the existence of a community engaged with the artist's communication. However, since the content of the comments was not systematically analyzed, these interactions are interpreted here as indicators of participation rather than definitive evidence of collective identity or cohesion. Within the psytrance scene, this pattern of interaction is compatible with Maffesoli's (2006) notion of neotribalism, insofar as the artist's communication mobilizes symbolic references shared by the community.

From this perspective, the construction of his personal brand functions as a mechanism of integration. Constant interaction and a tone of proximity on social media transform fans into active participants in the artist's narrative. Posts inviting followers to attend performances, announcing new releases, and sharing personal moments illustrate this communicative strategy by encouraging audience participation beyond simple content consumption. As evidenced by the collected data, peaks in engagement coincide with posts that reinforce emotional bonds and feelings of belonging, indicating that emotionally oriented communication tends to generate greater audience interaction during the analyzed period.

A closer examination of the monthly mapping (Table 1) further illustrates this strategic management by relating publication volume to audience response. Although March recorded the highest number of posts (26), February generated the greatest engagement in quantitative terms, totaling 171,137 likes. This positive discrepancy suggests that brand construction relies not solely on the volume of information disseminated but also on the symbolic impact of specific content, likely associated with moments of heightened emotional significance or professional achievement.

The strong performance observed in February can be understood through a combination of strategic and contextual factors that enhanced visibility and strengthened connections with the artist's personal brand. These include participation in Carnival street events, which carry strong popular and emotional appeal; the announcement of his participation in the Só Track Boa festival, a highly influential event within the electronic music scene; the circulation of a viral video featuring a fan with a tattoo inspired by one of his songs, which alone generated more than 100,000 likes; and the release of the official music video for *Corpo e Canção*. These examples illustrate how

specific events and emotionally significant content may produce higher engagement than posting frequency alone, reinforcing the importance of symbolic relevance within the artist's communication strategy.

This controlled variation indicates that the artist's personal brand has reached a level of maturity capable of sustaining audience engagement even during months with lower posting frequency, such as April and June. Although the available data do not allow causal inferences regarding audience loyalty or long-term market impact, they suggest that communication consistency contributes to maintaining audience interaction throughout the analyzed period. This finding supports Ortega's (2010) argument that a consolidated personal brand generates value that precedes the act of promotion or sales itself. Ultimately, the construction of the Blazy brand during the analyzed period can be understood as a balanced system in which technical competence generates authority, narrative generates connection, and visual consistency contributes to reinforcing a coherent public identity across digital communication.

4.2 Audience Engagement And Relationship Building

While the construction of Blazy's personal brand establishes his visual and professional identity, engagement strategies are responsible for transforming that image into an organic community. Within the electronic music scene, engagement extends beyond metrics such as likes and can be understood as a process of Emotional Branding (Gobé, 2001), in which the artist uses digital presence to build bonds that directly influence the sensitivity and memory of audiences. Music therefore ceases to be merely a product and becomes the catalyst for a shared experience that may contribute to defining the artist's place within the collective imagination (Frith, 1996).

An examination of the data presented in Table 1 reveals that the relationship with the audience is structured around a logic of reciprocity. The expressive volume of 17,252 comments accumulated during the semester indicates a high level of audience participation and interaction, suggesting that Blazy's profile functions as a space of "convergence culture" (Jenkins, 2008), where fans cease to be passive spectators and become active participants in the artist's narrative. This continuous dialogue is fueled primarily by the sharing of backstage content and moments of vulnerability, such as posts documenting tours, rehearsals, travel routines, and interactions with audiences, which humanize the DJ figure and reduce the distance between artist and follower. As noted by Montoya and Vandehey (2009), such proximity transforms an ordinary brand into a memorable identity capable of generating connections that extend beyond the professional sphere.

Within this context, Blazy's digital interactions can be interpreted as an extension of the "liminal experiences" (Turner, 1974) lived on dancefloors. Although the present study did not examine the textual content of individual comments, the frequency and continuity of audience interaction suggest that Instagram functions as a space for extending experiences associated with live performances. For psytrance audiences, commenting on a post may therefore represent a means of reliving the collective ritual of the festival experience. By validating and encouraging such participation, the artist appears to encourage a sense of belonging, transforming his Instagram profile into what may be interpreted as a neotribal meeting point (Maffesoli, 2006) that sustains group cohesion. The strength of this bond becomes evident when comparing March and June. Although the number of posts was

reduced by nearly half, the average number of comments per post increased significantly in June, suggesting that audience interaction remained expressive despite the lower publication frequency.

This stability is also explained by the coherence between discourse and practice, one of the foundations of Personal Branding identified by Ortega (2010). By using social media to reveal artistic processes and the challenges of touring, Blazy reinforces perceptions of authenticity. According to Jenkins (2008), such transparency enables audiences to participate in the symbolic construction of the artist, co-creating meanings and strengthening brand image across different contexts. Within the scope of this study, the observed interaction levels are consistent with this interpretation, although they do not by themselves demonstrate how audiences interpret the published content.

A deeper qualitative analysis of the published posts reveals that engagement is driven by the manner in which Blazy's public image shapes interpretations of his music. According to Frith (1996), visual aesthetics are not accessories but integral components of musical experience. Within the analyzed profile, the consistent use of psychedelic graphic elements and high-quality records of performances functions as a recurring communicative strategy. This helps explain the high volume of interactions during periods of extensive touring, such as January and February, particularly in posts related to performances, festival participation, and major announcements. While the present data do not allow direct access to followers' motivations, the observed interaction patterns are compatible with communication that emphasizes values traditionally associated with the psytrance scene, including freedom, spirituality, and collective experience. This dynamic suggests that engagement is not accidental but rather is associated with the management of an artistic identity that resonates with the values of the psytrance scene, transforming each post into a reinforcement of Ortega's (2010) "value proposition".

Furthermore, the nature of the observed interactions points to a phenomenon of meaning co-creation typical of convergence culture (Jenkins, 2008). Blazy's relationship with his audience is not unidirectional; rather, it is characterized by recurring audience participation through comments and interactions with the published content. Because the analysis focused on engagement indicators rather than the semantic content of comments, this interpretation refers to participation patterns rather than individual audience perceptions. When examining the volume of comments relative to the number of posts in April and May, a stable level of discursive density becomes apparent, suggesting that the artist's personal brand exhibits characteristics compatible with the "culturally strong brand" described by Holt (2004). At this level, engagement and relationships appear capable of being maintained over time, as the tribe (Maffesoli, 2006) interacts both internally and with the artist through the platform, reinforcing shared symbolic references within the niche and contributing to Blazy's positioning within the contemporary electronic music community.

Finally, it is important to note that maintaining this engagement rate over a six-month period reveals a brand management strategy that understands electronic music as a system of meanings (Holt, 2004). By aligning sonic aesthetics with visual elements and forms of digital interaction, Blazy constructs an identity narrative that resonates with the values of the psytrance community. The consistency observed across the analyzed publications suggests

that this integration between technical performance and digital presence contributes to reinforcing a coherent public identity over time. Although the present study does not evaluate long-term audience loyalty or commercial performance, the findings indicate that these communication strategies are associated with sustained audience interaction throughout the analyzed period.

4.3 Artistic Identity and Symbolic Positioning

Blazy's artistic identity transcends sound production and is consolidated as a complex semiotic system in which image and sound operate together to construct a unique market position. As Frith (1996) argues, in popular music identity is not limited to what is heard but encompasses the broader set of signs emitted by the artist. In Blazy's case, this symbolic positioning is represented through communication strategies that combine technological futurism with ancestral mysticism, creating a public identity that oscillates between the high-performance DJ and the guide of a spiritual experience.

A central element of this identity, identified through the analysis of official materials and social media content, is the use of conceptual narratives, as observed in the album *The Chase* (2024). Representing each track through Tarot cards is not merely decorative; rather, it constitutes a strategic use of symbols that resonate with psytrance aesthetics, which place strong value on spirituality and self-knowledge. According to Holt (2004), brands become icons when they successfully embody the myths and values of a culture. Within this perspective, by associating his music with archetypal symbols, Blazy appears to position his artistic product within a symbolic universe that reinforces what Turner (1974) defines as the sacred character of collective festival experiences. The recurrence of these visual and symbolic elements across the analyzed communication materials suggests a deliberate effort to maintain coherence between artistic production and digital representation.

From the perspective of visual identity, a rigorous consistency can be observed, which Peters (1997) identifies as essential to personal branding. Blazy's logo, color palette, contrasts between light and shadow, and use of high-definition psychedelic visuals create an immediate pattern of recognition. This aesthetic rigor functions as what Thornton (1995) describes as "subcultural capital," signaling to audiences that the artist masters the visual codes of the scene and thereby contributing to distinction (Bourdieu, 2007) from producers who operate with more generic aesthetics. This interpretation is supported by the consistency observed throughout the analyzed publications, in which visual identity remains stable despite variations in formats and communication objectives.

Furthermore, Blazy's positioning on social media suggests the construction of a form of symbolic authority. He presents himself not merely as a technician operating equipment but as the protagonist of an ongoing professional narrative. Photographs on monumental stages, videos emphasizing the euphoric reactions of audiences, and records of international travel construct a narrative of success that Montoya and Vandehey (2009) identify as essential for a memorable identity. Within the analyzed corpus, these elements recur in posts highlighting performances at major festivals, international tours, and professional milestones, reinforcing the coherence of this narrative over time. This positioning simultaneously represents what may be interpreted as an exercise of symbolic

power (Bourdieu, 1989), as it contributes to reinforcing perceptions associated with leadership within the contemporary genre.

Finally, Blazy's identity is sustained through the tension between the global and the authentic. Although he employs micro-celebrity strategies (Khamis; Ang; Welling, 2017) to manage his digital image, he maintains a connection with the "tribe" (Maffesoli, 2006) by preserving elements of underground culture in his discourse. His ability to be both a top-selling artist on Beatport and a recurring presence at festivals such as Universo Paralello illustrates how commercial visibility coexists with symbolic references traditionally associated with the psytrance scene. Rather than demonstrating authenticity itself, these communication strategies suggest an effort to publicly reinforce values that are recognized within this cultural context. Overall, the analyzed materials indicate that Blazy's artistic identity is constructed through the consistent articulation of music, visual aesthetics, and digital communication, supporting his personal branding strategy within the contemporary electronic music market.

5 Final Considerations

This study aimed to analyze how DJ and music producer Blazy differentiates himself within the electronic music landscape by investigating the personal branding strategies that support his identity and contribute to the strengthening of his personal brand. By examining Instagram communication between January and June 2025 through qualitative content analysis, the study demonstrated that the artist's trajectory extends beyond the exclusively musical dimension, highlighting how branding, positioning, and digital communication have become fundamental elements for the consolidation of artists in a market characterized by intense competition and constant aesthetic and cultural transformation.

The findings revealed that the construction of Blazy's personal brand is directly associated with his ability to combine authenticity, proximity, and visual consistency within his digital presence. In a context where psytrance functions not only as a musical genre but also as a cultural expression linked to spirituality, collectivity, and freedom, the artist strengthens his differentiation by developing communication strategies aligned with the symbolic values of the scene. Consequently, the analyzed materials suggest that success in the contemporary electronic music market depends not only on technical and musical quality but also on the ability to establish emotional and identity-based connections with audiences.

The analysis also identified the humanization of the personal brand as one of Blazy's main competitive advantages. Rather than adopting a purely corporate approach, Henrique Janelli uses social media as a space for interaction and the sharing of everyday experiences, reducing barriers between artist and audience. This strategy aligns with the concept of emotional branding proposed by Gobé (2001), enabling followers to connect not only with his musical productions but also with the personality and values conveyed through his public image. At the same time, this sense of proximity is supported by a consistent visual and narrative standardization, an essential aspect of personal brand recognition and strengthening, as discussed by Ortega (2010). These findings contribute

to understanding how personal branding strategies are publicly articulated through digital communication in the context of electronic music.

Furthermore, it was observed that Blazy's digital presence contributes to the formation of an engaged community around his artistic image, reinforcing the understanding that cultural consumption within electronic music is deeply connected to the construction of belonging and collective identification. Although the present study did not analyze the semantic content of audience comments, the observed engagement patterns are consistent with this interpretation. In this regard, the findings resonate with Maffesoli's (1987/2006) reflections on the formation of contemporary "tribes," in which emotional and symbolic bonds play a central role in audience loyalty.

During the development of the research and the application of the mapping presented in Table 1, a relevant technical limitation was identified concerning Instagram's policy of hiding the number of likes on certain posts. This factor limited the complete collection of quantitative data, requiring the analysis to rely on sampling procedures and visible engagement averages. Although this limitation does not compromise the results obtained, it highlights the methodological challenges inherent to research conducted on digital platforms, particularly in environments where metrics are subject to constant changes. Another limitation concerns the scope of the analysis, which focused on the communication published by the artist rather than on the perceptions or motivations of followers. Consequently, interpretations regarding audience engagement are based on observable communication patterns and engagement indicators rather than on direct evidence collected from fans.

Finally, it should be noted that the study focused on analyzing Blazy's digital presence on Instagram, the artist's primary communication channel, and therefore does not encompass all dimensions of his artistic identity and relationship with audiences. Future research could expand the investigation to other digital platforms, festivals, and audiovisual products associated with the artist, as well as develop qualitative approaches focused on the perspectives of fans and the psytrance community. Comparative studies involving other electronic music artists or different subgenres could also contribute to evaluating the extent to which the branding strategies identified in this case are transferable to other contexts within the creative industries. Such avenues may deepen the understanding of how personal branding strategies contribute to the consolidation of artists within the creative industries and to the construction of symbolic bonds in increasingly dynamic and competitive cultural contexts.

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