

ANALYSIS OF PERSONAL BRANDING IN VIRTUAL WORLD THROUGH LANGUAGE

Endratno Pilih Swasono^{1✉}, Kamillah Ariqoh Kaltsum², Rahma Dila Nurlaili³

UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya^{1,2,3}

✉ endratno007@uinsa.ac.id, kamillahariqoh20@gmail.com,
rahmadila13laili@gmail.com

Abstract:

This research's main purpose is to find the construction of identity social media users in the virtual world through language according to Goffman theory. The researchers use qualitative methods, which in the process the researchers observing a social media account followed by analyzing based on the theory. In this research, there are several steps required collecting data from social media, analyzing the data that shows personal identities, and through personal branding that they create with language, for example, such as bio on social media, special terms that characterize them, caption, and also content. Our study revealed that language can be a tool of personal branding by creating and expressing new social identity through the words or phrases they use to communicate with society.

Keywords: Personal Branding; Virtual World; Language; Self-Identity.

Abstrak:

Tujuan utama penelitian ini adalah untuk menemukan konstruksi identitas pengguna media sosial di dunia maya melalui bahasa menurut teori Goffman. Peneliti menggunakan metode kualitatif, di mana dalam prosesnya peneliti mengamati akun media sosial yang diikuti dengan menganalisis berdasarkan teori tersebut. Dalam penelitian ini, terdapat beberapa langkah yang diperlukan untuk mengumpulkan data dari media sosial, menganalisis data yang menunjukkan identitas personal, dan melalui personal branding yang mereka ciptakan dengan bahasa, misalnya, seperti bio di media sosial, istilah khusus yang menggambarkan mereka, caption, dan juga konten. Studi kami mengungkapkan bahwa bahasa dapat menjadi alat personal branding dengan menciptakan dan mengekspresikan identitas sosial baru melalui kata-kata atau frasa yang mereka gunakan untuk berkomunikasi dengan masyarakat.

Kata Kunci: Personal Branding; Dunia Maya; Bahasa; Identitas Diri.

INTRODUCTION

The world society has now undergone very significant changes. We can see this from the many aspects of life around us changing. This change is certainly not without cause, but the result of the current globalization that has spread in all corners of the world. The current of globalization gave birth to a new world for the world community which we usually call the virtual world. In this virtual world, people are free to communicate both between cities and between worlds at once, this certainly makes it easier for people to keep in touch with each other. However, the term communication here is not only intended for a pair of people who have known before, but a pair of people who do not know each other and do not meet each other can establish new relationships through this virtual world communication. Uniquely, in this case, the pair of people can use different identities in communicating with each other. This is as stated in a study by Maria Magdalena entitled "Personal online identity-brand or impression management", in the results of her study she suggested that there are two types of people in this world, namely, multiphrenia performers and personal branding performers (Popescu, 2019).

Multiphrenia performers are the type of people who are more likely to express their true identity where with the help of the virtual world, this type of performers finds it helpful to explore and expose their own identity. This is in contrast to personal branding performers, as the name implies, this type of performer uses a different identity to express his identity. It can also be said that personal branding performers strive to create a new identity. Personal branding performers assume that with the creation of a new identity, they can reach the stage they want in the virtual world. Based on the description of the study, it can be seen that the virtual world indirectly divides society into two types. In the division, it is not necessarily divided, but there are specific characteristics shown by each person. After a person is considered able to form and build his personality in the virtual world, it is expected that a person can develop his potential to the maximum. Personal branding is a new term along with the emergence of the virtual world, this term is associated with a person's efforts in introducing something in the marketplace (Khedher, 2015). In the process of personal branding, it takes communicative skills or the use of language that is displayed in front of an audience or outside audience, and also here the use of expression is very dominated (Bauman, 2000).

THEORY

Here the researchers use the performance theory of Erving Goffman in his article entitled *The Presentation of Everyday Life* (Goffman, 1956). There are 7 key principles in Goffman theory, The First theory is **Belief** in the part one is playing. In here, Goffman says that a person who does this theory always does things that make others believe that what he or she has been doing is true and there is no lie. He or she makes an impression where his or her audience believes that everything that is good in the eyes of the audience about him or her is in accordance with their expectations, as if there is no other side of him or her.

The second theory is **front**. In here Goffman says that the front is part of a person's action in performing his performance and also this is done intentionally or unintentionally. Usually, this part of the action has a nature that is full of expression and standards that are set by a person himself, the standards he uses to perform in front of his audience. As an explanation, Goffman provides three things about what 'front' is done by a person. Among them are manner, appearance and also setting. Manner is an action or attitude that gives the impression, signal, or hint that this person is going to do something related to the interaction. There are usually certain attitudes or signs that will be a sign that this person is going to do. Next is appearance, Appearance can be said to be a pointer about a person's life or social status. In addition, it can start from hobbies, occupation, character, informal and formal activities, or also even a new phase or experience in life. For the setting here, it refers to the background, place, conditions, decorations, tools or even scenery that is part of someone in carrying out their actions to the audience. Usually, the setting here tends to be in a fixed place and cannot be carried anywhere. So, the person has to go to this setting to do the action.

The third theory is **dramatic realization**, here Goffman says that here a person displays something non-verbal to convince his audience that he is someone who is sure and true. It doesn't matter whether the clarity about him or her is true or not. In other words, this person must present himself and convey the message and the message as if it is well received by his audience. The fourth theory is **idealization**. Here Goffman says that every person's behaviour that is displayed in front of an audience, symbolizes the values and also social norms of that person. In addition, the factor that supports someone to do this is, a person just wants to show the good side to his audience. The fifth theory is

maintenance of expressive control. Here Goffman says that one must maintain social communication between others. Because no matter how consistent this person is in maintaining his impression, if there is even the slightest gap then this can be a dangerous thing for that person. because it will affect the sympathy of its audience. The sixth theory is **misrepresentation.** Here Goffman says when a person puts on a different identity in their real life and also in their virtual life, the audiences usually can find a gap between the two different identities presented. Thus, can build a gap which allows audiences to notice and judge. As a result, audiences will be left with different impressions towards the performers. The seventh theory is **mystification.** Here Goffman says that identity is one of the basic needs of a human that every audience should respect among the performers. Although performers may show false identity, audiences must respect all sides of it.

Among all the key principles that has been presented, the one that is suitable for this analysis is the second theory called **front.** In this key principle, Goffman specifically categorized personal branding into 3 terms. The first one is appearance, as its name, this term can be visibly seen. It can be in the form of a bio or username displayed in a performer account. In contrast, the second term is unable to be seen physically. It can be analysed in a form of communication style and specific terms used while communicating.

The final term from front is setting, it can only be seen from its content and from how the performers react when they are settled in a particular place.

METHOD

This study is indicated as qualitative research because the researchers use a qualitative descriptive method to analyze the data. Qualitative-descriptive aims to examine and summarize activities that mostly occur in everyday life. This method is used in research because the data examined relates to real evidence, but due to limitations, researchers cannot provide specific reasons about certain events (Basthomi, 2015). Also, this method is more focused on a phenomenon and also this method does not break the phenomenon into different variables and studied differently, but looks at the whole picture (Ary et al., 2017)

Researchers use social media as a source of data and most of the social media users that researchers make as data are accounts of influencers who have quite a lot of

followers. The social media used are Instagram, YouTube, Tiktok, and X. In looking for data on social media, researchers look at certain aspects related to language whether it is done in writing or orally. Certain aspects used in examining data, namely Bio, Username, and Utterance as their specific terms. The researchers used these aspects because in social media, these aspects are where they build personal branding of self-identity or accounts with the aim that many people easily remember them.

The first step the researchers took in finding data is to search for accounts on social media by looking at bio, username, and utterance as their specific terms. After finding the data, the researchers classified the data with Goffman's front theory, whether the data fell into the manner, appearance or setting category. After collecting and classifying the data, the researchers wrote down the data along with the owner's account and collected it into one table. After that, the researchers counted the data to find which classification was found the most and the least.

FINDING

The data that has been collected from social media, the researchers have found 32 factual data or accounts whose personal branding is through language. The 32 data found were examined by the researchers by looking at the account username, bio, and specific terms. These three aspects can be said to be their identity as influencers on social media. The following is a further description of the data:

Table 1. The classification of Font.

No	Front	Amount	Percentage	Types
1	Manner	18	45%	communication style, utterance as specific terms
2	Appearance	21	52,5%	bio and username
3	Setting	1	2,5%	use of language that is in accordance with the setting. Usually appears in the content. (in video or picture)
	TOTAL	40	100%	

Based on the data collected from social media, researchers identified 32 factual accounts whose personal branding relies on language. These accounts were analyzed based on three key aspects: manner, appearance, and setting. **Manner** (45%): This aspect focuses on the communication style and specific terms used by the influencers. It

encompasses how they express themselves verbally or in written form. For example, certain influencers might use slang, humor, or formal language to engage with their audience. Researchers found 18 out of the 32 accounts placed emphasis on this aspect. **Appearance** (52.5%): Appearance here refers to the influencers' bio and username, which contribute significantly to their personal branding. The bio often provides a brief summary of who they are and what they do, while the username is the identifier by which they are known on the platform. Researchers found that 21 out of the 32 influencers focused on this aspect to establish their brand identity. **Setting** (2.5%): This aspect pertains to the use of language that aligns with the setting or context in which the influencers present their content. This could include the language used in videos or pictures shared by the influencers. While relatively less prominent compared to manner and appearance, it still plays a role in shaping their brand image. Researchers found only one instance out of the 32 accounts where language was aligned with the setting.

These three aspects collectively contribute to the influencers' identity and brand image on social media. By examining their communication style, bio, username, and how they adapt language to different settings, researchers gain insights into how influencers strategically use language to cultivate their online persona and engage with their audience.

DISCUSSION

After the data being analysed and classified, the researchers found that the most amount of data found on social media is appearance. This means that social media users build social media identities using their bio and username. Bio and username are the first step for users to have a new identity on social media, with a bio and username that is easy to remember or unique, the user is doing personal branding using written language. This bio usually contains a description of their account or identity. One example that can be seen in the data is the account of one of the influencers on social media with the username @queenarths. The account is classified as an appearance because its bio reads "fashion, beauty, & life dairy". Here the account owner is doing personal branding by giving a brief description to everyone about herself as someone who is interested in fashion, beauty such as make-up, skincare and also about her daily life like her routine. The second example that can be taken from the data is the account owner @amauryguichonchef. Here,

it can be seen from the account username alone that the account owner is a person who has a profession as a chef.

The second most common data classification is manner. This manner refers more to the oral use of language, where users do their personal branding with unique and fun expressions. As a result, these expressions can become their identity and also their characteristics. Not infrequently, these expressions go viral and are used by everyone as everyday language. An example that can be taken from the data is utterance as a specific form owned by the @koreareomit account. This account has an expression that is always spoken in each of its videos. The phrase that is always spoken is *Halo bolo-bolo balik lagi bersama orang korea yang medok* which means hello everyone back again with a Korean who speaks fluent Javanese. As explained earlier, manner always have a sign of interaction. Here every time the account owner says the sentence, it means that there will be something that will be discussed, shown and also shouted to the audience or subscribers. In addition, this phrase has become the identity and characteristic of the account owner, where the owner of this account is someone who is Korean but grew up in Indonesia. Then, the owner of this account is known as a Korean who can speak Javanese, this is also shown by him through his expression. From here the owner of this account does personal branding through language that is expressed orally and because of his specific terms he is easily remembered by many people.

The least data classification found is setting. From the 32 data that have been found, only 1 data is classified as setting. seen from the data the account owner @aclotheshorse can be classified as setting because, the use of language used is always in accordance with the place or setting in the videos of the account owner. This account owner has content whose setting is like in the royal era, using clothes and atmosphere typical of the royal period. The scenery, place, and decorations shown by the owner of this account have always been in line with the royal eras. The languages used are also following the setting. This classification is rarely found because not many people do personal branding with this background or setting. plus it is quite difficult to find this setting classification that has a correlation with language.

When the researchers were classifying the data, the researchers found that one data or account could have two classifications. There are some data or accounts of social media users that can include the classification of manner and appearance simultaneously.

This can be seen in the table where the total data classified is 40 while the data found is only 32. The researchers found that there are around 6 data or accounts that have 2 classifications. This proves that doing language can be one of the tools or media for personal branding, plus only with language people are easily recognized and build self-identity.

CONCLUSION

Language is an important part of expressing identity and image that is freely disseminated through the virtual world, as for example social media. Language can be a tool to propose and introduce a brand-new branding or identity. The personal branding can be written or can be performed through oral communication. As a result, language can effectively accommodate people to express their personal hobbies, interests, jobs, and characteristics. Furthermore, this will create a brand-new personal branding or trademark which helps people to be familiar with, without having to meet a real person. At last, this new identity can give many people a chance to protect their real identity.

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