

The Role of Personal Branding in Increasing Generation Z Career Success

*The Role of Personal
Branding*

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ABSTRACT

The rapid development of human communication and interaction contributes significantly to intergenerational differences. Today's workplace is occupied by mostly generation Z, a generation that is skilled in technology. The aim of this research is to describe and analyze the relationship between personal branding and increasing career success for generation Z through the use of social media, Islamic human values, and skills among final students at the Faculty of Economics and Business, Muria Kudus University. The research population was 3846 students with 116 students being used as research samples. The data collection technique uses a questionnaire distributed via a digital platform, namely Google Form. The analysis technique uses Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) which is operated through the Partial Least Squares (PLS) program. The results of this research show that the use of social media, Islamic human values, and skills have a significant positive effect on personal branding. Personal branding has a significant positive effect on generation Z's career success.

Keywords: *Personal Branding; Use of Social Media; Islamic Human Values; Skills; Career Success.*

ABSTRAK

Perkembangan yang cepat dari komunikasi dan interaksi manusia berkontribusi secara signifikan terhadap perbedaan antargenerasi. Tempat kerja sekarang ini diduduki oleh kebanyakan dari generasi Z, generasi yang mahir dalam bidang teknologi. Tujuan penelitian ini untuk mendeskripsikan dan menganalisis hubungan personal branding terhadap peningkatan kesuksesan karir generasi Z melalui penggunaan media sosial, Islamic human value, dan keterampilan pada mahasiswa akhir Fakultas Ekonomi dan Bisnis Universitas Muria Kudus. Populasi penelitian berjumlah 3846 mahasiswa dengan yang dijadikan sampel penelitian sebanyak 116 mahasiswa. Teknik pengumpulan data menggunakan kuesioner yang disebar melalui platform digital yaitu google form. Teknik analisis menggunakan Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) yang

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dioperasikan melalui program Partial Least Squares (PLS). Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa penggunaan media sosial, Islamic human value, dan keterampilan berpengaruh positif signifikan terhadap personal branding. Personal branding berpengaruh positif signifikan terhadap kesuksesan karir generasi Z.

Kata kunci: *Personal Branding; Penggunaan Media Sosial; Islamic Human Value; Keterampilan; Kesuksesan Karir.*

INTRODUCTION

Technological developments are always accompanied by significant social and economic changes. The rapid development of human communication and interaction contributes significantly to intergenerational differences. Unlike previous generations, Generation Z (those born between 1996 and 2010) is a population that grew along with the explosion of social media (Pinto & Paramita, 2021). The differentiating factor between Millennials and Generation Z is their use of technology from an early age and the impact it has on their online behavior. Generation Z is the youngest generation entering the world of work today (Dash et al., 2021). One of the characteristics of Generation Z globally, including Indonesia, is understanding the use of technology. In Indonesia, 94% of Generation Z want to work in companies that use advanced technology. Social media has emerged as a tool to shape job seekers' self-image and influence the performance of the job market (Priestnall et al., 2020). The practice of personal branding has become very relevant in the current digital era, especially in the context of young professionals who are ready to enter the world of work. Traditionally, personal branding has been the concern and interest of most people such as CEOs and celebrities. Every individual has an intrinsic personal brand as a result of personality qualities, past experiences and developments, as well as communicating with other people. In this sense, everyone already has some kind of self-image (Kushal & Nargundkar, 2021).

Basic human values refer to values that become the core of humans such as truth, honesty, loyalty, love, and peace (Firman & Putra 2020; Aisyah et al., 2023). Technology brings changes to humans, especially generation Z. With these changes, Islam not only regulates matters of worship but the use of social media becomes a positive thing. With all the current developments, Muslims must prepare Islamic principles and values in various aspects of life, including in using technology and social media. Religion is deeply embedded in people's culture and in many important aspects of life in society, especially in eastern countries including Indonesia where religion is the main source of identity, culture and relationships. Social media has a weakness from an Islamic perspective, namely that it can give rise to *riya'* in showing off someone's activities. However, social media also helps foster human values, especially Islamic values in helping each other, such as together which be easily seen by other social media users. Having Islamic values in the current era help in relationships between people, especially in creating differences in values because they have a strong foundation (Malik et al., 2019). Increasing research on training and development as a personal branding attribute has made employers emphasize the importance of personal branding to gain competitive advantage (Tanwar & Prasad, 2017). According to Khan et al. (2021), the selection made was based on the problem that the IT sector faces high pressure in maintaining professional skills due to rapid technological advances. According to Jacobson (2020), self-marketing is explained in the context of business school students in Helsinki, Finland, stating that this is a process for students to develop and communicate their abilities and skills in order to be superior to other job seekers.

This research refers to the results of research conducted by Althof & Fachrunnisa (2022) regarding the role of Islamic human values and personal branding to increase career success in the millennial Muslim generation at one of the Private Islamic Universities in Semarang. However, in this research there are several limitations, including bias in self-response to the measurement variables, and the distribution of

questionnaires only focuses on one field and one department, namely the Faculty of Economics at the Private Islamic University in Semarang, Central Java with an example focus on final year students of the Muslim millennial generation who aged 20-26 years. Therefore, in this research, a model be developed and confirmation of the relationship between variables by adding an independent variable, namely individual skills. This is in line with research conducted by Kushal & Nargundkar (2021), which shows that respondents have a high level of awareness about the need for company-oriented personal branding and use various methods and skills to build their image. Apart from that, this research also be oriented towards Generation Z (Gen Z) who are currently starting to enter the world of work and whose character is identical to supporting a more dynamic, interactive work process from authentic personal branding. The aim of this research is to analyze the role of personal branding to increase career success for Generation Z in Indonesia.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Social media can be described as online services or platforms that focus on facilitating the building of social networks or social relationships among people who have similar interests, activities, backgrounds, or real-life relationships (Sun et al., 2021). Social media is a platform that facilitates information sharing and participation from media users to create and distribute content (Trang et al., 2024). This digital platform provides the ability to increase employee productivity by connecting employees with global resources. Social media is used to get technical assistance and express ideas in the workplace. In addition, social media users can reveal their workplace and environment with the help of statuses or posts on social media. This publicly available data is also a rich source of information for employers as it represents important input from employees (Shuai et al., 2019).

Human values can influence a person's attitude, this can also influence changes in themselves as a preference for achieving something. Humans are very objective creatures and have the freedom to choose, including in their attitudes and actions. The way humans behave is greatly influenced by the environment. Humans are also aware that they are God's creation and will affect them as a person and the way they relate to God (Malik et al., 2019). Islamic human values themselves arise from the human values learned in Islam and adapted to Islamic rules. This adjustment can be made because religion is a social institution that greatly influences attitudes, values and behavior. Meanwhile, for the Muslim millennial generation, the application of Islamic human values is expected to be able to improve their Islamic personality so that they are more resilient in facing the world of work and can easily adapt to various changes, considering the heterogeneous work environment and the large number of colleagues who have different values (Frendika et al., 2018).

Skills or what are usually called personal skills refer to the ability to carry out tasks or activities. Personal skills are skills acquired and developed through direct competence and training. Individuals need to pay attention to developing their personal skills throughout their lives (Rizan & Utama, 2020). Personal skills relate to how a person expresses and presents themselves. As individuals grow and develop, they are enrolled in educational institutions and training centers to achieve their goals. Skills or skills refer to the skills, attitudes, and behaviors, in addition to technical abilities, that enable a person to engage and progress in the demands of an ever-changing work environment and remain an asset to employers (Parashakti et al., 2020).

Personal brand is the expectations, images and perceptions that are created in the minds of other people when they see or hear someone's name (Heskiano et al., 2020). Personal branding itself has a definition of various personal attributes, values, drivers, strengths and enthusiasm that individuals have to differentiate themselves from other people. This aims to enable a person or institution to collaborate with individuals who have this personal branding. Personal brands effectively communicate an individual's unique values and differentiate them from their competitors (Basabain et al., 2021). Everyone has a personal brand, but most people don't realize it so they don't manage it

strategically, consistently and effectively. People who manage personal branding skillfully are successful people, known for their enthusiasm, achievements, politeness, and communication based on respect (Kushal & Nargundkar, 2021).

Career success is the result of one's career experiences and conventionally, it refers to upward physical and career mobility, often accompanied by prominent positions, prestige, and financial rewards. Career success is specifically defined as an individual's work experience over a certain period of time. According to Hadi & Abdullah (2018) a person needs to participate and be involved in several aspects of work to be considered a successful career. When individuals achieve success and recognition in the workplace it then brings important results to the organization in the form of achieving their organizational goals in a responsive manner. According to Tambengi et al. (2016) define career success as the result of a person's experience and long-term goals. For individuals, career success is a way to satisfy the need for achievement and power. Therefore, career success can increase the quantity or quality of a person's life. For each individual, the level of career success refers to materialistic terms, power, and satisfaction.

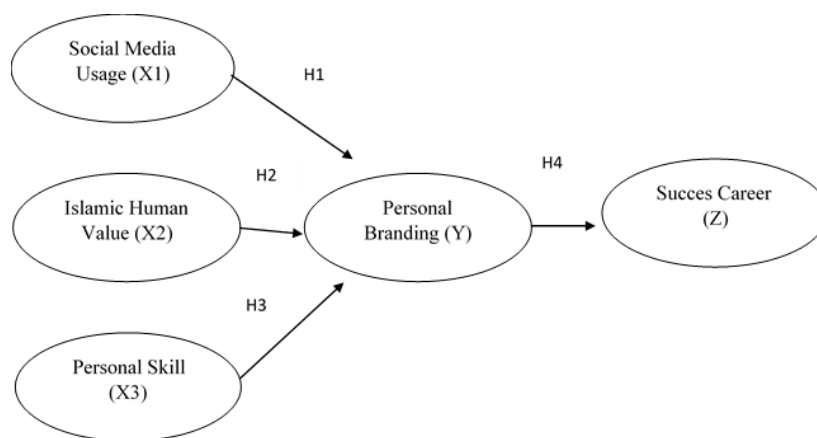


Figure 1. Research Framework

Several previous studies stated that the use of social media has the ability to provide a platform for someone to build their self-image or society's perception of them. According to Jacobson (2020), students who show their personal branding through the use of social media aim to prepare themselves for the world of work. While Trang et al. (2024) also found that the relationship between social media use and personal branding had a positive effect. Personal branding itself has a very important role in designing their lives, so literacy and use of social media help interpersonal networks in the long term. Frendika et al. (2018) emphasized that the key to making a difference through social media is to be proactive in presenting yourself, thereby influencing the information that people find. Then Liu & Suh (2017), think that the practice of personal branding provides enormous opportunities and autonomy to social media users.

H1: The use of social media has a positive and significant effect on personal branding

Human values can influence a person's attitude, this can also influence changes in themselves as a preference for achieving something. Humans are very objective creatures and have the freedom to choose, including in their attitudes and actions. The way humans behave is greatly influenced by the environment. Humans also have a basis as social creatures who naturally interact with each other. Humans are also aware that they are God's creation and of course this affects them as a person and the way they relate to God (Malik et al., 2019). Research conducted by Frendika et al. (2018), stated that human values have a significant influence on personal branding. Strengths within a person, values, personality, are strengthening aspects in developing personal branding and even in looking for work later. A study in Saudi Arabia revealed that there is a relationship

between Islamic human values and personal branding to maintain personality in social media life (Basabain et al., 2021). Human values and skills are very important in increasing one's productivity (Orando & Isabirye, 2018). Successful personal branding requires effective perception management and control which influence how other people perceive and think about a person.

H2: Islamic human value has a positive and significant effect on personal branding

Research from Jacobson (2020), shows that to build a strong personal brand, a person must develop strategies and actions to show their characteristics. Regarding the topic of building skills, important aspects that really influence include the skills that individuals must have, such as communication skills and leadership skills. Personal branding allows them to show their communication skills, personality, and interests (Francis & Hoefel, 2018). Research from Kushal & Nargundkar (2021) found that skills can be used as a framework that can be used to build company-oriented personal branding by business school students. These techniques include online and offline networking as well as positive perceptions of social media, both professional (LinkedIn) and informal (Facebook, Instagram). According to Dolan (2017), skills are the most important thing that individuals want to highlight to potential recruiters and employers. Consistency needs to be maintained in all areas of communication, both verbal and written and this can encourage a person's personal branding.

H3: Skills have a positive and significant effect on personal branding

The current digitalization trend is an opportunity for individuals to offer their skills and competencies globally and benefit organizations. This is done through personal branding, or in other words, by making an individual's value proposition known to the target audience. Research from Syachrony et al. (2023) shows that individuals who implement self-promotional behavior show greater career satisfaction compared to those who do not implement this behavior. Because personal branding and self-promotion are self-presentation behaviors, it can be concluded that personal branding is also positively related to career satisfaction. According to Vallas & Christin (2018), personal branding as a deliberate individual career behavior emerged as a response to the increasing emergence of new communication technologies in all parts of society's life and work as well as changes in the labor market and world of work. In this new form of work, personal branding is an important factor determining one's career success as an adaptable career behavior that aims to package and display one's professional identity to meet the needs of its target audience.

H4: Personal branding has a positive and significant effect on career success.

METHOD

The method applied in this research is a quantitative method. The population used in this research was students from the Management Study Program, Faculty of Economics and Business, Muria Kudus University, totaling 3846 according to the Higher Education Data Base (*Pangkalan Data Pendidikan Tinggi/PDDikti*). Using a purposive sampling technique with the criteria of students being at least semester 8 and being Muslim. The sample used in this research was 116 students from the Management Study Program, Faculty of Economics and Business, Muria Kudus University. The data collection technique in this research is to use a questionnaire in the form of a Google form, where the Google Form link is distributed to students who meet the specified criteria. The data collection process via a Google Form questionnaire took 1 month. The data analysis technique uses Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) which is operated through the Partial Least Squares (PLS) program.

RESULT

This research uses Partial Least Squares (PLS) to analyze the research model with the help of SmartPLS 3 software. Although prediction of measurements and structural parameters occurs simultaneously, PLS model application usually occurs in two stages. The first step is to assess the measurement model using confirmatory factor analysis. It also estimates the reliability and validity of theoretical constructs. Then, the second step is to estimate the structural model testing of the associations (paths) between the hypotheses in this research model. To determine the reliability of a measurement model, the most commonly used method is measuring its internal consistency. The internal consistency of this measurement model was measured using the method proposed by Fornell and Larcker (1981), Composite Reliability (CR), Cronbach's alpha and Average Variance Extracted (AVE). The Cronbach's alpha or composite reliability value must be > 0.7 to be said to have a good reliability value, but a value of 0.6-0.7 is still acceptable for explanatory research (Ghozali, 2014). The evaluation results of the PLS Algorithm run 1 model show that the external load is more than 0.70. This means that all indicators for all variables are valid so there are no indicators that need to be removed. The test results show that the measurement model is quite reliable.

Table 1. Measurement Model Evaluation

Latent Variable	Items	Outer Loading	AVE	Composite Reliability	Cronbach Alpha	HTMT
Use of Social Media	X1.1	0.800	0.697	0.920	0.892	<1
	X1.2	0.826				
	X1.3	0.836				
	X1.4	0.852				
	X1.5	0.858				
Islamic human values	X2.1	0.871	0.797	0.940	0.915	<1
	X2.2	0.891				
	X2.3	0.924				
	X2.4	0.885				
Skills	X3.1	0.816	0.732	0.950	0.939	<1
	X3.2	0.860				
	X3.3	0.834				
	X3.4	0.863				
	X3.5	0.864				
	X3.6	0.873				
	X3.7	0.877				
Personal branding	Y1	0.842	0.663	0.855	0.745	<1
	Y2	0.831				
	Y3	0.769				
Career Success	Z1	0.935	0.892	0.951	0.931	<1
	Z2	0.931				
	Z3	0.916				
	Z4	0.858				

The coefficient of determination is used to measure the ability of exogenous constructs (social media use, Islamic human values, and skills) in explaining endogenous variables (personal branding and career success). Chin determined three values for R2, namely 0.19, 0.33, and 0.67 as small, medium and large values (Furadantin, 2018). In this research, the R square for the personal branding and career success variables was large, namely 0.641 and 0.591. Therefore, it can be concluded that the influence of social media use, Islamic human values, and skills on personal branding and career success is 64% and 59%. Meanwhile, the remainder is influenced by other factors not included in the variables examined in this research.

Table 2. Coefficient of Determination

Variables	R Square	R Square Adjusted
Personal branding	0.641	0.631
Success career	0.591	0.588

Testing the hypotheses contained in the table below shows that the results in this study resulted in hypotheses 1 to 4 being accepted.

Table 3. Path Coefficient

Hypothesis	Path Coefficients	Std. Deviation	T Statistics	P-value
H1: Social media use → Personal branding	0.220	0.086	2.566	0.011
H2: Islamic human value → Personal branding	0.170	0.074	2.304	0.022
H3: Skills → Personal branding	0.516	0.096	5.374	0.000
H4: Personal branding → Career success	0.769	0.057	13.519	0.000

The results of Hypothesis Test 1 show that the use of social media has a positive and significant effect on personal branding because the p value is 0.011 < 0.05. The original sample (path coefficient) value of 0.220 indicates the direction of the relationship is positive. The t-statistic value for this construct relationship is 2.566. This means that good use of social media creates individual personal branding. The results of hypothesis 2 testing show that Islamic human values have a positive and significant effect on personal branding because the p value is 0.022 or smaller than 0.05. The path coefficient value is 0.170. The t-statistic value for this construct relationship is 2.304. This means that the existence of Islamic values in humans form an individual's personal branding. The results of Hypothesis Test 3 show that skills have a positive and significant effect on personal branding because the p value is 0.000 < 0.05. The path coefficient value of 0.516 shows that the direction of the relationship is positive. The t-statistic value for this construct relationship is 5.374. This means that the individual's skills form an individual's personal branding. The results of Hypothesis Test 4 show that personal branding has a positive and significant effect on career success because the p value is 0.000 < 0.05. The path coefficient value of 0.769 shows that the direction of the relationship is positive. The t-statistic value for this construct relationship is 13.519. This means that having individual personal branding increase individual career success.

DISCUSSION

The use of social media has a positive and significant effect on personal branding. Individuals who post information about themselves so that other people know about that individual's character can increase their personal branding. Individuals who often express their ideas and opinions and can identify and gain recognition from friends can build their personal branding because this makes the individual have a good reputation in life so that it be beneficial for the individual's career success (Fitria, 2023). This is in accordance with research by Trang et al. (2024), who found that individuals who show their personal branding through the use of social media aim to prepare themselves for the world of work. Frendika et al. (2018) also found that the relationship between social media use and personal branding had a positive effect. Personal branding itself has a very important role in designing their lives. Therefore, literacy and use of social media help interpersonal networks in the long term.

Islamic human values have a positive and significant effect on personal branding. Individuals who are steadfast and able to act in balance in life can form their personal branding based on Islamic principles. Individuals who always practice Islamic values in carrying out their work can form an individual religious image so that it can influence them in achieving success in carrying out their work. And individuals who are able to practice Islamic values in everyday life make that individual have a good reputation in life (Aji & Muslichah, 2023). This is in accordance with research Frendika et al. (2018) which states that human values have a significant influence on personal branding. Strengths within a person, values, personality, are strengthening aspects in developing personal branding and even in looking for work later. A study in Saudi Arabia revealed

that there is a relationship between Islamic human values and personal branding to maintain personality in social media life (Basabain et al., 2021).

Skills have a positive and significant effect on personal branding. Individuals who have skills in presentation, writing and creating content to fulfill their duties and responsibilities can form their personal branding. Individuals who are skilled in using technology and building their social media profiles can create a positive image for them which is beneficial in career success. Interpersonal abilities and ability in social media are also factors that can influence an individual's reputation in life (Bilgin, 2018). Similar research was also found in the research of Kushal & Nargundkar (2021), that skills can function as a framework that can be used to build company-oriented personal branding by individuals. These techniques include online and offline networking as well as positive perceptions of social media, both professional (LinkedIn) and informal (Facebook, Instagram). According to research by Khan et al. (2021), skills are the most important thing that individuals want to highlight to potential recruiters and employers. Consistency needs to be maintained in all areas of communication, both verbal and written and this can encourage a person's personal branding.

Personal branding has a positive and significant effect on career success. Individuals who have good personal branding are believed to be committed to their career success. Individuals who can build their personal branding through social media can form a confident image of themselves to increase their career success. And individuals who have a good reputation in life are expected to be able to have the motivation to have good interpersonal skills so that they consider that success in life is very meaningful for that individual. This is in line with research from Francis & Hoefel (2018) showing that individuals who implement self-promotional behavior show greater career satisfaction compared to those who do not implement this behavior. Because personal branding and self-promotion are self-presentation behaviors, it can be concluded that personal branding is also positively related to career satisfaction. According to Vallas & Christin (2018), personal branding as a deliberate individual career behavior emerged in response to the increasing emergence of new communication technologies in all parts of society's life and work as well as changes in the labor market and world of work.

CONCLUSION

Rapid technological developments in the current era have a significant impact on the way humans communicate and interact. One striking impact is the increasingly obvious differences between one generation and another. Generation Z, which is currently starting to dominate the workplace, is a generation that is very adept at using technology. They grow and develop amidst advances in digital technology, which gives them an advantage in terms of speed of adaptation and use of technology compared to previous generations. Generation Z is known as digital natives, because they have been accustomed to digital technology from an early age. Their ability to master this technology makes a major contribution to workplace dynamics. They tend to be quicker at learning new software, more comfortable with internet-based communications, and have the ability to work flexibly using a variety of digital platforms. This makes them different from previous generations who may take longer to adapt to new technology.

The research results show that one effective way to increase the personal branding of students at the Faculty of Economics and Business, Muria Kudus University is to make optimal use of social media. Social media can be used as a tool to build and manage self-image more effectively. With platforms such as LinkedIn, Instagram, and Twitter, students can showcase their skills, achievements, and personality to a wider audience. This not only helps them in forming a positive self-image, but also opens up opportunities for wider professional networking. Apart from that, the application of Islamic values in everyday life also plays an important role in forming personal branding. Values such as integrity, honesty and good work ethics can create a positive self-image and be trusted by others. Students who are able to show that they adhere to these values more easily gain the trust of colleagues, superiors and clients.

Improving communication skills, writing skills and interpersonal skills is also very important in forming a strong personal brand. Good communication skills enable students to convey their ideas clearly and persuasively. Good writing skills help them in crafting engaging reports, proposals, and social media content. While good interpersonal skills help them in building good relationships with colleagues and clients. The use of social media, application of religious values, and improvement of skills are factors that can form strong personal branding. Good personal branding determines their chances of career success in the future. Students who are able to build a positive personal brand find it easier to get a job, get promoted, and be recognized as a competent professional in their field. Therefore, it is important for students to continue to develop themselves in various aspects in order to achieve the career success they dream of. By utilizing technology, social media, religious values, and interpersonal skills, students can form a strong personal brand and increase their chances of career success.

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