

Youth Strategies To Build Personal Branding Through Social Media

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Abstract:

Adolescence is characterized by a desire to present oneself through talents and interests in a field. In the Industrial Revolution 4.0, the creative economy flourished, thus, the Ministry of Trade of the Republic of Indonesia emphasized the utilization of individual creativity, skills, and talents to create prosperity and employment opportunities through the use of individual creativity and creation, resulting in human resources that have specific services and competitiveness. The process of creating a professional self-reputation to be recognized and remembered by others as a complete self-image is known as personal branding. The use of social media creates new opportunities to increase personal branding for creative industry practitioners This study reviews the strategies for building personal branding represented by three teenagers who use social media platforms. This qualitative research uses the purposive sampling technique. Data were obtained through semi-structured interviews and observation. The results of the study reveal that social media is an opportunity for young creative industry practitioners to develop strategies for building personal branding by maintaining consistency, variations in content forms, and periodic posting schedules to be better known by the target market.

Key words: adolescent; personal branding; social media; strategy.

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Adolescence is a phase in human life-cycle after going through childhood. In this stage, individual wants to actualize himself in society. Sarwono (2012) suggests several stages of development in adolescents. The late adolescence phase is the period leading to the adult phase which is marked by the steady state of the individual in a particular area of interest.

In the industrial era 4.0, Indonesia developed a creative economy industry that emphasized the use of creativity, skills, and individual talents to create prosperity and employment opportunities through the approach and use of individual creative and creative power (UK DCMS Task Force, 1998, Ministry of Trade RI). Every individual or organization must have superior competitiveness in the form of services, and products that have characteristics and are not owned by other individuals or organizations. One way to present one's superiority is to build a self-image or what is known as a personal brand. Lake (2018) defines personal branding as a process to build other people's perceptions so that they are recognized and remembered as a complete picture that represents a professional self-image and reputation.

Along with the development of communication technology, the use of social media has become a new opportunity for practitioners in the creative industry. Information and communication technology is used by teenagers who are Generation Z as a new method to improve personal branding. Personal branding is also used to expand network connections with individuals who have the same interests in a particular field (Afrilia, 2018). It takes a personal branding formation strategy that needs to be known and studied, especially by teenagers.

This study reviews the strategies for building personal branding represented by three teenagers who are creative industry practitioners by utilizing social media platforms. A qualitative approach with the type of phenomenological method is used in this study to describe the experiences of participants (Creswell, 2015). Participants were determined using the purposive sampling technique. Data were

collected through semi-structured interviews and observation.

1.2 Research Objectives and Benefits

This study aims to provide an overview of the phenomenon of the process of building personal branding in adolescents through social media.

1.3 Theoretical Review

Teenager

The World Health Organization (WHO) groups adolescents into population groups aged 10-19 years. Data from the Central Statistics Agency of the Republic of Indonesia as of December 2021 shows that the youth population reaches 17% of the total population of Indonesia (45.68 million). At this time, adolescents have a desire to actualize themselves in the school environment and the community. Adolescents are characterized by rapid growth and development physically, psychologically, and socially. The category of adolescents is divided into three stages, namely early adolescence at the age range of 11-14 years, middle adolescence at the age of 14-17 years, and late adolescence at the age of 17-20 years (Unicef, 2021). The period leading to the adult phase in the late adolescence stage is marked by an increasingly steady interest in a field (Sarwono, 2012). The potential of teenagers to explore everything that is around them, try new things and express their thoughts and emotions is supported by the great energy possessed by teenagers. This self-expression is influenced by various factors according to this stage of adolescence, including physical, mental, emotional, intellectual development, and environmental factors so that there are different characteristics, different potentials, and abilities (Suryani, 2007).



Figure 1. Three Main Dimensions of Personal Brand

(Source: Yunitasari and Japariato, 2013)

Creative Industries

The creative industry according to the UK Department for Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS) in 1998 is defined as an industry that relies on the originality of individual skills and talents to be able to improve living standards and create job opportunities through the use of intellectual property rights. The creative industry sector makes every individual or organization must have competitiveness in the form of excellence in the form of services or products that are not owned by other individuals or organizations. The main commodity of the creative industry is individual ideas and creativity, personal brand is the right strategy to use to promote oneself (Khedler, 2014).

Personal Branding

Philip Kotler (2012) defines branding as a name, term, symbol, design, or a combination of these that is used to identify a product or service with characteristics that distinguish it from other products and services. According to McNally and Speak (2004), the main dimensions of personal branding are divided into 3 (three), namely:

a. Individual Competence or Ability

Reputation or personal branding will be built, with the condition that a person must have a unique ability and expertise or master competence in a particular field. What makes a person unique and distinctive compared to others, is reflected in the values, personality, skills, and qualities of self.

b. Style

Style is the personality characteristic of personal branding. Style is the part that makes the self-image unique in the perception of others. Style is a way for an individual to establish relationships with other individuals.

c. Standard

Personal branding standards on individuals greatly affect the perception of others. Setting standards will give meaning to the power of personal branding.

The combination of these three factors, namely competence, style, and standards applied to a person can be started, developed, and continuously built so that it will form a reputation in a particular field according to the expertise chosen.

Picture 1. The Three Main Dimensions of Personal Brands

(Source: Yunitasari and Japariato, 2013)

The process of building a reputation lasts a lifetime because it is a continuous and long-term process. Achieving a personal brand takes time to grow and develop, so from the beginning, the formation of a personal brand and at every stage must be consistent and firm. A well-built personal brand will give good results and last for a long time, especially if the self-image is conveyed continuously. The road to a professional business world will open when someone has built their personal branding. (McNally & Speak, 2002: 26)

Building Personal branding on Social Media

Branding in the social world is an attempt by someone to present information, messages, and impressions of an activity carried out by displaying profiles, updating statuses, uploading pictures and photos, sharing information in the form of ideas or opinions, replying to comments as feedback for followers or inserting icons. like (Tamimy, 2017).

The development of social media today can be used by someone to develop a career and build his own image. Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook have been widely used by creative industry practitioners, to show personal branding that is in accordance with the expertise, interests, and personality of the content creator. The content displayed on Instagram is adjusted to the features possessed by social media. Content creators will be better known by the target market if they maintain content consistency, varied content forms, and a regular posting schedule (Putri, 2016)

Through self-image in an individual, it is hoped that it will able to increase self-confidence, and credibility, be able to build connections, expand networks, be able to attract the attention of the target public, and as a differentiator of self-image with others (Fransia, 2018). Personal branding that displays self-image in digital reality needs to be built diligently and consistently. Digital media facilities can present one's self-existence as well as self-development which will increase value for oneself and others.

There are various types of social media, here are some social media based on their features and uses (Hardy, in Rijalus 2018):

- a. Relationship Networks are websites that are used as a means of communicating and socializing. Examples of Relationship Networks, are Facebook, LinkedIn, Google Plus, and so on.
- b. Media Sharing Networks such as Instagram, YouTube, Vimeo, Vine, and Snapchat with visual content as the main focus.
- c. Online Reviews Social media for location-based Online Reviews such as OpenRice, TripAdvisor & Zomato. The appeal of this type of social media is to adopt geolocation technology.
- d. Discussion Forums are one of the pioneer types of social media since the early days of the internet. Long before internet users used Facebook to tag friends in photos, they joined discussion forums.
- e. Social Publishing is in the form of blogs and microblogs (Twitter), where written articles can be shared for reading among fellow users. Blogs can be used as effective marketing content.
- f. E-commerce is social media that makes it easy for users to browse products and shop online, such as

Bukalapak, Tokopedia, Shopee, Olx, Fiverr, and many more.

Based on the research of Sheldon and Bryant (2015), Instagram is used for the following four things, namely sharing stories and experiences from various activities with friends through profile pages. as a means of documenting activities recorded in digital photo albums. Instagram is also used as a means of self-existence to achieve fame or popularity, which is marked by the number of followers and the number of likes every time he uploads his content. And the next use is as a means of actualizing creativity into content in the form of photos, videos, or status updates. Consistent self-image publication will lead to increased self-visibility through digital media platforms.

Here's a strategy to build personal branding through digital media:

1. Telling a biography of yourself to build a connection with a specific target audience.
2. Build profiles using digital media platforms, both websites and social media (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and others). Choosing a platform that matches your personal character will make it easier for individuals to set other strategies.
3. Creating good connections and relationships according to audiences who have an interest in the same field. Optimal use of social media, and establish active communication with visitors to the created content.
4. The spirit to continue to learn from the experts to gain knowledge for the selection of appropriate techniques, that need to be improved or sort out things that need to be improved or eliminated.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study aims to provide an overview of the phenomenon of the process of building personal branding. A phenomenology is an approach that describes the meaning of the lived experience of several individuals regarding a phenomenon (Creswell, 2007).

Three participants were involved in this research, and all of them were teenagers who took part

as creative industry practitioners, namely content creators, and illustrators (see table 1). Participants in this study were determined using a purposive sampling technique, namely a participant selection technique that had been determined previously, based on certain criteria and considerations, and was determined based on the research objectives (Sugiyono, 2017).

The criteria for participants are from a population of adolescents aged 16-21 years and active users of social media who have content with a consistent theme. The three participants are included in the category of late teens. The age group of 16-21 years was chosen because this age range they are the most social media users in Indonesia. Consistent content criteria are set because personal branding has eleven characters, including consistency and distinctiveness.

Data were collected by interview and observation. Interviews were conducted with a semi-structured model using an instrument containing questions to be shown to the informants.

Table 1. Research Participants

No.	Participants (Initials Age and Occupation)	Type digital media	Content theme	Since	Number of audience	Source of income
1	RGL, 21 years old, college student	Wattpad, Instagram	Fiction, cover creator	June 2017	154K readers	Publisher
2	TVA, 18 years old, college student	Fiver, Instagram	Illustration landscape	May 2020	21 reviews	Clients
3	GYA, 16 years old, highschool student	Instagram	Japanese Anime	March 2019	86,1k followers	Product reviews, paid promotion

RESULTS

This study aims to describe how teenagers build personal branding through social media

according to the competencies and skills possessed by the three teenagers who are participants. The three participants have different areas of expertise on which they base themselves to present themselves in public through social media platforms. RGL(21 years old) likes the field of journalism which is manifested through writing fiction with mystery and thriller genres, he has sharpened his imagination through writing since he was in elementary school, but when he was a teenager he started to take part in publishing his work on the Wattpad website. TVA has been fond of drawing and creating landscape illustrations since childhood. He has honed his skills through tutoring and self-taught through youtube tutorials. The image content on YouTube later also inspired him to make videos when he was drawing activities. GYA teenagers who like anime cartoons have become a trend in children and teenagers this decade. This passion developed by learning more about manga drawing, the Japanese language, and culture, which eventually prompted him to learn video editing to use in the content he created.

Departing from a hobby that developed into a skill, the three participants had the confidence to present their work in public. Social media is the means they choose to showcase their work. RGL chose Wattpad and Instagram, TVA via an Instagram channel, and Fiverr and GYA account via Instagram. The social media they choose is adjusted to the character of the products and services they offer to their audience. Instagram was chosen by the three participants because it is an application for sharing photos and videos. Teenagers use Instagram for various needs, including the needs of affection, cognition, entertainment, personal integration, and social integration. According to Chen (2017), Instagram is used as a means of self-expression, digital albums, and gaining recognition from other people who visit his account.

These teenagers started their personal branding by setting goals to be achieved. This is in accordance with the theory presented by Mc Nally and Speak (2017) that setting goals are part of the application of standards and values. The goals chosen by the three are to express creativity, share experiences, and information, and communicate with others. This fulfills their need for social integration.

The creativity they pour through Instagram causes them to find communities with similar interests.

As explained by Mc Nally, personal branding is determined by the style carried by these three teenage participants. Style is a characteristic or uniqueness that is different from others. RGL carries a mystery story with a distinctive style of speaking. TVA sketches have their own uniqueness and color selection with watercolors. GYA is unique through short anime comedy videos accompanied by character voting that involves interacting with the audience.

The activity of building personal branding, of course, will further hone the competencies possessed by each participant. RGL initially made its own covers for its fiction works, then developed into accepting cover illustrations from other writers. TVA's skills are getting more and more honed. When orders are getting more and more with various types of sketch styles. GYA honed its competence in choosing interesting animations and editing them in a shorter duration but the content was conveyed. Likewise, the foreign language skills of the three participants improved because they wrote works in English, or when communicating with clients and followers in foreign languages.

Setting time targets periodically to produce new work also plays a role in honing competence and ability to manage time management. RGA targets that within a year it can post 2-3 works of fiction, and in a month it can receive orders for cover illustrations. TVA targets to complete each image order within 2 days and on time, the results of the order on the Fiverr site are then posted on Instagram, thus strengthening his image as a competent illustrator. GYA is looking for comedy anime material every day to make short videos and especially on weekends making six or more videos at once which is used as stock, one work will be released per day.

Rampersad (2008) states that there are eleven characteristics of personal branding, namely authenticity, integrity, consistency, specialization, authority, sincerity, relevance, visibility, persistence, kindness, and performance. In terms of visibility according to observations, GYA is higher because he publishes his work daily. A large number of followers after 3 years of being active has an impact on other

program interests to link hashtags, or offers for product reviews so that it brings additional income for GYA.

GYA and RLG continue to communicate with their audiences by providing feedback from voting for anime characters, while RLG has added audiences since he became an admin for consulting activities about student life and book covers published by Wattpad. TVA responds to every incoming order promptly, provides painting services according to the wishes and tastes of its consumers, and receives and responds to feedback from its clients.

TVA uses the Fiverr website to channel their creativity as well as business. Meanwhile, GYA and RGL indirectly get effective income from being paid and promote from their uploaded works.

The presence of social media is something to be grateful for, with the characteristics of having a wide reach, and being able to spread messages quickly so that it can be used as a medium for forming one's personal brand. The features that exist in social media can be used to build personal branding to be more creative and attractive. One of the components to form personal branding is the value related to the interests and beliefs they have. This statement is in accordance with what was experienced by 2 out of 3 participants, namely having a belief and trying to adapt their content in the virtual world to their life in the real world.

GYA participants prepare drafts for the content to be posted. In one video editing, participants edited three videos at once which were prepared to be posted on that day, the day after tomorrow, and the next two days. This is in accordance with the theory of McNally and Speak (2011), that one of the steps to forming a personal branding is to establish a distinctive style.

Another thing that is needed in forming a personal brand is uniqueness. The three participants displayed their uniqueness through postings according to their respective specifications: RGL with mystery and action genre youth fiction and articles and book cover designers, TVA with landscape paintings, and GYA with comedy genre anime and character voting.

This study also reveals the uniqueness that there are two participants who use endorsements as a means to earn additional income, while TVA earns income from clients who use their painting services. Social media has functioned as a place to display personal branding in the digital world according to the characters, interests, and personalities of the three participants. RLG and GYA are categorized as content creators. The content creator profession can be an excess of creative industry innovation by utilizing social media.

The activities of the three participants with their respective brands in addition to depicting a positive image of creative youth are able to use social media as a place to express creativity, as well as foster an entrepreneurial spirit that indirectly encourages the creative economy in Indonesia.

There were hopes from the three participants for wider connections to explore other media such as TikTok, youtube, forming #hashtags; or creating a special website to showcase their work.

CONCLUSION

Through social media, creative industry practitioners can show personal branding on platforms that are in accordance with their skills, interests, and personality. Content consistency, variations in the form of content, and a regular posting schedule will help a content creator be better known by the target market.

The three participants in this study already have a personal brand that suits their audience and have a high awareness of the use of social media networks to strengthen the personal brand they have built. The personal brand that has been formed then needs to be communicated through certain media, including social networking media. If the message about a personal brand is conveyed to many social networking media, it will be increasingly accepted and known by others. Conversely, if the personal brand that is formed is not synergistically communicated to various media, then the message about the personal brand is not accepted by others. Efforts to increase personal brand through social media can be

done in the following ways:

1. Have an awareness of the individual's self-image.
2. Displayed consistently and repeatedly.
3. The use of various social media in accordance with the function and purpose.

DISCUSSION

Implication

The implication is a consequence or direct result of the findings of scientific research. The results of this study on the strategies adopted by three adolescent participants who represent creative economy practitioners in building personal branding indicate that a number of ways have been taken by the participants according to their field of expertise so that their products and services can be recognized, have competitiveness and display a complete self-image through social media platforms. This implies that teenagers who are in the creative industry need to hone specific skills, carefully choose social media platforms as a means of building personal branding and display a positive self-image that can inspire their audience.

Suggestion

Based on the research findings, the researcher recommends further research to increase the number of participants, and examine one of the similar social media, or specific areas of creative economy expertise.

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