ATLANTIS
PRESS

Microblog Used as Personal Branding

Study on Instagram Account @vikirahardja

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ABSTRACT

As social media, Instagram can be utilized to send messages, in the form of either writing or images, to the public. One of the barista influencers, Viki Rahardja (@vikirahardja), employed it to build strong personal branding. The purpose of this study is to describe how a microblog can be used as a way to build personal appeal on the @vikirahardja Instagram account. The data analysis technique used was qualitative content analysis by looking at and examining the meaning of a text message contained in microblog content based on the personal branding concept of Peter Montoya. The results revealed that Viki Rahardja had met the criteria in the formation of personal branding according to eight main concepts: specialization, leadership, being a good personality figure, having visibility, highlighting distinctiveness, having values and behaviors that match him (unity), being consistent/persistence, and providing goodwill and positive values to all audiences.

Keywords: Instagram, social media, microblog, personal branding.

1. INTRODUCTION

Social media is part of the new media designed to expand the interaction among audiences. Users can share experiences, daily activities, and knowledge widely and freely through social media. Interacting on social media is an alternative for individuals to introduce themselves and is referred to as personal branding[1]. Self-promoting activities on social media as a brand are relatively cheap, easy, and efficient [2] [3].

Specifically, Instagram is a photography-based social networking service whose function is almost similar to Twitter [4]. As a microblogging medium, Twitter users can only send and read messages with a maximum of 140 characters [5]. However, Instagram highlights photos and videos with additional captions reaching 2200 characters. In Indonesia, Instagram is quite popular; data from statistica.com as of April 2021 [6] reported that the number of Instagram users, especially in Indonesia, reached 87.8 million (second only to the United States).

Furthermore, microblogging involves social media users writing in short, concise, and clear versions and is expected to interact with the audience quickly. Microblogs can be used to build a personal brand through Twitter [7] or Instagram [8].

Currently, social media is the most appropriate and easiest place to actualize oneself. It is because almost everyone is already active online, and it is easy to find someone and their activities [3]. Several aspects needed in the strategy to build personal branding include the planning process that can be applied for the long term because, usually, personal branding success takes a long time [9]. In addition, personal branding prioritizes quality and originality. Meanwhile, [10] building personal branding takes a creative strategy, a process of gathering relevant information, and a level of digital understanding. A personal brand can control how the perception or perspective of others towards a person. With personal branding, a person can influence other people's perceptions of him as he wants [5]. This form of personal branding is usually done to create a positive perception of a person for the audience and can be used as a marketing tool.

Moreover, the development of information technology and social media makes it important to build personal branding, not only in social reality but also in virtual space. Personal branding is an individual's investment to get a positive image from society [11]. However, not everyone understands how to build a good personal brand. In fact, it can have a

positive impact on his development. Someone with a strong personal brand is easier to notice as they share what they do appropriately with people with similar passions.

On the other hand, the barista profession in Indonesia has been increasingly recognized in recent times. It is inseparable from the growing culture of drinking coffee, especially among young people. Through Instagram, baristas try to convey messages to the public in the form of information and experiences related to the coffee sector, for example, self-development, coffee brewing techniques, how to build a coffee business or their achievements as baristas. The success of baristas to influence their viewers has been proven by the feature services available on Instagram, such as Instastory, microblogging, TikTok, and Instagram reels. As a place to do personal branding, Instagram is also used by Viki Rahardja. He is a barista influencer who uses personal branding through his Instagram account @vikirahardja. As of November 5, 2021, his account had 295,000 followers. Starting from being a barista and studying latte art, Viki actively uses Instagram by sharing videos of making latte art to his journey to participating in latte art championships.

In addition, several barista influencers actively use social media to get closer to their fans, such as Restu Adam, who is active in uploading latte art techniques through his Instagram account. It is different from Viki Rahardja, who is more focused on creating microblogging content by discussing topics about coffee and baristas. Viki uses microblog as a medium for discussion. Through this media, Viki provides information and uses it as an alternative to communicating with his followers. For this reason, this research is interesting because, in today's era, microblog content on Instagram can be more helpful for disseminating information quickly, instantly, and accurately, with easy-to-understand sentences. However, the problem that occurs today is that there are quite a number of influencers who have not succeeded in forming personal branding through social media. It is due to distinctiveness in the perception of readers and senders of messages, lack of consistency from account owners, and dishonesty from Instagram account owners in conveying messages through writing, often known as imaging. Failure to create personal branding can also destroy a person's career, so the right strategy is needed in building personal branding.

The similarity of this study with previous studies is that they both discuss microblogging content as the formation of personal branding on social media. However, this research focuses more on Instagram social media. Previous studies have mostly discussed Twitter accounts, so there is still minimal research on microblogs on Instagram accounts. This study also seeks to examine a more comprehensive study than previous research. In this study, eight elements of personal branding are reviewed: specialization, leadership, being a good personality figure, having visibility, highlighting distinctiveness, having values and behaviors appropriate to him, consistent, and providing positive values to all audiences on Instagram accounts. The researchers observed the communication between Viki and the audience to enrich the analysis.

The account @vikirahardja was chosen because he is one who actively creates content in the form of a microblog on Instagram and interacts with many of his followers. It also has an impact on this scientific study. This study discusses the use of microblogging as one of the uses for personal branding on Instagram. From the background described, the researchers were interested and inspired by the existence of the @vikirahardja account.

The formulation of the problem taken from the background above is "How can microblog be used as a way to build personal branding on the @vikirahardja Instagram account?"

2. LITERATURE REVIEW
2.1. New Media

The new media theory, developed by Pierre Levy [12], explains that this theory discusses the development of media. There are two views in this theory; first, regarding the view of social interaction, which distinguishes the media according to their proximity to face-to-face interaction. The second view is the World Wide Web (WWW), which is a means of information with openness, flexibility, and dynamism. Through this view, humans gain new knowledge and experiences. New media gives rise to virtual reality, where new media phenomena can allow users to use the widest possible space and can be used freely. Castells [13] calls new media a force that drives the emergence of social network dominance and audience-centeredness. New media are also closely related to the internet, online media based on technology, interactive, very flexible, and both private and public. The existence of new media can also show a different identity in the real world of its users.

Some characteristics of new media are interconnectivity, namely having high relationship skills and being "real-time", access to audiences that can be used to communicate interpersonally, and can be used as mass media to the general public. Users of new media can connect quickly and easily. New media uses are also diverse and ubiquitous [14].

The existence of new media today turns out to bring a positive aspect, namely, with all its advantage, the public is given the convenience of communicating and finding the information they need [15]. However, from the negative side, people experience dependence, such as having an addiction to look at the smartphone screen. Still, new media are also proven to provide effective communication in various fields in politics, business, education, and socio-culture [16].

2.2. Microblogging

The concept of microblogging is defined as a form of blogging in which users can write text updates (less than 200 characters) about any information and then send it to anyone [17]. Microblog first appeared in mid-2006 with viral on Twitter and has become a good social media in creating content since it consistently uses short messages rather than long messages. In addition, microblogs are also often found on Instagram social media.

With each of these social media features, microblogging can spread quickly, and the content is more liked. Blogs generally contain long, detailed articles, are difficult to get people interested in reading, and have an attachment to blogs for a long time [18]. Compared to existing blogging, the advantages of microblog are that it can create content with short character writing limitations and fast speeds in meeting communication needs. Another advantage of a microblog is that it can convey events, opinions, activities, and the development of user status, without having to involve the medium, such as webpages, online chat, and the essence of cybermedia [19].

Previously, Maulana [19] conducted research entitled *"The Role of Twitter Microblogging in the Online Self-Disclosure Process (Study Among Twitter Users Following @The_Discomafia),"* knowing that the role of microblogging on Twitter can indirectly change a person to be more open to the process of interpersonal communication in the scope of social media. Meanwhile, Narida's [8] research examined the personal branding of Jokowi's youngest son in microblogging media via Twitter @kaesangp. The result found eight main concepts by [20] to build Kae Sang's personal branding as a banana seller through Twitter microblogging.

2.3. Personal Branding

Personal branding controls how other people will perceive someone before they make direct contact with that person [21]. Based on what Montoya and Vandehey mentioned, personal branding can provide the first assessment of other people's perceptions of a person through physical appearance, attitudes, behavior, or things deliberately shared with others before they decide to have direct contact with that person.

A strong personal brand concept seeks to communicate values, personality, and ideas about one's capabilities to the audience [20]. In this case, every human being needs to know how to create a good reputation to show his privileges and advantages. Besides, strong personal branding can be an important asset today. Personal branding is divided into a personal brand identity and personal brand image [22]. To create a personal brand and a good reputation, it is essential to manage both. Social media, related to this, is often used as a forum for the existence of branding activities, where users can display a good image so that they can be accepted and liked by many people and can be role models.

The main concept of building a personal brand, according to Peter Montoya, can be seen from the following [23]:

a.　　The Law of Specialization
A great personal brand focuses on a particular strength, skill, or achievement. The right specialization can make a personal brand look credible. Some of these specializations include ability – a good initial vision and mission; behavior – behaviors and skills in understanding technology and information; lifestyle – have a good lifestyle; mission – a thought to motivate oneself; product – create a good product; profession and service.
b.　　The Law of Leadership
Leadership character is needed in the environment, especially in terms of decision-making and direction for followers. A personal brand that reflects a person's power and credibility will shape the character of a leader.
c.　　The Law of Personality
Having a good personality, as he is, and accepting all his imperfections certainly describes an individual's personality in all aspects of a personal brand.
d.　　The Law of Visibility
A person promotes and markets himself in various opportunities to make himself seen by others. Basically, visibility is more important than ability.
e.　　The Law of Distinctiveness
Distinctiveness needs to be highlighted to create a more effective personal brand. Distinctiveness is needed to shape perceptions to be memorable and superior.
f.　　The Law of Unity
A person's personal life must be in accordance with the values and behaviors that have been built from his personal brand. His personal life reflects the self-image he wants to display in his personal branding.
g.　　The Law of Persistence
One must stick to the personal brand concept that he formed from the start, without hesitation to change it. Consistency over time in the personal branding process will help build trust.
h.　　The Law of Goodwill
A personal brand will be better and last longer if someone is judged by a positive audience. Therefore, a personal brand must provide useful goodwill and bring positive values.

In this study, the analysis applied a form of personal branding from microblogging content to Viki Rahardja's Instagram posts through the concept proposed by Peter Montoya called "The Eight Laws of Personal Branding."

Further, conveying messages utilizing social media has proven to be very effective and has a positive impact in building one's personal brand, supported by several studies [24][25][26]. Other

research shows the successful role of the TikTok application as a personal branding strategy effort on Instagram [27]. Within 15 seconds, an athlete can get incredible fan engagement using TikTok on Instagram[28]. The use of stories has also proven successful in building personal branding [29].

3. METHODOLOGY

Qualitative research was used by researchers to obtain information about how Viki Rahardja builds personal branding from his Instagram account posts through content in the form of a microblog. The researchers employed data analysis techniques in the form of qualitative content analysis to identify, process, analyze, and find all microblog factors as a form of personal branding in the @vikirahardja Instagram account. With this analysis, the meaning of the message or text content can be seen in the components, such as expressions, words, statements, and others. Qualitative content analysis is also not only observing words or extracting content in general but also examining meaning, themes, and patterns in a particular text that are more specific [30].

The researchers utilized this technique because qualitative content analysis not only examines the contents of communication manifest (visible or explicit messages) but can also analyze the content of communication in the form of latent messages or implied. This technique is more accurate to see trends in media content based on context (content in documents or texts), process (how the media production process or message content is made), and emergence (the gradual formation of the meaning of a message through understanding and interpretation) [31].

The population of this research was posts made by Viki Rahardja through his Instagram account @vikirahardja starting on June 6, 2020, when Viki had just started to create microblog content. In determining the informants or samples, a purposive sampling method was used by determining the sample based on certain criteria. The criteria in this study included forms of writing on Instagram @vikirahardja, namely captions in one corner saying "microblog," which contained a topic packaged and designed, and the content was not too long and wordy.

The researchers also used the unit of analysis that serves as a guide for smoothing data recording. The units of analysis first is personal branding includes The Law of Specialization, The Law of Leadership, The Law of Personality, The Law of Distinctiveness, The Law of Visibility, The Law of Unity, The Law of Persistence, and The Law of Goodwill. Second, Microblog content: includes posts, colors, content titles, upload times, and other users' comments

The method of data collection was in the form of non-participant observation. As observers, the researchers did not have direct participation as long as the informant carried out various activities [32]. Meanwhile, the documentation method employed was in the form of photo files, articles, and data related to microblogs in building personal branding.

After the data were collected, the next step was to process and analyze them using an interactive model consisting of three components: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion testing (Miles and Huberman in [33]). The researchers used the validity test, namely the data triangulation technique, by checking the data through several sources [33]. The sources in question were personal writings, pictures, and photos from the @vikirahardja Instagram account.

4. RESULTS

Viki Rahardja's microblog contents published through his Instagram account @vikirahardja starting from June 6, 2020, were 81 posts, and of the number, 18 posts were in the form of videos with the concept of microblog concept until November 6, 2021. Based on the primary concepts in building personal branding, according to Peter Montoya [23], the research results were obtained using data collection techniques from microblog content posts on Viki Rahardja's Instagram account @vikirahardja, as follows.

4.1. The Law of Specialization

Brands are built around one area of specialization, which is useful for keeping the brand looking simple. Through the specialization concept, there are seven ways: ability, behavior, lifestyle, mission, product, profession, and service.

a. Ability

Viki Rahardja has introduced himself as a barista. He has shared his experience as a barista in his microblog content. It can be seen from his microblog content post on October 18, 2020, with the title *Sustenance from the Customer*. There was #LetMeTellMyStory, where Viki told his experience when he became a barista. In several microblog posts, for instance, on June 7, 2020, in the title *KOPI*, Viki Rahardja also introduced himself as a coffee machine salesman because he is part of the team in Toffin.id, a platform provider company for coffee business development.

b. Behavior

Viki Rahardja has tried to present a personality that emphasizes the behavioral side by always maintaining grammar in every comment and being humble toward anyone. Viki has been a very open person towards various experiences from netizens. Viki's way of replying to comments or stories has never been offensive. He has tried to put in polite words with a little extra humor. Viki Rahardja's

microblog posts on his Instagram account also discussed the coffee industry more.

c. *Lifestyle*

Lifestyle segmentation includes lifestyle patterns and market segmentation, which places a person into several groups based on activities, interests, and opinions [34]. In this study, in building personal branding on his microblog content, Viki has not displayed a lifestyle even though almost all his microblog contents discussed the modern life of today's young people who drink coffee and come to coffee shops. Based on this, the researchers stated that Viki Rahardja fulfilled this concept, but he has not applied his lifestyle to his personal branding in his microblog content.

d. *Mission*

In various microblog content that Viki uploaded, he has been consistently created content by showing that he is a senior barista with various experiences and wants to share those experiences. Not always uploading questions from netizens, he has also provided insight with credible sources listed. Like the example uploaded on August 10, 2021, with the title *Coffee Makes Stomach Sick?* Viki gave a detailed answer.

e. *Product*

Starting from being a barista for two years, he began to learn the technique of making latte art, which eventually led Viki to participate in various latte art competitions. His skills and knowledge have resulted in him becoming an Indonesia Latte Art Champion Finalist in 2014. Although his academic background has nothing to do with the coffee industry, Viki is now known as a senior barista who has the expertise, experience, and abilities.

f. *Profession*

Specialization in the form of a profession has been shown by Viki Rahardja as an effort to build personal branding as someone who is already a senior in the coffee business industry. Viki now works as a Barista Trainer and Sales Marketing Team at PT Toffin Indonesia, a coffee business platform that has made his name more known to many people. It will make people more convinced that Viki Rahardja has special expertise in coffee and the industry so that people will have more confidence when seeking knowledge about coffee.

g. *Service*

The law of specialization in the form of Viki Rahardja's service shows from the discussion of his microblog content, which helps answer many questions and complaints of netizens. For example, in the upload on June 14, 2020, *Learning Coffee?* Viki explained how to get started with coffee for the first time. Next, Viki shared several barista schools that can be used as a reference for learning coffee and baristas.

4.2. The Law of Leadership

As a senior barista, Viki has been considered knowledgeable and has much experience in the coffee industry. Many have asked Viki for advice regarding experience in this field. Even more, most netizens call him *'Bang'* or *'Pak Boss'* as his nickname. With this, the perception of his followers will see Viki as a leader in the coffee industry, who may be followed in his footsteps and teachings.

4.3. The Law of Personality

Like in his microblog content, Viki has always invited everyone to discuss any issues in the coffee industry. In fact, Viki has also uploaded comments from other users and then becomes a discussion for microblog content. In addition, he has often replied to comments with polite sentences. It indicates that Viki Rahardja has been a humble and open-minded person. In accordance with what Viki uploaded on his personal Instagram account @vikirahardja, he has prioritized the behavior side, which is the identity he wants to display. It will also form a positive image of Viki Rahardja to attract people to him.

4.4. The Law of Visibility

Viki Rahardja has always been diligent in uploading microblog content with up-to-date discussions about the intricacies of coffee and could be accepted by a wide audience. The microblog design concept has also always been a monochrome background, written in capital letters. Monochrome colors give an elegant impression of the appearance and look simple and neutral. Meanwhile, capital letters used will look firm and clear. Related to this, a person's success in building personal branding can be seen from the continuous and consistent display of himself[8].

4.5. The Law of Distinctiveness

Things that have made Viki Rahardja different from other barista influencers can be seen from the microblog content posts that not only raise the issue of baristas but also show the perspective of consumers who come to a coffee shop and the owner's point of view in running a business in the coffee industry. The way he composed the writing pages in the microblog has also been different, starting from the topic title, followed by questions from the customer's point of view, theoretical explanations, and then motivational writing to his readers. The relaxed writing style that looked close to the reader also added a difference for a Viki Rahardja. It is in accordance with Narida's research in the title *"Kang Pisang": Personal Branding of Jokowi's Youngest Son in Microblogging Media"* [8] that personal brand requires that it be displayed uniquely and differently from the appearance of its competitors

4.6. The Law of Unity

Viki's personal brand as a senior barista shown on his Instagram account has been in line with his daily life as an owner at a coffee shop called *Kopi Bu Dokter* and as a consumer when he came to a coffee shop. Some of his microblog contents also discussed his personal experience as a barista. Based on the example of the writing below, it can be seen that Viki also talked about facts about his meeting experience with customers who discussed the details of each coffee character, and they discussed with each other what they felt.

4.7. The Law of Persistence

Viki has always been consistent with what he created in his microblog content about whatever was happening in the coffee industry, with topics he often brought up of coffee and baristas. His persistence in creating content has always been hashtagged as a sign of the content topic, such as #curhatbarista, #curhatnetizen, #curhatowner, #curhatnetizen, #tanyanetizen. It is in accordance with Narida's research in the title *"Kang Pisang": Personal Branding of Jokowi's Youngest Son in Microblogging Media"*[8] that the formation of personal branding will require a process and time that is not short through the hashtags he provides.

4.8. The Law of Goodwill

Viki Rahardja has always made a quote at the end of the microblog content slide on his Instagram account. The quote contained motivation to the readers in a unique and interesting language. The article completed a series of Viki's writings in a theme for his microblog. It was intended that a Viki Rahardja could be useful for others, apart from theoretical knowledge and experience content, but also encouraging content to the readers. Viki's microblog content also has always been shared the experiences of netizens, and then he replied in a relaxed and easy style with a little joke; still, it was acceptable to everyone.

5. DISCUSSION

Viki has used various features on Instagram to interact with netizens. The comments column on the upload was added as a caption in the form of questions or netizens' opinions. Many of Viki's microblog content posts also gave positive comments, where they discussed by telling their respective experiences. Some netizens also asked for advice on the problems in the coffee industry. Here, the values formed by Viki Rahardja in becoming a barista influencer on social media were not only uploading his daily activities in the coffee industry but also sharing experiences, knowledge, and good interactions with netizens.

Based on the main concept in building personal branding, according to Peter Montoya [23], the researchers can conclude that Viki has complied with the Law of Persistence, where he has had the determination to create microblog content with the topic of coffee and baristas. However, he has a drawback in the upload time of the content, which is not always consistent. In addition, several re-uploads were found.

In addition, Viki has packed his microblog content in simple, easy-to-understand, and organized colors while still paying attention to the composition of the content and always filtering the language style of the content that would be uploaded to the @vikirahardja account so that all people could accept its microblog content. According to the researchers, it is in accordance with the concept of forming a personal branding that must show good integrity. Integrity in forming and building personal branding must adhere to the moral code and behavior that has been set so that it is seen as good by the audience [35].

6. CONCLUSION

Based on the verified analysis results, as a barista influencer, Viki Rahardja has succeeded in building personal branding through a microblog in the @vikirahardja Instagram account. In general, the formation of personal branding can be seen from the choice of theme, type, uniqueness, the direction of writing, and the number of comments from other users. Of course, special themes are needed from Instagram owners, which show their actualization to be different from the others. A writing style that is creative, unique, inspiring, and easy to understand can also attract the attention of many people so that it will continue to be known.

It is in accordance with the eight main concepts in building personal branding mentioned by Peter Montoya [23]. First, the concept of specialization is seen from Viki Rahardja, specifically discussing the coffee industry. Second, Viki Rahardja has often been called *"Bang"* or *"Pak Boss"* because netizens think he is a senior; it is in accordance with the concept of leadership. The third is the concept of personality; Viki has had a humble and open-minded personality because he has always replied to anyone's comments on his posts and even uploaded comments from that person to be used as content for his microblog. Fourth, the concept of visibility is seen from the design used, consistent with a monochrome background, with the title writing always using capital letters. In addition, Viki Rahardja has also regularly updated the content of his microblog. Fifth, related to the concept of distinctiveness, Viki has raised the point of view of consumers who came to a coffee shop and the owner's point of view in running

a coffee business, thus distinguishing it from other barista influencer Instagram accounts. Sixth, regarding the concept of unity, Viki has displayed his daily activities in the virtual world according to life in the real world. Seventh, in the concept of persistence, Viki has always been consistent with the branding goals he wants to achieve, namely as a coffee expert barista. Eighth is the concept of goodwill; Viki has always provided experiences and motivated his readers with the words written on the microblog.

Further research can be carried out with the same subject and object, but it can be distinguished from the use of platforms to dig deeper into the concept of personal branding. It is because differences in social media platforms allow for different effects to be received. In addition, research can be conducted to test the perceptions of followers of the Instagram account quantitatively to measure effectiveness and see the response directly by the audience. The next research is also expected to examine personal branding on social media with different theoretical concepts to complete the study of science.

AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTION

In this study, the authors contributed by dividing the tasks:
Fadhila Azzahra: conceptualizing, identifying methods, conducting investigations and searching for data sources, and writing original draft form.
Nieldya Nofandrilla: reviewing and editing the script.

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