

# The Role of Personal Branding in Increasing Generation Z's Career Success

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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 with a sample of 116 students. 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; Social Media Usage; Islamic Human Value; Personal Skill; 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 dengan sampel 116 mahasiswa. Teknik pengumpulan data menggunakan kuesioner yang disebar melalui platform digital yaitu google form. Teknik analisis menggunakan Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) yang 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 development has always been accompanied by significant social and economic changes. The rapid development of communication and human interaction contributes significantly to intergenerational differences. Unlike its predecessors, Generation Z (those born between 1996 and 2010) is a population that grew up alongside the explosion of social media (Pinto & Paramita, 2021). The distinguishing factor between Millennials and Generation Z is the use of technology from an early age and its impact

**JIMKES**

Jurnal Ilmiah Manajemen  
Kesatuan  
Vol. 12 No. 03, 2024  
STIE Kesatuan  
ISSN 2337 – 7860

on their online behavior. Generation Z is the youngest generation entering the workforce today (Dash et al., 2021).

One of the characteristics of Generation Z globally, including Indonesia, is their savvy in using technology. According to Dell Technologies (2017) 'The Gen Z effect' research conducted in Indonesia shows that 94% of Generation Z in Indonesia 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 today's digital era, especially in the context of young professionals who are ready to enter the workforce. Traditionally, personal branding has been the concern and interest of most people such as CEOs and celebrities. Every individual has intrinsic personal branding as a result of personality qualities, past experiences and development, and communicating with others. In this sense, everyone already has a kind of self-image (Kushal & Nargundkar, 2021).

Basic human values refer to values that will become the core of humans such as truth, honesty, loyalty, love, peace, etc. (Aisyah et al., 2023). Technology brings changes to humans, especially generation Z, with these changes Islam not only regulates in terms of worship but in the use of social media into positive things. With all the current developments, Muslims must prepare Islamic principles and values in various aspects of life including 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 a major source of identity, culture and association. Social media has a disadvantage from an Islamic perspective in that it can lead to *riya'* in showing off one's activities. However, social media also helps foster human values, especially Islamic values of helping each other, such as sharing which will be easily seen by other social media users. Having Islamic values in the current era will help in human relations, especially in creating value differences because it has a strong foundation (Malik et al., 2019).

The increasing research on training and development as an attribute of personal branding has made employers emphasize the importance of personal branding to gain a competitive advantage (Tanwar & Prasad, 2017). According to Khan et al., (2021) said that the selection made, based on the problem that the IT sector faces high pressure in maintaining professional skills due to rapid technological advances. According to Jacobson, (2020) explains that self-marketing in the context of business school students in Helsinki, Finland which states that this is the process of students developing and communicating their abilities and skills to be superior to other job seekers.

This research refers to the results of research conducted by Althof et al., (2022) on the role of Islamic human value and personal branding to increase career success in the millennial Muslim generation at one of the Private Islamic Universities in Semarang. However, in this study there were several limitations, including self-response bias for measurement variables, and the distribution of questionnaires only focused on one field and one department, namely one of the Faculties of Economics at a Private Islamic University in Semarang, Central Java with a sample focus on final year students of the millennial Muslim generation aged 20-26 years. Therefore, this study will develop a model and confirm 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. In addition, this research will also be oriented towards Generation Z (Gen Z) who are currently entering the workforce and their characters are synonymous with supporting a more dynamic, interactive work process from authentic personal branding.

The purpose of this research is to analyze the role of personal branding to improve Generation Z's career success: Analysis of Social Media Use, Islamic Human Value, and Skills.

## **THEORETICAL REVIEW**

### **Social Media Usage**

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). These digital platforms provide the ability to increase employee productivity by connecting employees with global resources. Currently, social media is used to get technical assistance and express ideas in the workplace. Moreover, social media users can express 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 is an important input from employees (Shuai et al., 2019).

### **Islamic Human Value**

Human values can influence a person's attitude, this can also affect the changes that exist in him as a preference to achieve something. Humans are very objective creatures and have freedom of choice, including in behavior and action. The way humans behave is strongly influenced by the environment. Humans are also aware that they are God's creation and of course it will affect them as a person and how they relate to God (Malik et al., 2019). Islamic human values themselves arise from human values studied in Islam and are adjusted to Islamic rules. This adjustment can be made because religion is one of the social institutions that greatly influences attitudes, values, and behavior. As 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 easily adapt to various changes, given the heterogeneous work environment and the many coworkers with different values (Frendika et al., 2018).

### **Skills**

Skills or commonly called personal skills refer to the ability to carry out tasks or activities. Personal skills are skills that are acquired and developed through competence and direct training. Individuals need to pay attention to developing their personal skills throughout their lives (Rizan & Utama, 2020). Personal skills are related 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 advance in the demands of an ever-changing work environment and remain an asset to employers (Parashakti et al., 2020).

### **Personal branding**

A personal brand is the expectations, images, and perceptions it creates in the minds of others when they see or hear a person's name. Personal branding itself has a definition of the various attributes, values, drivers, strengths, and personal passions that individuals have to distinguish themselves from others. It is intended that a person or an institution can collaborate with individuals who have personal branding. Personal brands effectively communicate an individual's distinctive value and differentiate them from their competitors (Basabain et al., 2021). Everyone has personal branding, 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 passion, achievements, courtesy, and communication based on respect (Kushal & Nargundkar, 2021).

## Career Success

Career success is the outcome of one's career experience. Conventionally, it refers to upward physical and career mobility, often accompanied by important positions, prestige and financial rewards. Career success is specifically defined as an individual's work experience over a certain time. According to (Ul 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 then brings important results to the organization in the form of responsively achieving their organizational goals. According to Tambengi et al., (2016) defines career success as the result of a person's long-term experiences and goals. For individuals, career success is a way to fulfill the need for achievement and power. Therefore, career success is able to increase the quantity or quality of one's life. In each individual, the level of career success refers to materialistic terms, power, and satisfaction.

## Research Framework

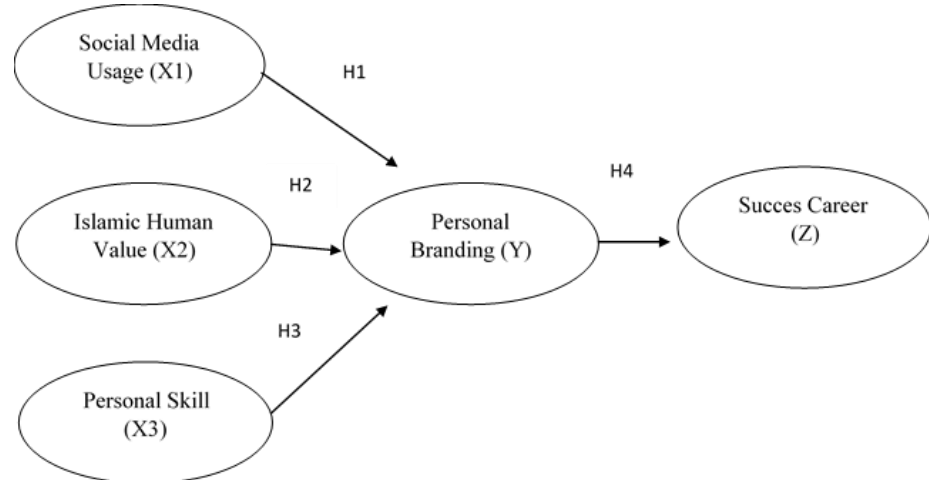


Figure 1. Research Framework

## Research Hypothesis

### The Effect of Social Media Use on Personal branding

Several previous studies have stated that the use of social media has the ability to provide a forum for a person to build a self-image or public perception of himself. Jacobson, (2020) also states that students who show their personal branding through the use of social media aim to prepare themselves for the world of work. Meanwhile, Trang et al. (2024) also found that the relationship between social media use and personal branding has a positive effect. Personal branding itself has a very important role in designing their lives, so literacy and use of social media will help interpersonal networks in the long term. Frenidika et al., (2018) emphasized that the key to making a difference through social media is to be proactive in presenting yourself, thus influencing the information that people find. Liu & Suh, (2017) have the idea that personal branding practices provide enormous opportunities and autonomy to social media users.

**Hypothesis 1: The use of social media has a positive and significant effect on personal branding.**

### The influence of Islamic Human Value on Personal branding

Human values can influence a person's attitude, this can also affect the changes that exist in him as a preference to achieve something. Humans are very objective creatures and have freedom of choice, including in behavior and action. The way humans behave is strongly influenced by the environment. Humans also have a foundation as social beings who will naturally interact with each other between one individual and another. Humans are also aware that they are God's creation and of course it will affect them as a person

and the way they relate to God (Malik et al., 2019). Research conducted by (Frendika et al., 2018) said that human values have a significant influence on personal branding. Strength in a person, values, personality, is a strengthening aspect in developing personal branding even in finding a job 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). According to Gupta & Sharma (2016) human values and skills are very important in increasing one's productivity. Successful personal branding requires effective management of perceptions and control which will affect how others perceive and think about a person.

**Hypothesis 2: Islamic Human Value has a positive and significant effect on Personal branding**

#### **The influence of skills on personal branding**

Research from Jacobson, (2020) shows that in order to build a strong personal brand, one must develop strategies and actions to show their characteristics. On the topic of building skills, important aspects are very influential including the existence of skill skills that must be possessed by individuals, such as communication skills and leadership skills. Personal branding allows them to showcase their communication skills, personality, and interests (Francis & Hoefel, 2018). Research (Kushal & Nargundkar, 2021) found that skills can serve as a framework that can be used to build company-oriented personal branding by business school students. These techniques include online and offline networking and positive perceptions of social media both professional (LinkedIn) and informal (Facebook, Instagram). According to Dolan's (2017) research shows that 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 oral and written. This can encourage one's personal branding.

**Hypothesis 3: Skills have a positive and significant effect on personal branding**

#### **The influence of Personal branding on Career Success**

The current trend of digitalization is an opportunity for individuals to offer their skills and competencies globally and benefit the organization. This is done through personal branding, or in other words, by making the individual's value proposition known to the target audience. Syachrony et al., (2023) showed that individuals who apply self-promotion behaviors show greater career satisfaction compared to those who do not apply these behaviors. 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) found that personal branding as an intentional individual career behavior emerged in response to the increasing emergence of new communication technologies in all parts of people's lives and work as well as changes in the labor market and the world of work. In this new form of work, personal branding is an important factor determining one's career success as a customizable career behavior that aims to package and display one's professional identity to meet the needs of its target audience.

**Hypothesis 4: Personal branding has a positive and significant effect on Career Success**

### **RESEARCH METHOD**

The population used in this study were students of the Management Study Program, Faculty of Economics and Business, Muria Kudus University, totaling 3846 according to the Higher Education Database (PDDikti). Using purposive sampling technique with the criteria of at least 8th semester students and Muslims.

The sample used in this study amounted to 116 students from the Management Study Program of the Faculty of Economics and Business, Muria Kudus University. The data collection technique in this study was to use a questionnaire in the form of a google form, where the google form link was distributed to students who fit the predetermined

criteria. The data collection process through the 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.

## RESULTS

This study used Partial Least Squares (PLS) to analyze the research model with the help of SmartPLS 3 software. Although the prediction of measurement and structural parameters occurs simultaneously, the application of PLS models usually occurs in two stages. The first step is to assess the measurement model using confirmatory factor analysis. This also estimates the reliability and validity of the theoretical constructs. Then, the second step is to estimate the structural model testing of the associations (paths) between hypotheses in this research model.

To determine the reliability of a measurement model, the most commonly used method is to measure its internal consistency. The internal consistency of this measurement model is measured using the method proposed by Fornell and Larcker (1981), composite reliability (CR), Cronbach's alpha and average variance extracted (AVE). Cronbach's alpha or composite reliability value must be  $> 0.7$  is said to have a good reliability value, but a value of 0.6-0.7 is still acceptable for explanatory research (Ghozali, 2014). The results of the PLS model evaluation run 1 algorithm show that the outer load is more than 0.70. This means that all indicators of all variables are valid so that no indicators need to be removed. The test results show that the measurement model is quite reliable (Table 1).

**Table 1. Measurement Model Evaluation**

<i>Latent variable</i>	<i>Items</i>	<i>Convergent Validity</i>		<i>Internal Consistency Reliability</i>		<i>DV</i>
		<i>Loadings &gt;0,7</i>	<i>AVE &gt;0,5</i>	<i>Composite Reliability &gt;,6</i>	<i>Cronbach Alpha &gt;0,6</i>	<i>HTMT</i>
Social Media Usage	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				
<i>Islamic human value</i>	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				
<i>Personal branding</i>	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 (Table 2) is used to measure the ability of exogenous constructs (social media use, Islamic human values, and skills) to explain endogenous variables (personal branding and career success). Chin (1998) set three values for R<sup>2</sup> namely 0.19, 0.33, and 0.67 as small, medium and large values. In this study, the R square for personal branding and career success variables is large, namely 0.641 and 0.591. So it can be concluded that the influence of the variables of social media use, Islamic human value, and skills on personal branding and career success is 64% and 59%. While the rest is influenced by other factors that are not included in the variables studied in this study.

**Table 2. Coefficient of Determination**

Variables	R Square	R Square Adjusted
<i>Personal branding</i>	0,641	0,631
<i>Success career</i>	0,591	0,588

Hypothesis testing contained in the table below, shows that the results in this study resulted in hypotheses 1 to 4 being accepted, which can be seen in table 3.

**Table 3. Path Coefficient**

	<i>Path Coefficients</i>	<i>Standart Deviation</i>	<i>T Statistics</i>	<i>P-value</i>
H1 : Social media usage → <i>Personal branding</i>	0,220	0,086	2,566	0,011
H2 : <i>Islamic human value</i> → <i>Personal branding</i>	0,170	0,074	2,304	0,022
H3: Skills → <i>Personal branding</i>	0,516	0,096	5,374	0,000
H4 : <i>Personal branding</i> → Career success	0,769	0,057	13,519	0,000

Note: \**P-value* < 0,05

The results of Hypothesis 1 test 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 in this construct relationship is 2.566. This means that with the use of good social media, it will shape the creation of individual personal branding.

The results of hypothesis 2 test provide results that Islamic human value has a positive and significant effect on personal branding because the p value is 0.022 or smaller than 0.05. The Original Sample (Path Coefficient) value is 0.170. The t-statistic value in this construct relationship is 2.304. This means that the existence of Islamic values in humans will shape individual personal branding.

The results of Hypothesis 3 test show that skills have a positive and significant effect on personal branding because the p value is 0.000 < 0.05. The Original Sample (Path Coefficient) value of 0.516 indicates the direction of the relationship is positive. The t-statistic value in this construct relationship is 5.374. This means that the existence of skills or skills from individuals will form individual personal branding.

The results of Hypothesis 4 test show that personal branding has a positive and significant effect on career success because the p value is 0.000 < 0.05. Original Sample (Pat

Coefficient) of 0.769 indicates the direction of the relationship is positive. The t-statistic value in this construct relationship is 13.519. This means that the existence of individual personal branding will increase individual career success.

## **Discussion**

### **The effect of social media use on personal branding**

The use of social media has a positive and significant effect on personal branding. Individuals who post information about themselves so that others know how the individual's character can improve their personal branding. Individuals who often express their ideas and opinions and can identify and get recognition from friends can build their personal branding because it makes the individual have a good reputation in life so that it will be beneficial for individual career success.

This is in accordance with research (Trang et al., 2024) which 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 has a positive effect. Personal branding itself has a very important role in designing their lives, so literacy and use of social media will help interpersonal networks in the long term.

### **The influence of Islamic Human Value on Personal branding**

Islamic human value has a positive and significant effect on personal branding. Individuals who are istiqomah and able to act balanced in life can shape their personal branding in Islamic rules. Individuals who always practice Islamic values in doing work can form an individual religious image so that it can be influential in achieving success in doing work. And individuals who are able to practice Islamic values in daily life make these individuals have a good reputation in life.

This is in accordance with research (Frendika et al., 2018) saying that human values have a significant influence on personal branding. Strength in a person, values, personality, is a strengthening aspect in developing personal branding even in finding a job later (Minor-Cooley & Parks-Yancy, 2020). 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).

### **Effect of Skills on Personal branding**

Skills have a positive and significant effect on personal branding. Individuals who have skills in presentation, writing, and creating content in fulfilling their duties and responsibilities can shape their personal branding. Individuals who are good at using technology and building their social media profiles can form a positive image for them that is beneficial in career success. Interpersonal skills and social media skills are also factors that can affect an individual's reputation in life.

The same research was also found in Kushal & Nargundkar's (2021) research which found that skills can serve as a framework that can be used to build company-oriented personal branding by individuals. These techniques include online and offline networking and positive perceptions of social media both professional (LinkedIn) and informal (Facebook, Instagram). According to Khan et al.'s research, (2021) shows that 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 oral and written. This can encourage one's personal branding.

### **Effect of Personal branding on career success**

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 shape their confident image in increasing 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 successful life is very meaningful for these individuals.

This is in line with research from (Francis & Hoefel, 2018) showing that individuals who apply self-promotion behavior show greater career satisfaction than those who do not apply 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) found that personal branding as an intentional individual career behavior emerged in response to the increasing emergence of new communication technologies in all parts of people's lives and work as well as changes in the labor market and the world of work.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the results and discussion, it is found that the development of technology today has an impact on human communication and interaction which contributes significantly to intergenerational differences. The workplace is now occupied by most of the Z generation who are proficient in the use of technology. The results of this study indicate that the personal branding of students of the Faculty of Economics and Business, Muria Kudus University can be improved by the optimal use of social media in creating their self-image, the existence of Islamic values in their daily lives and an increase in communication skills, writing skills, and interpersonal skills. The use of social media, religious values, and skills may be able to form personal branding which can determine their career opportunities for success.

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