

Research Article

Dona Trisukma's Personal Branding as a Public Speaker on the TikTok Account @donatrisukma

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Abstract.

In an increasingly digital era, social media has become an important platform for individuals to build and strengthen their professional identity. Dona Trisukma, an influencer from Semarang, has used TikTok to position herself as a public speaker with great influence, by utilizing creative content and effective interaction with her audience. A qualitative method was used to understand how Dona Trisukma, who has amassed 435.7 thousand followers on TikTok, succeeded in building a personal brand through her strong public speaking skills, educational and inspirational content, and active interaction. Her followers appreciate her authenticity and expertise in public speaking, marked by the growing number of followers on her account over time. This research is considered important in the digital era, as personal branding and public speaking, when effectively supported by the right social media platforms, particularly TikTok, can grow and find a market amid ongoing digital transformation and innovation.

Keywords: personal branding, public speaker, TikTok, Dona Trisukma

1. INTRODUCTION

Communication plays an important role in everyday life, both in personal and professional contexts. Good communication can help individuals convey values, skills, and personality in an authentic and convincing way. It is important for individuals to understand the audience in interacting and adapt the message conveyed to suit the needs and expectations of the communicant. Therefore, in communication there is a strategy called *branding*. Strategy *branding* not only applied in marketing products or services, but also applies to organizations, ideas, even individuals (1).

Personal branding is a marketing concept that has a positive relationship with various strategies implemented by individuals to promote themselves (2). In the book *The Branding Called You*, if *personal branding* applied correctly, a person can ensure that

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Published: 21 July 2025

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Knowledge E

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Selection and Peer-review under
the responsibility of the
ICoGPASS 2024: Transformation
and Innovation Conference
Committee.

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he or she will have a personal brand that can help shape an image and build a name to control how others perceive that person before they interact directly (3). By building *personal branding*, We can shape public perceptions of various aspects of a person, such as personality, speaking style, appearance, abilities, or values that give rise to positive perceptions from society, thus making it a tool for marketing communications. (4)

With increasingly fierce competition in various fields, *personal branding* it is becoming increasingly important for individuals to assert themselves. Success in *personal branding* often determined by a person's ability to communicate clearly and effectively. This involves using body language, voice intonation, and choosing the right words. In a professional context, *staff branding* can influence the perceptions of colleagues, superiors and clients towards a person. Currently, practice *personal branding* don't just use channels *offline* Of course, with the development of the times, social media has increasingly become the main tool in building their personal branding. Social media often reflects the personality of its owner. It is not surprising that social media is often used as a tool to demonstrate self-existence or build *personal branding*. Therefore, it is important for someone to display a good image or impression in order to have positive branding. Thus, strategy *branding* on social media must be done correctly in order to create the impression desired by the public.

Platform Social media such as LinkedIn, Instagram, TikTok and Twitter allow individuals to share relevant content and interact with a wider audience. TikTok has experienced extraordinary growth since it was launched in 2016 by ByteDance, a technology company from China. In a few years, TikTok has managed to become one of the most popular social media platforms in the world, based on a report from We Are Social (5), until January 2024, TikTok users in Indonesia have reached a percentage of 73.5% of the population which is equivalent to 126.83 million users in Indonesia. This figure makes Indonesia the country with the second largest number of TikTok users in the world, just behind the United States which has 148.02 million users.

TikTok's success can be attributed to several key factors such as its unique and engaging short video format, use of a sophisticated recommendation algorithm, and a very active and diverse community. The app also offers easy-to-use editing tools, making it accessible to anyone, including individuals with no experience in video production. This rapid growth of TikTok has had a significant impact on *personal branding*. *Platform* it provides a great opportunity for individuals to gain wide exposure in a short period of

time, thanks to the high virality potential of its content. TikTok makes it easy for users to discover and target *niche* specific.

In this way, TikTok helps strengthen *personal branding* in a specific field, providing the opportunity to become *influencer* Of *niche* the. TikTok offers various interesting and easily accessible features, such as music, video filters, *voice effect*, *beauty*, *timer*, *stitch*, *duet*, video editing and more (6). The content presented by creators on TikTok is very useful, providing information, knowledge and stimulating user creativity. TikTok as a platform that supports creativity is highly appreciated by its users, allowing them to express their hobbies, share information and create new, innovative and interesting things. (7)

Activity *personal branding* which is often done by *influencer* includes showing positive activities, showing off the skills they have, and providing examples of good behavior to the audience via social media. *Influencer* is someone, especially a public figure, who uses social media and has a large or significant number of followers, so that what they share on social media can influence and get responses from their followers (8). One of *influencer* who implements *personal branding* via social media account is Dona Tri Sukma.

He started his career as *master of ceremony* (MC) accidentally while at lectures. Armed with curiosity and a thirst for knowledge, he tried everything that wasn't his main focus, even before Dona knew him. *modelling* since middle school. Always hone your skills *soft skill* is the key to Dona being able to enter the world *public speaking*. In 2020, Dona then saw that digitalization opportunities would increasingly lean towards TikTok, which at that time was TikTok *booming* after being reopened by Kominfo because it had previously been blocked. When many people started to become known on TikTok, Dona herself was still working at Kominfo as a presenter *live* and touring as a reporter with the Governor of Central Java, namely Ganjar Pranowo.

Dona has good communication skills combined with her attractive appearance, this 26 year old woman has managed to generate millions of impressions on every content from her audience on TikTok, where she shares entertaining content in the form of her personal life as an MC, *host* and content creators. His expertise in creating interesting content has made him one of the popular figures in the world *platform* with the amount *followers* of 434,300 and 3,000,000 *likes* for the videos that he has consistently uploaded to the @donatrisukma (Dona Dekik) account. In some of her video content, Dona often includes *original sound* which in *dubbing* by himself with an energetic tone

of voice and able to invite comments from netizens. The biggest impression Dona's TikTok account has ever received was 8,000,000.

Many studies discuss about *personal branding* on social media, especially Tiktok, one of which is Ishihara & Oktavianti in 2021 shows that *influencer* have a character that is in line with their personal ambition, namely creating TikTok content to provide information to their followers. Next, para *influencer* also consistent with focusing on one area only, experience, and professionalism towards the audience, including being willing to make self-improvements if they receive criticism or evaluation from their followers (9). The next research carried out by Mandira & Carey resulted in the finding that the president of Oriflame was *influencer* TikTok does *personal branding* on *platform* up to para *followers* looking forward to it *posting*- the President of Oriflame as encouragement (10). A subsequent study by Mulyana & Listiani showed that TikTok Fikri Alfatah (@ficraftth) using 9 concepts *personal branding* from Hubert K. Rampersad's book. Wicku developed *personal branding* and skills as *content creator* everyday life, which includes his passion, enthusiasm, positive energy, and vibrant voice. Because of this ability, various brands can collaborate with him.

The urgency of the study of *personal branding* on Tiktok shows the importance of managing social media in a more positive direction. Deep understanding of how *influencer* can build and maintain *personal branding* on TikTok can provide valuable insight into the dynamics of digital influence, effective communication strategies, and how to leverage TikTok for professional or business purposes. Besides that, *personal branding* on TikTok can be a reflection of digital identity *influence* which affects their reputation and credibility in the real world. In a broader context, this research can help individuals and organizations perform *branding* in cyberspace.

2. Theoretical study

2.1. Strategy Branding

According to Schultz & Barnes strategy *branding* is the management of a brand which involves various activities to organize the elements within the brand with the aim of forming a brand identity (11). Gelder states that brand strategy aims to determine what the brand wants to achieve in terms of consumer attitudes and behavior (12). Brand strategy is also management that aims to regulate all brand elements related to consumer attitudes and behavior. It can also be interpreted as a communication system

that manages all points of contact with a product, service, or organization, and supports the overall business strategy. Gelder also explained that is included in the strategy *branding* are as follows:

2.1.1. Brand Positioning

Brand positioning is an attempt to design a company's offering and image so that it occupies a distinct position among competitors in the minds of consumers.

2.1.2. Brand Identity

Brand identity is a collection of brand associations that become the goal or vision of the brand strategy itself to create or maintain brand existence in the market.

2.1.3. Brand Personality

Brand personality is the characteristic of a brand that comes from what it offers so that it can be recognized by the public.

In addition, according to Schultz & Barnes, what is included in brand strategy is brand communication. Brand communication occurs when consumers interact with brands. It is important to ensure that each brand interaction strengthens the brand itself.

2.2. Personal Branding

Personal branding comes from the English term "*personal*" which means personal, and "*branding*" which means forming a brand. So, *personal branding* is an activity a person undertakes to create a personal brand. In the business world, a brand is defined as the perception or emotion of potential buyers that is formed through their various experiences with a particular product. According to McNally & Speak, if this concept is applied to a person, *personal brand* are the views and emotions that other people have towards the individual based on overall experiences in interpersonal relationships (13)

Apart from McNally's theory, this research also refers to Peter Montoya's theory which identifies three main elements for success in *personal branding*: first, clarity (*Clarity*), where personal branding must be clear in conveying who you are and what you do, which can be conveyed through photos. Second, Specialization (*Specialization*), which

emphasizes the importance of being unique to attract attention. Third, Consistency (*Consistency*), where the competition in building personal branding can be won with consistency in these efforts (3). Thus, it can be concluded that *personal branding* is an individual's activity to show the value or ability they have as an identity, with the aim of increasing the selling value of each individual.

2.2.1. Eight Laws of Personal Branding

2.2.1.1 Laws of Specialization

Brand focus on one area of excellence. *Personal brand* usually focuses on individual strengths, such as talents or achievements. There are seven main ways to specialize *personal brand*:

a. Ability specialization

Build *personal brand* through capabilities or advantages that are superior to competitors. This advantage can be proven through awards, testimonials, or documentation that becomes differentiation.

b. Behavioral specialization

Form an identity with personality, way of speaking, listening ability, and leadership ability.

c. Specialization way of life

Visible aspects of a person's life are used to form specializations.

d. Mission specialization

Personal branding formed based on individual objective assessment.

e. Product specialization

Put *brand* as a specialist in a particular product scope.

f. Professional specialization

Identify *niche market* in profession and building *personal brand* through promotions.

g. Service specialization

Choose one of the most prominent services in the domain.

2.2.1.2 Laws of leadership

Individuals are considered people who have knowledge, are respected, or have certain abilities. This rule controls *personal brand* by providing authority where the source is considered a leader in the domain. Leadership can be obtained from:

a. Superiority (*excellence*)

A person is seen as an expert in a particular field, experienced, talented, and intelligent. Performance in a role is very important. Excellence can be achieved by narrowing the scope, using the principle of “*under-promise over-deliver*” or through *word of mouth*.

b. Position (*position*)

A person has position and authority indirectly. This is achieved through action, known ambition, and publication.

c. Confession (*recognition*)

Individuals receive rewards and praise from leaders in the domain. This is achieved by publicizing the existence and awards pursued.

2.2.1.3 Laws of personality

Brand formed according to individual character from various aspects, both strengths and weaknesses. *Personal brand* must be built from genuine personality. In principle, a person must be good, but does not have to be perfect.

2.2.1.4 Laws of distinctiveness

How to express *personal brand* in a unique way.

2.2.1.5 Laws of visibility

Personal branding must be done continuously to be effective. To enter the subconscious domain, the individual must display *personal brand* consistently. No matter how great the quality *brand* a person, if it is not known to others, it will be meaningless. To increase this value, promotion, publication and marketing are needed.

2.2.1.6 Laws of unity

Exposed and unexposed behavior must be in line. According to this rule, *personal brand* can not be separated from the morals and behavior that are in *brand*.

2.2.1.7 Laws of persistence

Personal brand requires consistency to develop. *Personal brand* cannot be replaced by advertising or public relations. Key from *personal brand* what is good is building trust consistently and continuously.

2.2.1.8 Laws of goodwill

Brand becomes influential when someone has good planning in forming it *brand* the. *Personal brand* can give good results if associated with positive things such as values and ideas

2.3. Personal Branding on Social Media

Social media offers a way for individuals to exchange ideas, content, thoughts and relationships online. Social media differs from mass media in that anyone can create, comment on, and contribute to content on social media. Text, audio, video, images, and communities can take the form of social media (14). Social media offers its users a variety of ways to create and share content. For example, social networking sites are used to share updates about users' daily encounters, microblogs are used to share short messages, wikis are used to share educational information, while forums are discussion sites where participants hold conversations about specific topics, products, or events (Budz & Starosta, 2018).

Social media can be a reflection of its users. This is stated in a book by Muhamad Fadhol Tamimy entitled "*Sharing- in Personal Branding-mu, Displaying Image Self and Character on Social Media*" (15). In the book, it is stated that a person's character can be recognized just by looking at their social media account. Social media is often used as a tool for self-existence or *branding*. Therefore, it is important for someone to display a good image or impression to build positive branding. Strategy *branding* on social media must be done correctly in order to produce the desired impression from the public.

2.4. Persuasive Communication Theory

According to Suryanto, persuasive communication is a communication process that aims to change or influence the behavior, beliefs or attitudes of other people so that they act in accordance with the communicator's expectations (16). Perloff explains that persuasive communication is the process of changing a person's attitude or behavior towards a particular issue through conveying a symbolic message in a situation where the individual has the freedom to choose (17).

According to Cialdini, quoted by Liliweri (18), the principles of persuasive communication include: *reciprocation, commitment and consistency, social proof, authority, liking, And scarcity*. *Reciprocation* is an internal tendency to reciprocate what others have given us, where people tend to want reciprocity. In principle *commitment and consistency*, persuasion must pay attention to aspects of commitment and consistency, which can be seen from social media posts and behavior *influencer*. Next, principles *social proof* shows that TikTok is accepted by society, especially users *platform* the. Principle *authority* related to a person's tendency to obey people who are considered trustworthy. Principle *liking* shows that people are more easily persuaded by individuals they like. final principle, *scarcity*, shows that people are more easily persuaded by something that is rare or unique.

2.5. Tiktok

TikTok is a music video sharing mobile application that debuted in the fall of 2016. The app allows users to create and browse short video clips ranging from 15 seconds to 60 seconds in length, allowing them to share all genres of videos online. It is said that 'the medium is the message', TikTok as a medium can spread messages widely and influence various aspects (19). TikTok is the most downloaded social media app on the iOS App Store and has more than 500 million active users worldwide. TikTok is also full of various types of activities *online*. in several activities *online*, users can share their short video clips with their social networking circles, which can significantly increase TikTok exposure and strengthen its popular trends (19).

3. METHODS

This research uses a descriptive qualitative research design, which aims to clearly describe and explain realistic events observed in the field. Qualitative research methods are research approaches based on postpositivist philosophy. (20) The author chose a descriptive qualitative approach in this research to provide a comprehensive and detailed description of the strategy and process *personal branding* which was done by Dona Tri Sukma on TikTok social media until she became known as *public speaker influencer* by the public. In this research, the author conducted an in-depth interview with Dona Tri Sukma as the main informant. According to Sugiyono in Pratiwi, interviews are a data collection technique that can be carried out in a structured or unstructured manner, either in person or by telephone. (21) The purpose of this interview is to obtain information about strategy *personal branding* which was carried out by Dona Tri Sukma on social media. The data collected will be analyzed and explained according to the focus of this research.

Apart from interviews, the author also made observations based on the documentation that had been collected. This observation is one of the methods in empirical research which involves direct observation of facts in the field without any manipulation. (22) The documentation observed included content uploaded by Dona Tri Sukma, *platform* social media namely TikTok used, as well as collaborations and career achievements. The author uses criteria *personal branding* proposed by Peter Montoya and Vandehey as a reference for analyzing the data that has been collected. With these criteria, the author will evaluate research data to understand the strategy *personal branding* which was done by Dona Tri Sukma so that it can be known as *public speaker* on social media.

The data collection process in this research involved observation, interviews and documentation methods. The practice of data triangulation is used to enhance the researcher's understanding of the phenomenon under investigation, as well as the various contexts that emerge from the phenomenon. This research uses a conceptual induction methodology that starts with factual or empirical data to build interpretations in the form of perceptions, opinions or theoretical perspectives.

4. RESULTS & DISCUSSION

The data collected by the author will be analyzed using 8 *laws of personal branding* which was promoted by Peter Montoya & Rampersad to find out the strategy carried out by Dona Tri Sukma on her TikTok account. Based on these criteria, the author will carry out a detailed analysis one by one according to the data obtained through interviews, observation and documentation.

The first aspect is *laws of specialization* or abilities possessed. Based on the results of the interview, Dona is a figure who focuses on the field *public speaking*. He has always wanted to learn new things and tried to build self-confidence in every activity he does. Activities in the world *modeling* since junior high school, then taking part in competitions that sometimes required speaking in public was what made him want to learn *public speaking*. First time interested in the world *entertainment*, Dona tried to register for the Sanitation Ambassador event when she was in junior high school, but failed. Since then, talent *public speaking* his skills began to develop until he finally participated in various activities of the Anti-Drug Ambassador, HIV Ambassador, and Bontang City Tourism Ambassador. Dona continued her studies at Diponegoro University (UNDIP) and majored in industrial engineering, where while she was in college she was often offered to be an MC, one of which was during the Diponegoro Muda orientation period. That period was the beginning of Dona's career as an MC as well *host* which then spread its wings in the world *public speaking* since starting college in 2016. Ability *public speaking* Dona often shares via the TikTok account @donatrisukma by creating content when she is a formal and informal MC. In this content, Dona also includes educational elements in her content, namely by encouraging the audience to explore the field *public speaking* and often gives tips about consistency in creating content on social media. Apart from that, Dona certainly entertains the audience *followers* by following the current content *hype* like dancing on TikTok using *sound* which was popular at the time. Dona admitted that she really followed the TikTok algorithm, whose consistency led to a drastic increase in the number of followers from 20,000 to 100,000 in just one year.

On the aspect *laws of leadership*, Dona succeeded in implementing the second point, namely *excellence* where he represents himself on TikTok as *influencer* in the realm *public speaker* that should be emulated. *Excellence* or excellence is characterized by someone who is experienced, talented and intelligent in certain fields. Through content on TikTok, Dona shared her activities for the first time *live streaming* with Pak Ganjar Pranowo when he was still working at Kominfo. The video received 350,400 views and

quite a lot of netizens commented by asking questions about how to work at Kominfo. From these comments, Dona was inspired to create further content, namely sharing tips and *trick* to apply for a job in a government office.

The third aspect that Montoya explains in *personal branding* is *laws of personality*. Based on the results of the interview, Dona wants to be known in the public eye as an MC. The famous name is Dona Dekik *branding* which he uses on his social media. Dekik itself is taken from another term for “dimples”, which is also used by his own followers. The physical characteristics shown by Dona are one form *personal branding* namely his always enthusiastic tone of voice, smile with dimples and long hair. However, if you look at the character as *public speaker*, *personal branding* What Dona applies is by conveying to the audience, namely the continuity of the topics discussed with ongoing trends and the flexibility of the uploaded content.

Laws of distinctiveness is the fourth aspect which can be interpreted as a unique way to emphasize *personal branding* somebody. That’s what Dona Tri Sukma did on TikTok. Dona is unique when creating content. Of the many good videos that discuss education, *entertainment* and others, there is a segment namely #DonaBicara. In this session, the video was taken from a second person’s perspective, where Dona seemed to be being interviewed by someone else. The first time, Dona uploaded #DonaBicara content in August 2023, at that time the interviewer asked about Dona’s experience of being *content creator*, Also continuing in November 2023, the content published on the @donatrisukma account is discussing Dona’s reasons for making MC her *personal branding*-his. What is unique is when Dona positions herself as an informant in the video. For Dona, videos are good *entertainment* and education provided *posting* via the @donatrisukma account you can bring in thousands, hundreds of thousands or even millions *viewers* because he himself is known as an MC who is unique in that he often uses it *story telling* in its contents. Starting from *background* Dona studied for a Bachelor’s degree in Industrial Engineering, then continued her Master’s degree in a different study program, namely Management. Dona’s college life was highlighted to the point where she became a student *curiosity* the audience increases. After that, *followers* Dona started *aware* that he is an MC. According to the results of an interview with Dona, using TikTok as a platform for storytelling can produce results *engagement* high, to make it reach 200,000, 300,000 or even 1,000,000 *viewers*.

Implementation *laws of visibility* shown by Dona Tri Sukma on her TikTok account. This aspect is related to *personal branding* displayed consistently. Dona stated in an interview that every day, at a minimum, she would *upload* one content. The consistency

he has carried out since 2020 until now is what created this *niche market* for audiences who really want to know more about *public speaking*. It can also be seen from several comments on Dona's content which reveal a lack of confidence when speaking in public. Dona's journey began to pioneer TikTok, which at that time had just returned *booming* to date it is based on *learning by doing* or learn while doing something and keep an eye on the TikTok algorithm which changes frequently.

Related *laws of unity* is what needs to be uploaded and not uploaded on social media. So far, Dona Tri Sukma's TikTok content has only focused on herself without involving other people in making videos. Based on observations on the TikTok account @donatrisukma, there is never any content discussing SARA issues because Dona herself admits that she doesn't want to deviate from the knowledge she understands, namely around *public speaker*. Dona more often uploads POV (point of view) content, following *trend* dancing, using *sound* which was popular at that time.

Laws of persistence in line with *laws of visibility*. A *personal branding* it is not created and built instantly, but requires consistency. As a result of his hobby of documenting and *sharing* everything about *public speaking* via TikTok, *personal branding* Dona as an MC is getting stronger and many people from outside her domicile know Dona and use Dona's services. *Personal branding* Dona has been forming this since 2016 when she was 16 years old. Thanks to Dona's work as a Kominfo employee, Dona also gained trust as an experienced figure. In addition, Dona's career as an MC has spanned the globe, hosting formal events such as company events or non-formal events such as football matches. Even so, he always made thorough preparations. In the midst of increasingly rapid digitalization, the number of *content creator* also increased. Dona's strategy for maintaining consistency *personal branding*-The goal on TikTok is to continue working, increase collaboration and friendship. Apart from TikTok, Dona also wants to expand to YouTube to share related education *public speaking* and MC for free for people who are interested.

As long as it becomes *content creator* on TikTok, Dona Tri Sukma has shown aspects *laws of goodwill* where the aim in creating content is to provide information and education about MC, *public speaking* and so on through *story telling*. Dona's good intentions greet the *para followers* who often look forward to Dona's content discussing how to dare to speak in public.

5. CONCLUSIONS

This research analyzes strategy *personal branding* Dona Tri Sukma on her TikTok account uses *8 laws of personal branding* by Peter Montoya & Rampersad. Dona has succeeded in highlighting her public speaking skills that she has developed since middle school through various events and activities, as well as consistently sharing educational and entertaining content that attracts millions *viewers*. By applying *laws of specialization, leadership, personality, And distinctiveness*, Dona built an image as a professional MC known for her uniqueness and *story telling* in the content. Implementation *laws of visibility, persistence, And goodwill* shows Dona's consistency and dedication in creating useful, empowering content *personal branding* and inspire audiences to explore the world *public speaking*.

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