PERSONAL BRANDING BY IMAM SANTOSO AS AN INFLUENCER AND LECTURER THROUGH INSTAGRAM IN CAREER DEVELOPMENT

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ABSTRACT

The rapid development of social media influencers has fundamentally changed the digital economy. Approximately 64 million individuals worldwide will identify themselves as influencers by 2023, 5.4 times the number of doctors worldwide. The role of social media is crucial in the context of *personal branding*. Social media can help share thoughts, ideas, and works with millions of people worldwide. Social media can help create a positive self-image and certainly attract others. Imam Santoso has done the same thing in building his *personal branding* as a creative and innovative marketing strategy. Research this own objective for know *Personal Branding* done on Instagram Social Media by IMAM SANTOSO**.** This study uses a qualitative descriptive approach. The subject of the study is Imam Santoso. The object of the study is the content of posts on Imam Santoso's Instagram from January 2025 to June 2025. The primary data sources in this study are Imam Santoso's followers and his Instagram account. Secondary data sources in this study are journals, books, and articles related to the problem being studied. Data collection techniques are carried out through observation, documentation, literature study, data analysis, observation, and conclusion drawing. Based on the results of the study above, it can be stated that Imam Santoso builds personal branding by creating various content on Instagram social media with various types of content created, namely inspirational content, educational content, daily activity storytelling content, testimonial and collaboration content, personal story content, experiences, and challenges.
Keywords: Personal Branding, Imam Santoso, Influencer, Instagram, Career

INTRODUCTION

A. Background Of The Problem

The rapid growth of social media influencers has fundamentally transformed the digital economy. Approximately 64 million individuals worldwide are expected to identify as influencers by 2023, 5.4 times the number of doctors worldwide. Social media influencers can not only shape consumer behavior but also drive the influencer marketing industry, which is projected to reach $24 billion by the end of 2024 (Geyser in Wang *et.al* , 2025).

Personal branding helps an individual compete; their reputation represents a competitive advantage that sets them apart from others. *Personal branding* can help someone increase their

visibility, but it can also help them become known for certain aspects (Shepherd in Marin and Nilä, 2021).

Nowadays, most people consider social media applications very important to support their daily lives and there is a tendency for many to frequently interact with other individuals or groups through several platforms, one of which is Instagram.

Social media plays a crucial role in the context of *personal branding* . It can help share thoughts, ideas, and work with millions of people worldwide. Social media can help create a positive self-image and, of course, be appealing to others (Maulana, 2024).

Imam Santoso has done the same thing in building his *personal branding* as a creative and innovative marketing strategy. Based on the sentence above, it is certainly very important to conduct research.

B. Research Focus

The focus of this research is *Personal Branding* carried out by IMAM SANTOSO on Instagram Social Media.

C. Objective Study

Study This own objective For know *Personal Branding* done on Instagram Social Media by IMAM SANTOSO.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Social Media

Social Media is an online media, with its users being able to easily participate, share, and create content including Blogs, Social Networks, Wikipedia, Forums, and virtual worlds (Suma and Siregar, 2023).

B. Instagram

Instagram is a community that shares photos between members from all over the world (Rahmawati *et.al* , 2020). According to Rosnaini (2025), Instagram is an Android-based application that allows users to take photos, apply digital filters, and share them on various social networking services.

C. Branding

Branding is a variety of communication activities carried out by an institution, with the aim of building and growing a brand (Mujib and Saptiningsih, 2021).

D. Personal

How a person builds his personal reputation (Daga, 2025).

RESEARCH METHODS

A. Type Study

This research uses a qualitative descriptive approach.

B. Subjects and Objects of Research

The research subject in this study was Imam Santoso. The research object was the content or posts on Imam Santoso's Instagram account from January 2025 to June 2025.
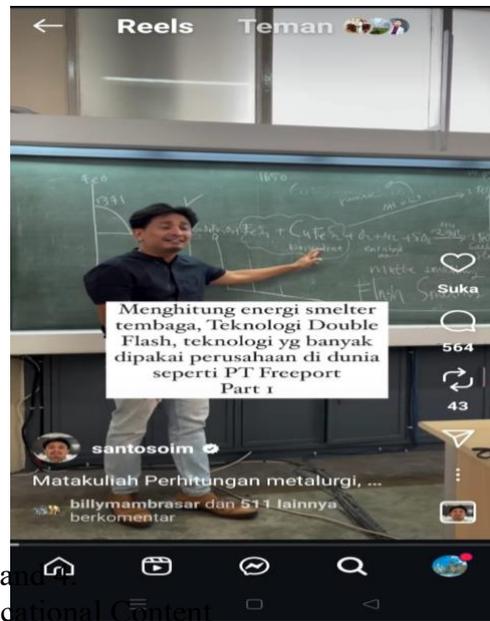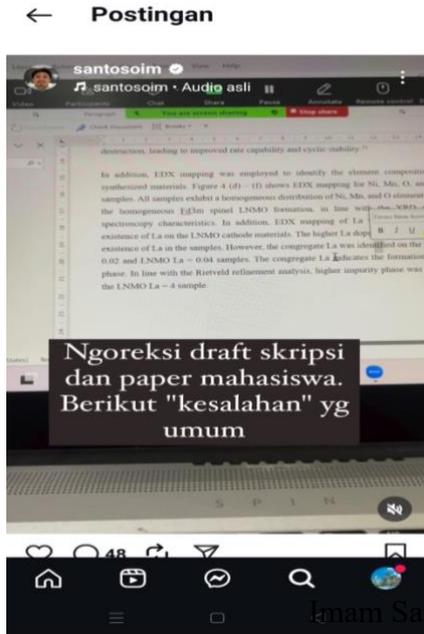
C. Data Source

The primary data sources in this study were Imam Santoso's followers and Instagram account. Secondary data sources included journals, books, and articles related to the research problem.

D. Data Collection Technique

The data collection techniques used are:
  a. Observation

Observations are carried out in a planned, systematic and directed manner towards one goal.

b. Documentation

The documentation technique used was verbal data collection.

c. Literature review

The technique used is collecting data and information through documents or in the form of books, journals and articles.

E. Data Analysis Techniques

a. Data Analysis

Viewing and observing Instagram social media.

b. Observation

Observations on netizen comments on IMAM SANTOSO's Instagram

c. Conclusion Drawing

Conclusions are drawn from observations and analysis of Instagram content according to research results.

RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The search results of Imam Santoso's Instagram account, who is a lecturer and also an influencer, show several variations of content, including videos and photos showing daily activities, teaching activities, providing guidance to students, being a resource person at various events, displaying personal story content from the village to becoming a famous lecturer, and also containing content showing collaborations with several companies and influencers.
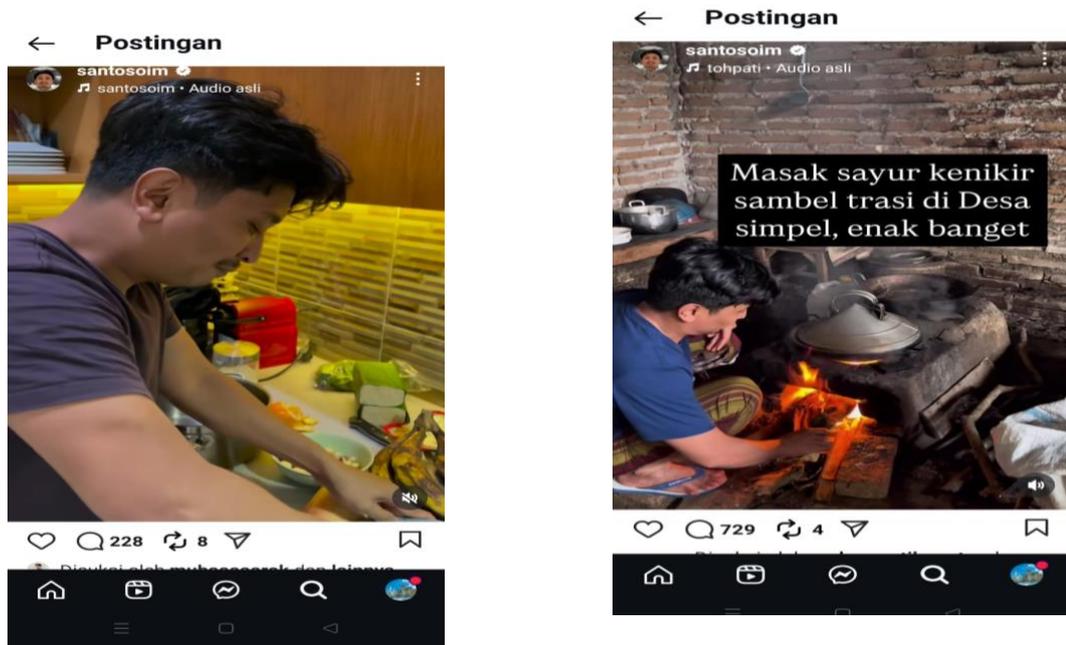
Figures 1 and 2.
Inspirational Content Imam Santoso as a Resource Person
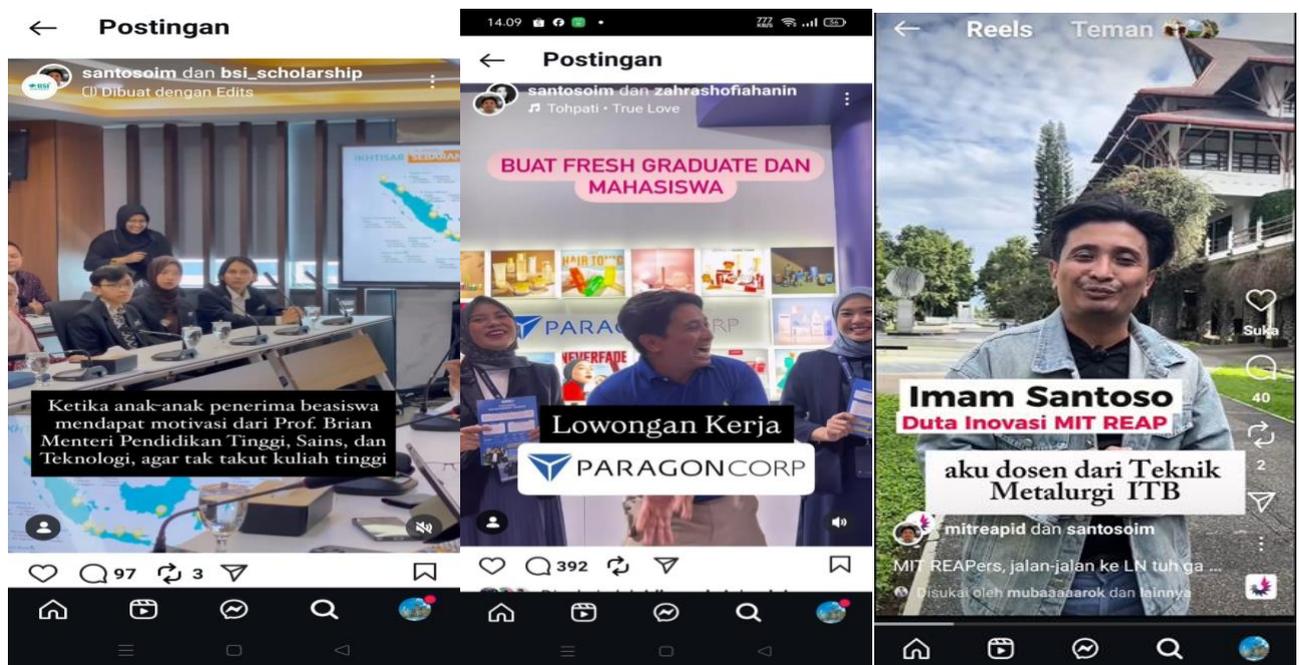

Figures 3 and 4.
Imam Santoso's Educational Content

Figures 5 and 6.
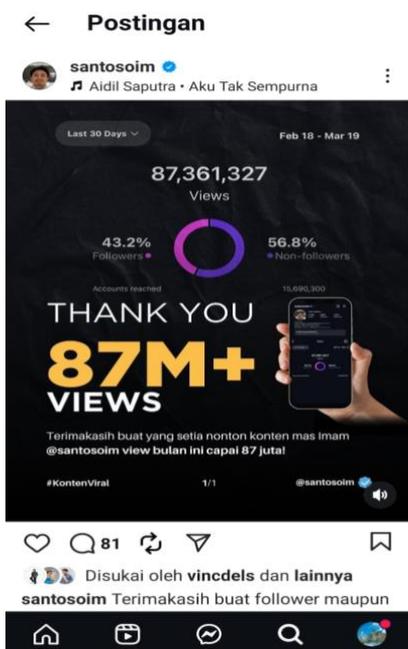Imam Santoso's Educational Content with Students

Figures 7 and 8.
Imam Santoso's Daily Storytelling Content

Figures 9, 10 and 11.
Testimonial and Collaborative Content.

Figures 12 and 13.
Personal Stories, Experiences and Challenges Content

Figures 14 and 15.
Imam Santoso's Viewers and Comments, Likes and Followers
Content

Personal branding is a process that involves creating and managing a person's personal identity for a specific purpose. The concept originates from the business world and is useful for developing and promoting a company's brand, with the goal of creating emotional connections with customers (Judijanto, 2024).

Personal branding is a strategy used to build a brand or self-image in the eyes of others. *Personal branding* is related to image and reputation. Image is seen in what an individual wears and says, as well as body language, personality, and how others treat them. Reputation is related to an individual's unique knowledge and experience. People with extensive knowledge, skills, and experience are said to have a good reputation in the eyes of others. Image and reputation constitute an individual's brand value, a brand value that will be remembered by many (Fitriyani, 2020).

Unlike a company or product, individuals have an intrinsic *personal brand* as a result of their personality traits, past experiences and development, and communication with others. In fact, every individual already has *a personal brand* in some form (Rangarajan *et.al* , 2017).

In this case, the focus of *personal branding* is the individual themselves, who act as a brand that must be positioned, marketed, and promoted to achieve personal or professional goals (Judijanto, *et.al* , 2024). It is important for every individual to sell themselves to gain a platform for self-actualization. This applies to motivators, businesspeople, politicians, and influencers (Nurhayati, 2023). The things contained in the statement above have been implemented by Imam Santoso in developing his *Personal Branding* , as an ITB Lecturer and as an Influencer.

While most *personal branding strategies* are aimed at professionals seeking to develop their desired identity, they have also extended to employees and young people seeking entry-level positions (Jacobson, 2020). Imam Santoso has demonstrated this through his posts on his @santosoim account.

Active interaction between influencers and their followers can increase followers' trust in the sponsored brand, strengthening the perception of its ability to provide benefits (Jun & Yi in Benevento *et.al* , 2025). Imam Santoso interacts with his followers almost daily, thus creating high trust from his followers in the brands Imam Santoso sponsors. One of the well-known brands is Kahf, which is a cosmetic product from PT Paragon Technology and Innovation. In addition, several of Imam Santoso's posts show appropriate collaborations with other companies or sponsors, Bank Syariah Indonesia, and MIT REAP, real contributions can be seen in Figures 9, 10, and 11.

An important aspect of social media is engaging with an audience with a clear goal of recruiting followers. Engagement takes various forms, including liking, commenting, sharing, retweeting, sending direct messages, mentioning, and tagging (Livingston, 2024). The various comments on each of Imam Santoso's posts, ranging from comments, likes, direct messages, and other activities, demonstrate a positive response from both Imam Santoso and his followers, as seen in Figure 15.

Everyone can have a stable *personal brand* by considering the goals given and using fast strategies (Shafiee *et.al* , 2020). The precise and fast strategy used by Imam Santoso creates stable *personal branding* .

A personal vision statement outlining career aspirations and values is crucial for job search and development (Savickas in Korzynski *et.al* , 2025). Individuals often engage in self-promotion as a strategy for managing their professional image with the intention of positively influencing career-related outcomes (Joo and Ready in Korzynski *et.al* , 2025). *Personal branding* is a positive and

recognizable self-image, and can be practiced by anyone. For professionals, *personal branding* can be a key factor in career development (Fitriyani, 2020). Imam Santoso has done the same in developing his career as a lecturer, utilizing Instagram as a platform to create a positive image as a professional lecturer (Figures 3, 4, 5, and 6).

Micro-celebrities are people who are not famous and visible in the offline world, but are " *cyber-famous* " people such as fashion celebrities, *mommy-bloggers* , or fitness celebrities. These celebrities are considered to have the ability to attract large audiences, gather fan bases, attract and command attention and they use social media as a path to celebrity (Khamis *et.al* in Kim, 2023). Imam Santoso can also be said to be a Micro-Celebrity who has become famous in almost all circles and can attract the attention of his large number of followers as seen in Figure 14.

An influencer is an individual who creates and uploads branded content to social media in exchange for compensation (Campbell and Grimm in Wilson *et.al* , 2024). Influencers are said to often build their fame on social media platforms, creating an image around a specific niche, such as beauty, fitness, or lifestyle (Campbell and Farrell in Wilson *et.al* , 2024). Influencer marketing is a new marketing approach that has grown rapidly in recent years due to the increasing interaction between influencers and their followers on social networks (De Veirman *et.al* in Farivar, 2022). Besides being a lecturer, Imam Santoso is certainly said to be an influencer who creates quality content and thus receives compensation for it. Imam Santoso is famous through the way he creates a positive image that he does in certain niches such as sports , as a resource person, motivator , lecturer, as evidence can be seen in Figures 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6.

Personal branding is based on the creation and management of personal brands by individuals who apply marketing principles to themselves for promotional purposes (Pagis and Ailon; Shepherd in Dumont and Ots, 2020). On the very popular Instagram platform, for a brand to achieve successful influencer marketing, they not only focus on the engagement, characteristics, and popularity of influencers on social media to have a positive impact on sales of a brand's products, but also must ensure that the content of marketing posts also attracts the attention of consumers (Hsian and Y Lin, 2025). This method is also used by Imam Santoso in displaying personal content or stories by sharing experiences or challenges from his beginnings as a student to becoming a lecturer in the Metallurgical Engineering Study Program, Faculty of Engineering, Bandung Institute of Technology (Figures 12 and 13). It has become a socio-technological and multi-stakeholder phenomenon, academics from various disciplines have used various methods to explore media in general and Instagram in particular, from various perspectives (Kapoor *et.al* in Rejeb *et.al* , 2022).

The emergence of short video platforms offers opportunities for individuals to communicate with one another in building *personal branding* (Wei *et.al* , 2022). Instagram's role supports its users in easily working with multimedia data and allows them to be creative and innovative (Casalö *et.al* ; Douglas *et.al* ; Kang *et.al* in Rejeb *et.al* , 2022). Imam Santoso implemented this method by displaying photos and videos of daily activities at home while cooking with students, so that the content does not appear too monotonous and is interesting to watch (Figures 7 and 8).

An influencer's appearance, which encompasses several aspects including age and gender, plays a significant role in the engagement and resonance of the target audience (Kim and Kim; Yang and Kim; Srour *et al.;* Mettenheim and Wiedmann in Eslami *et al.* , 2024). Metrics such as likes and comments measure persuasive power and suggest which content is worthy of attention and engagement (Chang *et al.;* Kumar *et al.;* Lee *et al.* in Eslami *et al.* , 2024). These elements combine to build an influencer's credibility and enhance their capacity to captivate and engage with their audience (Breves *et al.;* Martensen *et al.;* Su *et al.* in Eslami *et al.* , 2024). According to his recent statement, the dominant

fans who enjoy Imam Santoso's content are mothers. They always look forward to Imam Santoso's creative content as entertainment and motivation in carrying out their daily activities.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the research above, it can be stated that Imam Santoso built Personal Branding by creating various content on Instagram social media with various types of content created, namely Inspirational Content, Educational Content, Daily Activity Storytelling Content, Testimonial and Collaborative Content, Personal Story Content, Experiences and Challenges.

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