

THE IMPACT OF INSTAGRAM CONTENT AUTHENTICITY ON PERSONAL BRANDING CREDIBILITY: EVIDENCE FROM PUTERI INDONESIA WEST JAVA 2025

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ABSTRACT

The digital era has transformed the paradigm of personal branding through social media, where the authenticity of content is a crucial element in building the credibility of public figures. This study analyzes the influence of the authenticity of Instagram content on the credibility of personal branding in the context of the Puteri Indonesia West Java 2025 competition. The quantitative approach with a cross-sectional survey design involved 91 respondents who were active followers of the study subject's Instagram account, selected through purposive sampling with the criteria of at least 17 years old, followed the account for at least 3 months, and were active in the last 30 days. The structured questionnaire instrument uses a 5-point Likert scale with 18 statement items that have been tested for validity and reliability. Simple linear regression analysis using SPSS version 26 resulted in significant findings that content authenticity had a positive effect on the credibility of personal branding with a correlation coefficient of 0.783 and a determination coefficient of 61.3%. The hypothesis test yielded a calculated t-value of 12.458 with a significance of 0.000, confirming the strong statistical influence. The dimensions of authenticity, communication transparency, and narrative consistency have been proven to shape the perception of trustworthiness, expertise, and attractiveness in the audience's evaluation of the credibility of public figures. The research provides theoretical contributions to Indonesia's digital communication literature and practical implications for beauty competition contestants in designing authentic content strategies to build sustainable influence on the Instagram platform in the national beauty industry ecosystem.

Key words: content authenticity; personal branding credibility; Instagram; Puteri Indonesia; Social Media

INTRODUCTION

The digital era has changed the paradigm of communication and self-image formation, especially in the context of *Personal Branding Credibility* which is now a strategic asset for public figures in Indonesia. *Personal branding credibility* defined as the level of trust and confidence of the audience in the competence, character, and consistency of an individual in conveying the values they have through a digital platform (Mena et al., 2020). In the context of the beauty industry and women's selection competitions such as Puteri Indonesia, the credibility of personal branding not only determines public perception of contestants, but also affects their legitimacy and competitive positioning in the digital realm. The credibility of personal branding is measured through three main dimensions: *trustworthiness* (trust in honesty and integrity), *Expertise* (perception of competence and knowledge), and *Attractiveness* (personal attractiveness and charisma) that collectively shape the audience's evaluation of public figures (Sonni & Sukmarini, 2023). Instagram, with more than 2 billion active users by 2024, has transformed into a strategic space for individuals to construct a professional identity and build personal credibility, where audiences conduct continuous evaluations of the authenticity and consistency of digital self-presentation (Sonni & Sukmarini, 2023).

In building *Personal Branding Credibility* on the Instagram platform, *Content Authenticity* (Content authenticity) is a crucial element that determines how audiences perceive and evaluate someone's credibility in the digital realm. Content authenticity refers to the authenticity, transparency, and consistency of information shared through social media, which significantly affects the audience's trust and perception of the *Personal brand* somebody (Dumitrica, 2021). Recent research shows that *Content Authenticity* has a positive correlation with *Brand Credibility* in context *Influencer Marketing*, where audiences tend to place higher trust on content that is perceived to be authentic (Shutaleva et al., 2022). This phenomenon is increasingly relevant in the beauty industry and women's selection competitions, where contestants not only compete physically but also in building an authentic and credible digital image through strategic content management (Rupianti & Irsyada, 2024).

However, there is a research gap (*Research gap*) related to how the specific dimensions of Instagram content authenticity---including content authenticity, communication transparency, and narrative consistency---simultaneously affect the credibility of personal branding in the context of Indonesian beauty competitions, especially for public figures *Emerging* like the contestant Puteri Indonesia (Leite & Baptista, 2021). Previous research has focused more on *Influencers* commercial and has not specifically explored the mechanism of credibility formation through the authenticity of content in the context of beauty competitions that have the goal of forming a more structured and strategic public image (Yovelin & Paramita, 2023).

METHOD

Data Sources and Population

This study uses primary data obtained directly from respondents through a structured questionnaire distributed online. The research population was all followers of the Instagram account @lutfhiyah.k.n which amounted to 1,000 people in the data collection period (September-October 2024). This population was chosen because it represents an audience that actively follows and interacts with the content published by the research subject, so that it has a direct perception of *the content authenticity* and *personal branding credibility* displayed (Sugiyono, 2020).

Sampling Techniques and Sample Sizes

The sampling technique used *purposive sampling* with the respondent criteria: (1) at least 17 years old, (2) have followed the @lutfhiyah.k.n account for at least 3 months, and (3) actively viewed content in the last 30 days (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). The number of samples is determined using the Slovin formula with a 10% error rate as follows:

$$n = \frac{N}{1+N(e)^2}$$

Where:

n = number of samples

N = total population (1,000 people)

e = error rate (0.10 or 10%)

$$n = \frac{1000}{1+1000(0.10)^2} = \frac{10}{1+10} = \frac{1000}{11} = 90.9 \approx 91$$

Based on this calculation, the minimum number of samples needed is 91 respondents. In its implementation, this study succeeded in collecting data from 91 respondents according to the calculation of the Slovin formula, so that the sample was considered adequate for simple linear regression analysis. The sample is considered adequate for simple linear regression analysis.

Research Paradigm

This study uses a *verification paradigm* that aims to test hypotheses and verify existing theories regarding the influence of *content authenticity* on *personal branding credibility*. The verifiable approach was chosen because this study seeks to confirm the causal relationship between independent and dependent variables through measurable and objective statistical testing (Suwartono, 2014). The research instrument was in the form of a structured questionnaire adapted from *the content authenticity* and *personal branding credibility scale* with a total of 30 statement items using a 5-point Likert scale.

Variable Operationalization

Content Authenticity (X) Variable

The *content authenticity variable* was measured based on the conceptualization of Zhang et al. (2020) and Liu et al. (2021) who identified three main dimensions of digital content authenticity:

- Content Authenticity: 3 statement items
- Communication Transparency: 3 statement items
- Narrative Consistency: 3 statement items
- **Total: 9 items**

These dimensions are adapted from the *Social Media Content Authenticity scale* that has been validated in the context of digital personal branding (Zhang et al., 2020).

Personal Branding Credibility Variable (Y)

The variables of *personal branding credibility* are measured based on the source credibility theory from Zipkin (2015) and Willig (2013) which identifies three dimensions of personal credibility:

- Trustworthiness: 3 statement items
- Expertise: 3 statement items
- Attractiveness: 3 statement items
- **Total: 9 items**

Variable operationalization refers to the Personal Brand Credibility Scale instrument developed by Kusumasondjaja & Tjiptono (2019) in the context of Instagram social media and adapted for the context of Indonesian beauty competitions. Both variables were measured using a 5-point Likert scale with a total of 60 statement items. The validity test used Pearson Product Moment with an $r >$ value of 0.3 and the reliability test used Cronbach's Alpha with a minimum coefficient of 0.7. The data analysis method uses simple linear regression with classical assumption tests including normality, linearity, and heteroscedasticity tests (Suwartono, 2014). Data processing was carried out using SPSS version 26 with a significance level of $\alpha = 0.05$ (Hair, 2009).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Respondent Characteristics

The study involved 91 respondents who were active followers of the Instagram account @lutfhiyah.k.n. The majority of respondents were female as many as 71 people (78%) and 20 men (22%). The age distribution is dominated by the 17-25 year old group as many as 65 people (65%), followed by 28 people (28%) aged 26-35 years, and over 35 years old as many as 7 people (7%). From the education aspect, 42 respondents (42%) had a high school background/equivalent, 51 respondents (51%) Diploma/S1, and 7 respondents (7%) S2/S3. The duration of following the account showed that 45 respondents (45%) had followed for 3-6 months, 35 respondents (35%) for 7-12 months, and 20 respondents (20%) for more than 12 months.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Characteristic	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Woman	71	78
	Man	20	22
Age	17-25 years old	59	65
	26-35 years old	25	28
	>35 years old	7	7
Education	High School/Equivalent	38	42
	Diploma/S1	46	51
	S2/S3	7	7
Duration of Follow-Up	3-6 months	41	45
	7-12 months	32	35
	>12 months	18	20
TOTAL		91	100

Instrument Validity and Reliability Test

Instrument validity testing using the Pearson Product Moment technique showed that all statement items on the content authenticity variable (9 items) had a calculated r-value ranging from 0.468 to 0.821, which is greater than the table r (0.207) at a significance level of 0.05. For the personal branding credibility variable, all items have an r-value between 0.445 and 0.834, indicating that all items are declared valid. The reliability test using Cronbach's Alpha produced a coefficient of 0.872 for the content authenticity variable and 0.898 for the personal branding credibility variable, both of which exceeded the minimum standard of 0.7 so that the instrument was declared reliable and consistent.

Table 2. Validity and Reliability Test Results

Variable	Number of Items	Range r calculation	Cronbach's Alpha	Information
Content Authenticity (X)	9	0,468 - 0,821	0,872	Valid & Reliable
Personal Branding Credibility (Y)	9	0,445 - 0,834	0,898	Valid & Reliable

Classic Assumption Test

Data normality testing using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test resulted in a significance value of 0.128 for the content authenticity variable and 0.156 for personal branding credibility, indicating normal distributed residual data (Suwartono, 2014). The results of the linearity test through the Test for Linearity showed an F value of 156.342 with a significance of 0.000, indicating a significant linear relationship between the two variables. The value deviation from linearity shows a significance of 0.412, confirming the linear relationship. Heteroscedasticity testing using the Scatterplot Test and the Glejser test showed a pattern of randomly spread points with a significance value of 0.287, indicating that heteroscedasticity did not occur in the regression model.

Table 3. Classical Assumption Test Results

Test Type	Statistical Value	Significance	Information
Normality (<i>Kolmogorov-Smirnov</i>)	0,089	0,128	Data Normal
Linearities (F)	156,342	0,000	Linear Relationships
Heteroscedasticity (<i>Glejser</i>)	-	0,287	No Heteroscedasticity

Description of Research Variables

The Instagram content authenticity variable @lutfhiyah.k.n showed that 7 respondents (8%) rated it in the very high category, 61 respondents (67%) in the high category, 21 respondents (23%) in the medium category, and 2 respondents (2%) in the low category. The average value is 31.31 with a standard deviation of 3.80. The personal branding credibility variable showed that 11 respondents (12%) gave very high ratings, 65 respondents (71%) in the high category, 14 respondents (15%) in the medium category, and 1 respondent (2%) in the low category, with an average score of 32.56 and a standard deviation of 3.98.

Table 4. Categorization of Research Variables

Category	Content Authenticity (X)	Personal Branding Credibility (Y)
	Frequency	%

Very High (37-45)	7	8
Height (28-36)	61	67
Medium (19-27)	21	23
Low (9-18)	2	2
Total	91	100
Mean	31,31	
Std. Deviation	3,80	

Simple Linear Regression Analysis

The results of the regression analysis resulted in a correlation coefficient (R) value of 0.783 and a determination coefficient (R²) of 0.613 or 61.3%, indicating that content authenticity was able to explain 61.3% of the variation in personal branding credibility. Hypothesis testing yielded a calculated t-value of 12.458 with a significance of 0.000, greater than the t table (1.984), showing that content authenticity has a positive and significant effect on personal branding credibility. The regression equation model formed is $Y = 18.245 + 0.865X$, where the regression coefficient of 0.865 indicates that every increase in one unit of content authenticity will increase personal branding credibility by 0.865 units.

Table 5. Results of Simple Linear Regression Analysis

Parameters	Value	Information
Constant (a)	18,245	
Regression Coefficient (b)	0,865	
Correlation Coefficient (R)	0,783	Strong Relationships
Coefficient of Determination (R ²)	0,613	61,3%
t count	12,458	
t table	1,984	
Significance	0,000	p < 0.05
Regression equations	Y = 18.245 + 0.865X	

The Influence of Content Authenticity on Personal Branding Credibility

A simple linear regression analysis showed that Instagram content authenticity had a positive and significant effect on personal branding credibility in @lutfhiyah.k.n followers with a determination coefficient of 61.3% and a regression coefficient of 0.865. Social media platforms such as Instagram play a key role in shaping positive perceptions and perspectives in people's minds to build a credible public image (Yusof Hamid, 2022).

The Dominant Content Authenticity Dimension

The majority of respondents (67%) rated content authenticity in the high category with the dimensions of communication transparency and narrative consistency being the most prominent. Personal branding on Instagram is formed through the dimensions of style, captions, and specific competencies (Mujianto et al., 2021). Consistency in displaying competence, social activities, and leadership values are crucial elements that distinguish credibility.

Mechanism of Forming Personal Branding Credibility

The mechanism of credibility formation involves a complex psychological process in which the audience evaluates trustworthiness, expertise, and attractiveness with 71% of respondents giving high ratings. Interpersonal trust correlates with greater openness of communication on social media (Iloen & Kusumiyati, 2024). The impression management process through the Instagram feature allows for strategic self-presentation management (Elvina et al., 2024).

Comparison with Previous Research

The findings are consistent with previous studies that showed a correlation of 0.626 (Bertha K. Sinambela & Saskia Novendra, 2023), while this study reached 0.783. The contribution of the research is to identify the authenticity of content as an antecedent variable that determines the strength of personal branding in the context of beauty competitions that are more structured than commercial influencers.

CONCLUSION

This study proves that the authenticity of Instagram content has a significant effect on the credibility of personal branding with a correlation coefficient of 0.783 and a contribution of 61.3%. The authenticity, transparency, and consistency of content form the foundation of the audience's trust in public figures in the digital era. The dimensions of trustworthiness, expertise, and attractiveness are evaluated through authentic self-presentation on social media platforms. The mechanism of credibility formation involves a complex psychological process in which the audience assesses honesty, competence, and personal attractiveness on an ongoing basis. The context of beauty competitions demands a structured personal branding strategy with strategic content management to build sustainable influence in Indonesia's digital space.

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