PERSONAL BRANDING STRATEGIES OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE EDUCATIONAL CONTENT CREATORS ON INSTAGRAM: A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF ROY MUHAMMAD

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Abstrak
Pesatnya perkembangan media sosial telah memposisikan personal branding sebagai strategi komunikasi yang penting, terutama bagi pembuat konten edukasi di ruang digital. Instagram, dengan fitur visual dan interaktifnya, berfungsi sebagai platform strategis untuk membangun citra, kredibilitas, dan keterlibatan audiens. Studi ini mengkaji strategi personal branding yang digunakan oleh Roy Muhammad, seorang pembuat konten pendidikan berbahasa Inggris di Instagram. Mengadopsi pendekatan studi kasus kualitatif, data dikumpulkan melalui pengamatan non-partisipan terhadap konten Instagram, wawancara mendalam semi-terstruktur, dan dokumentasi, dan dianalisis menggunakan analisis tematik. Temuan ini mengungkapkan bahwa personal branding Roy Muhammad dibangun melalui integrasi tiga elemen kunci: diferensiasi performatif, konsistensi komunikasi, dan relevansi yang berpusat pada audiens. Diferensiasi diekspresikan melalui gaya komunikasi yang menarik, lucu, dan ekspresif secara emosional yang menarik perhatian audiens; konsistensi tercermin dalam narasi yang koheren, nilai pendidikan, dan pola interaksi yang menumbuhkan kepercayaan; dan relevansi dicapai dengan mengatasi kebutuhan dan tantangan nyata audiens. Studi ini berkontribusi pada keilmuan komunikasi digital dengan membingkai personal branding sebagai proses strategis performatif, relasional, dan kontekstual dalam ekosistem media sosial. Secara praktis, temuan ini menawarkan wawasan strategis bagi pendidik digital dan pembuat konten pendidikan dalam merancang strategi komunikasi yang berkelanjutan dan berpusat pada audiens yang meningkatkan kredibilitas dan keterlibatan pembelajaran yang bermakna dalam lingkungan pendidikan digital.
Kata Kunci: personal branding, pembelajaran konten kreator, komunikasi digital, studi kualitatif

Abstract
The rapid development of social media has positioned personal branding as a crucial communication strategy, particularly for educational content creators in digital spaces. Instagram, with its visual and interactive features, serves as a strategic platform for building image, credibility, and audience engagement. This study examines the personal branding strategies employed by Roy Muhammad, an English language educational content creator on Instagram. Adopting a qualitative case study approach, data were collected through non-participant observation of Instagram content, semi-structured in-depth interviews, and documentation, and analyzed using thematic analysis. The findings reveal that Roy Muhammad's personal branding is constructed through the integration of three key elements: performative differentiation, communication consistency, and audience-centered relevance. Differentiation is expressed through an engaging, humorous, and emotionally expressive communication style that captures audience attention; consistency is reflected in coherent narratives, educational values, and interaction patterns that foster trust; and relevance is achieved by addressing the real needs and challenges of the audience. This study contributes to digital communication scholarship by framing personal branding as a performative, relational, and contextually grounded strategic process within the social media ecosystem. Practically, these findings offer strategic insights for digital educators and educational content creators in designing sustainable, audience-centered communication strategies that enhance both credibility and meaningful learning engagement in digital education environments.
Keywords: personal branding; educational content creator; digital communication; qualitative study

1. INTRODUCTION

The rapid development of social media has significantly transformed patterns of public communication, including the ways in which non-formal education is delivered and consumed in contemporary society. Learning is no longer confined to formal institutions such as schools and universities; instead, digital platforms have become increasingly influential in shaping how knowledge is produced, shared, and interpreted by diverse audiences (Siahaan,

2024). Among various social media platforms, Instagram has emerged as a particularly powerful medium due to its visual and audiovisual nature, which allows creators to combine text, images, sound, and motion in engaging ways. Consequently, Instagram functions not only as a space for social interaction and self-expression but also as a strategic channel for disseminating educational messages to broad and heterogeneous audiences (Rivaldy Rachman et al., 2025). The rise of educational content creators on this platform demonstrates that learning processes are now mediated by individual figures who can build credibility, emotional closeness, and relational trust with their audiences through digital communication practices.

In the context of English language education, social media presents both significant opportunities and notable challenges. On the one hand, platforms such as Instagram enable educational content to be accessed more easily, flexibly, and contextually by learners from different backgrounds and locations (Erwan Ibrahim et al., 2025). Users can learn at their own pace, revisit content, and engage interactively with creators and other learners. On the other hand, the increasing volume of English learning content has intensified competition among creators, making it difficult for individual educators to stand out. This highly competitive environment requires content creators not only to present material accurately and informatively but also to develop a distinctive communication identity that can attract attention, sustain engagement, and foster audience loyalty (Ulfah & Rosmiati, 2024). Under these conditions, personal branding becomes a crucial factor in determining the visibility, credibility, and long-term success of educational content on social media.

Within communication studies, personal branding is commonly understood as a strategic and intentional process through which individuals shape public perception by managing their messages, image, and interactions in a consistent manner (Agustin et al., 2024). Montoya and Vandehey conceptualize personal branding not merely as surface-level image construction but as a deliberate effort to communicate one's

uniqueness in a way that makes the individual recognizable, memorable, and trustworthy to audiences (Montoya & Vandehey, 2002). According to this perspective, effective personal branding is built upon three interrelated foundations: identity clarity, differentiation, and message consistency. These elements work together to create a coherent public persona that audiences can understand and relate to over time.

Among these elements, Montoya emphasizes that differentiation is the most fundamental aspect of personal branding (Murdani et al., 2025). Without clear differentiation, a personal brand risks being indistinguishable from others and easily overshadowed in the crowded digital space. Differentiation must be communicated consistently so that audiences can form stable and credible perceptions of the individual. This principle is especially relevant in social media contexts, where users are constantly exposed to large amounts of content and have limited attention spans. Therefore, personal branding depends not only on the substance of educational messages but also on how those messages are packaged, performed, and communicated in ways that are engaging, relatable, and easily recognizable (Aprilliyah & Chairil, 2025).

Although personal branding has been widely studied, previous research has largely focused on visual aesthetics, linguistic style, and posting consistency as key indicators of personal branding success. Many studies tend to treat personal branding as a static outcome rather than as a dynamic, ongoing, and performative communication process (Elizabeth Tawlyn Bogar & Hadiyanto, 2025). Furthermore, empirical studies that specifically examine the personal branding strategies of educational content creators, particularly those teaching English on Instagram, remain relatively scarce. This gap suggests the need for deeper qualitative inquiry into how personal branding is actively constructed, negotiated, and sustained through everyday digital communication practices.

Roy Muhammad represents a compelling case in this regard. As an English education content creator on Instagram, he has successfully developed a strong, distinctive, and recognizable communication identity. His

success is reflected not only in quantitative indicators such as follower numbers and engagement rates but also in his unique performative style, emotional expressiveness, and consistent interaction with audiences. His approach illustrates how personal branding can function as an effective educational communication strategy that bridges formal language learning with the preferences and experiences of digital audiences. This makes his case particularly valuable for academic investigation.

Based on this background, this study aims to analyze Roy Muhammad's personal branding strategy as an English education content creator on Instagram using Montoya's personal branding framework. Specifically, the research examines how differentiation and communication consistency are constructed through content design, performative delivery, and interactive engagement with audiences. By doing so, this study seeks to contribute theoretically to the fields of personal branding and digital communication, while also offering practical insights for educators and content creators seeking to develop effective educational communication strategies on social media.

2. METHODS

This study employs a qualitative approach with a case study design to obtain an in-depth and contextual understanding of the personal branding strategies implemented by Roy Muhammad as an English education content creator on Instagram (Albaburrahim et al., 2025). The qualitative approach was selected because it enables the researcher to capture complex meanings, interpretive processes, and communicative practices constructed by the research subject within the dynamic, interactive, and algorithm-driven environment of social media. Rather than measuring variables quantitatively, this approach prioritizes depth of understanding, interpretation of social meaning, and exploration of lived communication experiences in digital spaces. The case study method was considered particularly appropriate because it allows for a holistic examination of personal branding as a socially embedded phenomenon, taking into account the subject's personal background, professional trajectory, communicative style, and digital presence within the broader ecosystem of Instagram.

The subject of this study is Roy Muhammad, an English education content creator who actively produces educational material on Instagram, while the object of the research focuses specifically on the personal branding strategies manifested through his content production, narrative framing, and interactive communication practices. The study systematically observed various dimensions of digital communication, including visual aesthetics, audiovisual storytelling, caption narratives, rhetorical strategies, message delivery style, and patterns of engagement with audiences. Particular attention was given to Instagram features such as Reels, Stories, and comment sections, as these platforms facilitate multimodal communication and audience interaction. Data collection was conducted within a predetermined time frame to ensure the consistency, continuity, and sustainability of the analyzed personal branding strategies, allowing the researcher to capture both routine communication patterns and strategic adaptations over time.

Multiple data collection techniques were employed to enhance the richness and reliability of the findings, including non-participatory observation, semi-structured in-depth interviews, and documentation. Non-participatory observation involved systematically monitoring and analyzing Roy Muhammad's Instagram content without direct involvement in his activities. This allowed the researcher to identify recurring communication patterns, visual coherence, narrative structures, and distinctive forms of differentiation in his educational content. Semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted to gain deeper insight into the motivations, objectives, and strategic considerations underlying his personal branding practices. These interviews provided contextual understanding of how Roy Muhammad conceptualizes his identity as a digital educator, how he interprets audience

needs, and how he strategically adapts his communication style to the affordances of Instagram. Additionally, documentation techniques were utilized to collect supporting evidence in the form of archived posts, screenshots of audience interactions, public comments, and publicly available biographical information.

The collected data were analyzed using thematic analysis, which involved systematic processes of data reduction, theme categorization, and interpretive conclusion drawing. In the data reduction phase, the researcher selectively filtered information that was most relevant to the research focus, particularly aspects related to differentiation, consistency, and relevance in personal branding. The remaining data were then coded and organized into key thematic categories representing major patterns in Roy Muhammad's communication strategies. In the final analytical stage, these themes were interpreted in relation to Montoya's personal branding framework as well as broader theories of digital communication, self-presentation, and audience engagement.

To enhance credibility and analytical rigor, this study applied both source triangulation and methodological triangulation. Source triangulation was conducted by cross-checking findings from observation, interview transcripts, and documentation. For example, claims made during interviews regarding consistency of engagement were verified against documented interaction patterns in comment sections and Story responses. Methodological triangulation was achieved by integrating observation, interviews, and document analysis to examine the same phenomenon from different methodological perspectives.

Additionally, preliminary findings were reviewed through member checking with the research subject to confirm interpretive accuracy. These procedures ensured that conclusions were not derived from a single data source but from converging evidence across multiple methods.

3. RESULTS
General Information about Roy Muhammad

Roy Muhammad is an English education content creator who actively produces and disseminates learning materials on Instagram. With a growing follower base, he has positioned himself as a digital educator who combines pedagogical knowledge with creative content strategies to engage audiences effectively. His Instagram account features a diverse range of content, including short video lessons, reels, interactive stories, and live sessions, all aimed at enhancing English learning accessibility and enjoyment.

Roy Muhammad's approach emphasizes the integration of educational objectives with entertaining and relatable communication techniques. He adopts a learner-centered perspective, focusing on the needs, challenges, and preferences of his audience, which primarily consists of students and young adults seeking practical language learning guidance. Through this approach, he has cultivated a participatory community where followers are encouraged to interact, ask questions, and contribute ideas, thereby fostering a sense of social closeness and engagement.

In terms of professional background, Roy Muhammad combines his knowledge of English language education with digital media literacy, enabling him to tailor instructional content to the affordances of Instagram. His personal brand is carefully curated to balance pedagogical credibility, approachability, and creative expression. This general profile provides the foundational context for understanding the specific mechanisms of his personal branding strategies, including performative differentiation, consistency, and audience-centric relevance, which are analyzed in the subsequent sections.

Performative Differentiation as a Strategic Mechanism of Personal Branding

The findings of this study indicate that Roy Muhammad's personal branding differentiation does not merely lie in the distinctiveness of the educational content presented, but more fundamentally in the mechanism of communicative performativity that is consciously, strategically, and consistently enacted across his Instagram activities (Elvina et al., 2024). Unlike many English education content creators who rely primarily on visual

aesthetics or structured lesson formats, Roy Muhammad differentiates himself through a highly performative communication style that blends pedagogy with entertainment-oriented delivery. This differentiation is manifested through the deliberate construction of a communicative character that displays hyperbolic emotional expressions, firm and dynamic vocal intonation, spontaneous gestures, and situational humor embedded within instructional narratives.

Based on systematic observations of his Reels, Stories, and live interactions, as well as insights from in-depth interviews, this performative character functions as a powerful attention trigger in capturing audience interest amid the saturated landscape of English educational content on Instagram. His exaggerated reactions, expressive facial cues, and dramatized speech patterns serve not merely as entertainment elements but as strategic tools to sustain viewer engagement from the first few seconds of each video. In this sense, the differentiation built by Roy Muhammad operates predominantly at a symbolic, emotional, and affective level rather than solely at an informational or technical level of language instruction.

Further analysis of audience response patterns reveals that this performative approach generates a paradoxical yet productive effect that ultimately strengthens the acceptance and internalization of educational messages (Febriani & Widyatama, 2025). While his dramatic delivery might initially appear to reduce academic seriousness, the findings suggest the opposite effect: it lowers psychological barriers among audiences who previously perceived English learning as intimidating, formal, or overly rigid. Many audience comments indicate that his humorous and expressive style makes learning feel more approachable, less anxiety-inducing, and more relatable to everyday experiences.

This finding confirms that differentiation in educational personal branding does not necessarily have to stem from the complexity or novelty of the material itself, but can be effectively constructed through a mode of message delivery that intentionally contrasts with conventional expectations of language

instruction (Widyaputra, 2025). Rather than positioning himself as a distant expert, Roy Muhammad performs as a friendly, energetic, and emotionally expressive educator who bridges the gap between academic knowledge and popular digital culture. This insight extends previous research that has tended to frame differentiation primarily in terms of visual design, color schemes, or thematic specialization, by highlighting the central role of performative communication as a differentiating mechanism.

From a theoretical perspective, these findings can be interpreted through the lens of self-presentation and personal branding, which emphasize selective identity construction in public and digital spaces (Sulastri & Muhamad Yopi, 2025). The analysis shows that Roy Muhammad does not present his complete, everyday personality; instead, he strategically constructs a communicative persona tailored to both educational objectives and the affordances of Instagram as a platform driven by short-form, attention-based content. His persona is neither entirely authentic nor purely artificial, but rather a calibrated performance designed to maximize pedagogical impact while maintaining audience appeal.

Consequently, differentiation in this study can be understood as a performative communication strategy that functions to establish a unique, recognizable, and competitive positioning as a digital educator within the broader social media ecosystem (Permana & Yunita, 2025). His personal brand is not simply a static image but an ongoing performance that integrates emotional expressiveness, humor, and instructional clarity. This suggests that in the context of digital education, personal branding should be conceptualized less as image management and more as dynamic communicative enactment shaped by platform logics, audience expectations, and pedagogical goals.

Consistency as an Infrastructure of Trust and Digital LegitimacyDigital

The findings of this study indicate that consistency constitutes a central pillar in the construction of Roy Muhammad's personal branding, serving as a critical infrastructure for

cultivating both audience trust and digital legitimacy (Ningtyas et al., 2024). This consistency extends beyond mere visual uniformity or regularity in posting schedules; it encompasses the coherence of educational messages, the persistence of pedagogical values, and the predictability of interaction patterns that are maintained consistently over time (Alvandaru et al., 2025). A detailed content analysis reveals that Roy Muhammad employs a recurring narrative structure, thematic continuity in English learning topics, and familiar stylistic features, all of which contribute to predictable communication patterns for his audience. Such predictability not only facilitates comprehension but also establishes a sense of reliability, forming a foundation upon which audiences perceive his credibility as a digital educator (Hanum et al., 2024).

Importantly, the analysis demonstrates that consistency in personal branding is inherently relational rather than unidirectional (Rupianti & Irsyada, 2024). Roy Muhammad actively engages with his audience by responding to comments, acknowledging feedback, and incorporating audience suggestions as sources for new content. He strategically utilizes Instagram's interactive features—such as polls, question stickers, live Q&A sessions, and story replies—to foster participatory engagement and sustain emotional closeness. This interaction generates what can be conceptualized as a parasocial intimacy, in which audiences perceive a personal connection with the creator despite the digital and asynchronous nature of the platform (Pakarti & Sinduwiatmo, 2024). Such relational consistency emphasizes that trust in digital education is co-constructed through repeated, meaningful interactions rather than solely through curated content.

From a strategic communication perspective, the sustained consistency exhibited by Roy Muhammad functions as a mechanism for social legitimacy (Fajar Satriyawan Wahyudi, 2025). Audiences not only recognize the creator's identity but also develop clear expectations regarding the type, style, and quality of content he delivers. This reliability strengthens his position as a credible knowledge source and reinforces audience loyalty over time. The

findings suggest that predictable yet engaging content, coupled with responsive interaction, creates a stable framework for audience trust and facilitates long-term engagement in ways that algorithm-driven metrics alone cannot achieve.

Moreover, this study expands existing understandings of personal branding by highlighting that consistency operates on multiple levels:

1. Visual and stylistic consistency – the repeated use of familiar colors, logos, and presentation formats.
2. Narrative and thematic consistency – recurring topics, instructional structure, and pedagogical framing.
3. Relational consistency – ongoing engagement, responsiveness, and participatory content co-creation with audiences.

By integrating these levels, Roy Muhammad maintains both functional and emotional credibility, ensuring that his brand is recognized as reliable, approachable, and pedagogically sound. Practically, these findings underscore that sustainable personal branding in digital education requires a long-term commitment to consistent communication practices, which extend beyond short-term algorithmic optimization or viral trends. The ability to maintain relational and thematic consistency over time thus emerges as a critical determinant of success for educational content creators seeking to build meaningful connections with their audiences.

Audience-Centric Relevance and the Formation of Digital Educator Credibility

The analysis reveals that audience-centric content relevance serves as a foundational pillar for establishing Roy Muhammad's credibility as an English education content creator on Instagram (Ningrum et al., 2024). Unlike traditional approaches to educational authority, where credibility is derived from formal qualifications or institutional affiliation, Roy Muhammad constructs his legitimacy primarily through responsiveness to audience needs, challenges, and inquiries. His content production process begins with identifying common learner difficulties, frequently asked

questions, and topics that resonate with his followers. By positioning the audience at the center of content creation, he operates not as a didactic authority but as a facilitative guide who mediates learning experiences in ways that are immediately applicable and contextually meaningful. This approach transforms the communication process into a dialogical exchange, even within the inherently asynchronous and digital environment of Instagram.

This audience-oriented strategy has direct implications for credibility perceptions. The study finds that credibility in this context is closely linked to functional utility—the ability of the content to solve real, practical problems encountered by learners (Priyono & Rifaah, 2025). Followers evaluate and select content based on its relevance to their learning needs, rather than the creator's formal expertise. These findings are consistent with the Uses and Gratifications Theory, which emphasizes the active role of audiences in seeking media content that meets their cognitive, emotional, or practical needs (Ilman & Hadi, 2024). Unlike prior research that largely highlights storytelling, visual identity, or follower numbers as central to personal branding, this study underscores that problem-based relevance—delivering content that directly addresses the learners' pain points—is a decisive factor in shaping digital educator credibility.

Furthermore, the study highlights that audience-centric relevance works synergistically with other elements of personal branding, such as performative differentiation and relational consistency. Roy Muhammad's expressive communication style captures attention (performative differentiation), while his predictable patterns of content delivery and interactive engagement establish relational trust (relational consistency). When these elements intersect with audience-centric relevance, they create a cohesive personal branding strategy that is not only algorithmically effective—promoting visibility and engagement on the platform—but also educationally meaningful, providing real learning value to followers (Zannah et al., 2024) and (Saputra & Astari, 2024).

From a practical standpoint, these findings suggest that educational content creators can leverage personal branding as a strategic pedagogical tool. By foregrounding audience needs, creators can increase both the perceived usefulness of their content and their legitimacy as digital educators. This approach challenges traditional notions of educational authority, emphasizing that in digital learning contexts, credibility is co-constructed through relevance, responsiveness, and audience-centered communication rather than conferred solely by credentials or institutional affiliation.

Theoretically, this study contributes to the growing understanding of personal branding as a dynamic, contextually grounded, and socially embedded communicative process. It extends prior conceptualizations by demonstrating that credibility emerges not only from self-presentation or visual identity but also from the functional impact of content on audiences' learning experiences. The integration of performative differentiation, relational consistency, and audience-centric relevance thus forms a multi-layered strategy that simultaneously achieves attention, trust, and practical utility—a model particularly suited for digital education ecosystems.

DISCUSSION

Performative Differentiation as a Communicative Strategy in Digital Personal Branding

The findings of this study extend existing understandings of personal branding by demonstrating that differentiation in digital educational contexts operates primarily through performative communication rather than content uniqueness alone. While prior studies have tended to conceptualize differentiation in terms of visual aesthetics or thematic content variation, this research highlights that Roy Muhammad's distinctiveness is constructed through embodied communication practices—particularly hyperbolic emotional expression, assertive vocal delivery, and situational humor (Elvina et al., 2024). This suggests that personal branding on Instagram is not merely a matter of what is communicated, but how communication is enacted in performative ways.

This performative differentiation aligns with theories of impression management and self-presentation, which argue that individuals strategically curate public personas to fit specific communicative environments (Sulastri & Muhamad Yopi, 2025). In this case, Roy Muhammad's communicative persona is not a reflection of his complete identity but a platform-optimized performance tailored to Instagram's attention-driven logic. This supports the argument that digital personal branding is inherently selective and situational rather than an authentic total self-representation.

Moreover, the paradoxical effect of this performative style challenges traditional assumptions that educational credibility requires formal, serious, and restrained communication (Febriani & Widyatama, 2025). Instead, this study suggests that emotional and humorous communication can function as a pedagogical strategy that lowers psychological barriers to language learning. This expands the scope of differentiation beyond aesthetics toward affective engagement as a central mechanism of personal branding in educational content creation (Widyaputra, 2025).

Thus, this research reconceptualizes differentiation not as a static attribute of content, but as a dynamic communicative performance that shapes audience perception, attention, and learning disposition within the social media ecosystem (Permana & Yunita, 2025).

Consistency as a Relational Foundation of Trust and Legitimacy

The results indicate that consistency in personal branding operates not merely as a technical strategy of visual uniformity but as a relational infrastructure that sustains audience trust and legitimacy over time. Previous studies have largely framed consistency in terms of aesthetic coherence or posting regularity. However, this study demonstrates that consistency also functions at the level of narrative continuity, educational values, and interactive engagement (Alvandaru et al., 2025).

The predictable structure of Roy Muhammad's content contributes to audience trust by creating a stable communicative environment in which followers know what to expect (Hanum et al., 2024). This predictability reduces cognitive uncertainty and enhances perceived credibility, reinforcing the notion that trust in digital creators is built through repeated, reliable communicative patterns rather than singular viral performances.

Importantly, the findings reveal that consistency is relational rather than unidirectional. Roy Muhammad's active engagement with audience comments, incorporation of follower questions into content, and use of interactive Instagram features create sustained parasocial interaction that deepens emotional attachment (Rupianti & Irsyada, 2024; Pakarti & Sinduwiatmo, 2024). This suggests that personal branding credibility is co-constructed through continuous creator–audience interaction rather than solely produced by the creator.

From a strategic communication perspective, this relational consistency functions as a mechanism of social legitimacy, positioning Roy Muhammad as a dependable knowledge source rather than a transient influencer (Fajar Satriyawan Wahyudi, 2025). This challenges algorithm-centric perspectives that prioritize novelty over stability, showing that long-term credibility in digital education depends on sustained communicative commitment beyond platform trends.

Audience-Centric Relevance and the Reconfiguration of Digital Educator Credibility

A central contribution of this study is the reconceptualization of credibility in digital education. Rather than being derived from formal credentials or institutional authority, credibility in Roy Muhammad's case emerges from content relevance and practical usefulness as perceived by audiences (Priyono & Rifaah, 2025). This supports the Uses and Gratifications framework, which posits that audiences actively evaluate and select content based on functional benefits (Ilman & Hadi, 2024).

By structuring content around real audience difficulties in English learning, Roy Muhammad positions himself as a facilitator rather than a didactic expert. This shift from

authority-based to utility-based credibility reflects a broader transformation in digital education, where legitimacy is earned through problem-solving capacity rather than institutional status (Ningrum et al., 2024).

Compared to earlier studies that emphasize storytelling or visual branding as primary credibility markers, this research highlights problem-based relevance as a more decisive factor in personal branding success. This suggests that in educational content creation, addressing concrete learner challenges is more influential than aesthetic presentation alone. Furthermore, the integration of performative differentiation, relational consistency, and audience-centric relevance indicates that effective personal branding in digital education is not a single strategy but a multi-layered communicative system (Zannah et al., 2024; Saputra & Astari, 2024). This system simultaneously operates at emotional, relational, and functional levels, producing both algorithmic visibility and meaningful educational impact.

Theoretical Implications

This study contributes to the advancement of personal branding theory by reconceptualizing it as a dynamic and contextually situated communicative process rather than a static form of image management. The findings suggest that personal branding should be understood as an ongoing performative practice that is continuously enacted, negotiated, and adapted within digital communication environments. In the case of Roy Muhammad, personal branding emerges not as a fixed identity but as a strategic communicative performance shaped by the affordances of Instagram and the expectations of its audience. This indicates that personal branding operates through repeated communicative acts rather than through a stable, pre-determined self-image.

Furthermore, the study highlights that personal branding is fundamentally relational rather than solely individualistic. Credibility and legitimacy are not merely constructed by the content creator alone but are co-produced through sustained interactions with audiences. Through consistent engagement, responsiveness to comments, and participatory content creation, Roy Muhammad fosters a collaborative process in which meaning, trust, and authority are collectively negotiated. This challenges traditional perspectives that view personal branding primarily as a unilateral strategy controlled by the individual.

Additionally, the findings shift the theoretical understanding of credibility in digital education from authority-based to utility-based legitimacy. Rather than relying on formal credentials or institutional recognition, audience trust is largely derived from the practical relevance and perceived usefulness of the content. This suggests that in digital learning contexts, credibility is grounded in the creator's ability to address real audience needs rather than in conventional markers of expertise.

Overall, this study positions personal branding as a socially embedded, relational, and performative communication process that extends beyond mere self-promotion or marketing strategy, emphasizing its role in shaping meaningful educational interactions in digital media spaces.

4. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that Roy Muhammad's personal branding strategy as an English education content creator on Instagram is constructed through a planned, sustained, and contextually grounded strategic communication process aligned with social media characteristics. The findings demonstrate that the success of this personal branding is supported by the integration of three main elements: performative differentiation, communicative consistency, and audience-centric relevance. Differentiation is realized through the creation of a distinctive performative communicative character that functions both as an attention trigger and as a means of reducing psychological barriers to English learning. Consistency is applied across visual, narrative, and interactional dimensions, thereby fostering audience trust and legitimizing Roy Muhammad's credibility as a digital educator. Meanwhile, content relevance is built through an approach oriented toward real audience needs, strengthening perceptions of content usefulness and practical value.

The contribution of this study to the

scholarly community lies in reinforcing the understanding of personal branding as a performative, relational, and audience-centered strategic communication process within social media contexts. This research expands personal branding studies by positioning performativity and interaction as key elements that go beyond the predominantly visual and narrative approaches of prior studies. Furthermore, the findings offer a conceptual contribution to digital communication and social media education by demonstrating that digital educator credibility is not solely derived from formal authority but from functional relevance and the learning experiences perceived by audiences. Accordingly, this study is expected to serve as a reference for further research in personal branding, digital educational communication, and strategic communication practices in the social media era.

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