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PERSONAL BRANDING OF FREELANCE MAKE-UP ARTISTS IN PEKANBARU CITY ON INSTAGRAM SOCIAL MEDIA

PERSONAL BRANDING PEKERJA FREELANCE MAKE-UP ARTIST KOTA PEKANBARU DI MEDIA SOSIAL INSTAGRAM

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ABSTRACT

To Finding for MUA services in the digital era has become increasingly convenient with the availability of social media platforms such as Instagram, which allows searches based on location, price, characteristics, or quality. This study aims to analyze the personal branding of freelance MUAs in Pekanbaru on Instagram using Peter Montoya's personal branding theory, which consists of eight indicators: specialization, leadership, personality, distinctiveness, visibility, unity, persistence, and goodwill. This research employs a qualitative approach with a descriptive qualitative method and field research design. Data were collected through observation, documentation, and in-depth interviews with four freelance MUAs selected using snowball sampling technique. The findings conclude that freelance MUAs utilize their work results, tutorials, and testimonials to build their reputation, attract audiences, and maintain an active presence on Instagram. Specialization and educational skills play a crucial role in personal branding, while persistence in facing industry challenges and maintaining a positive image is essential for sustaining professionalism. This study contributes to a better understanding of how local freelance MUAs can optimize Instagram as a personal branding tool to remain competitive and relevant.

Keywords: Instagram, MUA, Personal Branding

ABSTRAK

Pencarian layanan MUA di era digital semakin mudah dengan tersedianya platform media sosial seperti Instagram yang memungkinkan pencarian berdasarkan lokasi, harga, karakteristik, atau kualitas. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis personal branding MUA freelance di Pekanbaru di Instagram menggunakan teori personal branding Peter Montoya dengan delapan indikator: spesialisasi, kepemimpinan, kepribadian, perbedaan, visibilitas, kesatuan, ketabahan, dan nama baik. Penelitian ini menggunakan Pendekatan Kualitatif dengan metode penelitian deskriptif kualitatif dan bentuk penelitian lapangan. Data dikumpulkan melalui Observasi, Dokumentasi dan Wawancara mendalam dengan empat MUA freelance yang dipilih dengan teknik snowball sampling. Kesimpulan penelitian bahwa MUA freelance menggunakan hasil kerja, tutorial, dan testimonial mereka untuk membangun reputasi, menarik audiens, dan mempertahankan kehadiran aktif di Instagram. Spesialisasi dan kemampuan pendidikan sangat penting dalam personal branding, sementara ketabahan dalam menghadapi tantangan industri dan menjaga citra positif sangat penting untuk mempertahankan profesionalisme. Penelitian ini berdampak pada pemahaman tentang bagaimana MUA freelance lokal dapat mengoptimalkan Instagram sebagai alat personal branding agar tetap kompetitif dan relevan.

Kata kunci: Freelancer, Instagram, MUA, Personal Branding

INTRODUCTION

The fundamental concept of personal branding is actually simple. People can have their own brand now. A brand is not limited to products and services. It is not only official companies that can have a brand; individuals can also establish their own personal brand (Enterprise, Jubilee, 2011, p. 2).

The technique of using oneself or one's work as a brand and methodically marketing oneself to others is known as personal branding. To help others understand a person's profession, the highlighted aspects often include their personality traits. Anyone, regardless of their profession, can engage in personal branding (Tumakaka et al., 2019, p. 76). Generally, we recognize a product or service based on a brand that is familiar and widely known. Interestingly, in today's era, anyone can build their own personal brand and create a recognizable identity. As times evolve, so do people's approaches to work, becoming more creative and innovative, especially by utilizing social media platforms like Instagram.

Finding MUA (Make-Up Artist) services in the digital era is now effortless. Anyone can easily search for freelance MUAs through social media platforms like Instagram. Searches can be filtered based on location, price, signature style, or makeup quality. The choice depends entirely on individual needs—what kind of freelance MUA they are looking for, for what purpose, and at what price. With so many MUA options available, differentiation is essential to ensure potential clients can easily remember and ultimately decide to use a particular MUA's services.

The Personal Branding Theory (2002) by Peter Montoya is used in this study to address the research question: How do freelance make-up artists (MUAs) in Pekanbaru build their personal branding on Instagram? This research aims to explore the personal branding strategies employed by freelance MUAs in Pekanbaru and to assess the importance of personal branding in growing a business. Additionally, it seeks to provide insights into how media operates in the digital era. By applying Peter Montoya's Eight Laws of Personal Branding, this study strives to answer how freelance MUAs in Pekanbaru utilize Instagram to establish their

personal brand effectively.

According to Montoya (2002), building a personal brand requires adhering to several key principles. One of them is the Law of Specialization, which states that a brand is usually built upon one specific area of expertise. To enhance effectiveness in their core tasks, individuals should maintain a clear and focused brand identity, avoiding excessive diversification. Next is the Law of Leadership, which emphasizes that people naturally seek guidance from individuals who provide clarity and eliminate doubts. This highlights the crucial role of a strong leader in shaping public perception of their brand. The Law of Personality asserts that people are more attracted to individuals who are authentic and relatable. A strong personal brand should reflect a person's true character, showcasing both strengths and weaknesses. Furthermore, the Law of Distinctiveness stresses the importance of uniqueness within an industry to ensure that a personal brand stands out from the competition. However, uniqueness alone is insufficient without the Law of Visibility, which emphasizes that a personal brand must be consistently visible to be recognized and remembered by others.

Additionally, the Law of Unity states that a person's values and actions must align with their personal brand to maintain authenticity and credibility in the eyes of the public. Developing a personal brand also requires perseverance, as explained in the Law of Persistence—one must remain committed to their brand identity and resist the temptation to change it impulsively. Finally, the Law of Goodwill asserts that the more positive the public's perception of a person, the greater the impact of their personal brand. By understanding and applying these principles, individuals can build a strong and influential personal brand.

This study presents a new perspective on the personal branding of freelance Make-Up Artists (MUAs) through Instagram. Unlike previous research that generally explored MUA personal branding on a national scale or within large industries, this study focuses specifically on freelance MUAs at the local level, considering cultural factors, beauty trends, and digital behavior in Pekanbaru.

Moreover, unlike previous studies that primarily employed conceptual approaches or limited case studies, this research adopts a more comprehensive methodology by integrating Instagram content analysis with in-depth interviews of freelance MUAs. This approach enables

a detailed mapping of personal branding strategies, including the use of Instagram features such as Reels, Story Highlights, and engagement algorithms to enhance visibility and client trust. This study also provides practical contributions for freelance MUAs in Pekanbaru, helping them optimize their digital branding strategies. As a result, this research not only fills the gap in the study of local-scale MUA personal branding but also offers more applicable insights for building a professional image in the digital era.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Over the past ten years, research on personal branding for Make-Up Artists (MUAs) on social media has grown significantly. Social media, as an interactive platform, allows users to build and promote their personal image more easily (Trisnayanti & Hadangnitias, 2024, p. 59).

Instagram has become a key focus in various studies examining how MUAs establish their professional image, attract clients, and differentiate themselves from competitors. One study by Tania (2023) used a qualitative approach to analyze MUA personal branding strategies on Instagram. The findings indicate that while MUAs have implemented personal branding elements and impression management, their application remains suboptimal. Interestingly, Instagram is primarily used as a digital portfolio, whereas the most effective marketing strategy still relies on word-of-mouth recommendations.

Another study by Herlina and Hegiarto (2024) examined the personal branding of Nina Make Up through Instagram and Facebook. This study found that Nina builds her personal branding by emphasizing specialization in makeup styles, maintaining product quality, and being responsive to customer needs. Additionally, Nina's professional and friendly attitude helps establish a positive reputation through customer testimonials. Although this study highlights visibility as an essential aspect of personal branding, it does not explore in depth how MUAs utilize specific Instagram features to enhance audience reach and engagement.

Yanti and Goenawan (2020), in their study on the personal branding of Malvava Make-Up Artist, found that Malvava has successfully built an authentic and honest personal brand that aligns with her values and personality. Malvava applies the eight key concepts of personal branding, including specialization, leadership, personality, differentiation, visibility, consistency, perseverance, and reputation. The study highlights visibility as a crucial aspect of personal branding but does not provide a detailed analysis of how Malvava utilizes specific Instagram features to enhance her presence and engagement.
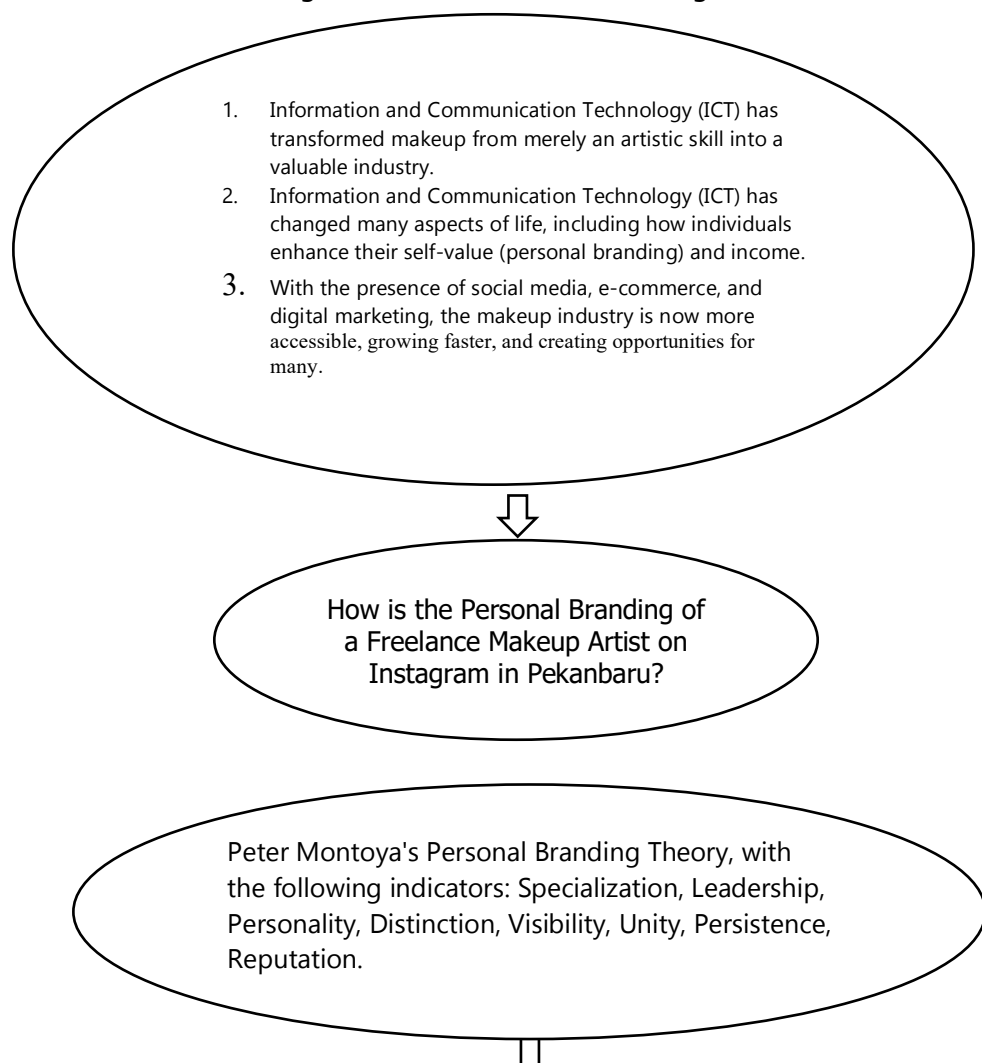
Moreover, the study by Rianti (2023) examined the promotional communication activities of MUA Meti Rosari on Instagram. The findings indicate that Meti Rosari applies several promotional communication indicators, such as advertising, public relations, and direct marketing, by utilizing Instagram features like Instagram Stories, Reels, and Feed to reach and attract customers. However, this study does not address the challenges faced by MUAs in digital marketing, including intense competition and platform policy changes.

Although various studies have examined MUA personal branding on Instagram, several research gaps remain. Most studies focus on MUAs with established reputations or significant followings, while research on beginner or freelance MUAs is still limited. Additionally, studies

highlighting the role of audience interaction, the use of Instagram's latest features, and the impact of visual content on audience perception are still rare.

This research on the personal branding of freelance MUAs in Pekanbaru through Instagram can provide new contributions by focusing on the strategies used by local MUAs to build their personal brand in a more specific environment. This study will explore how freelance MUAs utilize Instagram features to attract clients, the challenges they face in developing their personal branding, and the role of the local community in supporting their growth. Thus, this research can fill existing gaps and provide a more comprehensive insight into MUA personal branding on social media.

Diagram 1. Framework of Thinking

1. Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has transformed makeup from merely an artistic skill into a valuable industry.
2. Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has changed many aspects of life, including how individuals enhance their self-value (personal branding) and income.
3. With the presence of social media, e-commerce, and digital marketing, the makeup industry is now more accessible, growing faster, and creating opportunities for many.

How is the Personal Branding of a Freelance Makeup Artist on Instagram in Pekanbaru?

Peter Montoya's Personal Branding Theory, with the following indicators: Specialization, Leadership, Personality, Distinction, Visibility, Unity, Persistence, Reputation.

Sumber : Olahan Peneliti (2025)

From the conceptual framework above, it is evident that various phenomena related to the development of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) have emerged, impacting the makeup industry. ICT has transformed makeup from merely an artistic skill into a high-value economic industry

ICT influences various aspects of life, including how individuals build personal branding and generate income. The presence of social media, e-commerce, and digital marketing facilitates access to information, accelerates trend dissemination, and creates new opportunities for freelance makeup artists. Social media has become the primary platform for shaping a professional identity, attracting clients, and building a reputation in the makeup industry.

This research applies Peter Montoya's Personal Branding Theory, which includes several key indicators: Specialization, which focuses on a specific area of expertise. Leadership, which demonstrates excellence in the field. Personality, a unique image that differentiates an individual from competitors. Distinctiveness, highlighting unique aspects that serve as a personal trademark. Visibility, ensuring an active presence on digital platforms. Unity, maintaining consistency in delivering messages. Persistence, committing to values and quality. Goodwill, building a positive reputation through interactions and work.

METHODOLOGY

The research approach used in this study is qualitative. Qualitative research is an investigative process aimed at understanding social or human issues by creating a holistic picture using words, reporting detailed perspectives from informants, and structuring the findings within a scientific context

(John W. Creswell in Safira, Aninda Nur, et al., 2021, p.167).

The research method applied is descriptive. This study employs content analysis to observe Instagram accounts and conduct interviews related to the research problem. The research object is the Personal Branding of Freelance Make-Up Artists (MUA) in Pekanbaru on Instagram. The study is conducted in Pekanbaru, where interviews are conducted with freelance MUAs in the city. Respondents are selected through purposive sampling by searching for freelance MUA accounts on Instagram. After identifying potential respondents, the researcher schedules interview appointments with them.

The research subjects are freelance MUAs in Pekanbaru, with the following criteria:nActively working as an MUA in Pekanbaru. Having a digital promotional platform (Instagram). A minimum of 100 followers on Instagram.

Table 1: Research Informants

No	Name/ Age	Description
1.	Arif/ 28 thn	1. Instagram User 2. 4.365 Followers 3. 746 Postingan 4. Positioning: Hairdo/ Hijab, Make-up Party, Make-up Bollywood 5. Instagram: @arif_MUA.pku
2.	Gina Aprilla/25 Tahun	1. Instagram User 2. Positioning: Certified MUA, Make-up Tari, Make-up Wisuda 3. 273 Postingan 4. Positioning: Certified MUA, Make Up Tari, Make Up Wisuda 5. Instagram : @ginaaprillamakeu
3.	Sukma Aulia Putri/21 Tahun	1. Instagram User 2. 370 Followers 3. 400 Postingan. 4. Positioning : Certified MUA , Daily Make UP, Make Up Tari 5. Instagram @sukmaap.makeup
4.	Kirana Agni/24 Tahun	1. Instagram User 2. 690 followers 3. 273 Postingan 4. Positioning: Certified MUA , Make Up Wedding, Make Up Wisuda 5. Instagram : @kiranaaagnii_MUA

Sumber : Olahan Peneliti (2025)

Data presentation includes steps for organizing data, such as linking two data sets so that all studied data are included in a single unit. Conclusion drawing involves considering trends and/or patterns in the collected data, where the researcher applies inductive principles. To further emphasize the research writing, the researcher may present findings from their own perspective (Soraya, Iin, 2017, p. 35).

FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

A Make-Up Artist (MUA**)** is a professional who transforms a person's appearance. In the Indonesian context, this term is relatively new and is often understood differently by the public. The development of information technology and social media—particularly the rise of platforms like Instagram—has reshaped the landscape of social support (Widodo, Marta, Engliana, Sholihin, Sudarsono, *ASPIRATION Journal*, p.14). Social media has changed how MUAs promote themselves and interact with clients. It allows MUAs to share their knowledge and skills widely without the need for formal education. The following are the interview results related to Specialization:

> "My expertise on Instagram lies in my ability to read the market or trends that can be turned into content to promote my makeup work, such as transitions, parodies, tutorials, and so on. In these contents, I showcase the before and after of my makeup, where we can see whether the results are good or need improvement. Not only the makeup results, but editing to make the content more appealing is also an important point—not to change the shape, but to enhance the colors in the final result that we will post." (Kirana, 2024

> "My expertise lies in my ability to continuously learn and stay updated with the latest trends in the beauty industry so that I can apply them effectively to my clients. Additionally, building an attractive portfolio by documenting makeup results and uploading them to social media is an essential strategy to showcase my skills to potential clients." (Sukma, 2024)

> "I am able to adjust facial makeup according to the needs and requests of each client, whether it's for weddings, photoshoots, or other special events. Choosing the right makeup products based on the client's skin type and condition is a fundamental skill that is highly important. For example, I need to know that oil-based products are not suitable for oily skin." (Anggi, 2024)

"My first expertise is my strong determination to be the best in this field—staying consistent, continuously learning, and remaining humble." (Arif, 2024)

From the interview, it was revealed that all MUAs stated that they specialize in various types of makeup, such as bridal, editorial, and fashion makeup. This specialization helps them attract clients that align with their expertise and meet the diverse demands of the market.

Meanwhile, based on observations of the Instagram content of freelance makeup artists (MUAs) in Pekanbaru, several specializations were found to be prominently showcased to build personal branding and attract clients.Specialization in Makeup Styles. Some MUAs, such as Kirana, specialize in the "Barbie look", emphasizing a feminine and elegant appearance. Others, like Sukma and Anggi, focus on bold makeup styles with striking colors and a radiant, fresh look. Beyond makeup services, MUAs like Arif also offer beauty classes, expanding their service range while establishing a reputation as experts who share knowledge with the community. By highlighting specific specializations and effectively leveraging digital platforms, freelance MUAs in Pekanbaru have successfully built strong personal branding, distinguished themselves from competitors, and attracted a broader client base. Meanwhile, the following are the interview results related to Leadership:

"By providing a link for makeup consultation and booking services." (Kirana, 2024)

"I provide guidance and direction to my Instagram followers in several ways. One of them is by creating educational content such as makeup tutorials, beauty tips, and tricks in the form of reels or stories. I also frequently interact through the comment section or direct messages to answer specific questions from followers about the products or makeup techniques they need." (Sukma, 2024)

"I present informative and engaging content. I regularly upload step-by-step makeup tutorials and share practical beauty tips that are easy to apply. Additionally, I encourage followers to ask questions through the comment section or Q&A features in stories, allowing me to provide direct answers and relevant advice. This way, I not only share knowledge but also build a closer relationship with my followers." (Anggi, 2024)

"I guide my Instagram followers by sharing various makeup tutorials and beauty tips in short video or photo formats. I also utilize features such as Instagram Live or Q&A in stories to interact directly and answer their questions. Moreover, I often create posts discussing the latest beauty trends, ensuring that my followers always receive the most up-to-date information from me." (Arif, 2024)

From the interview, it was revealed that MUAs consider it important to take on leadership roles within their community. They often share their knowledge through social media posts and conduct workshops for beginners. This not only enhances their reputation but also helps build a stronger sense of community among makeup professionals.

Based on observations of the Instagram content of freelance makeup artists (MUAs) in Pekanbaru, several aspects reflect their leadership within the beauty industry through the platform. MUAs like Kirana not only showcase their makeup work but also actively share makeup tutorials, beauty tips, and product information. This approach highlights their role as thought leaders who contribute to increasing knowledge within their community. Beyond makeup services, MUAs like Sukma offer beauty classes and workshops, guiding individuals interested in exploring the world of makeup. This reflects their leadership initiative in educating and empowering others.

MUAs often collaborate with photographers, models, and local designers on creative projects. For example, Anggi works with freelance models to produce high-quality content. This collaboration demonstrates leadership skills in building professional networks and leading joint projects. Meanwhile, Arif actively follows the latest makeup trends and frequently creates their own unique styles. By posting relevant and up-to-date content, they position themselves as adaptive and innovative leaders in the beauty industry.

MUAs demonstrate leadership by building strong relationships with their followers, responding to questions, and valuing feedback. This interaction fosters a loyal and engaged community. Through these strategies, MUAs in Pekanbaru not only promote their services but also lead their community by sharing knowledge, collaborating, innovating, and establishing strong connections with their followers on Instagram.

Meanwhile, the following are the interview results related to Personality:

"Every MUA has their own unique style, not only in their makeup results but also in their content. Some MUAs prefer a simple approach, while others follow the latest trends. I consider myself an MUA who keeps up with current beauty trends." (Kirana, 2024)

"To maintain a balance between my professional and personal personality in the content I upload on Instagram, I always strive to be authentic. I believe that showing my personal side, such as hobbies or daily thoughts, makes me more relatable to my followers. However, I still uphold professional standards in terms of content quality and aesthetics. For example, I post trendy makeup tutorials while also sharing personal stories or my creative process. This helps me stay connected with my audience while showcasing my expertise as an MUA." (Sukma, 2024)

"To balance my professional and personal identity in the content I share on Instagram, I always aim to be transparent and honest. I believe that sharing personal experiences, including the challenges I face as an MUA, brings me closer to my followers. However, I also ensure that every piece of content I create reflects my expertise. For example, when I make a makeup tutorial, I share tips while also narrating my journey in the industry. This way, my followers not only learn makeup techniques but also find inspiration in the story behind them." (Anggi, 2024)

"In maintaining the balance between my professional and personal presence on Instagram, I always strive to present a well-rounded view of myself. I enjoy sharing daily moments, such as behind-the-scenes footage from makeup projects or interesting experiences at work, which showcase my personal side. However, I also ensure that every post contains educational elements, such as makeup tips or techniques that followers can benefit from. This way, my audience sees me as a professional who also has a life outside of work, making my content more relatable and engaging." (Arif, 2024)

From the interview, it was revealed that personality is a key factor in attracting clients. MUAs emphasize the importance of being friendly and approachable, making clients feel comfortable during interactions. They also showcase their unique personalities through the content they share, whether through tutorial videos or live sessions on Instagram.

Based on observations of the Instagram content of freelance makeup artists (MUAs) in Pekanbaru, they effectively use the platform to showcase their personalities and build strong personal branding. MUAs in Pekanbaru actively utilize various Instagram features, such as Reels and Stories, to highlight their work process, makeup results, and client interactions. This allows them to present themselves as friendly, professional, and creative, fostering closer relationships with their followers. They also demonstrate an open and communicative personality by actively responding to comments and messages from their followers. This reflects a welcoming and professional attitude, which enhances trust and client loyalty.

MUAs maintain consistency in visual aesthetics and content themes, reflecting their personality and the values they want to convey. This consistency helps shape a professional image and makes it easier for followers to recognize their personal brand. Through these strategies,

MUAs in Pekanbaru have successfully leveraged Instagram as a platform to express their personality, build strong personal branding, and attract more potential clients.

Based on observations of the Instagram content of freelance makeup artists (MUAs) in Pekanbaru, it was found that they utilize the platform to showcase their personalities and build strong personal branding. MUAs like Kirana actively use various Instagram features, such as Reels and Stories, to highlight their work process, makeup results, and client interactions. This allows them to present themselves as friendly, professional, and creative, fostering closer relationships with their followers. They also demonstrate an open and communicative personality by actively responding to comments and messages from their audience. This reflects a welcoming and professional attitude, enhancing trust and client loyalty. Moreover, MUAs maintain consistency in visual aesthetics and content themes, aligning with the personality and values they wish to convey. This consistency helps shape a professional image and makes it easier for followers to recognize their personal brand. Through these strategies, MUAs in Pekanbaru have successfully leveraged Instagram as a platform to express their personality, build strong personal branding, and attract more potential clients. Meanwhile, the following are the interview results related to Differences:

> "Yes, I have a unique style amidst the wave of MUAs who stick to a single look, like a specific eyebrow shape. I am one of the MUAs who shape eyebrows to match the client's face. Also, my content stands out because it includes a lot of jamet (playful, bold styles) and energetic edits with upbeat music." (Kirana, 2024)

> "I believe what sets me apart from other MUAs on Instagram is my approach to diversity. I always strive to create looks that can be tailored to different skin types, face shapes, and client personalities. Rather than just following trends, I focus on highlighting each individual's uniqueness." (Sukma, 2024)

> "I think what differentiates me from other MUAs on Instagram is how I incorporate storytelling into every look I create. I believe makeup is not just about appearance but also about how each look reflects a person's moments and life experiences. I love blending cultural and historical elements into my makeup, giving each creation a deeper meaning. For instance, I sometimes take inspiration from traditional motifs from my hometown and adapt them into modern makeup designs. I also strive to make my content more personal by sharing my journey as an MUA and the challenges I've faced. It's not just about technical skills; it's about building an emotional connection with my audience. Through this, I hope to inspire them to express themselves through makeup." (Anggi, 2024)

"What sets me apart from other MUAs on Instagram is my focus on natural beauty and minimalist makeup techniques. I believe makeup should enhance a person's natural beauty rather than hide it. In every look I create, I emphasize my clients' best features by using lightweight products and precise techniques to achieve a fresh and natural appearance. Additionally, I prioritize skin health, always offering advice on proper skincare before and after makeup application. I also love collaborating with photographers and other artists to create artistic content. Through this approach, I hope to help my followers feel confident in themselves, whether they wear makeup or not." (Arif, 2024

From the interview, it was revealed that each MUA has a unique characteristic that sets them apart from others. Some utilize innovative makeup techniques or bold color choices, while others offer additional services such as personal style consultations or comprehensive service packages for special events. Meanwhile, the following are the interview results related to visibility:

"By consistently creating content at least twice a month and regularly uploading, even if it's the same type of content. You never know where opportunities will come from—someone who missed the content yesterday might see it today." (Kirana, 2024)

"To stay active and relevant on Instagram, I implement several strategies. First, I make sure to post content regularly, at least three times a month, with a variety of themes and formats, such as tutorials, before-and-after makeup transformations, and behind-the-scenes footage. This way, my audience doesn't just see one type of content but gets a richer experience." (Sukma, 2024)

"I actively engage with my followers through comments and direct messages. I make an effort to respond to every question or comment and show appreciation to those who share their experiences related to my content. This not only strengthens relationships but also demonstrates that I value my audience." (Anggi, 2024)

"I use Instagram Stories to share daily moments and quick updates, which helps maintain engagement without needing to post official content all the time. This gives my audience a closer look at who I am." (Arif, 2024)

From the interview, it was revealed that MUAs actively post content regularly on Instagram, including photos of their work and behind-the-scenes footage from makeup sessions. They also utilize Instagram Stories to provide daily updates and engage directly with their followers, ensuring consistent visibility on the platform. Meanwhile, the following are the interview results related to unity:

"Of course, what I build on Instagram aligns with my extroverted personality and my willingness to try new things. I work on things that make me feel comfortable, not just for the sake of FOMO or following trends." (Kirana, 2024)

"I always strive to maintain consistency between my personal branding on Instagram and my real-life image in an authentic way. I believe honesty is key, so I only share content that truly reflects what I do and who I am. I often share personal experiences and stories that are relevant to the makeup industry I work in. This allows my audience to see my human side and feel more connected. Additionally, I am committed to not pretending or forcing myself to be someone I'm not. When I feel comfortable and confident in what I present, the branding process becomes much easier and more natural." (Sukma, 2024)

"To ensure that my personal branding on Instagram remains consistent with my real-life image, I always strive to be myself in every post. I avoid following trends that don't align with my personality and prefer to showcase things I genuinely like and believe in. This includes choosing themes, styles, and content that reflect my cheerful and open personality. By doing so, I can build a more authentic relationship with my audience because they can sense the genuineness of what I share. Communicating messages that are honest and aligned with my values also helps attract followers who truly appreciate and understand who I am." (Anggi, 2024)

"I make sure that my personal branding on Instagram remains consistent with my real-life image by always showcasing the authentic side of myself. I am committed to sharing content that aligns with my hobbies and interests, such as makeup that focuses on natural beauty and easy-to-apply techniques. I also frequently share my journey and experiences as an MUA, including the challenges and successes I have encountered. This allows my audience to see me as a genuine and relatable figure. I also pay attention to comments and feedback from followers to ensure that what I present aligns with their expectations. By prioritizing honesty and openness, I believe my personal branding will remain consistent and strong." (Arif, 2024)

From the interview, it was revealed that MUAs maintain consistency in branding by ensuring that all their content follows a uniform color theme and style. This helps create a strong visual identity that is easily recognizable to potential clients. This research highlights the cohesion in how MUAs establish a consistent image through distinct aesthetics and signature styles on Instagram. Meanwhile, the following are the interview results related to resilience:

From the excerpts above, it is evident that mental resilience is a key factor in building a personal brand as a freelance MUA. Kirana emphasizes that the biggest challenge in this profession is not just the technical aspects of makeup but also the mental readiness to handle

unpredictable schedules, client demands, and feelings of insecurity when seeing peers achieve greater success.

Sukma, Anggi, and Arif also highlight the importance of resilience in maintaining quality, building client relationships, and adapting to changing trends and competitive pressures. They stress how resilience contributes to establishing a strong professional identity and attracting more opportunities.

From this perspective, it can be concluded that being a freelance MUA is not just about technical skills but also about mental endurance, perseverance, and the ability to handle industry pressures. A successful personal brand is built not only on excellent makeup results but also on a consistent personality, professional attitude, and resilience in facing challenges.

From the interview, it was revealed that in facing the challenges of a competitive industry, MUAs demonstrate resilience by continuously learning and adapting to new trends. They do not easily give up when faced with criticism; instead, they use it as motivation for self-improvement**.** The findings from this research observation show that MUAs maintain their identity and aesthetic values despite the ever-evolving beauty trends. Meanwhile, the following are the interview results related to reputation:

"By asking what caused it to go wrong, and if it was our mistake, we will apologize. However, if the mistake was not ours, we will simply ignore it and not overthink it." (Kirana, 2024)

"When facing criticism or negative reviews on social media, I strive to remain calm and take a rational approach. First, I analyze the criticism to determine whether there are aspects I can learn from and improve. If the criticism is valid, I will acknowledge my mistake and explain the steps I will take to fix it, so the audience sees that I am open to feedback and committed to growth." (Sukma, 2024)

"When handling criticism or negative reviews on social media, I respond politely and provide an explanation if necessary while maintaining a positive tone. If the criticism is unfair or personally attacking, I prefer not to engage and let the comment fade away in the noise of social media." (Anggi, 2024)

"When dealing with criticism or negative reviews on social media, I believe it is important to stay calm and take proactive steps. First, I evaluate the criticism received. If it is based on facts and has constructive value, I will respond with gratitude and explain the improvements I will make. This shows that I appreciate feedback and am committed to improvement." (Arif, 2024)

From the interview, it was revealed that in facing the challenges of a competitive industry, MUAs demonstrate resilience by continuously learning and adapting to new trends. They do not easily give up when faced with criticism; instead, they use it as motivation for self-improvement. The findings from this research observation show that MUAs maintain their identity and aesthetic values despite the ever-evolving beauty trends.

Interviews with Make-Up Artists (MUAs) reveal various factors contributing to their success in the beauty industry. Makeup skills alone are not the sole determinant; how they build a professional image and establish relationships with their community and clients also plays a crucial role. Specialization is one of the key aspects that set each MUA apart, as they focus on specific areas such as bridal makeup, editorial, or fashion makeup. This targeted expertise helps them attract the right clients and enhances their competitiveness in the industry.

Beyond technical skills, leadership is also a crucial element. Many MUAs actively share their knowledge and experiences through social media or workshops, making them not just service providers but also inspirational figures within their community.Strong interaction with followers and clients is also supported by a friendly and approachable personality. The unique character they showcase through various digital content, such as tutorials and live sessions on social media, helps them build a closer connection with their audience.

Each MUA has a distinctive style that sets them apart, whether through makeup techniques, color choices, or additional services such as style consultations. This differentiation is key to staying competitive in the ever-evolving beauty industry. To remain relevant, they actively utilize social media, particularly Instagram, to foster stronger connections with their audience. Features like Stories and live streaming are leveraged to provide real-time updates and engage directly with potential clients.

Consistent branding is another crucial factor in shaping a professional image. MUAs with a strong visual identity, in terms of color themes and artistic style, are more easily recognized by prospective clients. This consistency enhances professionalism and boosts customer trust**.** In a highly competitive industry, resilience is essential. MUAs continuously learn and adapt to new trends, using criticism as motivation for growth**.**

Client trust is also a valuable asset that must be maintained. MUAs who build a strong reputation through high-quality services, professional communication, and positive client testimonials are more likely to sustain their presence in the beauty industry. A solid reputation not only ensures short-term success but also fosters long-term customer loyalty.

CLOSING

The success of a Make-Up Artist (MUA) in Pekanbaru is not only determined by their makeup skills but also by the implementation of effective personal branding strategies on social media platforms such as Instagram. Based on the personal branding theory applied, these MUAs build their personal brand through several key elements. First, specialization serves as the foundation for shaping a unique identity. MUAs in Pekanbaru highlight their specific expertise, such as traditional or modern bridal makeup, which differentiates them from competitors. This aligns with the concept of specialization in personal branding, where focusing on a particular field of expertise can strengthen one's professional image. Next, leadership is demonstrated through sharing knowledge and beauty tips on Instagram. By actively providing education and inspiration, they position themselves as opinion leaders in the local beauty industry. This reflects the leadership principle in personal branding, where individuals showcase authority and influence in their field.

Authentic personality is also a crucial element. MUAs showcase their personal side, such as their creative process or daily life, allowing their audience to feel a sense of closeness and authenticity. This approach aligns with the personality concept in personal branding, emphasizing the importance of displaying one's true character to the public. To ensure they remain visible and relevant, MUAs consistently upload high-quality content, utilizing Instagram features like Stories and Reels to enhance engagement with followers. This consistency helps build audience trust and loyalty, in line with the visibility principle in personal branding. The combination of technical

expertise and effective branding strategies enables freelance MUAs in Pekanbaru to maintain their presence and compete in the highly competitive beauty industry.

RESEARCH LIMITATIONS AND OPPORTUNITIES

There are research limitations and opportunities for further studies in the research titled "Personal Branding of Freelance Make-Up Artists in Pekanbaru on Instagram." This study focuses solely on freelance make-up artists (MUAs) in Pekanbaru, meaning the findings may not be fully generalizable to MUAs in other cities with different market characteristics and cultural influences. Additionally, this study only analyzes personal branding through Instagram, whereas some MUAs also utilize other platforms such as TikTok, YouTube, and Facebook, which may require different branding strategies. Future research could compare the personal branding of MUAs in Pekanbaru with those in other cities or even with other creative professions such as photographers or fashion stylists. Further analysis could also explore the effectiveness of personal branding across various social media platforms like TikTok, YouTube, or LinkedIn to determine which platform has the most significant impact on the MUA profession. By acknowledging these limitations and proposing directions for future research, this study aims to contribute to both academics and practitioners interested in personal branding and digital marketing.

APPRECIATION

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