

# Organizational Branding in Digital Media Communication at Airlangga University Library

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## ABSTRACT

The use of Instagram social media as a branding tool by Universitas Airlangga Library has shown significant results in building a positive image among the millennial generation. The main objective of this research is to analyze the impact of using Instagram in building a positive image and interaction with the millennial generation. The method used by the researcher is a qualitative method. The data collection process was carried out using semi-structured interviews and observation. The informants were Public Relations of Universitas Airlangga Library as the Instagram manager and two followers of @unairlibrary Instagram account. The results showed that the library utilizes interactive features such as Instagram Live and responsiveness to comments to create two-way communication with users. The collaborative and innovative programs launched also contribute to strengthening the library's position as a relevant information center in the digital era. With an effective branding strategy, Universitas Airlangga Library not only succeeded in raising awareness of the services offered, but also built a strong emotional connection with the academic community. These findings show that libraries can adapt to technological developments and transform into dynamic institutions that are committed to meeting users' information needs.

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## INTRODUCTION

In general, people's perception of libraries is still relatively low. Many people still think of libraries simply as old buildings that store old books, without understanding their strategic role as centers of modern science and information (Mustofa, 2019). Research on library promotion strategies also found that some people do not fully understand the function of libraries as institutions that play an important role in the dissemination of knowledge (Muhra rauf, 2016). This situation applies not only among the general public, but also among students, who are the main potential users of library services. Negative views of libraries result in low awareness of the value and role of libraries, which in turn has an impact on their lack of participation in utilizing available services.

In an effort to overcome these problems, libraries need to design and implement effective branding strategies. Branding is the process of building impressions, perceptions, and values in the minds of consumers about the image of an institution or company (Landa, 2006). The right branding process enables the library to effectively convey key messages to its users, so that the image and function of the library can be better understood by a wide audience (Doucett, 2008a). Branding is also important to reinforce a positive and relevant impression in the midst of technological developments and changing social dynamics.

In the context of students as part of the millennial generation, libraries need to choose branding media that suits their characteristics and habits in interacting in the digital world. Instagram, one of the most popular social media platforms among millennials, offers great potential as a tool for library branding. According to research from Global Web Index, Instagram is the third most used social media in Indonesia (Beritasatu, 2021). Millennials with an age range of 19 to 25 years old are the largest users of this platform (Napoleoncat, 2020), making Instagram an ideal medium to communicate with students.

Instagram has a number of advantages over other social media, such as YouTube and WhatsApp, which each rank higher in terms of popularity. However, Instagram's main advantage lies in its ability to present content in multiple formats, such as photos, text with photos, as well as videos. While YouTube only provides video content, and WhatsApp focuses more on chatting features, Instagram allows users to flexibly combine different types of content. This makes it an effective platform for branding, especially for libraries that want to deliver visual and informative messages in an engaging and interactive manner.

The features provided by Instagram greatly support the library's branding efforts. For example, the Instagram *feed* and *instastory* features allow libraries to convey information and introduce their services through attractive visual media, such as photos, text with photos, and short videos. The use of these features can help the library in shaping the desired image. Image, according to Kotler and Andreasen (1995), is a set of impressions, beliefs, and images that a person has of an individual, group, or organization. In this case, the library can form a positive image as a relevant and modern institution, which serves the needs of students in the field of information and knowledge.

Through effective branding on Instagram, the library can create a stronger positive perception among students. In addition, this branding is expected to increase students' awareness of the values offered by the library, so that they are more interested in using the services available. A relevant example can be seen from Universitas Airlangga library, which has succeeded in improving the image and interest of students through the Instagram account @unairlibrary, having a large number of followers is a factor that shows people's interest in viewing the content of a social media (Mardina, 2018). This can be proven through the number of Instagram followers of Universitas Airlangga library, which reached 16,000 followers. The large number of followers can be interpreted as a form of student interest in the image of the Airlangga university library.

This success shows that branding strategies through social media, especially Instagram, can be an effective tool in increasing engagement and strengthening the library's image among millennials.

## METHOD

This research uses a qualitative approach, which was chosen because it is in accordance with the research objectives to explore descriptive data from the experiences of informants. This descriptive data allows researchers to deeply understand the branding strategy implemented by Universitas Airlangga library in shaping its image among the millennial generation. As research that aims to answer questions with the formulation "how," qualitative methods are very relevant to reveal events and processes that occur (Creswell & Poth, 2016). The subject of this study is to analyze Instagram social media as a basis for digital branding.

This research sets Instagram of Universitas Airlangga library as a specific research object. In conducting data collection research, the methods used are physical observation and observation of social media owned by Universitas Airlangga library and in-depth interviews to the location conducted with the head of the library and several public relations staff of Universitas Airlangga library and have been conducted for 4 days.

The population studied was the followers of the @unairlibrary Instagram account, and the sampling technique used was purposive sampling. Mack (2005) defines purposive sampling as a sampling technique in which informants are selected based on certain criteria set by the researcher. The purpose of using this technique is to obtain relevant data regarding the followers' perceptions of the image formed by Universitas Airlangga library through the branding process on Instagram. data on followers' perceptions will be analyzed to assess whether the branding strategy implemented by Universitas Airlangga library is successful in building the desired image. Sukmadinata in Helaludin and Hengki (2019) states that the number of participants in qualitative research usually ranges from 1 to 40 people. Therefore, the researcher chose two informants from among the followers, namely nn and kih, who were considered to meet the criteria and could provide in-depth insights related to the research focus.

## DISCUSSION

### *Branding*

Branding comes from the root word "brand", which means that a brand is a representation of an item, organization, or organization. According to Landa (2006), branding is the process of creating character, impressions, perceptions, and consumer responses about the name and image of a company or institution. Irhamni Ali (2012) also describes branding as a collection of ideas and practices that aim to measure, build, and manage the image of an organization. Therefore, branding can be defined as a process that applies theories aimed at measuring and building an organization's image so that it is memorable to customers. libraries have recently used the term branding, so some librarians do not yet know what it means and how to use it (Nuriana & Amelia, 2019). Therefore, libraries must have a deep understanding of branding and how to implement branding strategies to form a good image in the eyes of the millennial generation.

Marketing and branding are different. One component of a marketing strategy is branding (Doucett, 2008). branding is responsible for delivering a memorable message to the reader. The goal is to shape perceptions, build trust, and a sense of love for the brand (Neumeier, 2003). To achieve these goals, libraries must be able to find compelling ways to convey brand messages so that readers are interested in listening to them and understanding them (Doucett, 2008b). The success of the branding strategy determines how effective the marketing process is. As a result, libraries must understand branding strategies.

### *Branding strategy*

Kotler (2009) states that efforts to strengthen the brand on goods or services is a branding strategy. According to Keller (2003), a brand can be considered as a component that distinguishes a product designed to meet the same needs. Unlike physical products that include goods or services, brands add certain dimensions that provide additional value and differentiate the product from other products.

Kotler and Armstrong (2012) state that a brand is "brand is a name, term, sign, symbol, or design, or a combination of these, that identifies the maker or seller of a product or service". attributes, benefits, values, culture, personality, and type of user are six levels of meaning, benefits are the result of product features both

functionally and emotionally, while attributes describe product features. values indicate the producer's values, culture indicates social identity, personality indicates brand character, and the type of user indicates the group of consumers who use it.

According to Landa (2006), modern branding encompasses more than just visual elements or logos; it also includes the image, credibility, and perceptions embedded in customers' minds. In other words, branding is the emotional connection and trust built between the customer and the brand (McNally & Speak, 2004).

According to Gelder (2005), branding objectives include conveying a clear message, ensuring credibility, building an emotional connection with customers, motivating customers, and building customer loyalty. To achieve these goals, companies must establish brand personality, brand positioning, and brand identifiers. The human character adopted by the brand to attract customers with similar personalities is called brand positioning. Brand positioning determines how the brand is perceived by consumers compared to its competitors, and brand identification is the component that distinguishes the product from others.

Therefore, building a strong identity, image and impression in the minds of customers is an important part of an effective branding strategy, which can enhance competitiveness in the market and build sustainable emotional relationships.

### ***Social media***

Social media has turned into a platform where people can self-actualize and create an image or branding as desired by the user (Restusari & Farida, 2019). Instagram is one of the fastest growing social media platforms and has become very popular in recent years due to its features that allow users to share photos and videos and interact with others online (Maulhayat et al., 2018).

Instagram is a social media platform that serves as a self-actualization tool through sharing visual content and social networking. By creating an account and following the registration procedure, users can use the platform's various features to communicate with other users and share content in the form of photos and videos.

Instagram is gaining traction with a wide range of people due to its ease of access and interactive features, making it one of the best platforms for managing self-image and communication in the digital age.

### ***Instagram***

Instagram is one of the fastest growing social media platforms, mainly due to its more specialized and advanced features for sharing photos and videos instantly. The platform allows users to upload and share visual content quickly, as well as offer a variety of editing options that enhance the aesthetic quality of the content. In addition, as part of the facebook ecosystem, Instagram makes it easy to integrate users' accounts on both platforms, allowing facebook friends to follow their accounts.

According to Bambang Dwi Atmoko (2012:10), "Instagram is an application on smartphones specifically designed for social media, and is a form of digital media that has similar functions to twitter. the difference lies in its focus on taking and sharing photos." Instagram is also considered to inspire and encourage creativity due to its amazing features that allow users to edit their photos, making them more beautiful, artistic and interesting.

With these features, Instagram not only serves as a visual communication tool, but also a platform that has the potential to enhance the creativity of its users. The app provides space for users to experiment with various photography and video styles, which ultimately strengthens their self-image or branding visually. Along with the development of technology, Instagram has become one of the leading social media in shaping visual trends and content sharing culture in the digital world.

Universitas Airlangga library has utilized the Instagram platform as the main media to build branding and disseminate information to the wider community, especially to students and academics.



Figure 1. Instagram profile photo display of Universitas Airlangga Library

Figure 1 has shown that in an effort to introduce the library's identity, Universitas Airlangga library chose a picture of the library building as the profile picture of the Instagram account, with the aim of providing a clear and accurate visual description of the available library facilities. The library building, which has three floors, is expected to be a visual symbol that attracts the attention of Instagram users and gives a real impression that the library has adequate physical facilities.

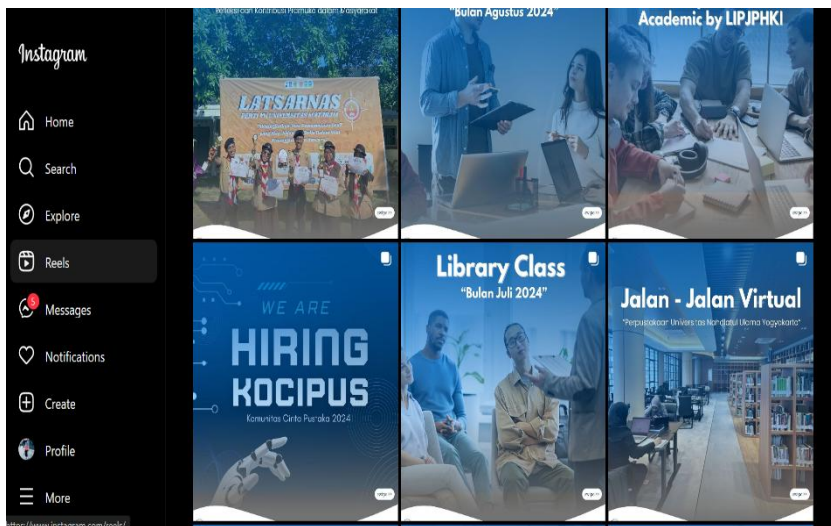


Figure 2. Instagram feed view of Universitas Airlangga Library

Figure 2 has shown that Universitas Airlangga's libraries do not yet have their own color identity, they adopt the university's official colors of blue, yellow, and white, to strengthen institutional linkages and overall branding alignment.

Instagram was chosen as the main platform because the number of followers of the library account reached 16 thousand, with the majority of users aged between 18 to 27 years old. This figure shows that Instagram has great potential to increase engagement and have a significant impact on library branding efforts. With high engagement and insight, the library can reach a wide audience, provide information related to services, and promote various activities organized.

However, in the process of building branding, Universitas Airlangga library faces a number of challenges. One of them is limited human resources. Library staff who manage social media often have to divide their time with other responsibilities as librarians, so content management sometimes cannot be maximized. In addition, there are still many users who have not followed the library's social media accounts, which results in information not being widely disseminated. Technical obstacles such as internet network disruptions and lack of collaboration with internal parties are also obstacles that are often faced.



Figure 3. Post about the Virtual Walk program of Universitas Airlangga Library

Figure 3 has shown that the virtual tour of the library at Universitas Airlangga is a service innovation that allows visitors to explore library facilities and services online, without having to come directly to the location. Through this virtual tour, users can view various spaces and facilities such as reading rooms, book collections, digital services, and discussion areas using only digital devices such as laptops or smartphones. This feature is designed to provide an immersive and informative experience, especially for new students, prospective students, researchers, or the general public who want to know more about Unair Library. With interactive navigation, visitors can explore every corner of the library independently, anytime and from anywhere. Interestingly, this virtual walk program can also be further developed through collaboration with libraries from other campuses. This collaboration could include the integration of virtual tours from multiple university libraries on a single platform, allowing users to compare and access services from different institutions simultaneously. This initiative will expand the reach of digital literacy and strengthen the network between libraries in Indonesia's higher education ecosystem. With this collaboration, libraries will not only become information centers, but also interactive bridges that strengthen synergies between universities.



Figure 4. Post about the Ngobras program at Universitas Airlangga Library

Figure 4 has shown that Ngobras or Ngobrol Santai is one of the flagship programs organized by Universitas Airlangga Library as an interactive forum between students, lecturers, librarians, and other inspirational speakers. This activity is usually packaged in a relaxed yet insightful atmosphere, discussing various interesting topics around the world of literacy, academics, technology, research, and other actual issues. Ngobras aims to create an open and inclusive discussion space, where participants are not only listeners, but also actively dialogue and share their views. The program is also a means to introduce library services and facilities in a more light-hearted and communicative way. Ngobras activities can be held offline in the library's discussion rooms, or online through virtual platforms such as Zoom or Live, so as to reach a wider range of participants, including students from out of town or abroad.



Figure 5. Posts about the Podcast program at Universitas Airlangga Library

Figure 5 has shown that the Universitas Airlangga Library Podcast Service is an innovation to disseminate information and education through audio media that is light and easily accessible. This podcast contains

content about literacy, academic tips, book reviews, and casual chats with inspirational speakers. Anyone can use the podcast room provided by the library, as long as they submit an official request letter. This service is also open for collaboration with other campus libraries to enrich content and expand audience reach.

To overcome various challenges, Universitas Airlangga library has implemented a number of innovative strategies by launching various collaborative programs, both with external and internal agencies within Universitas Airlangga. One of the successful programs is "jalan-jalan virtual," which is a collaboration with libraries from various regions in Indonesia. This program aims to introduce other libraries and establish good relationships with them. In addition, Universitas Airlangga library also has the "ngobras" (ngobrol santai) program, which raises various discussion topics and involves lecturers, student executive board (bem), student activity unit (ukm), and other student organizations according to the topic discussed. There are also other programs such as "library podcast," "yuk bisa yuk menjadi penulis," "thursday motivation," "libpedia," and "basajawi," which show that Universitas Airlangga's library is not only focused on providing books and digital reference sources, but also a center of information, entertainment, and education for the entire academic community.

The effectiveness of these programs is evident in the growing number of collaborations, as well as the increasing awareness of the library's role as a place that supports creativity and collaboration between parties. These programs also allow the library to expand their reach, introducing the library to speakers, students, and other stakeholders within Universitas Airlangga.

In addition, Universitas Airlangga library utilizes the insight feature on Instagram to monitor the performance of each uploaded content. This feature provides a clear picture of the reach and impact of each post, as well as which content attracts the most attention from the audience. With this data, the library can evaluate and develop a more effective content strategy, so that it can continue to increase engagement with Instagram users and maximize the potential of social media in building library branding.

Overall, Universitas Airlangga library has successfully built a strong branding through the use of social media, although it still faces various challenges. Program innovations that involve collaboration, creativity, and continuous evaluation through social media insights have helped Universitas Airlangga's library continue to grow as a center of information, education, and collaboration for the entire academic community. Thus, the image built can change the public perception of a better library image.

Based on the results of interviews with two informants, it can be concluded that the branding strategy implemented by Universitas Airlangga library through the Instagram social media platform has achieved success in building a positive and attractive image. Both informants, NN and KIH, who are students of Universitas Airlangga, said that Universitas Airlangga library actively publishes information related to events, services, and facilities offered through Instagram. The library's activeness in conveying this information makes it easy for users to always get the latest updates that are relevant to their needs as students, especially those who often use library services.

According to informant NN, the image of Universitas Airlangga library on Instagram is quite good, because the library regularly shares important information about events and services, which directly helps students like her to stay informed about library services. This shows that the library does not only function as a place to store books, but also as an institution that is active and responsive to students' information needs.

This opinion was also reinforced by informant KIH, who stated that Universitas Airlangga library has an attractive image on Instagram compared to other libraries. KIH observed that other libraries tend to be less active on social media, while Universitas Airlangga library continues to update content and is active in uploading information. This activity reinforces the perception that the library is not just a stationary place, but a dynamic institution that continues to innovate in presenting information through digital platforms.



From this interview, it can be seen that Universitas Airlangga library has fulfilled one of the important points recommended by Ramsey and Vecchione (2014) in social media image building strategies, namely "be interesting." The library's activity in uploading content regularly, especially related to events and services, has succeeded in creating a positive impression on its followers. The uploaded content is not only informative, but also interesting and useful, thus increasing engagement and strengthening the library's image as a modern institution that is relevant to student needs.

In addition to building an attractive image, Universitas Airlangga library is also considered successful in creating interactivity with its followers on Instagram. Informants NN and KIH highlighted how the library utilizes Instagram features, such as Instagram live, to communicate directly with its followers. When the library announced that services had reopened, they held an Instagram live session, where librarians actively answered questions from followers. This creates an interactive, two-way communication between the library and users, increasing engagement and trust in the institution.

KIH also observed that Universitas Airlangga library often replies to comments from users, which shows that the library tries to stay connected with its audience. Being responsive to followers' questions and comments on social media is an important step in maintaining good interactions and ensuring that users feel cared for and valued.

This interaction shows that Universitas Airlangga library is implementing another point of Ramsey and Vecchione (2014) strategy, namely "be engaging." The library not only provides information unilaterally, but also builds interactive and meaningful two-way communication with its users. Activities such as Instagram live and replies to comments show that the library is committed to creating a close relationship with followers, which ultimately strengthens the library's image and reputation in the eyes of the public.

Overall, Universitas Airlangga library has successfully utilized Instagram as a strategic platform in building a positive and interactive image. Regular activities in uploading interesting content and good interaction with followers show that the library understands the importance of modern and relevant communication strategies in the digital era. It also reflects the library's ability to keep up with digital trends and meet user expectations in an academic environment that is increasingly connected to technology.

With an effective branding strategy on Instagram, Universitas Airlangga library is able to shape better public perception, increase engagement, and strengthen relationships with its users. This shows that the library is not just a place to borrow books, but also an institution that adapts to technological developments, provides innovative services, and is actively involved in building digital communities among students and academics.

## **CONCLUSION**

Universitas Airlangga library has successfully utilized Instagram as a strategic tool in building branding and image in the eyes of the millennial generation, especially students. Based on the findings in this study, there are several important points that need to be considered for branding organizations through Instagram.

First, being active in publishing content regularly on Instagram, such as information about services, events, and facilities, has built positive perceptions among its followers. This shows that the library is an active and responsive institution to students' information needs. To achieve effective branding, it is important for the library to maintain consistency in uploading interesting and relevant content. By doing so, the library can ensure that users always get the latest information they need.

Secondly, interactivity with users is essential in building a strong relationship between the library and its audience. The use of the Instagram live feature and active replies to followers' comments strengthens the library's engagement with the audience. This shows that the library functions not only as an information provider, but also as a responsive dialog partner. This strategy is in line with the "be engaging" point suggested by Ramsey and Vecchione (2014), which emphasizes the importance of building interactive two-way communication.

Third, strong visual branding is one of Instagram's main advantages. This platform provides a large space to highlight interesting visual elements, such as photos and videos uploaded on Instagram feed and Instagram stories. By utilizing engaging visual content, libraries can build an image that is modern and relevant in the digital age. This not only helps attract the attention of the audience, but also creates a lasting impression of the services and facilities available.

Fourthly, the library has also utilized the insights feature on Instagram to evaluate the performance of uploaded content. This evaluation provides important data regarding the reach of the content, the level of interaction, and the type of content that is most appealing to the audience. Using this data helps the library to develop more effective branding strategies in the future. By understanding what users like and need, libraries can customize their content to be more relevant and engaging.

Overall, the branding strategy through Instagram allows Universitas Airlangga library to strengthen its image as an institution that is modern, innovative, and close to its users. However, libraries also need to continue to innovate and evaluate their branding strategies to face existing challenges, such as limited human resources and a wider range of users. By utilizing social media effectively, libraries can build a strong identity, increase engagement, and adapt to the needs of the millennial generation in the digital era.

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