



Self-Identity Management and Branding on Social Media: A Case Study of WhatsApp Status through the Johari Window Perspective

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Abstract. This study aims to examine self-identity management and branding on social media with a focus on WhatsApp status, using the Johari Window four-quadrant theory approach, functioning to express themselves openly, blindly, hidden, and unknowingly. Data were collected through interviews and content analysis of informants' WhatsApp statuses. The informants in this study consisted of four people with different backgrounds: a housewife, a lecturer, a writer, and a lecturer and preacher. The results showed that each informant had a unique way of managing their identity and self-branding through WhatsApp status. The first informant, a housewife, actively shares her activities on social media, including videos of singing with interesting face filters. She shows open and hidden identities, with satirical statuses reflecting the blind self-aspect, while in the open quadrant the expression of happiness reflects positive self-branding. The second informant, a lecturer, posts social and teaching activities, creating an image as an active and accomplished individual. Also statuses related to culinary and vacations show personal well-being, reflecting hidden identities. The third informant, a writer, brands himself as a writing service provider with consistency in posting writing activities. The cursing status shows a blind self, where the negative impact of the reaction may not be realized. The fourth informant, a lecturer and preacher, posts tausiyah and songs, creating an image as a religious individual and a positive influence. This study highlights how each informant uses WhatsApp status to build self-identity and branding, and how aspects of the Johari Window theory can help understand these dynamics. All four informants revealed that they use WhatsApp status to strengthen their self-image and personal branding, by considering the audience who will see the status. In addition, this study found that social interaction and feedback from friends on WhatsApp play an important role in the process of self-identity management. This study contributes to the understanding of how individuals manage their identities in the digital era and the importance of social media in shaping public perceptions of themselves.

Keywords: Self-identity management, branding, social media, WhatsApp status, Johari Window.

INTRODUCTION

In today's digital era, social media is one of the main platforms for individuals to express themselves, interact with others, and build the desired self-image. WhatsApp status, as one of the features that allows users to share messages, images, and videos for 24 hours, has become one of the important tools in managing self-identity in the digital world. The existence of this status not only functions as a communication channel but also as a platform for building and managing the user's personal branding.

However, the emergence of WhatsApp is not a coincidence; its user-friendly interface, global reach, and smart features have transformed the way we communicate. Originally created for messaging, WhatsApp then became a reliable platform for instant connections without the need for phone lines or additional costs. Moreover, end-to-end encryption makes it a secure choice, allowing people to communicate freely, whether for family chats by creating groups with existing contacts, business updates, or even organizing surprise parties. (clickup.com). Therefore, if someone wants to brand themselves as "impressive" by openly posting WhatsApp statuses, for example, wanting to appear happy and prosperous through posts of traveling to various places, not to mention culinary events at many restaurants, meeting famous figures and celebrities through posts with photos together, the openness displayed may not necessarily receive positive appreciation. People who see the posts might call him 'arrogant', 'pretentious', or even get angry because the posts could hurt someone, as that person actually owes him a lot of money and always says "I don't have any money yet" when asked to pay it back. The feedback given creates problems for him because he might actually receive sarcastic remarks and be asked for the debt again. Or someone who posts hate speech by cursing the person who has a problem with them. People who see his status will lose respect, but this person is unaware of it. And many other things, initially, the emergence of WhatsApp made communication and sharing friendly and warm messages easier, but if the users cannot manage themselves properly, it will instead backfire.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Self-identity management on social media requires a deep understanding of how individuals create and maintain their self-image in the eyes of the public. (Ellison, N. B., Steinfield, C., & Lampe, C., 2007). In this context, the Johari Window model becomes a useful tool for understanding the dynamics between what individuals know about themselves and what others know about them. This model divides information into four quadrants: the open

area, the hidden area, the blind area, and the unknown area, which can help explain how individuals manage and reflect their identities on social media. (Luft, J., & Ingham, H., 1955).

The Johari Window is one way to observe the dynamics of self-awareness, which relates to our behaviors, feelings, and motives. The model created by Joseph Luft and Harry Ingham in 1955 is useful for observing how we understand ourselves as part of the communication process. Joseph Luft and Harrington Ingham developed the concept of the Johari Window as an embodiment of how a person relates to others, depicted as a window.

If someone wants all their ideas, feelings, and actions to be accepted by others, then Area I (the open area) must be wide open. And do not expect too much appreciation from others. One way to reduce the 'hidden self' and enhance the 'open self' is through the process of self-disclosure, which involves trusting others more and sharing personal information with them. To reduce the 'blind self' and at the same time increase the 'open self', an individual must be willing to accept feedback from others and use that feedback to improve or change their own personality.

A clearer explanation of the Johari Window model (Brown, 2004) is that its four quadrants (windows) are:

- a. The open area is information about ourselves that is known by others, such as name, position, rank, marital status, which university we graduated from, etc. The open area refers to behaviors, feelings, and motivations that are known by ourselves and others. For someone who has recognized their own potential and abilities, their strengths and weaknesses, it is very easy to engage in activities that are beneficial for themselves and others, so people of this type will always find success at every step, because others know their abilities as well as they do themselves. When starting a relationship, we will share something light about ourselves. The longer it goes, the more information about ourselves will continue to increase vertically, thereby reducing the hidden area. The larger the open area, the more productive and beneficial our interpersonal relationships become.
- b. The hidden area contains information that we know about ourselves but is closed off to others. This information includes our concerns about our boss, work, finances, family, health, etc. By not sharing about the hidden area, it usually becomes an obstacle in relationships. This will cause others to miscommunicate about us, which in a work relationship will reduce people's trust. This refers to behaviors, feelings, and motivations that are known by others but not known by ourselves.

- c. The blind area that determines that others are aware of something but we are not. In this area, others do not know us while we are aware of our abilities and potential. If this happens, feedback and communication are ways for us to become more known to others, especially our abilities. Eliminate self-doubt and start being open. For example, how to reduce nervousness, how to deal with Professor A, etc. Input from others will reduce the blind area. The more we understand our strengths and weaknesses that others know, the better we will work in a team. This refers to behaviors, feelings, and motivations that are known to ourselves but not known to others.
- d. The unknown area is information that neither others nor we know. Until we gain experience about something or others see something in us, how we behave or feel. For example, when we first like someone other than our family members. We can never express the feeling of "love." This window will shrink as we grow up, start developing ourselves, or learn from experiences.

What is meant by the public area is the area that contains things known by oneself and others. The blind area is the area that contains things known by others but not known by oneself. In interpersonal relationships, this person understands others better but is unable to understand themselves, often unintentionally hurting others' feelings. The hidden area is the area that contains things known by oneself but not known by others. In this area, people hide/conceal themselves. Information about themselves is kept tightly guarded. The unconscious area creates a part of the personality that is repressed in the unconscious, which is unknown both to oneself and to others. However, this unconsciousness can potentially emerge. Due to individual differences, the extent of each area in one person differs from that in another.

According to Goffman (1959) in his book titled "The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life," individuals act as "actors" who strive to manage the impressions received by others. In this context, WhatsApp status can be seen as a stage where individuals present their identities and strive to build a certain reputation. This research aims to understand how WhatsApp users utilize the status feature to build and manage their identities and personal branding, as well as how they interact with others' perceptions of the image they present.

Previously, studies on identity management on social media have received considerable attention, as written by McLean & Thorne in their book "Introduction to the Special Issue on Identity and Well Being. Identity." (2016: 1-10) especially with the emergence of platforms like Instagram and Facebook. However, more specific research on WhatsApp status is still rarely conducted. Therefore, this research will fill that gap by conducting a qualitative

descriptive study on four informants who actively use WhatsApp status, to explore how they use this feature in the context of self-identity management. (Ardiansyah, 2018).

With this background, it is hoped that this research can provide a more comprehensive insight into the dynamics of identity management on social media, particularly through the WhatsApp status feature.

METHODS

This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach to examine self-identity management and branding on social media through a case study of WhatsApp status, utilizing the Johari Window theory perspective. The qualitative descriptive method was chosen because it is suitable for understanding complex and in-depth phenomena from the informants' perspective. This research approach aims to describe and understand social phenomena or human behavior in a deep and holistic manner. This method does not focus on numerical or statistical measurements, but rather on the collection of narrative and descriptive data aimed at providing a deeper understanding of a phenomenon, including context, meaning, and the experiences of individuals or groups. This method is often used to explore complex issues that cannot be explained with numbers. (Creswell, 2014).

Meanwhile, Lexy J. Moleong (2005:6) states that the purpose of qualitative methods is to understand the phenomena experienced by research subjects. Including explaining behavior, perception, motivation, behavior, and others as a whole, in terms of language and within a specific natural context, using various natural methods.

This research involves four informants who were selected through purposive sampling. The informants are active users of WhatsApp status with a variety of backgrounds, professions, and experiences in using social media. The selection of informants was carried out with the following criteria:

1. Actively using the WhatsApp status feature for at least the past year.
2. Willing to provide information and experience regarding the use of WhatsApp status.
3. Having a basic understanding of self-identity and personal branding on social media.

The data in this study were collected through semi-structured interviews. Interviews were conducted in person or via video calls to understand the informants' experiences and perspectives regarding self-identity management and branding through WhatsApp status. The interview questions were structured based on the Johari Window theory framework, covering

aspects of self-disclosure: open self, blind self, hidden self, and unknown self. (Luft, J., & Ingham, 1955).

In addition to interviews, the researchers also observed the WhatsApp statuses posted by informants over a certain period to understand the context and content shared.

Data analysis was conducted descriptively with the following steps:

1. Interview transcription: All interview data is transcribed verbatim to ensure the accuracy of the information.
2. Coding: The transcribed data is coded to identify the main themes related to the Johari Window theory.
3. Categorization: The emerging themes are grouped based on the four quadrants of the Johari Window (open self, blind self, hidden self, unknown self).
4. Interpretation: The categorized data is interpreted to understand the dynamics of self-disclosure and personal branding strategies on social media.

The analysis in this method is inductive, where the researcher seeks patterns, themes, and categories from the collected data. The results of the analysis are usually presented in the form of a narrative that describes the research findings. (Creswell, 2013).

DISCUSSION

This research examines self-identity management and branding on social media through a case study of WhatsApp status using the Johari Window theory approach. The informants in this study consisted of four individuals with diverse backgrounds, namely a housewife, a lecturer, a writer, and a lecturer who is also a preacher. The research results are described as follows:

First Informant

The first informant is a housewife who actively posts her activities on TikTok and WhatsApp. Through her WhatsApp status, she often shares videos of herself singing with her face filtered to look beautiful. When she feels annoyed with others, she doesn't hesitate to make sarcastic remarks or even curse in her status. For example, when someone who owes her money is difficult to remind or "forgets" to pay. Her curses are very straightforward and harsh. On the other hand, when she feels happy, she will express her happiness by posting good news, such as when she gets a new phone or a bonus in addition to her monthly allowance from her husband, and she often goes out to various places with her friends while enjoying food and drinks and posting photos of them.

The Johari Window approach shows that this informant tends to reveal both an open self and a hidden self simultaneously. The statuses that are sarcastic or insulting indicate the presence of the blind self-aspect, where the informant may not be aware of the impact of their behavior, but others are. Meanwhile, expressions of happiness indicate an effort to brand oneself as a happy and fortunate individual.

Second Informant

The second informant is a lecturer who posts daily about her social activist activities and teaching activities. He also often shares culinary experiences with his wife and details about hotel facilities during vacations.

From the perspective of the Johari Window, this informant shows the dominance of the open self and hidden self identities. Status related to social activities and teaching reflects self-branding as an active and accomplished individual. Posts about culinary experiences and vacations reflect a hidden identity that shows well-being and happiness in personal life.

Third Informant

The third informant is a writer who consistently posts their writing activities online and brands themselves as a provider of thesis, dissertation, and dissertation writing services. This informant also does not hesitate to curse people who do not pay for their services. The curses and insults he posts are in stark contrast to the positive words and advice that reflect his religiosity.

In the Johari Window analysis, this informant shows an open self and a hidden self. Posting daily writing activities reflects self-branding as a productive writer. A status that insults people reflects the presence of a blind self, where the negative reaction towards clients may not be recognized by the informant but is known by others.

Fourth Informant

The fourth informant is a lecturer and preacher who often posts songs by Rhoma Irama and motivational sermons or da'wah.

From the perspective of the Johari Window, this informant exhibits a dominant open self. Status that includes singing and religious sermons reflects self-branding as a religious individual with a positive influence. This reflects an effort to motivate others to do good through social media.

CONCLUSION

This research examines self-identity management and branding on social media through a case study of WhatsApp status using the Johari Window theory approach. All informants

actively express certain aspects of their identity through their WhatsApp status. This open identity includes daily activities, professional activities, hobbies, and expressions of happiness. Informants also manage information that they want to hide or partially reveal to others. This is evident in how they choose to present the desired self-image and hide certain aspects of their personal life. Some statuses that are sarcastic or insulting reflect the presence of a blind self. The informant may not be aware of the negative impact of such behavior on others, but this is known by the people around them. The use of WhatsApp status for self-branding is very evident among all informants. They utilize their status to build a positive self-image, whether as active, productive, religious, or happy individuals.

SUGGESTION

Social media users need to be more aware of the impact of the statuses they share, especially those that are negative, such as sarcasm or insults. This awareness is important for maintaining good relationships with others. Individuals need to manage their self-identity wisely on social media. They must consider the balance between an open identity and a hidden identity, as well as the long-term impact of self-branding. The use of social media for personal branding should be done with a positive and constructive approach. This will not only create a good self-image but also have a positive influence on others. Further research is needed with a larger number of informants and a variety of other social media platforms to gain a more comprehensive understanding of self-identity management and branding on social media.

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