

Personal Branding Through Online Dating App Bumble

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Abstract. *In contemporary society, personal branding has become an important aspect of self-presentation, especially in digital media. This study explores the phenomenon of personal branding through the popular online dating app Bumble. Through a qualitative analysis of user profiles and interactions within such platforms, the study aims to understand how individuals strategically build and manage their personal image to attract other users. Qualitative descriptive research method through data collection by interviewing 6 Bumble user informants and observing user profiles, including selected bio and images, as well as their interactions with other users in the application. The theory used is personal branding by Peter, Personal branding McNally and Speak, and self-presentation by Goffman Montoya analysis was carried out qualitatively to identify patterns in personal branding strategies used by bumble users. The results showed that Bumble users engaged in a variety of personal branding strategies, such as selective self-disclosure, image curation, and the use of language designed to portray desirable characteristics and values. In addition, visual elements, such as profile photos and aesthetics, also play an important role in the formation of online self-image. Overall, this research contributes to our understanding of personal branding in the context of online dating, providing insight into the complex dynamics of self-presentation and impression management in the digital environment. The findings have implications for academics and practitioners interested in the intersection of Technology, identity, and interpersonal relationships.*

Keywords: *Personal Branding, Online Dating Application, Bumble.*

I. INTRODUCTION

In an increasingly advanced digital age, online dating apps like bumble have become a popular platform on tiktok commonly referred to as the "Yellow app" for individuals to find and interact with potential partners. According to Business of Apps data, Bumble application users worldwide have reached 42 million people in 2020 (Haryadi and Simangunsong, 2022). The number increased by 20% compared to the previous year of 35 million people and there is flexibility to highlight personal branding. Bumble app is a location-based online dating app to make it easier for users to communicate and provide opportunities for online dating and have more open access than other dating apps.

The concept of personal branding, originally used in a business context, has found its place in everyday life, including in the world of online dating. Social Media has become an important tool for individuals to express themselves and build personal branding that they want to display to the public with a specific purpose (Herd, 2018). For some people, social media is a platform where they can show their talents or strengths. Previous research has shown that people often post content about themselves on social media in order to gain self-recognition and classify their activities.

One type of application that is increasingly popular among unmarried individuals is a dating app or dating app. Examples of such apps are Bumble, TanTan, Tinder and Okcupid. Among these applications, bumble is one of the most demanded and widely used. Its ease of use as well as its worldwide reach make bumble one of the options for people who are single to find a partner. With its

ability to connect users within a radius spanning hundreds of kilometers, Bumble is becoming one of the most popular online dating platforms.

In the context of online dating apps, such as Bumble, users actively use personal branding strategies to highlight certain aspects of themselves and build an attractive image for potential partners. To understand how personal branding operates in this environment. In this study, researchers will explore the concept of personal branding through two main theories: personal Branding theory by Peter, which describes how individuals utilize marketing strategies to build a positive personal image; and The Theory of self-presentation by Goffman Montoya, which describes the way individuals structure and present themselves.

Personal Branding theory by Peter is an approach that describes how individuals utilize marketing and branding strategies commonly used in business contexts to build a positive personal image and reputation (Marsya, M. A, 2021). This concept emphasizes the importance of building and managing the impression desired by the individual towards others, similar to how a brand or company builds a positive image in the eyes of consumers. In the context of online dating apps like Bumble, users can use the concept of personal branding to highlight certain aspects of their personality and lifestyle in an effort to attract attention and build a desired impression to a potential partner.

The theory of personal branding by McNally and Speak states that a strong personal brand always has three basic things together (Dewi Haroen, Op.Cit.,P.6) . The three things are:

A strong Personal brand describes something that is so specific or distinctive that it is different from most people. Distinctiveness here can be represented by personal qualities, physical appearance, or expertise

1. Relevance: a strong Personal Brand usually describes something that is important to you society and have relevance to the character of the person. If the relevance does not exist, it will be difficult to strengthen the community's mind
2. Consistency: a strong Personal Brand is usually the fruit of consistent branding efforts through various means so that what is commonly called brand equity is formed.

Goffman Montoya's presentation theory focuses on the way individuals structure and present themselves in social interactions. Goffman Montoya describes social interaction as a "show", in which individuals act out and structure their behavior to achieve certain goals or influence the perception of others towards them (M.Arzy Marsyah, 2022). In the context of Bumble, users will compose a profile, select a photo, and design a description of themselves to present the desired version of themselves to fellow users. This theory helps understand how Bumble users use visual and textual elements to control how they want to be understood by others in the context of online dating (Andriani, I., et al. 2021).

Bumble is one of the online dating apps known around the world. Launched in 2020, (Herd, W.W, 2018). Bumble allows users to search and interact with other users within a specific geographic area. The app makes use of the user's location and search preferences to display the corresponding profiles of other users. Users can then evaluate the profile by swiping the image to the left or right, indicating interest or disinterest, users can use one spotlight per week so that the user's profile can be seen by

more people for 30 minutes and bumble provides a match feature according to the behavior of fellow users. If both users like each other, they will be allowed to start a conversation and build a potential further relationship

Bumble is often used to find a partner, but it can also be used to make friends or even to build a professional network. With its simple interface and intuitive features, Bumble has become one of the most widely used online dating platforms in the world, allowing millions of people to connect and interact every day.

Conceptually, online dating applications can be viewed as one form of the variety of communication between people made possible by computerized technology, known as Computer mediated communication (CMC) (Thurlow, 2004:15). Furthermore, online dating apps can also be categorized as a type of social network sites (SNS) within the framework of the CMC concept. According to Boyd & Ellison (2008: 211), SNS is a web-based service that allows individuals to form a public or semi-public profile through a particular system, display a list of other users, as well as interact with them in the system.

In the context of online dating apps, the concept of SNS offers a platform for users to build their personal profiles, displaying information about themselves, interests, and preferences. This allows them to present themselves online with specific goals, such as building an attractive personal image or finding a partner (Boyd, D., & Ellison, N, 2008). Although the use of online dating apps may vary from platform to platform, the presence of a user profile that can be viewed by other users is a common feature found in online dating apps.

Previous journals that can support and strengthen this research. Motivations and Patterns of Usage on Tinder: a Study Among College Students in Urban Areas by Rizki Arti Utami in 2019 University of Lampung. This study aims to identify the motivation and patterns of use of the Tinder application among college students in urban areas. The research method used was a survey with questionnaires distributed to students at several universities in the metropolis.

II. METHOD

Data analyzed using methods of descriptive statistics and factor analysis. The results showed that the main motivating factor for Tinder use among college students was to find a friend or partner, followed by the desire to socialize and curiosity. Tinder app usage patterns tend to revolve around finding a partner, although there are also those who use the app for non-dating purposes such as expanding the social network.

The findings have implications in understanding the behavior of online dating app users among urban college students. The study may provide additional insight into the factors that influence the use of online dating apps among college students, as well as patterns of use that may vary depending on the context and population studied.

The use of the Tinder application as a Media for self-presentation and Personal Branding: a case study of users in Indonesia by Muhammad Arzy Arsyah in 2021 UMBY. This study aims to identify and explain how Tinder application users use the platform as a medium for self-presentation

and building personal branding. Through a qualitative approach, the study involved collecting data through in-depth interviews with a number of active Tinder users in Indonesia.

III. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION-

In this research, the main focus is to explore the phenomenon of personal branding through the online dating app Bumble. Through a qualitative approach with an interactive analysis model, we collected primary data from interviews with four active Bumble users. Secondary data was also used to support our analysis. We analyzed this data using thematic analysis techniques to identify patterns in the personal branding strategies used by Bumble users, as described by Peter's Personal Branding theory, McNally and Speak's personal branding theory which has 3 aspects that strengthen personal branding (Distinctiveness, Relevance, Consistency), and Goffman Montoya's Self-Presentation Theory.

This research uses the indicators of McNally and Speak's theory that underlies personal branding with three things namely distinctiveness, relevance, and consistency related to how each Bumble user informant has a unique, relevant, and consistent experience in using the application to build their self-image. Let's discuss each of the indicators of McNally and Speak's theory underlying personal branding.

a. Kekhasa

YH has a unique peculiarity by always posting a curation of favorite motorcycle images, showing turing activities and by showing the hobby of motorcycling that is owned so that it increases YH's personal branding in finding an online dating partner on the bumble application.



Figure 1. Yh pictures

SR has the same peculiarity as IC by always uploading images and bio related to fashion, holiday and mall or supermarket.

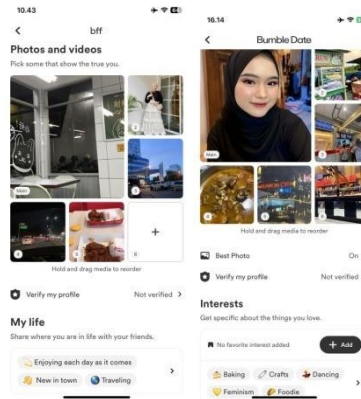


Figure 2. IC pictures

PT also has a unique peculiarity to get a partner on bumble by highlighting the curation of religious images and providing posts that motivate someone so PT has a unique peculiarity in finding an online dating partner.

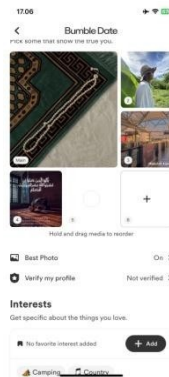


Figure 3. PT pictures

AL has a unique peculiarity to find a partner in Bumble by highlighting the hobby of football and providing information about football matches by posting curated images seoutar football. With this can provide unique peculiarities AL to attract couples who are both lovers of the ball.

FI also has its own peculiarities from the others, FI forms its peculiarities by showing a love of cats by always posting pictures of cats, so it can give a unique impression to get a partner of fellow cat lovers in Bumble.

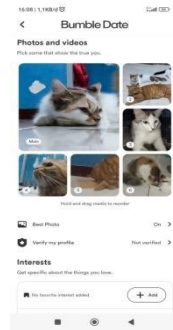


Figure 4. FI pictures

b. Relevance

YH has relevance that strengthens bumble users by having the characteristics of motorcycle and touring lovers in the community so that it is relevant to the same motorcycle posts and turing activities as the person.

IC and SR have relevance from images uploaded related to fashion, and streets in some malls or supermarkets are relevant to life in society which is shown from the habits of IC and SR who have a high lifestyle in society and have consumptive properties. With the connection of uniqueness and relevance formed by IC, it can be concluded that the personal branding lifestyle displayed by IC and SR to get online dating partners is the same frequency in the bumble application.

PT has less relevance in the community with bumble pictures or stories related to Islam, religion and religion because PT in the community is rarely seen in congregation in mosques and does not follow religious activities.

FI has a strong relevance in the community because FI if you meet a cat always carrying and FI Always bring cat food in his office to give cat food wherever he goes out to have relevance to posts that show pictures of cats related to cat lovers, thus giving other users thoughts if FI is a cat lover.

AL has a strong relevance because in the community AL is a football coach at a club so it is relevant to uploading bumble images or stories related to football, so as to give other users the Upload is a hobby and favorite of its users .

c. Consistency

In terms of consistency YH, SR, IC and PT have the same consistency in uploading images related to their peculiarities and relevance that are highlighted for the formation of personal branding, this can show their personal branding to get a partner from the online dating application bumble.

While FI and AL in terms of consistency have a low consistency in raising images related to the peculiarities and relevance that are highlighted to form personal branJduidnugl formed. This can be seen by the lack of information provided and the lack of distinctiveness that is formed to attract

fellow bumble users and the lack of consistency in uploading story images on the bumble application so that the lack of brand equity is formed.

With indicators based on the theories used in the research, strengthening the research the personal branding strategy used by Bumble users reflects the principles contained in the theory of personal branding and the theory of self-presentation on which the research is based.

The results show that Bumble users actively use personal branding strategies to build and manage their personal branding on the platform. Some commonly used strategies include being selective in self-disclosure, image curation, and the use of language designed to image desirable characteristics and values. In addition, visual elements such as profile photos and aesthetics also play an important role in the formation of online self-image.

3. First, Bumble users selectively reveal certain aspects of themselves. They tend to highlight qualities and interests that are considered attractive to a potential partner. This is in line with the concept of personal branding which emphasizes the importance of building the impression desired by individuals towards others. In the context of Bumble, users actively choose the information they want to share in an effort to attract attention and build a desired impression to their fellow users.
4. Second, image curation is an important strategy in personal branding on Bumble. Profile photos are carefully selected to reflect the personal branding desired by the user. They can use photographs that show their activities or interests, as well as adjust the aesthetics of the images to increase visual appeal. This suggests that visual elements play an important role in the formation of online self-image, in accordance with the theory of self-presentation by Goffman Montoya. In addition, the user also uses a strategically designed language to brand the desired characteristics and values. They can use self-description to present the best version of themselves, trying to attract attention and build a positive impression to a potential partner. This strategy reflects a similar approach to marketing in the concept of personal branding by Peter, where individuals utilize marketing strategies to develop positive personal branding.
5. Based on the results of interviews and the stages of personal branding that the informants went through in using the online dating app Bumble, we can see how this process can also be interpreted in the context of personal branding. Here are some ways in which the stages of self-disclosure can be related to the concept of personal branding: Tahap Orientasi:

At this stage, the informant provides the outermost information about themselves, such as general things about themselves. In the context of personal branding, this is equivalent to a first-time self-introduction. Users of dating apps like Bumble often use their profiles to present their self-image to other users. Therefore, keeping an informative and engaging profile can help build a positive first impression.

6. Affective Assessment Exchange Stage:

At this stage, informants begin to share more personal information about their hobbies,

preferences, and daily activities. This is an opportunity for them to showcase the deeper sides of their personality. In the context of personal branding, this is equivalent to building a more in-depth and authentic personal branding. By sharing more personal things, users can build stronger connections with fellow users and create a deeper impression.

7. Affective Exchange Stage:

At this stage, there is an increased exchange of deeper personal information, including complaints and more intimate emotions. In the context of personal branding, this is equivalent to showing greater vulnerability and honesty about who they really are. Users who are able to express themselves authentically and openly by building stronger relationships with fellow users and strengthening their self-image as reliable and transparent individuals.

8. Further Depth Stage:

At this stage, the informants begin to have more intimate interactions, such as making video calls or meeting in person. This suggests that their relationship has developed to a deeper and more personal level. In the context of personal branding, users who are able to build closer relationships with fellow users can strengthen their self-image as individuals who are friendly, open, and communicate well.

By understanding these stages in the context of personal branding, users of online dating apps like Bumble can strategically build and strengthen their personal branding while interacting with fellow users. By paying attention to how they convey information about themselves and how they interact with others, they can create a positive and engaging impression that matches their personal branding goals.

With indicators and stages carried out some informants managed to get online dating in the bumble application, one of which was :

1. Yh informants managed to get an online dating partner to step into a further and become a couple for up to 2 years in a relationship together until now.
2. IC informants also managed to get a partner by way of personal branding and the introductory stages carried out on the bumble app but only up to the affective exchange stage until there was a deeper exchange of personal information, including complaints and more intimate emotions. In the context of personal branding, this is equivalent to showing greater vulnerability and honesty about who they really are.
3. The SR informant also managed to get a suitable partner with the SR by using personal branding and personal branding stages until there was a meeting and further stages.

The discussion of the results of this study has important implications in understanding the complex dynamics of self-presentation and impression management in the digital environment, particularly in the context of online dating applications. These findings can be a valuable source of

information for academics and practitioners interested in the intersection of Technology, identity, and interpersonal relationships.

In addition, the results of this study highlight the importance of using a qualitative approach in understanding the phenomenon of personal branding in the context of online dating. Using interactive analysis models and thematic analysis techniques, we were able to unearth a deep understanding of user experiences and perceptions related to personal branding on Bumble.

In an era where technology is increasingly pervasive in everyday life, the phenomenon of using online dating apps and personal branding is becoming an indispensable part of contemporary social dynamics. Through the various materials that have been discussed, we can see how important the role of technology is in shaping the way individuals present themselves and establish relationships. However, behind the ease and benefits offered by dating apps and social media, there are also challenges and risks that need to be faced. In an effort to build an authentic and positive self-image, individuals must remain cautious and respect the principles of healthy interpersonal communication.

IV. CONCLUSION

This study focuses on the phenomenon of personal branding in the context of the use of online dating app Bumble, by adopting a qualitative approach and interactive analysis. The results showed that the personal branding strategy on Bumble involves several indicators : specificity, relevance, and consistency. Users take advantage of peculiarities, such as specific interests and hobbies (motorcycles, fashion, football and cats), to build a unique identity that can attract potential partners with similar interests. Relevance is also an important factor, where users associate their particularities with social information to create consistent personal branding, for example through photos and descriptions that reflect their hobbies and lifestyle. Consistency in the sharing of content related to specificity and relevance influences the success of personal branding, with consistent users more successful at attracting partners than those who are less consistent.

The process of self-presentation on Bumble goes through certain stages starting with orientation, where users introduce themselves in general to create a good first impression. Further, at the stage of the exchange of Affective peddling, users begin to share personal information about their interests and daily activities, which helps to establish a deeper connection. The affective exchange stage involves increasing personal information and emotions that deepen the relationship, while the further depth stage indicates more intimate interactions, such as video calls or in-person meetings, which can strengthen the self-image as a communicative and friendly individual.

The results showed that some users such as YH managed to build long-term relationships through effective personal branding, while IC and SR managed to attract partners despite varying relationship depths. On the other hand, pts, despite their unique peculiarities, experience a lack of effectiveness in establishing deeper relationships due to the less effective relevance of personal branding. FI and AL Show particularities relevant to their interests, but low consistency in personal

branding strategies limits their effectiveness.

This research provides insight into how individuals use personal branding strategies to build their self-image on online dating platforms and their relevance for academics and practitioners interested in the interplay between technology, identity, and interpersonal relationships. Qualitative approaches and thematic analysis techniques have proven effective in exploring user experiences and perceptions of personal branding in online dating apps. Overall, personal branding on Bumble involves the use of distinctiveness, relevance and consistency to build an attractive self-image for potential partners, with success depending on the strategic management of these elements and following stages of in-depth self-presentation. The study also emphasizes the importance of creating authentic personal branding and valuing the principles of healthy interpersonal communication in the digital age.

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