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Ndarboy Genk Personal Branding Strategy in the Dynamics of Popular Javanese Music

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Abstrack

This study examines the personal branding strategy implemented by Ndarboy Genk, one of the prominent figures in the development of Javanese popular music. The purpose of this research is to describe how personal branding is constructed and to analyze its contribution to the public acceptance of Javanese music within a broader cultural context. The study employs a descriptive qualitative method, utilizing data collection techniques such as observation, documentation, and literature review. The findings reveal that Ndarboy Genk develops his personal image through the consistent use of the Javanese language, everyday narratives that resonate with audiences, and intensive engagement with fans. The utilization of digital platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok further enhances his authenticity and expands his visibility. This personal branding strategy not only supports the sustainability of his career but also strengthens the position of Javanese music in the Indonesian music industry. The study highlights the significance of personal branding as a key factor for local musicians in preserving cultural identity while competing within the national music scene..

Keywords: Personal branding, Popular music javanese, Ndarboy Genk

INTRODUCTION

A strategy can be defined as a comprehensive plan designed to achieve long-term goals through optimal utilization of resources and adaptive to environmental changes. In the context of management, strategy includes the process of analyzing internal and external situations, setting vision and mission, formulating tactical measures, implementing policies, and evaluating results. According to Pearce and Robinson in, a strategy is a large-scale, future-oriented plan to deal with competitive conditions and achieve organizational goals. Thus, strategy is not just a written plan, but also an integrated, dynamic, and sustainable pattern of action in responding to the challenges of the business and organizational environment (Nirmayanthi et al., 2024) (Lesmana , 2024)

The term personal branding first emerged from Tom Peters' article in Fast Company's "The Brand Called You", where the author explicitly mentioned that "regardless of age, regardless of position, regardless of business we are in, we all need to understand the importance of branding (Korzh & Estima, 2022). Personal branding is a strategic process in which individuals consciously design, build, and manage their image so that they can be recognized, remembered, and have a distinguishing value compared to other individuals. This concept has its roots in marketing theory that adapts the principles of brand management to the personal realm, where individuals are treated like a brand that has a certain identity, value, and perception in the eyes of the public according to Montoya & Vandehey, 2009 in . According to Shepherd (2005) in, personal branding is a person's effort to promote their uniqueness, skills, and expertise with the aim of creating positive perceptions and building a sustainable reputation. Meanwhile, Peters (1997) emphasizes that in the modern context, each individual needs to think of himself or herself as

a "personal brand" that must be managed with a communication strategy and consistency of values in order to achieve professional success. (Judijanto et al., 2024a) (São Paulo, São Paulo et al., 2025) (Sudarmanto et al., n.d.)

Personal branding is not only concerned with how individuals present themselves externally, but also includes internal aspects such as personal values, personality, work ethic, and consistency between the image you want to display and real behavior. This strategy aims to create an emotional connection and credibility in the eyes of the audience, which ultimately increases trust and social influence (Labrecque et al., 2011). In the digital era, personal branding has expanded its meaning because the presence of social media allows individuals to display their identity and reputation more broadly, quickly, and interactively. This phenomenon gave birth to what is called online personal branding, which is the management of self-image through digital platforms such as Instagram, LinkedIn, YouTube, or Twitter, where every online activity has the potential to shape public perception (Gandini & Parents , 2020)

Personal branding conceptually includes several main elements, including self-concept, value and uniqueness (value proposition), differentiation, communication consistency (message consistency), and credibility (credibility) according to . The combination of these elements serves to build an authentic and relevant image to the social and professional context. Personal branding can also be seen as an identity communication strategy that puts individuals in a competitive position in the job market, academia, and social environment. Thus, personal branding not only plays a role as a means of building reputation, but also as a form of self-management that requires awareness, honesty, and continuity in every aspect of individual life (Hearn, 2008). Personal branding has become an important strategy for

gaining visibility and building a fan base (Rosnaini Days, 2025)(Manullang, 2025).

Research on personal branding in the music industry has been conducted by (Ramadan, 2024) who examines Jimi Multhazam's personal branding as the band's vocalist through Instagram social media. The focus of the study is directed on the application of the concept *Authentic Personal Branding* which is put forward by Rampersad, which includes eleven main elements such as authenticity, integrity, consistency, specialization, visibility, and performance. The results of the study show that Jimi Multhazam only represents three of the eleven elements, namely authenticity reflected in personal character, persistence in the process of creating works, and performance shown through the consistency of personal branding activities on social media. These findings confirm that musicians' personal branding in digital media does not always include all conceptual elements, but is selective and depends on the individual character and communication strategies used. Unlike the study, this study not only examines personal branding as a personal communication strategy, but places it in a broader context, namely the dynamics of popular Javanese music and changes in the music industry in the digital era. This study views personal branding not solely as an effort to build a personal image, but as part of a cultural strategy that negotiates with local identity, market tastes, and the logic of the entertainment industry.

Previous research from (Hananta, 2023) which examines the shift in instrumentation and characteristics of dangdut music in the digital era in East Java focuses on musical aspects, especially changes in dangdut instruments and musical characteristics due to technological developments and digital contexts. Thus, this study places music as the main object of analysis, while the aspects of actors, communication strategies, and the construction of the image of musicians are not the main focus of the discussion. In contrast to the study, this study does not focus on changing musical elements alone, but on the personal

branding strategies of musicians in the dynamics of popular Javanese music. The focus of this research shifts from the analysis of the structure and characteristics of music to the analysis of how musicians build identities, images, and relationships with audiences in the midst of changes in the digital music industry. In other words, this study views music not only as an artistic product, but also as a medium of representation of cultural identity and personal communication strategies.

Ndarboy Genk Ndarboy Genk, whose real name is Helarius Daru Indrajaya, is a musician from Bantul, Special Region of Yogyakarta, who is known as one of the important figures in the development of contemporary Javanese pop music. His work stands out through the combination of traditional elements such as campursari and dangdut koplo with a modern touch that is easily accepted by the younger generation. The use of Javanese in each song is a characteristic that not only strengthens the local cultural identity, but also plays a role in maintaining the existence of regional languages in the midst of the globalization of popular music. Through songs such as Mendung Tanpo Udan, Wong Sepele, and Ojo Nangis, Ndarboy Genk presents a narrative of daily life of Javanese people that is simple, meaningful, and easy to understand by various circles. This phenomenon using digital media such as YouTube and TikTok has also encouraged the widespread dissemination of his works, showing how the power of digital platforms can be an effective means of building popularity and expanding the reach of local music. Thus, Ndarboy Genk can be seen as a representation of musicians who are able to combine traditional values and modernity while forming a new image of Javanese music in the digital era (Laksono & Rachman, 2025) (Retnowati & Andriyanto, 2025a) (Detri et al., 2025)

Dynamics is a concept that refers to the process of change, interaction, and continuous movement in a system, whether it is a social, organizational, or cultural system. Broadly

speaking, dynamics reflect how structures, behavior patterns, values (Marliani & Merisa , 2024) , and relationships between elements in an environment undergo transformation and adaptation to internal and external factors, including technology, globalization, and other social pressures. For example, in the social context, the dynamics of society can be seen from shifts in inter-group interaction patterns, changes in cultural norms, and reorientation of social identity. Meanwhile, at the organizational level, dynamics can be seen from capacity building, innovation, and response to a rapidly changing environment. Therefore, understanding the dynamics is not only the identification of the changes themselves, but also understanding the mechanisms, directions, speeds, and consequences arising from these changes, so that it can be used as an analytical basis for adaptive and sustainable system management. (Sinambela et al., 2025) (Rusdi , 2020)

Popular Javanese music can be defined as a musical form that combines elements of Javanese culture such as the use of the Javanese language, pentatonic scales of gamelan, traditional instruments or melodic patterns with the format, style, and production and distribution mechanisms of modern popular music. This music is growing in the context of social and technological change, where the music industry and digital media allow for a wide reach so that works based on local culture are able to reach national and even international audiences. An industrial creative industry that comes from the utilization of individual creativity, skills, and talents to produce a specific product with the aim of creating prosperity and employment (Retnowati & Andriyanto , 2025b) (Mustika et al., 2025) (Ardena, 2020).

In the process, it becomes an arena for negotiation between local cultural identity and commercial demands; For example, Javanese pop songs often feature lyrics that use Javanese or mix Javanese-Indonesian codes, the theme of daily life of the Javanese people, and

arrangements that adapt electronic instruments, tempo pop, or dangdut koplo patterns so that they are easy to consume by the younger generation. In addition, this phenomenon also shows how tradition and modernity synergize: traditional music is not only archivally preserved, but also revived in a format relevant to digital trends, social media, as well as the dynamics of the contemporary entertainment industry. Considering art as an element or subsystem of culture, its function in life can be clearly seen. As a culture in terms of conceptual harmony, art is a way of life for the supporting community in carrying out activities (Surrender & Surrender , 2024) (Mukti et al., 2022).

The development of Indonesian music in the last twenty years has shown significant changes, both in terms of listeners' tastes and genre diversity. One of the prominent phenomena is the emergence of popular Javanese music that has managed to penetrate the national and even international markets. This music not only functions as entertainment, but also represents the Javanese cultural identity which is packaged in a modern form so that it is accepted across generations and social classes. (Retnowati & Andriyanto , 2025c)

In the midst of this trend, the presence of Ndarboy Genk is in the spotlight. He is not only a musician, but also a public figure who has succeeded in elevating Javanese music to the mainstream through a distinctive personal branding strategy. Its popularity was born from the combination of strong musical works with an authentic, simple image, close to fans, and consistently carrying Javanese cultural values. This makes it a symbol of contemporary Javanese music representation. (Fatima et al., 2023)

In the modern music industry, personal branding is a vital factor. In the digital era, when music distribution is becoming more accessible and competition is getting tougher, personal branding is a differentiator as well as a means of building emotional closeness with the audience. Ndarboy Genk utilizes social media,

digital platforms, and direct interaction with fans to build a strong personal narrative, so that his existence is even stronger in the Indonesian music industry. On that basis, this research is important to examine Ndarboy Genk's personal branding strategy and its impact on public acceptance of popular Javanese music. (Endah Dwi S et al., 2024)

METHODS

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach that aims to explore and analyze the personal branding strategies applied by Ndarboy Genk in the popular Javanese music industry. The selection of a qualitative approach is based on the need to understand phenomena in depth, especially in the social, cultural, and real-world contexts carried out by the research subjects.

The subject of this study is the music group Ndarboy Genk, a popular Javanese music group that is active in the local and digital music industry. Ndarboy Genk is known as a musician who consistently produces Javanese music works and builds interaction with audiences through various social media platforms. The characteristics of the research subjects were reviewed from musical identity, communication styles, and digital activities displayed in musical works and social media content in a given period. The selection of Ndarboy Genk as the subject of the study is based on its relevance as a representation of popular Javanese musicians who consciously build personal branding to maintain their existence and competitiveness in the midst of the development of the modern music industry.

Data collection is carried out using several techniques. First, observations were made on musical works and social media content published by Ndarboy Genk on YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok platforms within a certain period. The observed data included songs, video clips, and social media uploads that featured promotional activities, interaction with the audience, and self-image representation. Observations were focused on

visual and verbal communication forms, message delivery styles, and audience engagement patterns related to the personal branding strategy built by Ndarboy Genk. Second, the documentation technique is carried out by collecting supporting data in the form of digital archives related to Ndarboy Genk's activities, such as official social media account profiles, promotional posters, snippets of online media news, and visual documentation of musical works. This documentation data is used to strengthen the observation results and provide a more complete context regarding the development of Ndarboy Genk's image and existence in the popular Javanese music industry. Third, literature studies are carried out by examining various relevant written sources, including scientific journals, books, news articles, and the results of previous research that discuss personal branding, the music industry, and the development of popular Javanese music. Literature studies function as a theoretical foundation and analytical framework in interpreting field data, so that the research results have a strong and directed academic basis.

The analysis instrument used in this study is the framework of the concept of personal branding proposed by Montoya and Vandehey, which includes five main dimensions, namely competence, authenticity, consistency, visibility, and differentiation (Andriza & Mreason, 2025). These five dimensions are used as an analysis category to examine Ndarboy Genk's music and social media content. Each data obtained is analyzed by identifying personal branding indicators in each dimension, so that the personal branding strategy applied by Ndarboy Genk in building his image and identity as a popular Javanese musician can be revealed.

Through this method, the research is expected to provide a comprehensive understanding of the practice of personal branding in popular Javanese music, as well as its role in strengthening the cultural identity and existence of musicians in the midst of competition in the modern music industry.

Personal Branding

The concept of personal branding was first popularized by Tom Peters (1997) through his article *The Brand Called You* in , which emphasized that each individual can be seen as a "brand" that has certain values, differentiations, and images in the eyes of the public. According to Montoya and Vandehey (2002), personal branding is the process of building public perception of oneself through image management that is consistent, authentic, and relevant to the target audience. Personalization Branding The dimensions of personal branding usually include: (São Paulo , 2016) (Judijanto et al., 2024b) Competence (expertise and qualities possessed by individuals).

Authenticity (uniqueness and authenticity of the character). Consistency (consistency of message and behavior). Visibility (the level of visibility of individuals in public spaces). Differentiation (differentiation from other figures in the same field). Personal Branding in the Entertainment/Music Industry In the entertainment industry, personal branding serves as an important instrument to build emotional closeness to the audience. Musicians are not only known through their work, but also through their inherent personal image. According to Shepherd (2005) in, the success of music artists cannot be separated from the ability to build authentic self-narratives, utilizing mass media and digital media to strengthen identity. Popular Javanese Music: History and Development Popular Javanese music is part of the development of regional music that is adapted into modern formats. Since the campursari era popularized by Didi Kempot in the 1990s, Javanese music has begun to be accepted across generations because it combines Javanese lyrics with rhythms that are easily accepted by the public. Furthermore, young musicians emerged who brought new colors, packaging Javanese music with touches of pop, dangdut, and electronic (Sudarmanto et al., n.d.) (Widhyasmaramurti & Culture , n.d.)

Integration with Social Media and Digital Trends The digital era has had a great influence on the development of popular Javanese music. Platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok are the main media for the distribution of works. Popular Javanese music is now able to penetrate the national and even international markets thanks to social media algorithms that expand the reach of the audience. This makes musicians not only rely on music labels, but also build strong personal branding in the digital space to maintain their existence.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

An Authentic Personal Image of Ndarboy Genk

Ndarboy Genk's personal image is built through characters who emphasize authenticity. Derived from the Greek words *autos* ('self') and *hentes* ('doer', 'existence'), *authentikos* implies a person acting on his own authority (Södergren, 2021). This authenticity is evident in the music work, both from the choice of lyrics and the way they are delivered. The lyrics used are inspired by the daily life of the Javanese people, so it feels natural, honest, and not made up. The narrative featured in his songs depicts emotional experiences, both joys and sorrows, that are close to the reality of the audience . This is in accordance with Peters' (1997) theory which emphasizes that authenticity is the main foundation in building a strong personal branding. various works and public representations, Ndarboy Genk's personal image can be categorized as a form of personal branding that highlights the value of **authenticity or authenticity**. This authenticity is the main element that distinguishes him from other musicians in the popular Javanese music industry. This authenticity is reflected in the creative process, starting from the selection of the song theme, the use of Javanese as a medium of expression, to the delivery of an honest and authentic message. The lyrics created by Ndarboy Genk are mostly sourced from the social realities of Javanese society,

such as the simplicity of life, struggle, and emotional dynamics in daily life. This shows that his works are not just entertainment, but also a strong representation of cultural identity as well as a form of emotional communication with his listeners. Creativity does not only mean creating, but it also means the ability to receive something in a certain way, so that it can manifest its overall nuances brilliantly (Andaryani, 2024) (Sari & Lestari, 2024) (Afwa et al., 2021).

In addition, in the context of personal branding theory, authenticity is an important dimension as emphasized by Peters (1997), that effective personal branding must depart from the original self-identity, not the result of artificial construction. Ndarboy Genk does not seek to emulate the style of other musicians or over-conform to market trends, but rather presents himself consistently as an artist who grows from local cultural roots. It is this consistency between values, behaviors, and musical works that form credibility and emotional closeness to the audience. Ndarboy Genk's success in building an authentic image is also strengthened by his ability to maintain harmony between his personal character and the musical message he conveys, so that the public views him as an honest figure, as he is, and with high artistic integrity.

Thus, it can be concluded that authenticity is not only the main identity in Ndarboy Genk's personal branding, but also a key factor that contributes to the success and wide acceptance of his works. This authenticity forms a deep emotional connection between musicians and audiences, and makes Ndarboy Genk a representation of a generation of local musicians who are able to maintain traditional values within the framework of modern popular music. These findings are in line with the results of research by Labrecque et al. (2011) who emphasized that authentic personal branding will make it easier to build public trust and loyalty, because it is perceived as a reflection of a real identity, not just an image strategy.



Figure 1. Reels posts on Ndarboy Genk Instagram

Simplicity in Ndarboy Genk Communication

Authentic, Ndarboy Genk's image is also shaped through a simple attitude displayed on various occasions. This simplicity is reflected in a straightforward communication style, the use of Javanese language on a daily basis without excessive polish, and a way of interacting that does not create distance between himself and his fans. This communication style creates an earthy impression, so that fans feel closer and can reach the figure of Ndarboy Genk. Thus, simplicity becomes an important element in strengthening the emotional connection between the musician and the audience. (Sari & Lestari, 2024)

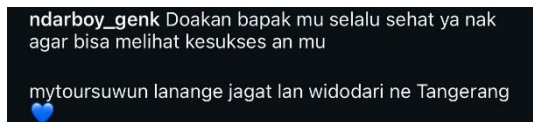


Figure 2. Caption of Feed Post on Instagram Ndarboy Genk

Proximity to Ndarboy Genk Audience

Closeness to fans is one of the most prominent aspects of Ndarboy Genk's branding strategy. This relationship is manifested through active interaction on social media, such as responding to comments, uploading daily content, and sharing personal stories that allow the audience to feel involved. This form of connectedness not only shows the humanist side of a musician, but also creates strong fan loyalty. This closeness is in line with Montoya's (2002) idea of the importance of audience

engagement as a pillar of successful personal branding.

The aspect of proximity to the audience is a central element in the personal branding strategy carried out by Ndarboy Genk. The findings show that intensive interaction between musicians and fans on social media is not just a communication activity, but part of a planned strategy to build *emotional connections* and strengthen audience loyalty. Ndarboy Genk consistently displays his personality through various personal uploads, such as daily activities, the creative process behind songs, and reflections on his career journey. This strategy allows fans to see the human and authentic side of the musician, creating a closer emotional connection than the relationship between the artist and fans in general.

In the context of personal branding theory, Montoya (2002) asserts that audience engagement (*audience engagement*) is a key pillar in building a strong personal brand. The relevance of audience engagement to the study and practice of journalism is in tension with its ongoing conceptual inconsistencies. Despite the growing importance of the practice of engagement in newsrooms and the growing body of research on it, scholars have repeatedly stated that audience engagement as a concept, and consequently as a practice, remains inconsistent and ambiguous (Gajardo & Costera Meijer, 2023). This principle is evident in the way Ndarboy Genk uses social media as an interactive space, not just a promotional tool. Through responding to comments, direct greetings to fans, and active participation in digital trends, Ndarboy Genk has managed to position himself not only as a public figure, but also as a figure who is close and relevant to his listening community. This approach supports the findings of Labrecque et al. (2011), who stated that two-way relationships between public figures and audiences in digital spaces can strengthen perceptions of authenticity (*authenticity*) and increase public trust in the personal brand it is built.

Thus, it can be concluded that Ndarboy Genk's closeness to his fans is not just a

spontaneous impact of social media interactions, but part of a structured branding strategy. Through openness, consistency of communication, and a humanistic approach, he managed to create a participatory relationship model, where fans felt part of the musician's career journey. This makes Ndarboy Genk's personal branding not only effective in terms of communication, but also has an emotional and cultural dimension that strengthens its position in the popular Javanese music industry.



Figure 3. Instagram posts that relate directly to fans

The Use of Javanese as the Cultural Identity of Ndarboy Genk

One of the main branding strategies carried out by Ndarboy Genk is consistency in using Javanese as the main medium in musical works. The use of local languages not only emphasizes cultural identity, but also creates a deeper emotional bond with local audiences. This strategy emphasizes that personal branding is not only about visuals or image, but also about the cultural values that are carried. Through this consistency, Ndarboy Genk was able to show a clear differentiation from other musicians in the national music industry.

The use of Javanese in Ndarboy Genk's music works can be understood as a form of strong cultural strategy in building personal branding and emphasizing cultural identity. Language is not just a means of communication in this context, but rather a representative symbol of the values of locality, authenticity, and emotional closeness to the listener's

society. According to Syaifuddin, Fathurohman, and Ristiyan (2024), the use of regional languages in Javanese pop music is a form of identity expression that shows that there are efforts to maintain local culture in the midst of national and global language dominance. Ndarboy Genk through his consistency in using the Javanese language has succeeded in building an image as a musician who not only entertains, but also becomes an agent for the preservation of regional languages and cultures.

Furthermore, this strategy shows how personal branding can be articulated through linguistic and cultural mediums. From a cultural branding perspective, language acts as a *point of differentiation* that emphasizes the unique character of a musician among his competitors. In line with Heryanto's (2019) view, regional music that uses local languages has symbolic power in strengthening a *sense of belonging* and strengthening cultural solidarity in the listening community. Through his works such as *Wong Sepele*, *Mendung Tanpo Udan*, and *Ojo Nangis*, Ndarboy Genk utilizes the Javanese language to display the values of simplicity, honesty, and closeness to the life of lower-middle class people, a strategy that reinforces his authentic image and distinguishes him from mainstream musicians.

The consistency in the use of the Javanese language also shows Ndarboy Genk's ability to adapt to the modern music market without losing its cultural roots. He combines local forms of communication with modern music production styles, such as pop and koplo arrangements, resulting in a balance between tradition and innovation. This is in line with the findings of Irawati (2024) who explains that local-traditional music that transforms into popular music has an important role in maintaining the sustainability of cultural values in the digital era. Therefore, it can be concluded that the strategy of using the Javanese language in Ndarboy Genk's personal branding is not only an aesthetic effort, but also a symbolic act in maintaining cultural identity in the midst of

the dynamics of the globalization of the music industry.

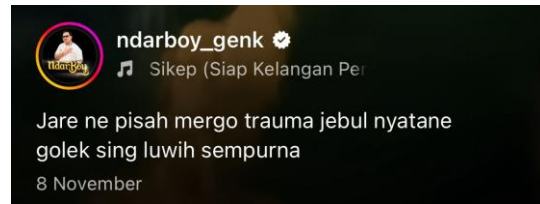


Figure 4. *Caption of Feed Post on Instagram Ndarboy Genk*

Narrative of Everyday Life in the Works of Ndarboy Genk

In addition to language, Ndarboy Genk also emphasizes the use of everyday narratives in his songs. Simple stories related to love, social life, and everyday emotional experiences make his works easy to accept and understand by the public. This narrative gives the impression that the music performed is not only entertainment, but also a representation of real life experienced by many people. This reinforces the authentic values that are at the core of their personal branding.

Ndarboy Genk's works show that the main strength of his music lies in the use of narratives of daily life that are close to the social reality of Javanese society. Based on research conducted by Sari and Lestari (2023) in the *Journal of Education Research*, the use of language and everyday stories is an aesthetic as well as a social strategy that makes Ndarboy Genk's songs relevant and easily accepted by various levels of society. The narrative presented not only depicts the story of love, longing, or sadness, but also reflects the social dynamics, cultural values, and life outlook of modern Javanese people who are adapting to the current of globalization. This approach creates an emotional connection between the musician and the listener, as the message conveyed feels authentic and representative of the collective experience.

Furthermore, through his works, Ndarboy Genk has succeeded in presenting a musical concept that not only functions as entertainment, but also as a form of cultural

communication and expression of local identity. Semiotic analysis of several songs such as *Wong Sepele* and *Ojo Nangis* shows that the lyric structure and speaking style used reflect people's perspective on social reality and relationships between individuals (Sari & Lestari, 2023). Thus, the music performed by Ndarboy Genk can be understood as a narrative representation of the life of today's Javanese people, where tradition and modernity meet in one dynamic musical space. This realistic narrative approach also reinforces the value of *authenticity* which is at the core of Ndarboy Genk's personal branding as a musician who grounds local wisdom in the context of the Indonesian popular music industry



Figure 5. Music Video "This Is Special"

Utilization of Digital Media

The role of digital media is very significant in strengthening Ndarboy Genk's personal branding. Platforms like YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok are not only used for the distribution of music works, but also as a means to display a personal image and build direct interaction with fans. Through digital media, the reach of the audience can be expanded beyond geographical boundaries, while strengthening the emotional connections that have been built. This strategy is also in line with the trend of the modern music industry that increasingly relies on digital media to build an existence.

The use of digital media has a very significant role in strengthening Ndarboy Genk's personal branding strategy as a contemporary Javanese musician. Based on the results of the analysis of their digital activities, platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok not only function as a medium for the

distribution of musical works, but also become strategic instruments in building a consistent and authentic self-image in the eyes of the public. One of the most important changes brought about by streaming services is the shift away from owning physical or digital copies of music. In the traditional model, consumers buy individual albums or songs, gaining ownership of the content. In contrast, streaming introduced a subscription-based model that allowed users to access an extensive catalog of songs on demand for a monthly fee (Guo, 2023). Through the uploaded content, Ndarboy Genk displays a balance between the persona of an artist who is simple and close to the community with professionalism as a productive and innovative musician. This shows that digital media is used not only for song promotion, but also as a space for identity representation and two-way communication with the audience.

The results of the observation also show that the digital communication strategy implemented is able to significantly expand the reach of the audience, beyond geographical and demographic boundaries. YouTube is the main medium in building a vast fan base, while TikTok plays a role in creating viral effects for songs like *Mendung Tanpo Udan* which strengthens the visibility of his personal brand. Instagram is used as a medium to strengthen emotional relationships with fans through narrative uploads, daily portraits, and motivational messages that illustrate the personal values they carry. This digital communication strategy is in line with the findings of research by Labrecque et al. (2011) which stated that digital media functions as an effective means in constructing *online personal branding* through social interaction and emotional engagement of the audience.

This phenomenon illustrates a transformation in music consumption patterns and the formation of artists' reputations in the digital era. Ndarboy Genk is able to utilize algorithms and characteristics of social media to create social closeness that is emotional, not just transactional. This strategy is in line with

Gandini's (2016) view that digital media has changed the way individuals build social and professional capital through measurable self-image management. Thus, the success of Ndarboy Genk's personal branding cannot be separated from its ability to combine artistic creativity with digital communication strategies that are adaptive to technological developments and media culture. The use of digital media is a determinant factor in the sustainability of its existence and strengthening its identity in the realm of modern popular Javanese music.



Figure 6. Youtube Ndarboy Genk



Figure 7. Instagram Ndarboy Genk



Figure 8. Tiktok Ndarboy Genk

The Formation of Ndarboy Genk Fan Loyalty

The result of a consistent personal branding strategy is the formation of a loyal fan base. Fans not only enjoy the musical work, but also feel emotionally attached to the Ndarboy Genk figure. This loyalty can be seen from the active involvement of fans on various platforms, from sharing content, attending concerts, to supporting new works that are released. This shows that authentic, consistent, and social-interaction-based personal branding is able to generate sustainable public acceptance.

The formation of fan loyalty to Ndarboy Genk can be understood as a direct impact of a consistent and authentic personal branding strategy. This strategy not only highlights a distinctive musical image through the use of Javanese language and everyday themes, but also displays a simple personality, close to the community, and communicative to fans on various social media. The consistency between the work, behavior, and values conveyed creates a strong perception of authenticity in the eyes of the audience. Such authenticity plays an important role in building emotional closeness, where fans not only consume music as an

entertainment product, but also make it a representation of identity and social closeness.

Research shows that fan involvement with Ndarboy Genk is not passive, but active and participatory. They act as *co-creators* in the digital ecosystem by resharing content, making reaction videos, and popularizing Ndarboy's songs through platforms such as TikTok and YouTube. This phenomenon reinforces the theory of *brand community* (Muniz & O'Guinn, 2001), which explains how fan communities are formed based on shared values and emotions towards public figures. Thus, the personal branding applied by Ndarboy Genk serves not only as an artistic communication strategy, but also as a means of establishing mutually beneficial social relationships between musicians and audiences.

The fan loyalty that is formed is an indicator of the success of the personal branding strategy in the context of popular Javanese music. The sustainability of public support shows a sense of *belonging* and a deep emotional attachment to the figure of Ndarboy Genk as a symbol of local cultural pride. With an inclusive approach, the personal branding carried out is able to penetrate the boundaries of social and geographical classes, making Ndarboy Genk not only a musician, but also a representative icon of the revival of local music in the digital era.



Figure 9. Fanspage Ndarboy Genk



Figure 10. Some Ndarboy Genk Fanpage Accounts

Ndarboy Genk as an Icon of Contemporary Javanese Music

The overall branding strategy carried out brought Ndarboy Genk to a position as a contemporary Javanese music icon. He not only succeeded in popularizing Javanese music at the national level, but also strengthened the image of Javanese culture in the modern era. Its success proves that personal branding based on local cultural values can be a strength in facing competition from the national and international music industry.

The communication and self-representation strategy carried out, Ndarboy Genk can be categorized as a contemporary Javanese music icon who is able to combine traditional and modern elements in one musical identity. Ndarboy Genk's success lies not only in its ability to create works that are popular with the wider community, but also in a consistent branding strategy rooted in Javanese cultural values. By harnessing the power of digital media such as YouTube, TikTok, and other streaming platforms, Ndarboy Genk manages to build an emotional connection with the audience without leaving the cultural roots that characterize his work. This shows that Javanese music still has a wide space of appreciation when packaged in a relevant way with the development of the times.

Conceptually, Ndarboy Genk's position as an icon of contemporary Javanese music can be explained through a personal branding

approach based on local cultural values. According to Shepherd (2005), effective personal branding must be built on the basis of authenticity and values that are in accordance with one's identity. In the context of Ndarboy Genk, this authenticity is reflected in his faithfulness to using the Javanese language in the lyrics of the song, the daily narrative of the Javanese people as the main theme, and a simple communication style that is close to the audience. This consistency creates a strong personal image, where the public not only knows him as a singer, but also as a representation of the spirit and pride in Javanese culture.

The branding strategy carried out by Ndarboy Genk also shows the ability to adapt to the dynamics of the modern music industry. In the midst of the dominance of Indonesian and English music, Ndarboy Genk chose to maintain the local linguistic character as a form of differentiation and resistance to cultural homogenization. He proved that regional language music is not only acceptable, but also loved by a wide audience. The success of songs such as *Mendung Tanpo Udan*, *Wong Sepele*, and *Ojo Nangis* is proof that personal branding strategies rooted in local wisdom are able to generate economic value while strengthening cultural identity. Thus, Ndarboy Genk can be positioned as a figure who is not only commercially popular, but also plays an important role in cultural preservation through the medium of music.

An authentic personal image is the main key to Ndarboy Genk's success as an icon of contemporary Javanese music. He presents an honest figure, as he is, and remains grounded even though he has achieved high popularity. This attitude is in accordance with the view of Hearn (2008) who states that effective personal branding must combine self-representation and social values that are recognized by the public. Ndarboy Genk does not build a pseudo-or artificial image, but rather displays his reality as a "Jowo person" who is proud of his culture. This approach results in strong emotional resonance, as the audience can feel the

authenticity and simplicity in each of their works and behaviors on social media as well as on stage.

In a broader perspective, the success of Ndarboy Genk reflects the phenomenon of the transformation of Javanese music towards a more inclusive and adaptive contemporary form. It is a symbol of the change in the way Javanese people interpret their culture in the digital age—not as a static heritage, but as a living and evolving identity. Thus, a personal branding strategy based on local culture such as Ndarboy Genk not only has an impact on individual popularity, but also has social significance in strengthening the position of regional culture in the midst of globalization.



Figure 11. The Use of Barongan in *Ndarboy Genk* Music Video

CONCLUSION

Ndarboy Genk personal branding strategy is the key to the success of his career in popular Javanese music. The authentic image, simplicity, and closeness to the audience make it different from other musicians as well as strengthen the emotional bond with fans. Authenticity can be seen from natural music, the use of the Javanese language on a daily basis, and a narrative that is close to the social experience of the community. The simplicity of communication makes it feel grounded, while active interaction on social media and live performances fosters closeness with fans.

Consistency in using the Javanese language and telling everyday life strengthens cultural identity, making the music relevant and easy to accept. The support of digital media such as YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok expands the reach of the audience and the visibility of

personal branding. This strategy also builds a loyal fan base, who not only enjoy the music, but also feel an emotional attachment to the figure of Ndarboy Genk.

This research confirms that Ndarboy Genk managed to become an icon of contemporary Javanese music. His personal branding supports career sustainability while expanding the acceptance of Javanese music nationally, thus playing a role in the preservation and modernization of local culture in the Indonesian music industry.

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