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# The Relationship Between *Flexing* Behavior and The Formation of *Personal Branding* of Sisca Kohl on Instagram Account @siscakohl

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### ABSTRACT

This research entitled "The Relationship Between Flexing Behavior and the Formation of Personal branding of Sisca Kohl on Instagram Account @siscakohl." The research method used is quantitative correlational. The purpose of this research is to determine the relationship between Flexing Behavior and the formation of Sisca Kohl's Personal branding on the @siscakohl Instagram account. The theories used in this study consist of Mass Communication, New Media, Social Media, Instagram, Personal branding, Thorstein Veblen's Theory of Consumption. The population of this research consists of all followers of @siscakohl Instagram account, which total amounts 1,617,781 people. The sample total amounts is 100 people which determined by using the Slovin formula with a precision of 10% and a confidence level of 90%. This research applies purposive sampling technique. Data collection is done by distributing online questionnaires through Google Form. The researcher conducted a series of data analysis techniques, including validity test, reliability test, single table analysis, cross-tabulation analysis, and Spearman rho hypothesis test. The hypothesis test shows that H<sub>0</sub> is rejected and H<sub>a</sub> is accepted, indicating that there is a relationship between Flexing Behavior and the formation of Sisca Kohl's personal branding on the @siscakohl Instagram account. Furthermore, with a correlation coefficient value of 0.342, it indicates a low but significant relationship between the two variables. Through the determinant correlation test, it is known that Flexing Behavior influences 12% of the formation of Sisca Kohl's personal branding on the @siscakohl Instagram account.

**Keyword:** Flexing Behavior, Personal Branding, SiscaKohl, Thorstein Veblen's Consumption Theory

### ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini berjudul Hubungan Perilaku *Flexing* terhadap Pembentukan *Personal Branding* Sisca Kohl pada Akun Instagram @siscakohl. Metode penelitian bersifat kuantitatif korelasional. Adapun tujuan dari penelitian adalah untuk mengetahui adanya hubungan Perilaku *Flexing* terhadap Pembentukan *Personal branding* Sisca Kohl pada akun instagram @siscakohl. Teori yang digunakan terdiri dari Komunikasi Massa, New Media, Media Sosial, Instagram, *Personal branding*, Teori Konsumsi Thorstein Veblen, Populasi pada penelitian ini merupakan seluruh pengikut Instagram @siscakohl yang berjumlah 1.617.781 orang. Sampel berjumlah 100 orang yang ditentukan melalui rumus Slovin dengan presisi 10% dan tingkat kepercayaan 90%. Penelitian ini menerapkan teknik purposive sampling. Teknik pengumpulan data dilakukan dengan menyebar kuesioner secara *online* melalui Google Form. Peneliti melakukan serangkaian teknik analisis data, yaitu uji validitas, uji reliabilitas, analisis tabel tunggal, analisis tabel silang dan uji hipotesis Spearman rho. Uji hipotesis menunjukkan H<sub>0</sub> ditolak dan H<sub>a</sub> diterima, artinya terdapat hubungan Perilaku *Flexing* terhadap pembentukan *personal branding* Sisca Kohl pada akun instagram @siscakohl. Kemudian, dengan nilai koefisien korelasi sebesar 0,342 yang menunjukkan terdapat hubungan rendah tapi pasti di antara kedua variabel. Melalui uji determinan korelasi diketahui bahwa perilaku *flexing* berpengaruh 12% terhadap pembentukan *personal branding* SiscaKohl pada akun Instagram @siscakohl

**Kata Kunci:** Perilaku Flexing, Personal Branding, SiscaKohl, Teori Konsumsi



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## 1. Introduction

Instagram is one of the most widely used social media in Indonesia since its launch on October 6 2010. With various interesting features, Instagram has succeeded in becoming a social media with 139 million users or the equivalent of 49.9% of the total population of Indonesia as of January 2024. This also places Instagram as the second most popular social media in Indonesia after WhatsApp for users aged 14-64 years. (Datareportal, 2022).

The abundant features in the Instagram application makes the activities in it increasingly complex and trigger the emergence of new phenomena in society. One of them is the emergence of celebrity flexing in society. Flexing is one of the behaviors carried out by celebrities to improve their personal branding. Flexing is a term originating from millennial language used to refer to video content on various social media platforms in the form of showing off luxury (Tresia, 2022).

The majority of flexers use "flashy luxury" in the flexing they do to increase their personal branding. However, personal branding tends to be hated by the people, because showing off in an excessive and flashy way is a behavior that many people don't like. Not to mention, flexing perpetrators who are often in the spotlight in the media are people involved in a scandal, the majority of whom use flexing to deceive other people. This can also trigger the stigma that flexing is a bad method to use to improve personal branding.

This is what makes researchers interested in researching the Instagram account @siscakohl. This 20 year old woman with the full name Sisca Kohl has an Instagram account called @siscakohl which currently has 1.6 million Instagram followers. Almost every post on Instagram contains uploads that do flexing. However, unlike other celebgrams, which make flexing the core of their content, the main focus of Sisca Kohl's content is to entertain and provide information. Often the comments in the @siscakohl Instagram account posts are also responded to with various joking comments by netizens.

There is a variety of content on the @siscakohl Instagram account, from reviews of beauty products and make-up tools, mukbang, reviews of kitchen tools, to reviews of snacks. However, what is unique is that the products that are the objects of the content are often items that are unusual or rarely encountered by the general public. For example, the content is eating fried rice for 400 million rupiah, buying 1000 pieces of perfume for 37 million rupiah, playing a claw machine filled with stacks of money, etc. Sisca Kohl is also famous for her punch line "Let's Try", which she often includes in the content she uploads to her Instagram. The different approach to flexing carried out on the Instagram account @siscakohl compared to other flexing actors, made researchers interested in seeing the influence of Sisca Kohl's flexing behavior in increasing her personal branding.

## Mass Communication

Mass communication according to Michael W Gamble and Teri Kwal Gamble (1986, p. 32), is that communicators in mass communication rely on modern equipment to spread or transmit messages quickly to a wide and dispersed audience. Messages spread through modern media include print media, electronic media and internet media. Meanwhile, according to Jay Black and Frederick C Whitney (1998, p. 12), mass communication is a process where messages that are produced or in large numbers are distributed to the mass of message recipients widely, anonymously and heterogeneously.

## New Media

New media is a concept that explains the ability of media which, with the support of digital devices, can access content anytime and anywhere, thereby providing opportunities for anyone, both as recipients and users, to participate actively, interactively and creatively in message feedback which in turn forms a community or new society through media content (Liliweri, 2015, p. 284). Apart from that, new media is media that uses the internet, technology-based online media, has a flexible character, has the potential to be interactive and can function both privately and publicly (Mondry, 2008, p. 13).

## Social Media

Van Dijk in Nasrullah (2015, p. 715) states that social media is a media platform that focuses on the existence of users who facilitate activities and collaboration. Therefore, social media can be seen as an online medium (facilitator) that strengthens relationships between users and social ties..

## Instagram

Instagram is a social media application that connects users by sharing photos and videos. In general, people use Instagram to share photos and videos with each other. This principle makes Instagram different

from other social media applications which place more emphasis on using words or status to share with the public.

As with other social media applications, Instagram can be used to find friends using the terms following and followers. Interaction can be done by liking or commenting on our or our friends' posts. Interaction can also be done using the Direct Message feature and the most popular one at the moment is InstaStory (Instagram story) which is an activity of sharing moments in photos or videos directly (live) (Riyadi, 2019, p. 3).

### **Personal Branding**

Personal branding is the art of attracting and retaining more clients by actively shaping public perception. (Montoya, 2006). Meanwhile, the American Marketing Association (AMA) stated in an article "*What is Branding and How Important is it to your Marketing Strategy*", explaining that a brand is a name, sign, symbol, design, or term and a combination of all these aspects which has the aim of identifying goods or services from a company so that it can differentiate one company from another. (Haroen, 2014, p. 6) Meanwhile, branding is any effort or program designed to increase value or avoid commoditization by building a different brand. (Neumeier, 2013, p. 27).

### **Flexing**

Dewi Ilma Antawati (2022), stated that flexing is an instinctive behavior in carrying out relationships in society. She likened this to a peacock showing off its tail to attract the attention of the opposite sex. According to Maslow (1943), in the hierarchy of human needs, the need for esteem (recognition and respect) is at the fourth level, following physiological needs, safety, and love/belonging. Maslow explained that humans naturally desire to be respected, valued, and recognized by others to build self-confidence and self-esteem. If these needs are not met, a person may feel inferior or worthless. And Flexing can be considered as one of the ways to fulfill this need. However, flexing can also be a method for carrying out personal branding.

### **Thorstein Veblen's Consumption Theory**

Excessive enjoyment is a special strategy of the connoisseur class in asserting their differences or declaring their qualities to the world. The goal is to leave the impression in society that their wealth is unlimited so that it arouses admiration from other people. This is realized through social actions in the form of conspicuous consumption (Veblen, 1899), such as using time unproductively and spending more money and goods than they should (Ritzer & Goodman, 2011, p. 1-3). This phenomenon is similar to the case of Sisca Kohl, where people admire her wealth through the content she creates on Instagram. Leon Festinger (1954) explained that humans naturally compare themselves to others to evaluate their abilities, status, or achievements. When someone sees something they do not possess in others, curiosity or admiration may arise. This aligns with the fact that the flexing behavior displayed by Sisca Kohl involves things that most people cannot own or do, which can spark curiosity and admiration.

## **2. Method**

In this research, researchers used a correlational method with a quantitative approach. According to Sugiyono (2016, p. 14) that the quantitative approach is research based on the philosophy of positivism to research certain populations or samples and random sampling by collecting data using instruments, statistical data analysis. The correlational method is research using statistical methods which measures the influence between two or more variables (Creswell, 2014, p.32). So, here the researcher wants to see and measure the influence between variable X in the form of flexing behavior and variable Y in the form of forming personal branding on the Instagram account @siscakohl.

## **3. Result and Discussion**

This research is a correlational quantitative study that looks at the relationship between flexing behavior and the formation of personal branding on the Instagram account @siscakohl. The characteristics of the respondents in this study include gender, age, and frequency of viewing posts from the Instagram account @siscakohl in a week. Based on the data obtained in the research, of the 100 respondents there were 59 respondents who were female and 41 respondents who were male. Respondents' ages ranged from 17 - 32 years old with the majority aged 25 - 29 with 43 respondents. The frequency of access with the largest percentage is 1 - 2 times a week with a total of 64 respondents, 3 - 4 times with a total of 28 respondents, 4 - 6 times with a total of 7 respondents, more than (>) 6 times with a total of 1 respondent.

Based on the research that has been carried out, it can be obtained conclusion, as follows:

Flexing Behavior (Variable Conspicuous consumption is a phenomenon where a person's consumption is driven by the desire to show their social status and wealth, not just based on practical needs. Meanwhile, the second indicator (free time) means that people who have a lot of free time are considered rich and do not need to work hard because they have acquired sufficient wealth. This free time can be filled with holidays, pursuing luxury hobbies, and so on

Based on data processing using SPSS Statistics version 25.0, the results obtained are a correlation coefficient (rs) of 0.342 with a significance value (Sig. (2-tailed)) = 0.000, which means that a significance value  $<0.05$  indicates that there is a significant relationship, so that  $H_0$  is rejected and  $H_a$  is accepted. Then, the high or low level of correlation that exists or the degree of relationship based on the results of the relationship coefficient (rs) of 0.342 or located at 0.20-0.40 can be interpreted as meaning that there is a low but definite relationship. This explains the influence of flexing behavior on the formation of the Instagram account @siscakohl. Based on the direction of the relationship, the result is positive, meaning that the relationship between the two variables is in the same direction. To determine the strength of the influence of Flexing behavior on the formation of personal branding on the @siscakohl Instagram account, a determination test was carried out and obtained a result of 12%. This indicates that the strength of influence of flexing behavior on the formation of personal branding on the Instagram account @siscakohl is low but certain,

The result of the relationship coefficient of 0.342 shows that there are 0.658 other values that form Sisca Kohl's personal brand apart from flexing behavior. This shows that flexing behavior alone is not enough to form Sisca Kohl's current personal brand, there are other behaviors or values that seen by her followers in Sisca Kohl's personal branding, both from the way the message is delivered, the attitude shown through the content, the use of language, etc

#### 4. Conclusion

Based on the research that has been carried out, it can be obtained conclusion, as follows:

Of the 2 indicators of flexing behavior, namely conspicuous consumption and free time, the flexing behavior that Sisca Kohl often shows on her Instagram account @siscakohl is excessive food content in both quantity and price, excessive beauty product content in both quantity and price, content that contains elements lots of money, as well as content about Sisca Kohl doing a hobby/relaxing

The personal branding formed on the @siscakohl Instagram account is Sisca Kohl's Personal Branding as a person with high economic capabilities, this is due to the positive value of the Variable X (Flexing Behavior) indicators, and is supported by the Y Variable indicators (Personal Formation branding on the @siscakohl Instagram Account) such as Characteristics, Relevance, Consistency, Personality, Visibility, Consistency and Good Name which have positive values.

There is a relationship between flexing behavior and the formation of personal branding on the @siscakohl Instagram account which has been proven through hypothesis testing with a correlation coefficient (rs) of 0.342 with a significant number (Sig. 2-tailed) = 0.000. Based on the Guilford scale, the result obtained is 0.342 which means a low but definite relationship..

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