

## Key aspects of personal brand identity in social media commerce: Impact on successful personal branding

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### ABSTRACT

This study explores the factors influencing personal brand identity and their impact on successful personal branding. It examines the positive influence of social media usage, self-expression, professionalism, and self-disclosure on personal brand identity, while also considering the inconsistent findings regarding the role of self-efficacy. The study finds that social media usage, self-expression, professionalism, and self-disclosure play crucial roles in developing a strong personal brand identity, which is essential for achieving successful personal branding. However, the findings on self-efficacy's influence on personal brand identity are inconsistent with previous research. This study contributes to the understanding of personal brand identity and provides valuable insights for individuals and organizations seeking to develop and maintain strong personal brands.

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## 1. Introduction

There is no doubt that supply chains in the digital world are changing quickly and becoming increasingly complex as a result. Every dimension of the competitive environment is intensifying at an ever-increasing pace. Businesses are facing the challenge of adapting to the changes in the business environment that occur every day, and they need to maintain a competitive edge. The most important aspect is to create an image that is memorable for the product brand. The brand must be memorable and survive in this era of digital disruption, especially in the chain of selling products on digital platforms where there are many players in the market. It is important to note that each has its own strengths. Creating a brand that customers will remember and choose us is the most important defense. Creating a brand is one of the most important strategies in digital marketing, which is highly competitive. The creation of a brand is essential for marketers to sell products to their target audience (Waller, 2020). Business brand development involves creating names, symbols, and other media to create an image so that customers remember the business (Bilgin, 2018). In the eyes of customers, it distinguishes the company and its products from their competitors (Kim & Chao, 2019). In a short period of time, companies can communicate easily with their customers, thereby retaining them. Digital marketing is an era of communication, in which businesses that wish to succeed must create value for both their brands and for their consumers, with the primary goal of serving business interests or profits. Personal branding should therefore be a priority for businesses. It is anticipated that the success of personal branding will increase business opportunities as well as opportunities for individuals. A successful personal branding strategy will enable business owners to gain recognition in their field and attract customers or business contacts. Developing a personal brand consists of establishing a credible reputation, differentiating yourself from your competitors, and expanding your professional network to increase your business opportunities. Personal branding leads to better job opportunities, persuades employers that you have the qualifications they expect, and increases your credibility (Labrecque,

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2011). The purpose of personal branding is to create a personal brand identity (Khedher, 2015) that influences audiences or others in terms of their perception of the value or quality of a person and is consistent with the person's business. In global business, a personal brand can enhance reputation and indicate market positioning (Chatzopoulou & Navazhylava, 2022). Self-expression, professionalism, self-efficacy, and self-disclosure all play a role in establishing a personal brand identity. Gender diversity and Non-Binary Gender groups have also seen personal branding expand according to changing social environments. Scholars have stated that gender diverse groups are becoming more accepted in society (Hartless, 2019; Forstie, 2020; Kalish Blair, 2016) and have identified that businesses related to gender diversity are targeting specific market segments with the aim of making it easier for cross-gender audiences to access and have become a major source of revenue (Siddons, 2019). In recent years, the market growth in the Non-Binary Gender group has been increasing, and with that growth comes an increase in market value. As individuals with different values and assets, personal branding is an important economic tool today (Waller, 2020). Research on personal branding through business personality of entrepreneurs for business competition has not been widely studied in previous studies (ElMassah et al., 2019). Further, previous studies have found that gender influences the process of personal branding (Fletcher & Everly, 2021). Therefore, traditional marketing fundamentals cannot make personal branding successful for Non-Binary Gender people.

It was the objective of this study to investigate several factors that contribute to the success of personal branding of the Non-Binary Gender group to use this information as a resource to plan the personal branding of individuals of that group in the future. Among the goals of marketing and business in today's world is to reach out to a larger market of consumers or followers.

## 2. Literature review and Hypothesis development

### 2.1 Digital community participation (social media)

Social media use is a social innovation in communication that is transforming the way humans use media for public relations, mass communication, advertising, and marketing (Kent & Li, 2020; Drahosova & Balco, 2017) suggest that it allows the exchange and discussion of opinions, as well as engagement and expression of opinions, online. Various economic, social, and individual factors contribute to the formation of social capital and identity (Bolton et al., 2013). As individuals create personal brands using social media, marketing opportunities exponentially increase (Noguti & Waller, 2020). Due to the widespread use of social media, personal branding is not private but displays an individual's identity to the public (Brunner, 2021), leading to improved relationships on social media platforms. In relation to personal brand performance on social media, personal brand communication through social media is positively and significantly correlated with brand equity and brand attitudes (Schivinski et al., 2016). It is possible for individuals to present their brand and identity via social media in the manner they desire (Vazire & Gosling, 2004). Social media users, such as YouTubers, bloggers, and reviewers, can communicate their personal brand and establish their professional status. Ivory et al. (2001) suggest that people develop personal brands based on their expertise as influencers on social media platforms.

These research gaps could provide valuable insights into personal branding dynamics in the digital age. Using these understudied areas, researchers can gain a deeper understanding of how individuals can effectively use social media to build and maintain their personal brands while navigating the risks and challenges associated with this. Organizations can foster a culture of individual professional development and empowerment in the age of social media by supporting personal branding efforts. As personal branding evolves along with technological advancements and societal changes, researchers must keep pace and provide evidence-based guidance to individuals and organizations. Researchers can help individuals unlock the full potential of social media as a tool for professional growth and success by identifying and addressing research gaps. Consequently, based on previous research and research gaps, testing of the hypothesis is necessary:

**H<sub>1</sub>:** *Social media uses influences on personal brand identity.*

### 2.2 Self-Expression

As Ashforth and Humphrey (1993) and Escalas and Bettman (2005) demonstrate, self-expression impacts both self-image and actions. Goffman (2023) defined self-expression as the act of communicating impressions to others to communicate social values arising from desires and stimulating responses from others. Therefore, consumers are more likely to manage their own decisions because of their desire for self-expression (Dominick, 1999). Personal branding is greatly influenced by the expression of one's identity, particularly one's values (Waterman, 2004). Developing and supporting an individual's identity takes place in the context of human relationships with an emphasis on social perception and responsibility (Brooks & Anumudu, 2016). Because of the findings of Algharabat et al. (2020) and Leckie et al. (2016), it has become increasingly important to consider brands that express self-identity when engaging with online brands. This contributes to considering brands' internal self-expression and social expression when engaging with online consumer brands. Those driven by expressive motivation tend to engage in activities that result in high levels of engagement, according to self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Like commercial brands, personal brands are important tools for building personal brands on social networks (Kushakha 2017). Ultimately, self-expression is the display of personal identity through social activities,

personal values, and personal image, creating value, motivation, following, and relationships. Based on the empirical evidence of previous findings, the following hypothesis has been developed:

**H<sub>2</sub>:** *Self-expression influences personal brand identity.*

### 2.3 Professionalism

Experts in a particular field are referred to as professionals, possessing specialized knowledge and skills that meet the standards of their profession. In accordance with societal expectations, they operate within the ethical framework of their profession. A professional is regarded as someone who holds knowledge or expertise related to their profession in high regard and strives to gain public recognition for their professional status (Al-Hawari, 2011). Members of a profession seek ways to improve their professional status and compensation by practicing professionalism. Professional competence is defined as the ability of individuals to comprehend the context and policies related to their field of practice, with a focus on analyzing the potential and values of their professional conduct (Shahin & Samea, 2010). It is recognized by society that professionalism requires the continuous development of service delivery concepts (Isibor & Odia, 2014). There is a multifaceted nature to professionalism and its significance across a variety of contexts. The concept of professionalism encompasses more than just skills and knowledge but also personal identity, ethical conduct, public perception, and continuous improvement. Al-Hawari (2011a) and Isibor and Odia (2014a) suggest that professionals actively seek to construct and maintain their professional identity. Continuing professional development is essential to meet the evolving standards of a profession (Shahin & Samea, 2010a). Furthermore, professionalism conforms to societal expectations and values (Al-Hawari, 2011b). Various factors influence how the public perceives different professions, and professionals must navigate these perceptions to establish and maintain credibility (Al-Hawari, 2011c). In addition, Shahin and Samea (2010b) suggest that professionals can leverage their expertise to negotiate better financial rewards. It is also known that professionalism impacts service quality and effectiveness, with professionals continuously improving their service concepts to meet their clients' needs (Isibor & Odia, 2014b). Finally, the findings emphasize the importance of considering professionalism within specific contexts, since the challenges and opportunities associated with this concept may differ across industries, sectors, and cultures (Al-Hawari, 2011d; Shahin & Samea, 2010c; Isibor & Odia, 2014c).

In conclusion, the research on professionalism emphasizes the dynamic and context-dependent nature of this construct, which is important to individual professionals, their professions, and society at large. For fostering excellence, integrity, and continuous improvement culture across diverse professional domains, understanding the different dimensions of professionalism is crucial. In addition to the research findings and gaps mentioned above, hypotheses can be developed based on these findings.

**H<sub>3</sub>:** *Professionalism has a positive influence on a person's brand identity.*

### 2.4 Self-Efficacy

A person's self-efficacy significantly influences his or her success in the workplace (Kim & Lee, 2014). Bandura (1977) studied and developed the self-efficacy theory. In this theory, one's ability to demonstrate behavior and act on it is fundamental. An environment, perception, and behavior-based theory of human learning and development. Efficacy is the assessment of one's ability to accomplish a particular task. In contrast, high self-efficacy will help increase self-efficacy because it will increase work efficiency and effectiveness. Expectations about outcomes are less reliable predictors of behavioral tendencies (Bandura, 1986). According to Lee's (1994) study, self-efficacy predicts assertive behavior better than outcome expectations. Furthermore, Shell et al. (1989) found that self-efficacy is a better predictor of reading achievement than outcome expectations. (Barry & Finney, 2009) Assessing and measuring self-efficacy is a multidimensional process. In the context of entrepreneurship, self-efficacy has been found to play a crucial role in entrepreneurial intentions and success (McGee et al., 2009; Miao et al., 2017). Similarly, research has established a strong relationship between self-efficacy and academic performance across various educational contexts (Honicke & Broadbent, 2016; Talsma et al., 2018). Self-efficacy also has a significant influence on health-related behaviors, such as exercise, diet, and medication adherence (Stewart, 2000; Sheeran et al., 1986). In the domain of leadership, self-efficacy has been identified as a key factor in leadership development and effectiveness (Hannah et al., 2008; Ng et al., 2008). Moreover, research has explored the design and implementation of self-efficacy interventions, demonstrating their potential to promote positive outcomes in various contexts (Bresó et al., 2011; Ungar et al., 2016). Importantly, self-efficacy has been found to be a better predictor of behavioral tendencies than outcome expectations (Bandura, 1986; Lee, 1994; Shell et al., 1989). This highlights the crucial role of self-efficacy in shaping individuals' actions and decisions across different domains. The measurement of self-efficacy has also been a focus of research, with studies exploring various aspects and dimensions of this construct (Barry & Finney, 2009). As self-efficacy continues to be recognized as a critical factor in human behavior and achievement, it is essential to develop and refine measurement tools to accurately assess this construct.

Addressing these research gaps on the impact of self-efficacy on an individual's brand identity will contribute to a more nuanced and comprehensive understanding of the role self-efficacy plays in shaping and maintaining one's personal image.

By exploring this understudied area, researchers can provide valuable insights into how self-efficacy can be fostered, maintained, and leveraged to enable individuals to build and sustain a positive personal and brand image, leading to positive outcomes across different contexts. As the world continues to face complex challenges and uncertainties, understanding the role of self-efficacy in shaping individual and collective beliefs, behaviors, and outcomes becomes increasingly important. By investing in further research on self-efficacy, we can unlock its potential to empower individuals, groups, and organizations to overcome obstacles, pursue their goals, and achieve success in various domains of life. The hypothesis of this study is:

**H4:** *Self-efficacy positively influences a person's brand identity.*

### 2.5 Self-Disclosure

Self-disclosure refers to the process by which an individual makes themselves known to others in a consistent way (Jourard, 1971). It involves sharing personal information such as feelings, beliefs, values, and dreams for the future (Ellison et al., 2006). Self-disclosure is the first step in the interpersonal communication process before developing interpersonal relationships, beginning with self-knowledge or intrapersonal communication. It then expands to interpersonal communication with a willingness to disclose one's personal stories to others. Moreover, self-disclosure by communicators makes communication more targeted and effective (Littlejohn, 1983). Stewart (1973) stated that humans disclose themselves through expressions, facial expressions, gestures, clothing, tone of voice, or other nonverbal cues, including most unintended behaviors. However, intentional self-disclosure is often part of interpersonal communication, influenced by psychological perspectives on interpersonal relationships within diverse gender groups such as gay, lesbian, bisexual, etc., stemming from self-acceptance and disclosure of sexual orientation (Cohler & Galatzer-Levy, 1996; Laird, 1996; Margolies et al., 1987; Mohr & Fassinger, 2003). The self-disclosure process is highly interpersonally related due to its involvement with family, religion, and other social contexts (de Monteflores, 1993; Gonsiorek, 1995).

It is imperative that scholars address these research gaps in order to gain a more comprehensive understanding of how self-disclosure influences people's personal branding and identity in today's digital and social media landscapes. In an increasingly connected world, this knowledge can be useful to individuals, organizations, and policymakers as they navigate the complexities of self-presentation and identity construction., hypotheses can be developed based on this support:

**H5:** *Self-disclosure positively influences a person's brand identity.*

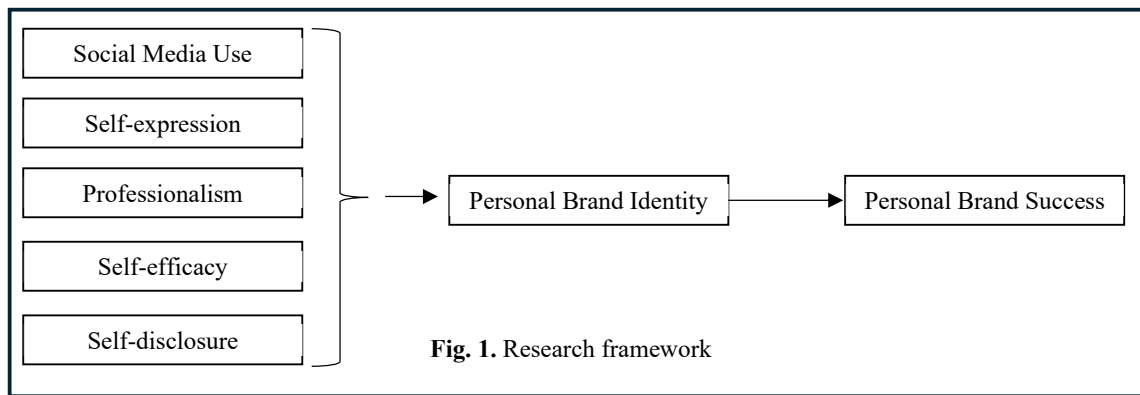
### 2.6 Personal Brand identity

Previous research related to individuals employing self-presentation and impression management strategies to construct and maintain personal brand identities. Qualitative studies using interviews or ethnographic methods could reveal the specific tactics and approaches individuals use to strategically disclose or withhold personal information across various online platforms (e.g. social media, personal websites) and offline settings in order to shape their desired personal brand image (Labrecque et al., 2011; van Dijck, 2013). Additionally, content analysis of individuals' online personal branding materials (social media profiles, personal websites, blogs etc.) could identify common self-presentation themes, narratives and visual cues utilized to project particular personal brand identities (Goffman, 1959; van Dijck, 2013a). Self-presentation strategies (such as selective disclosure, humble branding, causing controversies, etc.) may be tested for their effectiveness on perceptions of authenticity, likability, and credibility (Goffman, 1959a; Jensen Schau & Gilly, 2003). In longitudinal studies of personal branding efforts over time, researchers may discover how self-presentation strategies and impression management strategies evolve over time (Labrecque et al., 2011a). It is possible to detect how cultural norms and values are reflected in personal branding tactics by comparing the tactics across different societies (Goffman, 1959b). By surveying and interviewing personal branding consultants/experts, we can gain an understanding of how to build an effective personal brand (Labrecque et al., 2011b). As a result of such studies, we would gain a deeper understanding of the dynamic and context-dependent processes involved in crafting and managing personal brand identities in today's highly mediated society.

According to previous research studies on personal brand identity (Duguay, 2016; Chrobot-Mason et al., 2022), although some studies have explored personal branding among LGBTQ+ individuals, there is still a gap in understanding how marginalized groups (including ethnic minorities and the disabled) construct and negotiate their own personal brands. As a result of such information, the following research hypothesis can be developed:

**H6:** *Personal brand identity has a positive influence on the success of personal branding.*

According to all the above research hypotheses, the above research hypothesis can be expressed as a concept framework, as shown in Fig. 1.



### 3. Methodology

#### 3.1 Population and sampling

According to the Micro Influencer principle, the non-binary gender group was used for this research, based on the number of followers. Social media users with 10,000 to 100,000 followers who have a significant impact on markets or areas where they may be an expert in a particular industry were randomly selected for structural equation analysis (Hair et al., 2018).

#### 3.2 Research tools

Research experts and sustainable development experts reviewed the questionnaire for content validity to verify its correctness and appropriateness. The questions were then evaluated based on the Index of Item Objectives Congruence (IOC) evaluation form, and then improved according to the suggestions of experts. Once the questionnaire has been approved, it can be tested (Try Out). The Cronbach Method will be used to determine the consistency of the questions within the same set by measuring the Cronbach's alpha value. It is recommended that the alpha coefficient is greater than 0.60 (Diamantopoulos & Siguaw, 2000; Hair et al., 2017; Sekaran & Bougie, 2011).

#### 3.3 Data collection

The researcher collected data from a questionnaire of the Non-Binary Gender group that builds personal brands through any media based on the Nano Influencer principle, which describes social media users with 1,000 to 10,000 followers who have influence towards niche markets or areas where they may be experts in a particular field. For the convenience of respondents, the Federation of Thai Industries (FTI) has been selected. Consequently, the researcher used an online questionnaire, using Google Form as the primary channel, and allowing people to respond online to the questionnaire.

#### 3.4 Data analysis

The main model of the structural equation model consists of two important models: Measurement Model, which specifies the linear relationship between latent variables and observed variables. As part of the confirmatory factor analysis, this step is taken. Structural Models and Confirmatory Factor Analysis specify causal relationships between latent variables.

### 4. Research result

#### 4.1 Descriptive statistic

Of 550 copies of online questionnaires distributed to the sample group that passed the preliminary examination, 490 questionnaires were returned. Statistical analysis of the status data from online respondents was conducted using the call building model (Hair et al., 2010) since the questionnaires were complete and met sufficient criteria for analysis. The frequency and percentage of responses of online respondents were analyzed using descriptive statistics. The results of the descriptive statistical analysis conducted on the respondents are shown in Table 1.

**Table 1**

Indicates the percentage of general information provided by respondents

Description	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Age</b>		
Less than 20 yrs.	61.00	11.10
Gen Z (20-28 yrs.)	240.00	43.60
Gen Y (29-45 yrs.)	220.00	40.00
Gen X (46-58 yrs.)	20.00	3.60
Baby boomer (Over 58 yrs.)	9.00	1.60
<b>Social Media Usage</b>		
YouTube	49.00	8.90
Instagram	103.00	18.70
Facebook	195.00	35.50
Twitter	20.00	3.60
TikTok	172.00	31.30
Etc.	11.00	2.00
<b>Follower</b>		
10,000-50,000	466.00	84.70
50,000-100,000	54.00	9.80
100,000-1,000,000	25.00	4.50
Over 1 million	5.00	0.90
<b>Personal's branding position</b>		
Entertainment	282.00	51.00
A professional attitude	65.00	11.80
Academic	14.00	2.50
Tourism	42.00	7.60
Food	39.00	7.10
Fashion	86.00	15.60
Musical	4.00	0.70
Etc.	18.00	0.30

#### 4.2 Data distribution analysis

The data was found to have the lowest skewness value equal to -1.915 and the highest skewness value equal to -0.985, based on the analysis of skewness and kurtosis. In terms of kurtosis, the minimum value is -0.270 and the maximum value is 1.960. According to Cruz (2007), the skewness and kurtosis of these data are between -2 and 2, indicating that they are normally distributed (normality).

#### 4.3 Analyses of correlation coefficients

To examine the relationships between the independent variables, Pearson correlation coefficients were calculated, resulting in a correlation matrix. This matrix was used to assess the initial fit between the structural equation model and the component analysis. In component analysis, the variables should not be highly correlated with each other. Multicollinearity is prevented by conducting component analysis on groups of interrelated variables. However, each pair of correlation coefficients should not exceed 0.8 to avoid issues arising from high multicollinearity. The correlation matrix helps identify any highly correlated variable pairs that could potentially cause multicollinearity problems in the subsequent analyses. Observed variables were grouped into seven categories: Social Media Use, Self-Expression, Professionalism, Self-Efficacy, Self-Disclosure, Personal Brand Identity, and Personal Branding Success.

#### 4.4 Analyzing the VIF and Tolerance

The construct validity of the measurement model was evaluated through various analyses. These analyses aim to assess the extent to which the measured variables accurately represent the underlying theoretical constructs or factors in the proposed model. The construct validity analyses help determine if the measurement operations truly capture the concepts or qualities they are intended to measure. By examining construct validity, researchers can ensure the measurement model provides a valid operationalization of the theoretical constructs before proceeding with further analyses or hypothesis testing using the structural model.

#### 4.5 Analyses of the construct validity of the measurement model.

In order to determine the reliability of the measure, several statistical analyses were conducted, including analyses of variance (standard residual covariances), regression weights, average variances extracted (AVE), and construct reliability (CR) of each component weight. According to Hair et al. (2021a), these analyses were conducted according to the criteria set forth by them. It is essential that the results of these analyses satisfy the specified criteria in order to establish the reliability of the measure. Regression weights should be significant and ideally high, residual covariances should be within the acceptable range, AVEs should exceed 0.5, CRs must be greater than 0.7 (or between 0.6 and 0.7 with good validity indicators), and component weights should be greater than 0.5 in order to achieve practical significance. Based on Hair et

al.'s (2021b) guidelines, a measure that meets these criteria may be considered reliable. Based on the results of this empirical test, Table 2 shows the results.

**Table 2**

The Empirical results consist of factors loading, variance and reliability.

Indicators factors	$\lambda$	R <sup>2</sup>	CR	AVE
<b>Social Media Use: SMU</b>		0.910	0.939	0.725
<i>An individual's use of social media must be consistent with their lifestyle.</i>	0.954			
<i>Communicating with the target audience through social media must be appropriate.</i>	0.697			
<i>Using social media to build a personal brand must be consistent with the business.</i>	0.863			
<i>Social media must be used to enhance personal branding.</i>	0.958			
<i>Social media should be utilized to increase individual brand awareness.</i>	0.616			
<i>Utilization of social media must include Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube, IG and TikTok.</i>	0.600			
<b>Self-Expression: SEP</b>		0.647	0.943	0.735
<i>The expression must reflect the unique characteristics of the individual</i>	0.805			
<i>In order to express one's true self, one must be authentic.</i>	0.871			
<i>To better know who we are, our expression must come from within, such as our attitude, thoughts, and heart.</i>	0.960			
<i>There is a need for expression to create awareness among those who follow.</i>	0.915			
<i>Words, gestures, and manners should create a positive impression on followers.</i>	0.728			
<i>It is necessary to adapt expressions to suit society and the target audience.</i>	0.844			

**Table 2**

The Empirical results consist of factors loading, variance and reliability (continue).

Indicators factors	$\lambda$	R <sup>2</sup>	CR	AVE
<b>Professionalism: PF</b>		0.647	0.943	0.735
<i>A personal brand requires skills and abilities that benefit society.</i>	0.805			
<i>One must be responsible toward oneself, customers, society, followers, and profession.</i>	0.871			
<i>A personal brand requires maintaining professional standards.</i>	0.960			
<i>Being aware of your own abilities and limitations is key to building a personal brand.</i>	0.915			
<i>Adherence to the rules, honesty in occupation, and accuracy when making decisions are key to building your brand.</i>	0.728			
<i>Respect followers, sponsors, and co-workers' decisions</i>	0.844			
<b>Self-Efficacy: SEF</b>		0.748	0.943	0.768
<i>Showing one's abilities requires presenting the value that comes from experiences.</i>	0.865			
<i>A person's abilities are demonstrated by their past experience and expertise.</i>	0.820			
<i>Confidence leads to success when demonstrating one's abilities.</i>	0.894			
<i>Creating a successful personal brand takes hard work and challenges.</i>	0.852			
<i>Developing learning skills is essential to demonstrating one's abilities.</i>	0.946			
<b>Self-Disclosure: SD</b>		0.766	0.910	0.610
<i>In self-disclosure, you reflect yourself.</i>	0.875			
<i>A self-disclosure is a personal statement.</i>	0.693			
<i>In self-disclosure, a person reveals their identity to others.</i>	0.773			
<i>An individual reveals his or her identity in self-disclosure.</i>	0.964			
<i>Self-disclosure involves expressing feelings, emotions, and experiences honestly</i>	0.767			
<i>Self-revelation involves expressing one's true self.</i>	0.546			
<b>Personal Brand Identity: PBI</b>		0.631	0.938	0.687
<i>Followers and stakeholders must see value in your brand identity.</i>	0.795			
<i>A personal brand identity must differentiate itself from competitors.</i>	0.672			
<i>To create recognition, a brand identity must have personality.</i>	0.966			
<i>A brand identity must keep its promises.</i>	0.837			
<i>Long-term, sustainable recognition requires a personal brand identity.</i>	0.914			
<i>Followers and sponsors contribute to a brand's identity.</i>	0.867			
<i>Brand identity comes from attitude and behavior</i>	0.712			
<b>Personal Branding Success: PBS</b>		0.579	0.958	0.718
<i>Creating an impression on your followers is the key to building a personal brand.</i>	0.761			
<i>Credibility and trust are key to building a personal brand</i>	0.895			
<i>Building a personal brand requires constant self-presentation.</i>	0.838			
<i>Self-presentation is essential to building a personal brand.</i>	0.777			
<i>Having business-valued intellectual property is the key to building a personal brand</i>	0.827			
<i>Social recognition and public awards are key to personal branding.</i>	0.779			
<i>An increase in income is the sign of successful personal branding.</i>	0.912			
<i>A successful personal brand increases investment and business opportunities.</i>	0.899			
<i>Personal branding leads to more customers and business connections.</i>	0.920			

4.6 Result of hypothetical testing

According to the goodness-of-fit indices, the structural equation model fit the empirical data well, supporting the adequacy of the proposed model to represent the relationships between variables. All fit indices met the criteria, with  $\chi^2 = 1459.886$ ,  $df = 694$ ,  $\chi^2/df = 2.104$ ,  $GFI = 0.900$ ,  $CFI = 0.968$ ,  $RMSEA = 0.45$ , and  $SRMR = 0.381$ . Clearly, these findings indicate that the structural equation model fits the empirical data well. Fig. 2 presents the structural equation model.

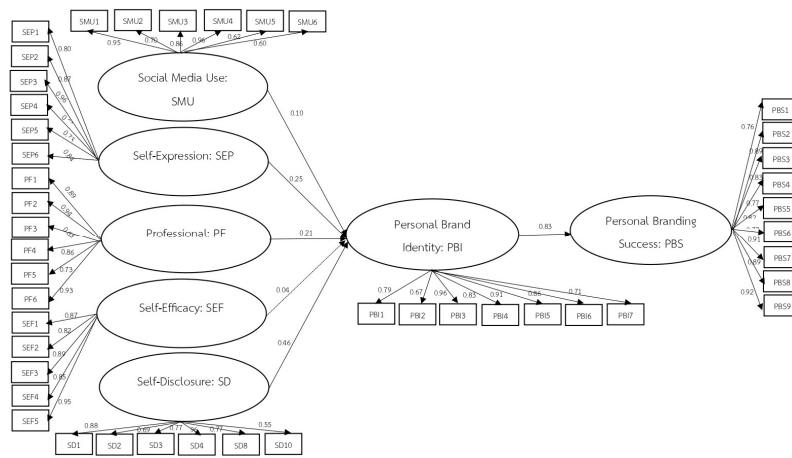


Fig. 2. The structural equation models.

Index values play a crucial role in evaluating the harmony of a model. Based on the five harmony indices that all meet the acceptance criteria, the model is consistent with the empirical data. The relative chi-square value of 2.104, which is less than five, supports the model's consistency. Goodness of Fit Index (GFI) of 0.900, which falls between 0 and 1, confirms the model's consistency with empirical data and exceeds the acceptable value of 0.90. The Comparative Fit Index (CFI) for this model is greater than 0.90, providing further evidence of its consistency with the observed data. The Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) value of 0.045, which is less than 0.09, indicates that the model is consistent with the empirical data as well. The Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) value of 0.038, which is less than 0.08, indicates a good fit between the model and the empirical data (Diamantopoulos & Siguaw, 2000). In conclusion, the five harmony indices - relative chi-square, GFI, CFI, RMSEA, and SRMR - collectively support the assertion that the model is consistent with the empirical data since their values satisfy the established acceptance criteria. Multiple harmony indices should be considered when assessing a model's overall fit and consistency, as illustrated by this comprehensive analysis of index values. According to the structural equation model analysis, six structural paths were statistically significant in the expected direction. There was a significance level of  $p = 0.418$  on one of these paths, a significance level of  $p = 0.027$  on another path, and a significance level of  $p = 0.000$  on the remaining four paths. As shown in Table 3, the results are as follows.

Table 3

The result of hypothesis testing

	Influence path	$\beta$	p-value	Result
H <sub>1</sub>	SMU → PBI	0.10	0.027*	Accepted
H <sub>2</sub>	SEP → PBI	0.25	0.000***	Accepted
H <sub>3</sub>	PF → PBI	0.21	0.000***	Accepted
H <sub>4</sub>	SEF → PBI	0.04	0.418	Rejected
H <sub>5</sub>	SD → PBI	0.46	0.000***	Accepted
H <sub>6</sub>	PBI → PBS	0.83	0.000***	Accepted

Note: \* $p < 0.050$ , \*\* $p < 0.010$ , \*\*\* $p < 0.001$ ; indicate p value to accept or reject hypothesis.

The hypothesis testing revealed that the factors influencing the causal relationships of personal branding success (PBS) of the non-binary gender model include social media use (SMU) ( $\beta = 0.10$ ,  $p < 0.050$ ), self-expression (SEP) ( $\beta = 0.25$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), professionalism (PF) ( $\beta = 0.21$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), self-discloser (SD) ( $\beta = 0.46$ ,  $p < 0.010$ ). Therefore, hypotheses 1, 2, 3 and 5 were accepted. Furthermore, the hypothesis testing found that self-efficacy (SEF) did not have a significant influence on personal brand identity (PBI) ( $\beta = 0.04$ ,  $p < 0.050$ ), so hypothesis 4 was rejected. However, the hypothesis testing revealed that personal brand identity (PBI) ( $\beta = 0.83$ ,  $p < 0.010$ ) have a significant effect on personal branding success, so hypothesis 6 was also accepted.

## 5. Discussion

Social media usage positively influences personal brand identity, according to studies on social media usage. It is consistent with Plackett et al. (2020), who stated that social media provides people with the opportunity to showcase their personal brands, which are a representation of their own identities. Social media is a valuable tool for marketers in communicating and promoting their value to themselves. A study by Caldevilla-Domínguez et al. (2021) on "Blogs, Twitter, the Blend for Digital Communicators" found that personal branding and mass communication define online information experts' identities, and blogs can be used to promote careers. As Kent and Li (2020) pointed out, social media represents a social innovation in communication that changes the way humans use media for public relations, mass communication, advertising, and marketing. According to Waller (2020), expressing one's identity to the public comes from using social media tools such as



Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Snapchat. In accordance with Thompson-Whiteside et al. (2018), individuals with digital skills can establish a personal brand online, expand their target audience, and find work opportunities through social media. Furthermore, Azimi (2014) asserts that social media can be used to express one's own identity and brand if desired. The findings of Raftari and Amiri (2014), who examined business models for entrepreneurs' personal branding, are consistent with this finding. Personal blogs and microblogs, video and photo sharing, social bookmarking, social networking, and social objects are all essential tools for building a personal brand.

From the study results on self-expression, it was found that self-expression has a positive influence on personal brand identity. This is consistent with Blasi & Glodis (1995) who stated that expressing personal identity, and especially personal values, greatly influences personal brand building. Similarly, Belk (2013) said that presenting oneself or brand image is an expression of personal identity, which is an example of an activity driven by general integrative motivation for self-expression. Motivation leads to certain behaviors, such as consumers engaging in conversations about brands in brand communities they like.

This aligns with the study by Kucharska (2017) that examined consumers' social network brand identification and personal branding - how social network users choose brands. A key factor in the study framework is self-expression, which defines their identity with brands on social networks and aims to create users' personal brands. This means that commercial brands are an important tool for building personal brands on social networks.

Self-expression influences personal brand identity, according to empirical findings. According to Flecha-Ortiz found that self-expression is an important component of both personal well-being and consumer behavior. A study by Al-Khouja et al. (2022) found a positive association between authentic self-expression and need satisfaction and personal well-being, emphasizing the importance of genuine self-expression. It focused on the impact of self-expression on social media platform usage and purchase motivation among millennials in Ortiz et al. (2021). Consumers' purchase motivation is influenced by the satisfaction derived from using Snapchat and interacting with brand content, the ephemeral content of the platform playing a critical role in satisfying Millennials' expectations. In both personal and consumer contexts, these studies demonstrate the importance of self-expression, showing how it influences well-being, platform usage, and purchase decisions. A significant role is played by brands in consumer self-expression and personal branding, as demonstrated by Catalin & Andreea (2014), Kucharska (2017), and Confente and Kucharska (2020). As Catalin and Andreea (2014) found, consumers are increasingly seeking new ways to express their identities through brands, and brands can be used to develop individual social identities. Consumer self-expression is linked to social media brands, and brand identity relates to personal branding, according to Kucharska (2017). According to Confente and Kucharska (2020), consumer brand identity influences the emergence of community identity, resulting in personal branding. Consumers use brands to express themselves, build a desired lifestyle, and develop their personal brand. Besides serving as a powerful means of self-expression, brands also play a crucial role in shaping consumer identity and fostering brand loyalty.

From the study results on professionalism, it was found that professionalism has a positive influence on personal brand identity. This is consistent with Gorbatov et al. (2020) who studied "Personal branding: scale development and validation" with the objective of developing career research. It was found that personal branding has become a crucial factor for success in professional careers. The measurement of personal brand value has an impact on predicting an individual's career success, perceived employability, and job performance. This links to the study by Bossio & Holton (2018) on "Performing Identity: self and social driving and media fatigue among journalists", which found that professionalism plays a significant role in shaping journalists' professional personal identity. Similarly, Domont & Ots (2020) studied "The social dynamics and stakeholder relationships of personal branding" and found that professionalism affects personal branding. Factors that promote professionalism include media producers, sponsors, and followers. It can be concluded that the factors contributing to professionalism in these studies are related to social media and sponsors, which influence professionalism in the profession and impact personal branding. This is consistent with the study by Pathemanathan and Dodamgoda (2018) who examined "The impact of personal attributes on personal branding reflecting employability" and found that professionalism is a personal identity that affects personal branding and leads to employability. Furthermore, Jacobson's (2020) study on "Personal branding for social media managers toward a target audience" suggested that personal branding for target audiences requires demonstrating professionalism to the target group. Similarly, Frade et al. (2010) studied "Identity and impact in the context of teacher professionalism" and found that identity is a shared concept between social and individual theories, derived from experiences and perceptions, which is related to the perception of personal identity in different social contexts.

Self-disclosure plays a crucial role in the formation and development of personal brand identity, particularly in the context of sexual orientation and gender identity. In conclusion, self-disclosure plays a crucial role in the development and maintenance of personal brand identity among LGBTQ individuals. The theories and models proposed by various researchers emphasize the importance of self-disclosure as a process through which individuals communicate their authentic selves to others. Empirical evidence from several studies supports the positive influence of self-disclosure on personal brand identity, highlighting the stages and patterns of self-disclosure, such as self-discovery, self-acceptance, and self-expression. These stages contribute to the construction and maintenance of a coherent and authentic personal brand identity. Self-

disclosure is not only a personal process but also a social one, involving the negotiation of gender identity, changing perceptions, and seeking support from others. This is particularly important for individuals who belong to marginalized or stigmatized groups, as self-disclosure enables them to assert their unique identities, challenge stereotypes, and build meaningful connections with others. The study by Huei Hsieh and Ling Wu (2011) specifically demonstrates how the consumption patterns of homosexual men correspond to the four stages of gay identity development, further reinforcing the significance of self-disclosure in personal branding. According to the finding of Haddad (2019), Eric et al. (2022), Mohr & Fassinger (2003), Huei Hsieh and Ling Wu (2011), and Mitchell & Knittel (2023) demonstrate the significant role of self-disclosure in the development and expression of sexual and gender identity among LGBTQ individuals. These studies highlight the various stages and patterns of self-disclosure, such as awareness, acceptance, and integration, that contribute to the formation of a coherent and authentic personal identity. Moreover, the findings suggest that self-disclosure is influenced by both personal factors, such as self-acceptance and experiences, and social factors, such as perceived support and safety concerns. Ultimately, self-disclosure is a critical factor in the construction and maintenance of personal brand identity, particularly for LGBTQ individuals who navigate complex social and cultural contexts.

An important aspect of a personal's brand success is their personal brand identity, according to this study. As supported by numerous studies and theories, personal brand identity has a positive influence on personal branding success. It is crucial to combine all elements of the brand to create a unique and desired position in the marketplace, according to Aaker (2012). It is determined by the organization's brand values that convey the true characteristics of the brand and differentiate it from competitors' brands. Kusi et al. (2021) defines personal brand identity as the brand values that are determined by the organization. Erdil (2015) and Dhillon (2013) emphasize the importance of personal brand image when differentiating brands and creating a memorable impression on consumers. In addition, Birtwistle, Clarke, and Freathy (1999) and Keller (1993) discuss personal brand image in terms of its impact on companies, organizations, brands, and consumer perception. As a symbol of self-identity and a reflection of the brand in the memories of consumers, Bearden and Etzel (1982) and Saleem and Raja (2014) emphasize the importance of personal brand image. Empirical studies by Kristal, Baumgarth, & Henseler (2020), Iglesias et al. (2020), Zhang et al. (2021), and Kuncharasvía et al. (2020) provide further evidence of the relationship between personal brand identity and successful personal branding. According to these studies, personal brand identity influences business competitiveness, communicates brand identity to stakeholders, and contributes to trust, reputation, and loyalty.

The findings of this study regarding the lack of positive influence of self-efficacy on personal brand identity are inconsistent with previous research. Pathemanathan and Dodamgoda (2018) found that personal characteristics, including self-efficacy, have an impact on personal branding and employability. Lin & LuLu (2022) discovered that self-efficacy, derived from skills and expertise, is related to self-presentation strategies in the context of food stagramming behavior. Woodworht et al. (2015) also found that self-efficacy, gained through experiences and social impact, influences personal identity formation. Additionally, Gorbатов et al. (2019) demonstrated that self-efficacy variables, such as technology and creativity skills, are important for career success and are related to personal branding. Bandura (1982) emphasized that high self-efficacy positively affects work performance and efficiency, which in turn enhances self-efficacy. Furthermore, the current study's findings are inconsistent with Green's (2019) research, which found that general self-efficacy is related to the development of professional personal identity through its relationship with mental components, autonomy, environment, life satisfaction, and self-acceptance. Lastly, Jaussi, Randel, & Dionne (2007) discovered that personal identity, in terms of creative self-efficacy, is related to work experiences.

## 6. Conclusion

This study found that social media usage, self-expression, professionalism, and self-disclosure positively influence personal brand identity. Various theories and empirical evidence support the importance of personal brand identity in personal branding. Individuals can showcase their personal brands and communicate their identities through social media. An individual's brand identity depends on self-expression, especially on personal values. Media producers, sponsors, and followers influence professional identity and personal branding. For non-binary gender individuals navigating complex social and cultural contexts, self-disclosure is essential. The study also emphasizes that brands should combine all elements of their brand to achieve a unique position in the market. The personal brand identity of an organization contributes to its memorable impression on consumers and differentiates it from competitors. The relationship between personal brand identity and successful branding has been demonstrated empirically, highlighting its effect on business competitiveness, stakeholder communications, trust, reputation, and loyalty. In contrast with previous research, the study's findings indicate that self-efficacy does not influence personal brand identity positively. Personal branding, employability, and professional identity development are all related to self-efficacy, derived from personal characteristics, skills, and expertise. A personal brand identity is essential for successful personal branding, and social media usage, self-expression, professionalism, and self-disclosure are all positive influences. The study presents valuable insights into how to develop and maintain a strong personal brand, despite the findings concerning self-efficacy being inconsistent with previous research.

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