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A Chart-buster YouTuber's Cruise to Stardom: The Role of Social Media Configuration in Digital Branding Strategy

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A Chart-buster YouTuber's Cruise to Stardom: The Role of Social Media Configuration in Digital Branding Strategy

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YouTubers who are often referred to as micro-celebrities, epitomise the fusion of a brand identity instilled with credible performance on social media and informed management of authenticity for commercial advantage (Senft 2013). Having seen a significant rise in their subscriptions and revenue, many celebrities rely on YouTube solely or partially to amass engagement with online plaudits and eventually be shot to stardom. As such, the meteoric growth of YouTube alongside the multitude of affordances instilled in other platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and TikTok has unfolded the notion of 'digital branding strategy' that portrays the adoption of technology-based platforms to deliver content and engage with one's audience.

A notable proportion of related research addresses how human brands such as artists, athletes, and CEOs could be self-branded, endorsed, and celebrificated (Muniz and Guzmán 2021). Nonetheless, there is a paucity of research focusing on a branding strategy in the digital domain of an artist managed by a firm, particularly in the entertainment industry. As such, it is crucial to understand the ecosystem around this phenomenon, which features a unique configuration of resources and capabilities fused with objectives to reap superior performance, underpinning Weber (1978)'s configuration theory. To redress this frailty, we conducted an exploratory qualitative in-depth case study focused on a trajectory of a YouTuber named; Yohani, who rose to international fame following the launch of her popular cover song "MenikeMageHithe." The study was informed by interviews with Artists and Repertoire Director of Yohani's record label; Pettah Effect, and the CEO of the digital advertising company; Theewra Worldwide. These insights revealed the significance of "social media hygiene factors," which resonate with the essentials of engaging with social media to derive, execute, and manage a YouTuber's digital branding strategy and assist with its facets of brand definition, buyer persona development, and brand activation. Albeit the success of this global singing sensation appears to be a photomontage of arbitrary events that occurred individually, how two firms employed each social media platform to deliver a carefully orchestrated digital branding strategy, eventually shooting her to global stardom, is quite intriguing. This study adds to the body of information systems research involving the orchestration of multiple social media channels by multiple companies in devising digital branding strategies for various celebrities.

References

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