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Pengaruh *Personal Branding* dan *Entertainment Value VTuber* terhadap *Audience Engagement* pada Platform Live Streaming di Indonesia

The Influence of VTubers' Personal Branding and Entertainment Value on Audience Engagement on Live Streaming Platforms in Indonesia

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Abstrak

Perkembangan ***Virtual YouTuber (VTuber)*** sebagai media hiburan digital menciptakan interaksi yang semakin intensif dengan audiens. Namun, tingkat ***audience engagement*** pada konten *VTuber* masih bervariasi. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis pengaruh ***personal branding*** dan ***entertainment value*** terhadap *audience engagement* pada penonton *live stream VTuber*. Penelitian menggunakan metode **kuantitatif** dengan pendekatan **SEM-PLS**. Data diperoleh melalui penyebaran kuesioner kepada **150 responden** yang pernah menonton konten *VTuber*, dengan teknik ***purposive sampling***. Variabel *personal branding* diukur melalui dimensi *sincerity, visibility*, dan *uniqueness*, sedangkan *entertainment value* diukur melalui ***enjoyment*** **dan** ***interactivity***. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa ***personal branding*** dan ***entertainment value*** berpengaruh **positif dan signifikan** terhadap ***audience engagement***, baik secara parsial maupun simultan. Temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa *VTuber* dengan citra yang autentik serta konten yang menghibur dan interaktif mampu meningkatkan keterlibatan audiens.
Kata kunci: Personal Branding, Entertainment Value, VTuber, Audience Engagement, Live Streaming

Abstract

*The growth of **Virtual YouTubers (VTubers)** as a digital entertainment medium has created increasingly intensive interactions with audiences. However, the level of **audience engagement** with VTuber content still varies. This study aims to analyze the effect of **personal branding** and **entertainment value** on audience engagement among VTuber live streaming viewers. This study used a **quantitative method** with the **PLS-SEM** approach. Data were collected through questionnaires distributed to **150 respondents** who had watched VTuber content, using a **purposive sampling** technique. Personal branding*

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was measured through sincerity, visibility, and uniqueness, while entertainment value was measured through ***enjoyment and interactivity****. The results indicate that* ***personal branding*** *and* ***entertainment value*** *have a* ***positive and significant effect*** *on* ***audience engagement****, both partially and simultaneously. These findings suggest that VTubers with an authentic image and entertaining, interactive content are able to increase audience engagement.*

Keywords: Personal Branding, Entertainment Value, VTuber, Audience Engagement, Live Streaming
Kode JEL:

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1. Intoduction

Digital transformation has reshaped how people access entertainment and interact with content creators. Live streaming platforms facilitate real-time communication through features such as live chat, comments, and other forms of digital participation. This development has transformed audiences from mere recipients of content into active participants who can engage in entertainment experiences and build relationships with creators (Dwivedi et al., 2021; Vivek et al., 2012). In the context of digital marketing, audience engagement is also a crucial aspect, as it reflects user interaction and responses to the content they consume.

One phenomenon emerging within this ecosystem is the Virtual YouTuber (VTuber)—a creator who appears via an animation-based virtual avatar, constructing a digital persona through their voice, character traits, and interactions with the audience. This virtual identity provides space for VTubers to develop unique characters, while live streaming activities facilitate direct communication with their audience. Previous research has explored virtual identity and self-presentation, fan attachment, and consumer behavior within the context of VTubers (Berryman et al., 2021; Hariadi & Budiwaspada, 2023; Wan & Lu, 2024). Meanwhile, studies on social media engagement indicate that content quality, relationships, and interactions contribute to fostering audience engagement. For instance, Erwita and Handayani (2022) found that discussions centered on quality, emotions, relationships, and services are linked to consumer engagement with local brand accounts on Instagram.

Two factors that potentially explain audience engagement with VTubers are personal branding and entertainment value. Personal branding relates to the effort to build a consistent and distinct identity, making a creator easily recognizable and memorable (Labrecque et al., 2011; Khamis et al., 2017). In this study, personal branding is examined through sincerity, visibility, and uniqueness—elements that help shape the audience's perception of a VTuber character. Meanwhile, entertainment value reflects the extent to which content is perceived as enjoyable and interactive. Entertainment value has been identified as a crucial element in the evaluation of digital content and audience behavior (Ducoffe, 1996; Jiang et al., 2024).

Although research on virtual influencers and VTubers continues to grow, studies that specifically examine personal branding and entertainment value—both

individually and collectively—as predictors of audience engagement among viewers of VTuber live streams in Indonesia remain limited. While some previous research has focused on purchase intentions, consumption behavior, or attachment toward virtual figures, this study positions audience engagement as the primary variable. Therefore, this research aims to analyze the influence of personal branding on audience engagement, the influence of entertainment value on audience engagement, and the extent to which these two variables, taken together, explain audience engagement.

2. Methodology

This study employs a quantitative approach with a causal design to examine the influence of VTubers personal branding and entertainment value on audience engagement on live streaming platforms in Indonesia. The methodology section covers model development, operationalization of variables, data collection, and analytical methods.

2.1. Model Development

2.1.1. Core Issue

The core issue addressed in this research stems from the observation that audience engagement levels among VTuber viewers can vary, even when the audiences are consuming similar types of live-streamed content. Audience engagement is reflected not only in the attention paid while watching but also through active participation—such as commenting, liking, or sharing content—as well as a sense of connection to the creator and their community. Consequently, this study focuses on two factors hypothesized to be linked to such engagement: the VTuber's personal branding and their entertainment value.

Previous research on VTubers and virtual influencers has explored topics such as celebrity attachment, virtual identity, interaction, and entertainment value. However, this study positions personal branding and entertainment value as two independent variables within a single model to examine their relationship with audience engagement, specifically in the context of VTuber viewers in Indonesia. Thus, the research problem is formulated to determine whether personal branding and entertainment value each exert an influence on audience engagement, and whether, taken together, they can explain the variations in audience engagement.

2.1.2. Variable 1 and Variable 2

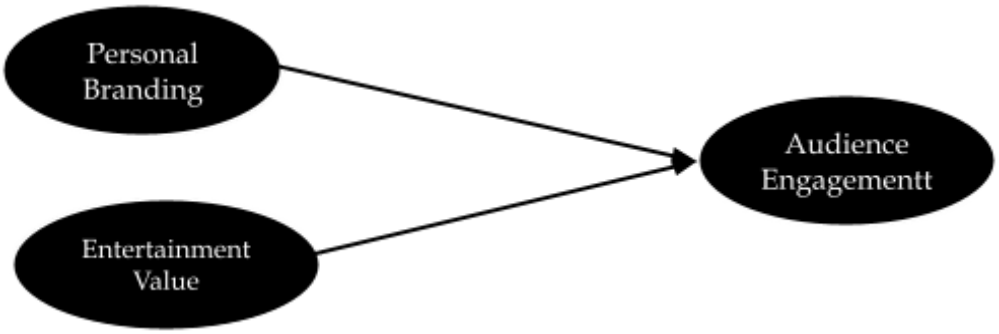
In this study, personal branding (X1) is defined through three dimensions: sincerity, visibility, and uniqueness. Sincerity refers to the audience's perception of a VTuber's genuine and authentic character; visibility relates to the VTuber's presence and the consistency of their activities on digital platforms; and uniqueness denotes the distinctive traits that set a VTuber apart from other creators. Based on this reasoning, personal branding is expected to help the audience recognize and remember the VTuber, while also fostering a stronger perception of the creator's identity.

Entertainment value (X2) is measured through the dimensions of enjoyment and interactivity. Enjoyment captures the pleasure or sense of entertainment experienced

while watching a VTuber's live stream, while interactivity reflects the engagement between the VTuber and the audience during the broadcast. Content that is enjoyable and provides opportunities for interaction is expected to encourage the audience to pay attention and participate.

Audience engagement (Y) is the dependent variable, measured through conscious attention, enthused participation, and social connection. These three dimensions represent the audience's attentiveness to the broadcast, their active participation in content-related activities, and their sense of closeness or connection to the VTuber and the fan community. Based on this framework, the research hypotheses are formulated as follows: H1: A VTuber's personal branding has a positive effect on audience engagement; H2: A VTuber's entertainment value has a positive effect on audience engagement; and H3: A VTuber's personal branding and entertainment value simultaneously influence audience engagement.

Gambar 1. Research Model



Tabel 1. Operationalization of Variables

Variable/Concept	Dimensions/Indicators	Item	Scale
Personal branding (X1)	Sincerity, visibility, uniqueness	9 (item 1–9)	Likert 1–5
Entertainment value (X2)	Enjoyment, interactivity	6 (item 10–15)	Likert 1–5
Audience engagement (Y)	Conscious attention, enthused participation, social connection	10 (item 16–25)	Likert 1–5

Source: Processed from the author's research instrument (2026).

2.2. Data Collection

This study utilizes quantitative data collected via an online survey employing a closed-ended questionnaire. The target population consists of individuals in Indonesia who have experience watching VTuber content on digital platforms such as YouTube, TikTok Live, or Twitch. The sample was selected using a non-probability sampling technique, specifically purposive sampling. Respondent criteria include being at least 17 years old, residing in Indonesia, having watched VTuber live streams at least three times in the last six months—with each session lasting a minimum of 30 minutes—and following or subscribing to at least one VTuber account.

The research data was obtained from 150 respondents. The questionnaire was structured using a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The instrument comprises 25 items: nine items for personal branding, six for entertainment value, and ten for audience engagement. Data collection was conducted online via Google Forms.

2.3. Analysis Method

Data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares–Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with the aid of SmartPLS 4. The evaluation of the measurement model (outer model) included an examination of outer loadings, convergent validity via Average Variance Extracted (AVE), internal reliability via Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability, and discriminant validity. The evaluation of the structural model (inner model) encompassed path coefficients, the coefficient of determination (R^2), effect size (f^2), and hypothesis testing using a bootstrapping procedure. Relationships were considered significant if the p-value was less than 0.05; for two-tailed tests at a 5% significance level, a t-statistic value greater than 1.96 was also used as a criterion.

3. Result

3.1. Respondent Characteristic

The study involved 150 respondents who met the criteria. There were 90 female respondents (60%) and 60 male respondents (40%). The largest age groups were 23 and 24 years old, with 21 respondents (14%) in each. Regarding viewing habits, 55 respondents (36.7%) watch VTuber live streams 3–5 times per week, and 62 respondents (41.3%) typically spend 1–2 hours per viewing session. Additionally, 49 respondents (32.7%) follow 4–6 VTuber accounts.

Characteristics	Dominant category	Amount	Percentage
Gender	Women	90	60,0%
Age	23 and 24 years old	21 each	14,0% each
Viewing frequency	3–5 times per week	55	36,7%
Viewing duration	1–2 hours	62	41,3%
Number of accounts followed	4–6 accounts	49	32,7%

3.2. Measurement Model Evaluation

The test results indicate that all indicators have outer loadings above 0.70. The AVE value for each construct also exceeds 0.50. Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability for all constructs are above 0.70, thereby meeting the criteria for internal reliability. The HTMT values between constructs, as reported in the final thesis, are below the 0.90 threshold.

Construct	Outer loading range	AVE	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability
Personal branding	0,827–0,887	0,751	0,958	0,964
Entertainment value	0,873–0,913	0,799	0,950	0,960
Audience engagement	0,850–0,888	0,750	0,963	0,968

3.3. Structural Model Evaluation and Hypothesis Testing

The reported VIF values for the indicators fall below the maximum threshold used in this study, indicating that there are no multicollinearity issues that would compromise the model. The R^2 value for audience engagement is 0.608, with an adjusted R^2 of 0.603. Consequently, personal branding and entertainment value account for 60.8% of the variation in audience engagement, while the remaining 39.2% is attributable to factors outside the model.

Relation	Path Coefficient (β)	t-statistics	p-value	Result
Personal branding → Audience engagement	0,450	4,076	<0,001	Supported
Entertainment value → Audience engagement	0,362	3,216	0,001	Supported

In terms of effect size, personal branding has an f^2 value of 0.153, while entertainment value has an f^2 value of 0.099. These figures indicate that personal branding makes a greater contribution than entertainment value within the research model. H3 is examined through the collective ability of both variables to explain audience engagement, as reflected by an R^2 value of 0.608.

4. Discussion

4.1. The Influence of Personal Branding on Audience Engagement

The results indicate that personal branding has a positive and significant effect on audience engagement ($\beta = 0.450$; $t = 4.076$; $p < 0.001$). Thus, H1 is supported. This path coefficient is larger than that of "entertainment value," and an effect size of 0.153 suggests a relatively greater contribution to the model. These findings indicate that audience engagement is not solely linked to the content of the broadcast, but also to the perception of the VTuber's identity and character.

These findings align with literature on personal branding, which emphasizes the importance of a clear and distinct identity in shaping audience perception (Labrecque et al., 2011; Khamis et al., 2017). Lee and Eastin (2021) also identify perceived authenticity as a crucial element in the evaluation of influencers. In the context of VTubers, "sincerity" can make interactions feel genuine; "visibility" helps the audience discover and follow the creator's activities; and "uniqueness" makes the character easily recognizable and distinguishable. Together, these three dimensions help foster familiarity and closeness, which in turn encourage comments, likes, content sharing, and community participation.

These findings can also be viewed in conjunction with research on virtual identity and audience attachment to VTubers (Berryman et al., 2021; Hariadi & Budiwaspada, 2023; Wan & Lu, 2024). Although the contexts and variables examined may vary, such research helps explain why a digital persona functions as more than just a visual appearance—it becomes an integral part of the audience's relational experience. In

practical terms, those who manage VTubers should maintain character consistency without making interactions feel rigid or contrived.

4.2. The Influence of Entertainment Value on Audience Engagement

Entertainment value has a positive and significant effect on audience engagement (β = 0.362; t = 3.216; p = 0.001), meaning H2 is supported. These results indicate that a more enjoyable and interactive entertainment experience is associated with higher levels of audience engagement. However, the path coefficient and effect size for entertainment value (f^2 = 0.099) are smaller than those for personal branding (f^2 = 0.153). Thus, while entertainment value remains important, its contribution to this model is lower than that of personal branding.

These findings are consistent with the notion that entertainment is a key component of digital content value (Ducoffe, 1996) and align with research on streamers, which links entertainment to the intention to follow and audience response (Jiang et al., 2024). The enjoyment dimension provides an entertaining viewing experience, while interactivity allows the audience to participate through live chat, Q&A sessions, and responses to comments. The findings of Erwita and Handayani (2022) regarding the relationship between conversation and consumer engagement in social media content also provide a point of comparison, suggesting that meaningful interaction can contribute to user engagement—even though their study did not focus on VTubers.

The implication is that VTubers and their agencies should not merely pursue entertaining content formats but also create relevant opportunities for audience participation. Responding to comments, hosting interactive sessions, and utilizing broadcast formats that encourage engagement can strengthen the overall viewing experience. Such entertainment experiences are likely to be more effective when presented within the framework of a consistent character and identity.

4.3. Simultaneous Influence of Personal Branding and Entertainment Value

An R^2 value of 0.608 indicates that personal branding and entertainment value, taken together, explain 60.8% of the variation in audience engagement. The remaining 39.2% of the variation stems from other factors not included in the model, such as content quality, community loyalty, social presence, or parasocial interaction. These findings support H3 within the research framework of this final project, confirming that both variables collectively contribute to explaining audience engagement.

The two variables play complementary roles. Personal branding helps establish a recognizable identity and a relatively sustained relationship, while entertainment value creates an enjoyable viewing experience and provides space for participation. This understanding aligns with the concept of customer engagement, which views engagement as a form of active, relational response rather than merely an act of consumption (Brodie et al., 2011; Vivek et al., 2012). Nevertheless, in the context of PLS-SEM reporting, the R^2 value reflects the model's explanatory power and is not synonymous with a simultaneous test based on the F-statistic; therefore, any claims regarding a "simultaneous" effect in this article are limited to the interpretation of the combined contribution of both predictors within the model.

5. Conclusion

This study finds that a VTuber's personal branding has a positive and significant impact on audience engagement, with a path coefficient of 0.450. Entertainment value also exerts a positive and significant influence, with a path coefficient of 0.362. Between the two predictors, personal branding makes a larger contribution, as evidenced by its path coefficient and effect size. Together, personal branding and entertainment value account for 60.8% of the variance in audience engagement ($R^2 = 0.608$).

In practical terms, it is recommended that VTubers maintain a persona that is authentic, consistent, recognizable, and unique, while simultaneously providing entertaining content that fosters opportunities for interaction. Agencies can leverage these findings to inform talent development and content evaluation—shifting the focus beyond mere viewership numbers toward the quality of engagement. Future research could examine other factors, such as parasocial interaction, social presence, content quality, or community identification, while expanding the sample size and employing mixed-methods approaches.

This study has limitations, as it relies on an online survey and purposive sampling; therefore, the results cannot necessarily be generalized to the entire VTuber audience in Indonesia. Furthermore, the model incorporates only two independent variables, and the measurements are based on respondents' perceptions. Future studies could expand the range of variables, account for platform-specific characteristics, and explore alternative data collection methods.

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