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Personal Branding of Generation Z Through Jaipong Dance: A Case Study at Sanggar Seni Cahaya Kancana

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Abstract

Generation Z faces increasing challenges in forming their sense of self. This study explores how traditional arts, particularly Jaipong dance, can serve as a medium for personal branding through informal learning. A qualitative case study approach was employed, with data collected via observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation of active members of Sanggar Seni Cahaya Kancana in Garut, West Java. The findings suggest that the studio serves as a social and cultural ecosystem where participants internalise cultural values, boost their self-confidence, and develop personal branding both offline and online. Specifically, participants demonstrated significant character development, gained community recognition, and used social media to amplify their cultural identities. The results support the integration of traditional art into youth identity formation by combining local heritage with digital expression. This study contributes to the understanding of informal learning spaces as strategic environments for shaping competitive and culturally grounded identities in the digital age.

Keywords: *Generation Z, Informal Learning, Jaipong Dance, Personal Branding, Social Capital*

Abstrak

Generasi Z menghadapi tantangan yang semakin besar dalam membentuk rasa jati diri mereka. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi bagaimana seni tradisional, khususnya tari Jaipong, dapat menjadi medium personal branding melalui pembelajaran informal. Pendekatan kualitatif dengan desain studi kasus digunakan dalam penelitian ini. Data dikumpulkan melalui observasi, wawancara mendalam, dan dokumentasi terhadap anggota aktif Sanggar Seni Cahaya Kancana di Garut, Jawa Barat. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa sanggar seni berfungsi sebagai ekosistem sosial dan budaya yang mendukung internalisasi nilai-nilai budaya, peningkatan kepercayaan diri, dan pembentukan personal branding baik di ranah luring maupun daring. Secara spesifik, peserta menunjukkan perkembangan karakter yang signifikan, memperoleh pengakuan dari komunitas, dan memanfaatkan media sosial untuk memperkuat identitas budaya mereka. Temuan ini memperkuat pentingnya integrasi seni tradisional dalam pembentukan identitas generasi muda dengan menggabungkan nilai budaya lokal dan ekspresi digital. Penelitian ini memberikan kontribusi terhadap pemahaman ruang belajar informal sebagai lingkungan

strategis untuk membentuk identitas yang berdaya saing dan berakar pada budaya di era digital.

Kata Kunci: *Generasi Z, Modal Sosial, Personal Branding, Pembelajaran Informal, Tari Jaipong*

Introduction

In the fast-paced and competitive digital era, Generation Z faces significant challenges in shaping their self-identity (Syafika et al., 2025). The overwhelming flow of information and the social norms shaped by social media drive them to continuously project their self-image as a means of asserting their presence in the digital realm (Sikumbang et al., 2024). In response to these challenges, it becomes essential for Generation Z to apply creative expressions rooted in local wisdom while leveraging technological developments (Nurida & Lathifah, 2023).

This phenomenon aligns with Goffman's theory, which states that in social life, individuals tend to construct their self-presentation in front of others, especially as social interactions increasingly shift to the online domain (Yuliani, 2024). In this study, Goffman's dramaturgy theory is used to analyse how members of the art studio portray their social roles as Jaipong dancers. Their actions on stage can be seen as a form of front stage, while the artistic activities shared on social media reflect backstage management in shaping self-impression. However, efforts to build personal branding on social media are often limited to visual appearance and material achievements, which in turn create psychological pressures such as low self-esteem or insecurity, social anxiety, and self-dissatisfaction (Rahmadhani dan Aziz 2024). This condition creates an urgency to develop a more meaningful form of personal branding, rooted in cultural values and grown from real social experiences.

The findings of this study align with Dwi's (2022) research, which emphasises the important role of art studios in shaping participants' character development. However, unlike that study, which focuses more on the enhancement of artistic skills, this research highlights how traditional art activities can also be utilised as a personal branding strategy among Generation Z (Dwi, 2022). Furthermore, compared to Bodrick et al.'s (2024) study that concentrates on social media-based personal branding strategies, this research offers a new perspective that personal branding can be shaped through social experiences, community interactions, and direct cultural engagement (Bodrick et al., 2024). This approach provides a more holistic understanding of identity formation in the digital era.

Although several studies have discussed personal branding in the digital era and the role of art in character development, research linking traditional art activities such as Jaipong dance with the formation of Generation Z's branding through informal learning approaches remains very limited. Most studies emphasise digital spaces or formal education, while the contribution of art studios as social and cultural spaces in shaping the identity of young generations has not been deeply explored. This gap constitutes the main rationale for the importance of this study, which aims to provide a fresh perspective on identity and culture in the digital era.

Andrean and Fauzi (2020) also highlight the role of art studios as an alternative character education when family roles are not optimal; however, their study does not address the aspect of personal branding. Most research on Generation Z's branding still focuses on digital environments and formal education. Therefore, the lack of studies connecting traditional cultural activities within the context of informal learning reveals a research gap that needs to be filled, especially in understanding traditional arts as a means of identity formation and social existence for Generation Z.

In this studio, young people not only learn dance techniques but also build character, strengthen social networks, and instil cultural values in their daily lives. Interestingly, amid the dominance of social media, some members of Generation Z in Mandalasari Village, Garut Regency, choose a different approach to shaping their self-image. They utilize traditional arts, especially Jaipong dance, as a medium of expression as well as a personal branding strategy rooted in local cultural values (Adani, 2024).

The informal learning process occurring in the studio reflects Vygotsky's view (as cited in Maulida et al., 2024) that learning is collaborative and community-based, and individual development is influenced by social environments and interactions with others. This concept aligns with Pierre Bourdieu's social capital theory, which emphasises the importance of social capital in building social relations, and Robert Putnam's view of social capital as the foundation of trust and participation in communities (Maulida et al., 2024). Bourdieu's and Putnam's social capital theories are used to understand how members' participation in the studio creates social networks that support character development, as well as increase trust and collaboration among members as forms of social capital that strengthen personal branding.

Jaipong dance, as one of the traditional Sundanese arts, has provided Generation Z with an opportunity to express themselves while preserving local culture. This dance art not only serves as a form of entertainment but also functions as an effective means to build their self-image (Sari et al., 2021). Through this dance, Generation Z can showcase their creativity, discipline, and courage in demonstrating unique skills in front of the public (Maesaroh, 2024). The Cahaya Kancana Art Studio offers a platform for young people to practice and perform Jaipong dance. Participants not only learn to preserve culture but also have the opportunity to develop their branding through achievements in the arts. Activities in the art studio enable them to hone their skills, increase self-confidence, and expand social networks that can support their future career development (Burhamzah et al., 2023). As a social and cultural space, the Cahaya Kancana Art Studio also serves as a place where its members can experience character transformation. Many who were previously shy and reserved have become more courageous and confident to perform publicly.

This transformation not only enriches their identity but also opens opportunities to expand their social existence through social media and public activities (Aan Setiadarma et al., 2024). Thus, through Jaipong dance, Generation Z not only preserves culture but also builds a stronger and more visible identity within society (Mahmudah et al., 2021). Based on the above description, the main focus of this study is:

1. How does the informal learning process at Cahaya Kancana Art Studio Shape Generation Z's branding through Jaipong dance?
2. What is the impact of this personal branding formation on the character and social identity changes of the studio members?

This study aims to examine how Jaipong dance is used by Generation Z as a medium for personal branding and to analyse its impact on their character and social identity in the digital era. The research also seeks to fill a gap in studies that remain limited to digital contexts and formal education by highlighting the role of art studios as informal learning spaces rich in cultural values.

With this background, the study is expected to contribute to understanding how Jaipong dance not only serves as a medium for cultural preservation but also as a tool for shaping the personal branding and character of Generation Z in the digital age. Additionally, the results of this study are anticipated to serve as a reference for

the development of art studios as informal learning spaces that support the social and cultural growth of young generations.

Method

This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study design. This approach was chosen because the researcher aims to gain an in-depth understanding of how Generation Z forms their branding through Jaipong dance activities at the Cahaya Kancana Art Studio. The qualitative approach aims to comprehensively and naturally understand a social phenomenon by involving direct interaction between the researcher and the subjects being studied (Haki et al., 2024).

The case study method was selected because the researcher wants to focus on a specific place and situation to closely observe social dynamics, personal experiences, and the meanings constructed by the studio members. The case study aims to reveal the uniqueness of this research and the characteristics inherent in the case under study. It is used to explore in depth the unique characteristics of the object, including the social dynamics and cultural background of the studio participants. Case studies are commonly found across various fields, covering aspects such as natural characteristics, activities, functions, historical context, environmental conditions, and other influencing factors that need investigation (Assyakurrohim et al., 2023).

The subjects of this study are Generation Z individuals who actively participate in activities at the Cahaya Kancana Art Studio, especially those who frequently perform Jaipong dance and are also active on social media. Informants were selected purposively, meaning deliberately chosen based on the research objectives. The criteria include age (born between 1997 and 2012) according to (BPS, 2024) active participation in the studio activities, and evidence of efforts to build self-image through dance.

Data were collected through several methods: observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. Observations were conducted to directly observe activities in the studio, such as practice sessions, interactions between members and coaches, and how the studio environment supports character development and self-confidence. Interviews were conducted with dancers, coaches, and studio managers to understand their personal experiences, reasons for joining the studio, and their perspectives on personal branding and the cultural values embedded in Jaipong

dance. Documentation involved collecting photos, performance videos, social media posts, and studio activity notes related to the process of shaping members' self-image.

The data analysis model used is the interactive model proposed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014) which consists of three main components:

1. Data reduction, the process of selecting, focusing attention, simplifying, abstracting, and transforming raw data obtained from field notes or interview transcripts. This is the initial stage of data analysis aimed at focusing the researcher's attention on data relevant to the research questions. In this study, data reduction involved simplifying and organising interview transcripts, observation notes, and digital documentation such as photos and social media posts. The researcher focused on data related to Generation Z's efforts to build personal branding through Jaipong dance, their motivations for joining the studio, and the social dynamics within the studio environment. This reduction is crucial to eliminate less relevant information so the analysis becomes more focused.
2. Data display, in this study, data were presented through interview excerpts and thematic tables containing categories such as: the process of internalizing cultural values, personal branding strategies implemented by studio members, and the role of the studio as an informal learning space. Systematic data presentation helps the researcher understand relationships between themes, observe behavioural patterns, and compare data from various sources. This is important to illustrate how cultural values in Jaipong dance are optimised by Generation Z as social capital.
3. Conclusion drawing and verification, conclusions are drawn continuously and tentatively until verified. Conclusions may change if new data are found, and the verification process involves systematically reviewing the data to maintain consistency with initial findings.

To ensure data validity, this study applies several techniques:

1. Data triangulation, done by comparing and combining data from various collection techniques, namely direct observation of studio activities, in-depth interviews with dancers, coaches, and managers, as well as documentation such as photos, videos, and social media posts. This approach is used to obtain a

more comprehensive and objective picture of how Generation Z builds personal branding through Jaipong dance, while reducing bias from relying on a single data source.

2. Member checking, conducted by confirming interview results and the researcher's initial interpretations with the informants. This aims to ensure that the researcher's understanding of the informants' experiences, motivations for joining the studio, the process of shaping self-image, and the meaning of cultural values in Jaipong dance aligns with the informants' intentions and realities. This enhances the validity and credibility of the data.
3. Researcher reflexivity: The researcher critically reflects on their position throughout the research process. Since the researcher is directly involved in social interactions in the field, it is important to recognise potential personal biases and subjectivity. Reflexivity involves recording views, assumptions, and personal responses during data collection and analysis. This step helps maintain objectivity and research integrity so that the findings genuinely reflect the social reality within the Cahaya Kancana Art Studio.

With these steps, this study is expected to produce valid data and in-depth analysis regarding the formation of Generation Z's branding through Jaipong dance at Cahaya Kancana Art Studio

Results and Discussion

1. The Informal Learning Process at Cahaya Kancana Art Studio

Informal learning is a natural learning process that takes place outside the formal and non-formal education systems. Its distinctive features include flexibility, the absence of a fixed curriculum, and a focus on direct experience, social interaction, and individual interests. At Cahaya Kancana Art Studio, the informal learning process is evident in routine practice sessions, performances at various events, as well as outdoor activities such as tree planting and nature exploration.

In an interview with the Studio Chairperson, he emphasised that participants are not rigidly restricted in their learning. They are free to express themselves and are even encouraged to create their own movements. This shows that the learning process is participatory and adaptive to the participants' needs:

"We do not limit the children in expressing themselves. They are free to explore movements, and if someone has a new idea, we welcome it." (Studio Chairperson)



Figure 1. Routine Practice at Cahaya Kancana Studio
Source: Cahaya Kancana Studio Instagram

This process aligns closely with Lev Vygotsky's (1978) concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), which emphasises that individual development occurs through social interaction and guidance from more competent others (Wardani et al., 2023). In the context of the studio, coaches, seniors, and peers act as "social mediators" who assist participants in surpassing their current capabilities through scaffolding. The studio environment provides a collaborative space that not only supports artistic exploration but also stimulates the formation of social identity through intensive interactions.

Besides social interaction as a key to development according to Vygotsky, this informal learning also reflects the principles of andragogy (Knowles, Holton, 2015). Although most studio participants are adolescents, these principles remain relevant because they come with internal motivation or family encouragement that later develops into active and voluntary involvement. Experience- and participant-centred learning proves to encourage independent development, as expressed by one participant:

"I initially joined the studio because my mom asked me to. At first, I was shy and not very interested. But over time, it became enjoyable, and I often explored movements by myself at home" (Studio participant).

Furthermore, social interaction in the studio can also be analysed through Erving Goffman's (1959) dramaturgical theory, which views social life as a performance on stage. The art studio becomes a symbolic stage where participants present their identities in front of the community. During rehearsals and performances, they play social roles that not only boost confidence but also shape the social identity they want to convey to the public. The exploration of dance movements is not only a form of creativity but also a means of self-presentation that reflects each participant's values and character.

While Goffman's approach emphasises symbolic self-expression, Pierre Bourdieu highlights how such expressions become attached and serve as capital carried by individuals. Consistent with this, Bourdieu's (1990) concept of cultural capital helps explain how participants' involvement in the studio contributes to the formation of embodied cultural capital. Knowledge of dance movements, appreciation of Sundanese cultural values, and performance skills become social assets embedded in participants. Through continuous habituation and internalization of values, participants develop a habitus, a pattern of thinking and acting reflected in everyday life.

This informal learning model is highly relevant to Generation Z's characteristics, who favor visual, collaborative activities that allow for self-actualization and contextual learning (Sari et al., 2021). The art studio is an ideal space because it combines elements of local culture, creativity, and community three crucial aspects in shaping the identity and personal branding of this generation. The studio's Vice Chairperson also emphasised that comfort and freedom of expression are priorities in creating an enjoyable learning atmosphere:

"The enthusiasm of the participants is quite good. They usually enjoy joint outdoor rehearsals, especially in places directly connected with nature, as nature itself is closely related to Sundanese culture" (Studio Vice Chairperson).

This statement shows that the studio creates contextual learning integrated with local values, while also fostering social closeness among individuals (Shantin, 2020). It confirms that learning in the studio is not confined to the rehearsal space. The learning process permeates social life and interaction with the natural surroundings, which are also part of Sundanese cultural values. This not only strengthens cultural understanding but also builds social networks and solidarity among participants, which constitute forms of social capital.

Robert D. Putnam's (2000) thoughts on social capital further reinforce the importance of community involvement, such as in art studios. Putnam stresses that collective activities in social groups can strengthen trust, cooperation, and social networks, directly impacting individual quality of life. In this context, Cahaya Kancana Art Studio is not only a place for cultural expression but also an important means of building social identity, strengthening character, and shaping Generation Z's personal branding through meaningful social interaction (Santoso, 2020).

2. Formation of Generation Z's Personal Branding through Jaipong Dance

The informal learning process at Cahaya Kancana Studio not only develops dance skills but also encourages the emergence of personal branding among Generation Z, as shown by observations and interviews. Through routine practice, stage performances, and close interaction with coaches and fellow members, studio participants begin to be recognized as creative, confident individuals with distinctive styles in expressing art. This shapes a consistent social identity that is recognized both in real life and digital environments.

Participants who initially joined activities due to parental encouragement gradually show deep interest and begin to explore dance movements on their own. Some participants have even gained recognition in their surroundings and are trusted to perform at various events:

"Because they often perform and their dancing is considered quite good, some participants are invited to perform at weddings and other events." (Studio Chairperson).

This indicates that social recognition results from consistent performance and active engagement in the art community. One participant also shared changes in their branding over time:

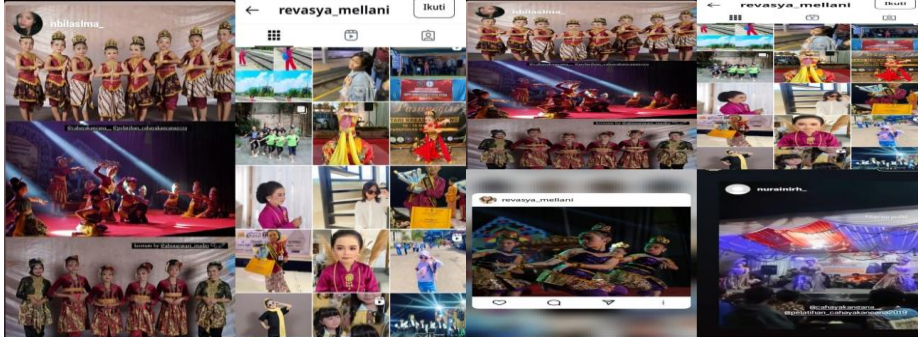
"At first, I was shy and not very interested. But gradually it became fun, and I often explored movements on my own at home. Now, I'm becoming known because I frequently perform." (Studio participant)

This shows a shift in motivation from external to internal, a crucial stage in forming self-identity.

Their personal branding is not only formed in offline spaces such as art performances or local events but also extends into the digital realm through social media. This aligns with the view of Nuriyati et al. (2024), who emphasize that consistency in presenting one's self-image on social media is crucial for personal branding to be widely recognized by the public (Nuriyati et al., 2024, p. 57). In practice, they pay attention to aesthetic details, such as costume selection, facial expressions, interesting backgrounds, as well as the use of captions that align with the self-image they want to project (S. Maulida, 2024). This is reinforced by a statement from a studio participant:

"I often post about my activities or when I'm dancing and practicing on my social media accounts so people know I like dancing." (Studio participant)

This statement shows that social media is used by participants not only as a means to share activities but also as a conscious strategy to shape their self-image as active dancers who love the arts.



*Figure 2. Forming Personal Branding Through social media
Source: Documentation by studio participants, taken by Instagram*

This phenomenon can be explained through Erving Goffman's dramaturgical concept, which describes social interaction as a theatrical performance where individuals display certain roles in the public space (front stage) and show their authentic selves in private spaces (back stage) (Amelia & Amin, 2022). Thus, personal branding is not only about media appearance but also the result of an authentic character-building process behind the scenes. In this context, Cahaya Kancana participants present themselves as talented dancers through social media and performances (front stage), while weekly rehearsals, movement explorations, and casual interactions at the studio become the backstage where they authentically shape their character and identity.

The art studio functions as an identity experimentation space for Generation Z. Participants are given the freedom to try different styles, explore techniques, and even present their ideal versions of themselves. They learn not only to be dancers but also to become individuals who can communicate values and self-identity through art and media.

This phenomenon occurs not only in direct interactions but is also reflected in how participants present themselves in digital spaces. As Goffman stated, every individual presents themselves in certain ways to create a positive impression on others (Girnanfa & Susilo, 2022). Therefore, informal learning in the studio produces not only technical skills but also strengthens self-presentation and personal branding among Generation Z, which is rooted in local culture yet communicated in a modern way through social media (Sormin et al., 2024).

Robert Putnam divides social capital into two main types: bonding and bridging. In this context, bonding social capital is more dominant, referring to close ties within the community that foster trust, solidarity, and emotional support. As explained by the studio coach, participants are helped to build trust, solidarity, and emotional support during rehearsals and performances:

"...Here, discipline, cooperation, politeness, cohesiveness, and confidence are shaped during group rehearsals, and I often provide motivation, encouragement, and praise when they show effort, just as they motivate each other." (Studio coach)

The coach's statement indicates the formation of bonding social capital through regular artistic activities, which, according to Putnam's theory, is crucial for building trust and solidarity within communities (Rahayu, 2020). The studio becomes a place where strong bonding social capital occurs. This is reflected in participants' mutual support during rehearsals, sharing experiences, and growing together in a close-knit atmosphere. One example is outdoor rehearsals that serve both to strengthen social bonds and instill Sundanese cultural values. As stated by the Studio Vice Chairperson, such activities are favored because they combine cultural values and closeness to nature.

From this emerges trust and reciprocity, which support the development of personal branding. A supportive environment enables participants to bravely explore their identities without fear of judgment, allowing the identity formation process to take place safely and gradually. Moreover, to strengthen the analysis of identity and social position formation among studio participants, Pierre Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital is also relevant (Musliha, 2021). At Cahaya Kancana Studio, cultural capital is seen in how participants learn Jaipong dance, understand Sundanese cultural values, and apply social etiquette in their interactions. This is not merely technical dance skills but a symbol of the cultural excellence they possess.

This cultural capital then becomes a tool to reinforce their branding. With this cultural asset, participants not only demonstrate artistic competence but also shape a self-narrative as a generation rooted in tradition yet appearing modern and relevant. By mastering traditional arts, participants present themselves as unique individuals blending local culture and modern self-expression. This distinguishes them from the typical image of Generation Z as solely digitally oriented. Through the studio, they gain new social status as culturally grounded, creative, and socially active youth.

Through the studio, they gain new social status as culturally grounded, creative, and socially active youth. This shows that traditional arts like Jaipong dance are not only a means of cultural preservation but also strategic tools in shaping Generation Z's social identity and social capital in the digital era, forming authentic, valuable, and competitive personal branding.

3. The Impact of Personal Branding Formation on Character and Social Identity Changes of Studio Members

The formation of personal branding at Cahaya Kancana Art Studio has a tangible impact on the transformation of its members' character. Participants who were initially shy, introverted, or lacking confidence gradually become more open individuals, courageous to perform publicly, and possess high self-confidence. This process occurs naturally through regular practice, art performances, and social interactions among members.

Traits such as discipline, responsibility, hard work, and collaborative spirit also develop alongside active involvement in the studio. They learn to value rehearsal time, take responsibility for their performances, and respect fellow members, whether older or peers. The studio becomes a safe space to explore themselves without academic pressure, allowing participants' character to develop authentically and sustainably. One participant stated:

"At first, I was shy and not very interested. But gradually it became fun; I often explored movements on my own at home. Now I'm becoming known because I frequently perform." (Source: Studio Participant).

This character transformation does not happen in isolation but also influences the social identity of studio members. Through the process of personal branding formation, their social identity undergoes significant shifts. They are no longer viewed merely as part of the local community but are increasingly recognized as talented young dancers, cultural preservers, and even local cultural icons. This identity is built both offline through participation in village events, art performances, or competitions, and online via social media platforms like Instagram and TikTok.

This change also gives rise to new social status within their environment. Some studio members are trusted to perform at formal events such as traditional weddings, national commemorations, and are even invited to perform at other schools. Their social identity becomes increasingly positive and strongly rooted in

local culture, making them proud to be part of the art community. In this regard, as stated by Goffman (in Rorong, 2018), the studio acts as a space for the production and distribution of new social identities that are respected and recognized by society (Rorong, 2018).

The process of building personal branding does not always run smoothly, as individuals often feel pressured to maintain a perfect image in public. Some participants experience pressure to appear perfect both visually and behaviorally, especially when their branding starts to gain wide recognition on social media. This often causes anxiety, feelings of insecurity, or even identity dissonance, which is the mismatch between the public image constructed and the personal self-identity felt.

Furthermore, not all participants have equal access to technology and digital media, leading to disparities in building an online brand. Another challenge is maintaining consistency between the cultural values they embody and the way they present themselves, so as not to fall into mere image-making. Nevertheless, the presence of bonding social capital (Putnam, in Hirst et al., 2024). Within the studio environment, close emotional ties and mutual support among members help participants cope with these pressures. The studio becomes a space for sharing, gaining encouragement, and a place to learn how to manage self-image healthily and in balance.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that Sanggar Seni Cahaya Kancana functions dually as a cultural preservation space and an effective informal learning environment for shaping the personal branding of Generation Z. Through the practice of Jaipong dance, participants not only acquire technical skills but also undergo character transformations, such as increased self-confidence, discipline, cooperation, and cultural awareness. Theoretically, these findings reinforce Vygotsky's concept of social learning, Goffman's dramaturgy in managing self-impression, as well as Putnam's and Bourdieu's theories of social and cultural capital in identity formation. This study enriches the literature on informal education based on local culture and broadens the scope of personal branding research beyond the predominantly digital and formal contexts.

However, this study has limitations. It was conducted qualitatively in a single studio at one location, so generalization of the results should be approached with

caution. Based on the findings, several recommendations can be made. First, local governments and cultural agencies are advised to provide sustainable support for art studios as alternative educational spaces rooted in local culture. Second, educational institutions can collaborate with art studios to enrich extracurricular curricula and character development. Third, trainers and studio managers should be provided with training on social media management to positively and sustainably expand the reach of participants' branding. Thus, art studios like Cahaya Kancana not only contribute to cultural preservation but also serve as social ecosystems that support the formation of culturally grounded, confident, and relevant Generation Z identities in facing contemporary challenges.

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Kancana as An Informal Learning Space*

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