

Article

Not peer-reviewed version

---

# Instagram-Enabled Personal Branding and Entrepreneurial Survival Strategies

---

[Muhammad Abubakar](#)\*

Posted Date: 4 February 2026

doi: 10.20944/preprints202602.0326.v1

Keywords: Instagram marketing; personal branding; entrepreneurial survival; social media strategy; digital entrepreneurship; audience engagement



Preprints.org is a free multidisciplinary platform providing preprint service that is dedicated to making early versions of research outputs permanently available and citable. Preprints posted at Preprints.org appear in Web of Science, Crossref, Google Scholar, Scilit, Europe PMC.

Copyright: This open access article is published under a [Creative Commons CC BY 4.0 license](#), which permit the free download, distribution, and reuse, provided that the author and preprint are cited in any reuse.

Disclaimer/Publisher's Note: The statements, opinions, and data contained in all publications are solely those of the individual author(s) and contributor(s) and not of MDPI and/or the editor(s). MDPI and/or the editor(s) disclaim responsibility for any injury to people or property resulting from any ideas, methods, instructions, or products referred to in the content.

Article

# Instagram-Enabled Personal Branding and Entrepreneurial Survival Strategies

Muhammad Abubakar

Independent Researcher; sanisco92@gmail.com

## Abstract

The widespread adoption of Instagram has transformed entrepreneurial strategies by enabling individuals to engage in personal branding while simultaneously promoting business survival. This study explores how Instagram-enabled personal branding supports entrepreneurial resilience in competitive digital markets. Drawing on psychological branding and digital entrepreneurship literature, the research examines how visual storytelling, authentic self-presentation, and value-aligned messaging contribute to audience trust, engagement, and long-term business sustainability. Findings from recent empirical studies indicate that entrepreneurs who strategically integrate personal identity with brand messaging are better equipped to adapt to market challenges, enhance visibility, and sustain follower loyalty. The study highlights the critical role of social media platforms in shaping both individual and business success, offering practical insights for entrepreneurs seeking to leverage Instagram as a tool for survival and growth.

**Keywords:** Instagram marketing; personal branding; entrepreneurial survival; social media strategy; digital entrepreneurship; audience engagement

---

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1. Background of Instagram-Enabled Personal Branding

The growth of Instagram has significantly transformed the way entrepreneurs communicate, market, and sustain their businesses. Beyond serving as a marketing platform, Instagram enables entrepreneurs to construct and project personal brands, combining professional identity with digital visibility. Personal branding on Instagram allows entrepreneurs to showcase expertise, values, and business narratives to a broad audience, enhancing both credibility and engagement [2]. The platform's visual and interactive features make it a strategic tool for conveying identity and establishing a distinctive presence in competitive markets [1].

### 1.2. Entrepreneurial Survival Challenges in Digital Markets

Entrepreneurs operating in digital environments face multiple challenges, including market saturation, audience attention scarcity, and rapidly evolving platform algorithms. These challenges are amplified during crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic, which disrupted traditional business models and accelerated the need for online resilience [4,5]. Survival strategies increasingly require leveraging digital tools, maintaining follower engagement, and adapting business operations to changing market conditions. Instagram-based personal branding emerges as a critical strategy for maintaining visibility, trust, and customer loyalty in such dynamic contexts.

### 1.3. Personal Branding and Psychological Engagement

Personal branding on Instagram is not merely a marketing tactic but also a psychological process that shapes audience perceptions and behavior. Entrepreneurs can create emotional connections with followers through consistent messaging, authentic storytelling, and value-driven content [2,6]. Such

branding strategies influence how audiences perceive credibility, reliability, and the long-term viability of the business. Research indicates that psychologically informed personal branding enhances audience trust, which in turn supports sustained engagement and business continuity [3,6].

#### *1.4. Research Gap and Study Objectives*

Although prior research has addressed digital entrepreneurship, personal branding, and social media marketing independently, there is a limited understanding of how Instagram-enabled personal branding directly contributes to entrepreneurial survival strategies. Most studies focus either on marketing outcomes or identity formation, but rarely on their combined effect on business resilience [1,5]. This study seeks to bridge this gap by examining how personal branding practices on Instagram support the survival and sustainability of entrepreneurial ventures.

#### *1.5. Significance of the Study*

This research contributes to the literature on digital entrepreneurship by integrating personal branding and survival strategy perspectives in a social media context. Practically, the study provides guidance for entrepreneurs on leveraging Instagram to enhance visibility, maintain follower trust, and build long-term business resilience. By highlighting the psychological and strategic dimensions of personal branding, the study offers actionable insights for sustaining entrepreneurial performance in digital markets [2–4].

## **2. Literature Review**

### *2.1. Personal Branding in the Digital Age*

Personal branding has emerged as a central strategy for entrepreneurs seeking to differentiate themselves in competitive markets. It involves deliberately crafting and communicating one's professional identity to influence audience perception, establish credibility, and foster engagement. Digital platforms, especially Instagram, offer unique affordances for personal branding by enabling visual storytelling, narrative consistency, and real-time interaction with audiences [2,3]. Scholars have emphasized that effective personal branding combines authenticity, professional competence, and strategic self-presentation to enhance both personal and business outcomes [1].

### *2.2. Instagram as a Platform for Self-Presentation and Brand Communication*

Instagram provides a highly visual and interactive environment for entrepreneurial self-presentation. Its features, including images, reels, stories, and captions, allow entrepreneurs to curate content that communicates values, expertise, and personality traits [1]. Research suggests that the platform's interactive affordances enable entrepreneurs to create psychological connections with followers, reinforcing trust and loyalty [6]. Furthermore, Instagram's public and algorithmic nature encourages continuous engagement and visibility, making personal branding an ongoing performance rather than a one-time effort [1,2].

### *2.3. Psychological Branding and Audience Perception*

Psychological branding focuses on influencing audience attitudes and perceptions through emotional, symbolic, and cognitive cues. Entrepreneurs who align personal identity with brand messaging can create deeper engagement and strengthen follower loyalty [2,6]. For instance, storytelling that highlights personal values or challenges can generate empathy, while consistent visual themes reinforce credibility. Studies indicate that psychological engagement enhances business sustainability by promoting long-term relationships with followers and reducing the risk of audience attrition [3,6].

## 2.4. Entrepreneurial Survival Strategies in Social Media Contexts

Survival in digital entrepreneurship requires adaptive strategies to respond to environmental uncertainties, competitive pressures, and crises. Social media platforms provide tools for monitoring audience behavior, adjusting messaging, and expanding reach [3,5]. Empirical studies during the COVID-19 pandemic highlight that entrepreneurs who actively leverage digital platforms, including Instagram, are more resilient and capable of sustaining business operations under challenging conditions [4,5]. Survival strategies thus combine marketing agility, audience engagement, and strategic identity communication.

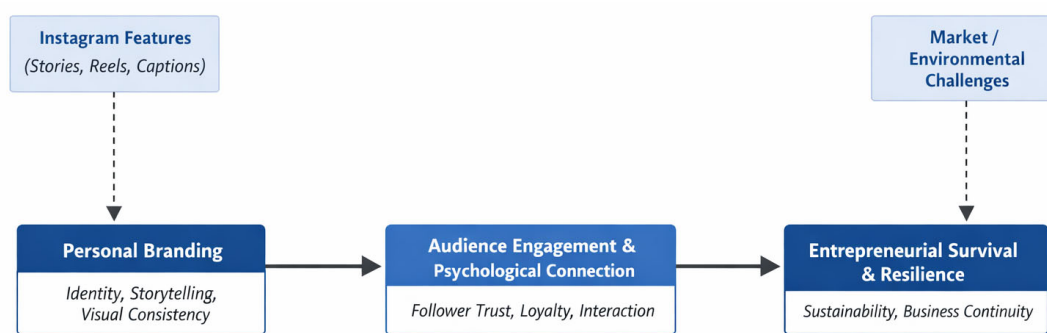
## 2.5. Linking Personal Branding to Business Resilience

The integration of personal branding with survival strategies strengthens business resilience. Entrepreneurs who effectively communicate their identity, values, and expertise through Instagram are better able to maintain follower engagement, enhance trust, and adapt to changing market dynamics [2,4]. This synergy between personal branding and survival strategies allows for sustained visibility and operational stability, highlighting the importance of psychological and strategic alignment in digital entrepreneurship [1,5].

## 2.6. Conceptual Framework and Research Gap

Although existing literature provides insights into personal branding, Instagram usage, and entrepreneurial survival independently, few studies have examined their interconnections systematically. There remains a research gap in understanding how Instagram-enabled personal branding directly supports business resilience and survival in dynamic digital markets [1,5]. This study addresses this gap by proposing a conceptual framework where personal branding serves as a mediating mechanism between entrepreneurial identity and survival strategies, emphasizing both psychological engagement and strategic adaptability.

Based on the reviewed literature, a conceptual framework was developed to illustrate the relationships among Instagram-enabled personal branding, audience engagement, and entrepreneurial survival. The framework also considers the moderating effects of platform features and environmental challenges (Figure 1).



**Figure 1.** Conceptual framework of Instagram-enabled personal branding and entrepreneurial survival.

## 3. Methodology

### 3.1. Research Design

This study adopts a quantitative research design to examine the relationship between Instagram-enabled personal branding and entrepreneurial survival strategies. A cross-sectional survey approach was used to collect data from active entrepreneurs who utilize Instagram for business purposes. The quantitative approach was chosen to allow systematic measurement of variables and

testing of hypothesized relationships among personal branding, audience engagement, and business resilience [2,3].

### 3.2. Population and Sample Selection

The target population included entrepreneurs and small business owners actively using Instagram as a primary marketing and branding tool. Respondents were required to have a minimum of six months of Instagram activity and regular content posting. Purposive sampling was employed to ensure participants possessed relevant experience with Instagram-based personal branding. This approach aligns with prior studies that target specialized social media user groups for digital entrepreneurship research [1,5].

### 3.3. Data Collection Procedure

Data were collected via an online structured questionnaire distributed through Instagram direct messages, email, and social media groups targeting entrepreneurs. The questionnaire included an introduction explaining the study objectives, assuring confidentiality, and emphasizing voluntary participation. Only completed responses were included in the analysis to ensure data reliability and validity.

### 3.4. Measurement of Constructs

The survey instrument was designed based on previous studies [2,3,6] and included three main constructs:

- **Personal Branding Practices:** Measured through items assessing self-presentation, authenticity, visual consistency, storytelling, and value alignment on Instagram.
- **Audience Engagement and Trust:** Measured through indicators such as follower interaction, perceived credibility, emotional connection, and audience loyalty.
- **Entrepreneurial Survival Strategies:** Measured using items reflecting business resilience, adaptability, sustainability, and continuity in dynamic market conditions.

All items were measured on a **5-point Likert scale** (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree) to capture the extent of respondents' agreement with each statement.

### 3.5. Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis was performed using statistical software. Descriptive statistics summarized the demographic profile and overall trends in the data. Reliability and validity of the scales were assessed using Cronbach's alpha and factor analysis. Correlation and regression analyses were conducted to evaluate the relationships between personal branding, audience engagement, and entrepreneurial survival. These analyses allow testing of the study hypotheses and provide insights into the predictive role of Instagram-enabled personal branding [2,5].

### 3.6. Reliability, Validity, and Ethical Considerations

Reliability was verified through internal consistency analysis, with all constructs exceeding standard thresholds. Content validity was ensured by adapting measurement items from established literature and expert review [3,6]. Ethical standards were strictly followed, including informed consent, voluntary participation, and participant anonymity. Data were collected and stored securely, in line with standard guidelines for social science research.

## 4. Results

### 4.1. Respondent Profile and Descriptive Statistics

A total of valid responses were analyzed from entrepreneurs actively using Instagram for business promotion. Participants represented diverse sectors including retail, services, and creative industries. The majority reported consistent posting schedules and engagement with followers through stories, reels, and posts. Descriptive statistics indicated moderate to high levels of personal branding practices, audience engagement, and perceived entrepreneurial survival, highlighting the relevance of Instagram as a strategic platform [2,3].

### 4.2. Reliability Analysis

The reliability of the measurement scales was assessed using Cronbach's alpha. All constructs demonstrated acceptable internal consistency, with values exceeding the commonly accepted threshold of 0.70. Personal branding, audience engagement, and entrepreneurial survival measures showed strong reliability, confirming that the survey items consistently captured the intended constructs [3,6].

### 4.3. Correlation Analysis

Correlation analysis revealed positive and statistically significant relationships among the variables. Personal branding practices were strongly correlated with audience engagement, suggesting that consistent and authentic self-presentation enhances follower interaction. Audience engagement, in turn, was positively associated with entrepreneurial survival indicators, indicating that higher engagement supports business resilience and continuity [2,5]. These findings support the hypothesized linkages in the conceptual framework.

### 4.4. Regression Analysis

Regression analysis was conducted to examine the predictive effects of personal branding on audience engagement and survival outcomes. Results indicated that personal branding significantly predicts audience engagement, explaining a substantial portion of variance in follower interaction and trust. Furthermore, audience engagement was a significant predictor of entrepreneurial survival, suggesting that effective engagement mediates the relationship between personal branding and business resilience. Collectively, personal branding and engagement explained a meaningful proportion of variance in entrepreneurial survival, confirming the proposed model [2,5].

### 4.5. Summary of Key Findings

Overall, the results indicate that Instagram-enabled personal branding is a critical driver of entrepreneurial survival. Entrepreneurs who strategically project their identity and values on Instagram foster stronger audience engagement, which in turn supports sustainable business practices. These findings align with prior research emphasizing the psychological and strategic importance of social media branding for business resilience [1,4,6].

## 5. Discussion

### 5.1. Interpretation of Key Findings

The findings indicate that Instagram-enabled personal branding significantly contributes to entrepreneurial survival strategies. Entrepreneurs who consistently project their personal identity, values, and expertise through Instagram achieve higher audience engagement, which in turn supports business resilience. This suggests that personal branding is not merely a marketing tool but also a strategic mechanism for sustaining business operations in dynamic digital markets [2,3]. The

results support prior research highlighting the central role of platformed self-presentation in professional belonging and audience perception [1,6].

### 5.2. Personal Branding as a Survival Mechanism

The positive relationship between personal branding and entrepreneurial survival underscores the importance of identity-aligned digital strategies. Entrepreneurs who engage in authentic storytelling, visual consistency, and value-based messaging are better able to maintain follower trust and loyalty. Such engagement enhances business continuity, particularly in competitive or crisis-affected environments, consistent with findings that digital technology and social media are key enablers of small business resilience [4,5].

### 5.3. Psychological Engagement and Audience Trust

The study also highlights the mediating role of psychological engagement in sustaining business outcomes. Audience engagement driven by trust, relatability, and interactive communication translates personal branding efforts into tangible business resilience [2,6]. Entrepreneurs who fail to cultivate authentic connections risk lower engagement and reduced capacity to survive in volatile markets. These insights reinforce the critical role of emotional and cognitive factors in social media-based entrepreneurship.

### 5.4. Theoretical Implications

The findings contribute to digital entrepreneurship literature by integrating personal branding, social media engagement, and business survival into a cohesive framework. While prior studies often examined these constructs separately, this research demonstrates their interdependence, highlighting how personal identity and psychological branding drive sustainable outcomes [1,5]. This framework can guide future research on the mechanisms linking identity, engagement, and resilience in platform-mediated entrepreneurship.

### 5.5. Practical Implications for Entrepreneurs

Practically, the study suggests that entrepreneurs should strategically invest in personal branding on Instagram as part of their survival strategies. This includes aligning content with personal and business values, maintaining consistency in messaging, and fostering interactive engagement with followers [3,4]. By doing so, entrepreneurs can strengthen trust, enhance visibility, and improve resilience against market uncertainties.

### 5.6. Study Limitations

The study's limitations include its cross-sectional design, which limits causal inference, and reliance on self-reported data, which may introduce bias. Additionally, the focus on Instagram restricts the generalizability of findings to other platforms. Future studies could incorporate longitudinal or multi-platform analyses to better understand the dynamics of personal branding and survival strategies over time [5,6].

## 6. Conclusion

### 6.1. Summary of Main Findings

This study examined the role of Instagram-enabled personal branding in supporting entrepreneurial survival strategies. The results indicate that entrepreneurs who effectively communicate their personal identity, values, and professional expertise on Instagram achieve higher audience engagement. This engagement, in turn, enhances business resilience, sustainability, and continuity in competitive digital markets [2,3]. The findings highlight that personal branding is not solely a marketing tactic but a strategic mechanism for long-term entrepreneurial survival [1,5].

## 6.2. Theoretical Contributions

The study contributes to digital entrepreneurship literature by integrating personal branding, audience engagement, and survival strategies into a unified framework. Unlike previous research that examined these constructs separately, the findings demonstrate their interdependence, emphasizing how identity-driven branding and psychological engagement collectively support business resilience [1,6]. This framework extends theoretical understanding of platform-mediated entrepreneurship and offers a foundation for future studies on digital identity and business sustainability.

## 6.3. Practical Implications

For practitioners, the study suggests that intentional personal branding on Instagram is essential for entrepreneurial survival. Entrepreneurs should focus on authentic storytelling, consistent visual and narrative branding, and values-aligned content to cultivate follower trust and long-term engagement [3,4]. Implementing such strategies can enhance visibility, differentiate the business, and strengthen resilience against market uncertainties.

## 6.4. Directions for Future Research

Future research could employ longitudinal designs to explore how personal branding and engagement evolve and affect business sustainability. Comparative studies across multiple social media platforms may provide insights into platform-specific branding strategies. Additionally, qualitative approaches such as interviews or content analysis could uncover the nuanced psychological mechanisms underlying identity-driven branding and survival [5,6].

## 6.5. Closing Remarks

In conclusion, Instagram-enabled personal branding serves as a critical tool for entrepreneurial survival. By aligning personal identity with strategic digital engagement, entrepreneurs can foster audience trust, maintain visibility, and achieve sustainable business outcomes. This study underscores the importance of integrating psychological, identity-based, and strategic dimensions in social media entrepreneurship to navigate complex and dynamic digital markets [2,3].

**Conflicts of Interest:** The author(s) declare that there are no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper. This research was conducted independently, and all sources of funding, if any, have been appropriately acknowledged.

## References

1. Soronen, A., & Koivunen, A. (2022). Platformed intimacies: Professional belonging on social media. *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, 25(5), 1344–1360.
2. Trivedi, P., & Chitraju, S. (2025). Entrepreneurial Identity Formation and Personal Branding: Psychological Insights from Instagram Use. Available at SSRN 5988014.
3. Trivedi, P., & Pal, R. (2022). A Research Paper on Strategies That Businesses Use to Survive Through Social Media Marketing with Reference to Instagram. *Towards Excellence*, June, 30, 1718–1728.
4. Pal, R., & Trivedi, P. (2022). Perception of Consumers Towards Online Buying During COVID-19 Pandemic Era. *Acta Universitatis Bohemiae Meridionales*, 25(2).

5. Kurniawan, I. (2025, September). Digital Technology and the Resilience of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) During the COVID-19 Pandemic: A Literature Review and Policy Analysis in the Indonesian Context. In *International Conference on Social Science and Technology for Sustainable Future* (Vol. 1, No. 1, pp. 36–46).
6. Shokouhyar, S., Siadat, S. H., & Razavi, M. K. (2018). How social influence and personality affect users' social network fatigue and discontinuance behavior. *Aslib Journal of Information Management*, 70(4), 344–366.

**Disclaimer/Publisher's Note:** The statements, opinions and data contained in all publications are solely those of the individual author(s) and contributor(s) and not of MDPI and/or the editor(s). MDPI and/or the editor(s) disclaim responsibility for any injury to people or property resulting from any ideas, methods, instructions or products referred to in the content.