



The Challenge of Ideological Neutrality in Digital Content: An Examination of the Perception of Human Capital Managers in a Corporate Setting

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ABSTRAK

The rise of social media has blurred the boundaries between personal and professional lives, particularly for managers in large organizations. This study aims to explore how social media posts by Human Capital (HC) managers affect employee perceptions of their image, credibility, and neutrality. The primary research objectives are to: (1) examine the influence of social media posts on employee trust, (2) identify factors that improve or harm managerial credibility, and (3) develop strategies for managing digital reputations. The study adopts Goffman's Impression Management Theory and Social Identity Theory to analyze the relationship between digital behavior and professional image. A descriptive qualitative methodology was used, incorporating in-depth interviews, case studies of sensitive social media posts, and document analysis of corporate policies. Findings indicate that posts related to luxury lifestyles or political opinions can polarize employee perceptions, while posts focused on professional development reinforce a positive image. This research emphasizes the importance of ethical digital communication and offers practical implications for managing HC managers' online personas to build sustainable trust within organizations.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The digital revolution has fostered global connectivity, transforming social media from a rudimentary communication tool into a multifaceted and influential public sphere. For individuals occupying critical positions within organizations, such as Human Capital (HC) Managers, the delineation between professional and personal lives has become increasingly indistinct. In this context, every social media post transcends mere personal expression, evolving into a public performance that significantly influences the perception of an individual's professional identity. This phenomenon holds particular significance in the business domain, where image construction an indispensable strategy in politics has assumed equal importance in organizational settings. For instance, in the political arena, candidates who project an image of honesty, empathy, and relatability are more likely to achieve electoral success. Conversely, in the business world, an HC manager's proficiency in managing their professional image and demonstrating empathy is paramount for cultivating trust and establishing credibility with employees. However, it is essential to recognize that this image is not static; it can be modified, sustained, or even deconstructed through various communication channels. Social media emerges as a real-time platform where this image construction and deconstruction transpire..

From a sociological perspective, this phenomenon can be analyzed using Erving Goffman's theory of social dramaturgy. Social media acts as a "digital stage" where HC managers perform their work lives. However, these performances are not always perceived uniformly. Personal posts, such as political opinions or displays of a luxurious lifestyle, can blur professional identity. This ambiguity often leads to multiple interpretations among employees, potentially undermining trust and managerial credibility.

Image development is well-documented in politics, where maintaining a favorable image can be crucial for success. However, an image is not an objective reality; it is a mental construct or a "picture in our heads" (Walter Lipman in Rahman, 2006). It is an ongoing effort to shape how others think and feel about an individual. In politics, image deconstruction occurs when opponents attempt to dismantle a favorable image. In the business world, this deconstruction does not stem from external competitors but from how employees interpret and perceive their managers. Employees may even interpret neutral posts as hidden messages or veiled communications about sensitive issues, which can lead to misinterpretations and a loss of trust in the manager's intentions.

Prototypicality is another key aspect of image development. In politics, a candidate who accurately portrays the social identities of voters is viewed as more representative and trustworthy. Similarly, in a business context, employees view a manager who is perceived as "people-centered," fair, and caring as an exemplary leader. However, posts that deviate from this prototypical image, such as those showcasing an excessively luxurious lifestyle, may trigger feelings of unfairness or inequality among employees. Employees may perceive their managers as self-centered and out of touch with their subordinates' struggles, damaging the manager's reputation as a fair and empathetic leader.

From an organizational psychology perspective, this issue parallels the theory of trust-building. For employees to be productive and satisfied at work, they must trust their managers. Trust can be eroded by posts that appear to disregard socio-economic disparities. Additionally, Social Identity Theory posits that employees often align themselves with specific groups within a company, and the behavior of managers, as representatives or "prototypes" of these groups, directly influences employees' perceptions of leadership. Misconceptions regarding the authority to make decisions, such as staff transfers, can exacerbate these issues, creating further confusion and anxiety among employees. When managers fail to meet employees' expectations, especially in cases perceived as unfair, this can lead to resistance and diminished employee loyalty.

Social media has become an influential platform for politicians to communicate with the public and shift perceptions. Similarly, in the business world, it has become a powerful tool for both building and deconstructing managerial images. Posts that address political or ideological beliefs can divide employees into opposing factions, with those holding different views perceiving their managers as biased or lacking neutrality, which can undermine trust. This underscores the importance of ideological neutrality for managers in maintaining credibility and organizational cohesion. Conversely, posts related to managerial activities, such as professional development or self-improvement, are perceived more positively, as they reinforce the manager's professional image and commitment to employee development.

The rapid evolution of social media is outpacing the development of corporate policies, creating a significant risk gap. Many organizations lack clear guidelines that establish ethical limits on how managers can use social media. In the absence of these regulations, managers are left to rely on their instincts to manage their online image, which does not always yield successful results and may even lead to reputational damage. The lack of formal policy creates confusion and divergent perspectives among employees regarding what constitutes appropriate digital behavior. Fombrun & Van Riel (2004) emphasize the importance of managing both personal and organizational reputations to prevent negative images from forming. Without clear rules, managers are constantly under scrutiny, not only as workplace leaders but also as public figures.

Given this context, this research is essential, particularly from the perspective of sustainable human capital development. Beyond elucidating the interplay between digital and professional

identities, this study examines how managerial digital behavior contributes to the long-term sustainability of trust, credibility, and ethical leadership within organizations. Digital reputation management, therefore, is not just a short-term image issue; it is a strategic component for sustaining human capital and organizational integrity over time. This study aims to develop more effective digital communication techniques that assist managers in navigating digital complexity while preserving organizational trust and credibility.

The goals of this study are:

1. To explore how social media posts influence employees' perceptions of HC managers.
2. To identify what factors make managers appear more credible or less credible due to their digital posts.
3. To propose recommendations for digital communication strategies that help managers and organizations maintain a positive reputation.

Table 1. Comparison of Previous Research on Digital Reputation in HR Management

Study	Focus	Theoretical Framework	Contribution	Research Gap Addressed
Kaplan & Haenlein (2010)	Social media's role in organizational behavior	Uses and Gratifications Theory	Examines broad social media effects on businesses	Lacks focus on managerial digital reputation specifically.
Treem & Leonardi (2013)	Social media's impact on workplace dynamics	Social Identity Theory	Focuses on communication processes and identity management	Does not focus on HRD and managerial credibility.
Van Dijck (2013)	Digital identity and social media in organizations	Reputation Management Theory	Analyzes digital behaviors and professional image	Not specific to HC managers or HR practices.
This Study	HC managers' social media impact on employee image	Impression Management Theory, Social Identity Theory	Examines digital reputation in HRD with a focus on HC managers' credibility	Addresses HR-specific digital reputation management.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review outlines key theories that inform the research, focusing on the relationship between social media, leadership image, and employee perceptions.

2.1. Impression Management Theory

Erving Goffman's Impression Management Theory (1959) suggests that individuals, including organizational leaders, actively manage their public persona. Goffman's concept of the "front stage" in social settings is applicable in the digital world, where Human Capital (HC) managers' online posts serve as a platform for presenting a curated image of professionalism, empathy, and credibility. This theory highlights the importance of aligning personal and professional identities to avoid negative perceptions.

2.2. Reputation Management Theory

Fombrun & Van Riel (2004) propose that reputation management is a critical component of organizational success. Managers, as leaders in their organizations, must carefully curate their digital personas to maintain a positive reputation. This theory is essential for understanding how a manager's social media activity influences employee perceptions and, by extension, organizational outcomes such as trust and morale.

2.3. Uses and Gratifications Theory

The Uses and Gratifications Theory (Blumler & Katz, 1974) provides a framework for understanding why employees engage with HC managers on social media. This theory emphasizes that individuals seek specific gratifications from media consumption, such as learning more about their leaders, gaining insight into their management style, or simply staying informed. For HC managers, understanding these motivations is key to crafting posts that align with organizational objectives and employee expectations.

2.4. Previous Research

Previous studies have highlighted the growing importance of social media in shaping organizational dynamics. Research by Kaplan & Haenlein (2010) shows how social media usage in professional contexts can shape personal and organizational identities. Other studies (Treem & Leonardi, 2013) have explored how social media impacts superior-subordinate relationships, with implications for trust and leadership credibility.

Additionally, Van Dijck (2013) explored the role of social media in professional image management, stressing the importance of digital reputation as a central factor in leadership effectiveness. This body of work lays the foundation for examining how social media behavior affects managerial credibility in the corporate world.

3. Methods

3.1. Research Design

This study uses a descriptive qualitative research design to investigate the impact of Human Capital (HC) managers' social media posts on employee perceptions of credibility, trustworthiness, and professional image. A qualitative approach was chosen because it allows for an in-depth exploration of participants' subjective experiences and interpretations of digital behaviour within organizational settings. This methodology is especially appropriate for examining complex social phenomena, such as the dynamics between managerial digital identity and employee trust.

3.2 Informant Selection Criteria

Participants were selected using purposive sampling, a non-probability sampling technique that is particularly useful for qualitative research where specific characteristics are essential for answering the research questions. The following criteria were used for selecting informants:

1. HC Managers: Must hold a managerial role within the human capital or HR department of a large organization and actively engage with social media platforms in a professional capacity.
2. Employees: Must be direct reports or colleagues of the HC manager within the organization, and have at least one year of experience working with or under the HC manager.
3. Diversity of Perceptions: The sample aimed to include a diverse range of perspectives, including those with varying opinions about the HC manager's social media posts.

3.3 Sample Size and Participants

A total of 15 participants were selected for this study, including 5 HC managers and 10 employees from various departments within the organization. This number is consistent with qualitative research norms for achieving data saturation, the point at which no new themes emerge from further interviews (Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, 2006).

- The HC managers were selected based on their visible presence on social media and their leadership role in shaping organizational culture.
- The employees were selected to reflect a range of perspectives based on their level of engagement with the HC manager's social media activities.

3.4 Data Collection Procedures

Data were collected through semi-structured in-depth interviews conducted over a two-month period. Interviews lasted between 45 to 60 minutes and were conducted in-person or via video conferencing, depending on the availability and preference of the participants. The interviews were guided by a set of open-ended questions designed to explore the participants' perceptions of the HC manager's social media posts, the impact of these posts on their trust and credibility, and the broader organizational implications.

The interview protocol was developed to ensure consistency across interviews while allowing flexibility to probe deeper into interesting or unexpected responses. The following core topics were covered in the interviews:

1. Perceptions of the HC manager's online image and credibility.
2. Reactions to specific types of posts (e.g., political views, personal lifestyle, professional development).
3. The perceived impact of the HC manager's social media behavior on organizational trust and employee relations.
4. Suggestions for improving digital communication strategies in the organization.

Interview protocol was piloted with two participants from a similar organization to refine questions and ensure clarity and relevance.

3.5 Data Analysis Procedures

Data from the interviews were transcribed verbatim and analyzed using qualitative coding techniques. The analysis followed a three-step coding process:

1. Open Coding: The initial step involved reading through the transcripts to identify significant statements and key themes related to digital reputation and managerial behavior.
2. Axial Coding: In this phase, the key themes were grouped and connected to identify relationships between the perceptions of employees, the types of social media posts, and the perceived impact on trust and credibility.
3. Selective Coding: Finally, selective coding was applied to identify the core category that best explained the main phenomenon under study: the managerial image dilemma in the digital age, where the manager must balance personal expression with professional responsibility.

This data analysis approach is based on Miles & Huberman's (1994) model of qualitative data analysis, which provides a systematic framework for handling and interpreting qualitative data. Creswell (2013) also emphasizes the use of coding techniques to identify recurring themes and patterns in qualitative data, which was applied throughout the analysis process.

3.6 Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval for the study was obtained from the Ethics Review Board of the institution. All participants were provided with an informed consent form explaining the purpose of the study, the voluntary nature of their participation, and their right to confidentiality. Participants were assured that their responses would be anonymized and that any personal information would not be disclosed in the final report.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Results of Data Analysis

The analysis of the interviews revealed several key themes related to the influence of HC managers' social media posts on employee perceptions. The following themes were identified through open, axial, and selective coding: managerial credibility, social media's impact on trust, and the role of ideological neutrality in leadership.

1. **Managerial Credibility:** Employees emphasized the importance of maintaining a professional image online. Posts about professional development, such as training or team achievements, were seen as reinforcing credibility. In contrast, personal posts that showcased luxurious lifestyles or political opinions were often perceived negatively, as they disrupted the image of fairness and empathy that employees expect from their managers.
2. **Social Media's Impact on Trust:** The majority of participants highlighted that trust in their HC manager was closely linked to the nature of the manager's social media presence. Posts that aligned with professional values, such as those related to self-improvement or organizational goals, enhanced trust. However, posts that deviated from these expectations, especially those perceived as politically charged or excessively personal, eroded trust and raised concerns about bias.

3. **Ideological Neutrality:** One of the most significant findings was the role of ideological neutrality in maintaining managerial credibility. Posts related to political beliefs or controversial topics caused internal polarization within the organization. Employees who disagreed with the manager's political views reported feeling alienated and less likely to trust the manager's leadership. This finding aligns with previous research on the importance of ideological neutrality for leadership effectiveness in organizational settings (Treem & Leonardi, 2013).

4.2 Comparison with Previous Research

While this study provides valuable insights into the impact of social media on HC managers' reputations, it is important to compare its findings with those of previous studies in digital reputation management within organizational contexts.

1. Kaplan & Haenlein (2010) argue that social media has a significant influence on organizational behavior, but they primarily focus on general business dynamics rather than the specific impact on managerial credibility. This study builds on their work by providing a more focused examination of HC managers' online behavior and its direct effects on employee perceptions.
2. Treem & Leonardi (2013) explore how social media affects superior-subordinate relationships, particularly regarding the visibility and transparency of managerial actions. They found that social media visibility can either enhance or damage trust, depending on the manager's communication style. Similarly, this study identifies that consistent professional communication on social media enhances trust, while personal or politically charged content undermines it, echoing Treem & Leonardi's findings but with a specific focus on HC managers.
3. Van Dijck (2013) discusses the evolution of social media in organizational settings, noting that digital reputation is increasingly important. This study extends Van Dijck's research by focusing specifically on how social media behavior impacts the trust employees place in HC managers and their perception of leadership credibility.

In summary, this study aligns with previous research that highlights the dual nature of social media's impact on trust: it can enhance organizational transparency and engagement, but it also risks undermining trust when managers do not manage their digital personas effectively.

4.3 Implications for Science and Practice

Implications for Science: This study contributes to the growing body of literature on digital reputation management and its impact on Human Capital Development (HRD). The findings highlight the importance of managers' digital presence as a crucial element in organizational trust-building. By integrating Goffman's Impression Management Theory and Social Identity Theory, this research provides a nuanced understanding of how digital behaviors affect both personal and professional identities within organizations. Future research could expand on these findings by exploring the longitudinal impact of social media posts on trust and loyalty over time, as well as examining the role of organizational culture in shaping employees' responses to managers' online behavior.

Implications for Practice: The study offers practical recommendations for HC managers and organizations:

1. **Digital Communication Strategies:** HC managers should develop clear guidelines for using social media, emphasizing professionalism and the importance of aligning personal and professional identities online. Training on digital reputation management should be offered to all managers to ensure they understand the potential impact of their online presence on employee trust and organizational credibility.
2. **Ideological Neutrality:** HC managers should exercise caution when posting political or ideological content, as such posts can alienate employees with differing views and reduce trust. Developing a communication strategy that focuses on organizational values and professional development can help mitigate the risks of ideological polarization.
3. **Long-term Trust Building:** The findings emphasize that trust is not built overnight. HC managers should prioritize consistent, positive online interactions that align with the

organization's values and goals. Over time, these actions will contribute to a sustainable reputation for both the manager and the organization.

4.4 Limitations and Future Research

While this study provides valuable insights, it is limited by its focus on a single organization. Future research could broaden the scope by exploring how HC managers in different industries or countries navigate digital reputation management. Additionally, a comparative study of **online and** offline reputations could provide deeper insights into how digital behavior interacts with traditional leadership practices.

Interview Findings:

- Employees frequently monitor HC managers' social media accounts.
- Posts depicting luxurious lifestyles are perceived as fueling negative speculation.
- There is a misperception that managers have the authority to transfer employees, leading to the perception that each post carries a hidden message.

Case Study Findings:

- Posts related to political activities fuel polarization.
- Posts related to positive social activities (e.g., training or self-development) actually strengthen the professional image.

Table 2. Interview Data Analysis (Open Coding Approach)

Interview Transcript (Response Excerpts)	Frequency of Occurrence	Coding
"My friends and I often monitor his posts, and there's even a special group to discuss his posts."	5	Constant Monitoring: This means that staff keep an eye on the manager's social media actions in a regular and coordinated way.
"Photos of his luxurious vacations or new car are often the talk of the town, making it seem like he's insensitive to our situation."	8	Perception Gap: Indicates a difference in views between managers and employees regarding lifestyle, which triggers negative speculation.
"If he posts about training or work, that's good. It looks professional and gives us confidence."	6	Professional Image Consolidation: Reinforces that work-related and self-development content is received positively and builds trust.
"Many people think he has absolute power to determine who gets transferred. So, every post is searched for clues or clues."	10	Misperception of Authority: Implies an acute misunderstanding among employees regarding the manager's authority, which is a major source of suspicion.
"He once shared something about politics, and it immediately became a hot topic. Some agreed, some didn't, making the work atmosphere uncomfortable."	4	Ideological Polarization: Political posts cause divisions of opinion among employees, undermining the perception of managers' neutrality.
"Actually, he also has to be careful. Freedom on social media has its limits when it comes to reputation and position."	7	The Freedom of Expression Dilemma: Describes the tension between an individual's right to express themselves and the demands of professionalism inherent in

		managerial positions.
"There are no clear rules from the office regarding this. So, everything is a bit unclear, and the manager is also confused."	6	Lack of Regulation: Highlights that the lack of clear company guidelines is a major driver of this issue, leaving room for misinterpretation.

Table 3. Interview Data Analysis (Open Coding Approach)

Key Phrases (Findings)	Codes (Concept Categorization)
"Employees frequently monitor HC managers' social media accounts."	Continuous Monitoring
"Posts about luxurious lifestyles are perceived as fueling negative speculation."	Persepsion Gap
"There is a misperception that managers have the authority to transfer employees, so every post is perceived as having a 'hidden message.'"	Misperception of Authority
"Posts related to political activities trigger polarization."	Ideological Polarization
"Posts related to positive social activities... actually strengthen the professional image."	Professional Image Consolidation
"There are no specific company regulations regarding limits on employee social media posts, including those at the managerial level."	Regulatory Gaps

Table 4. Analysis of Interview Data (Axial Coding Approach)

Initial Categories (Open Coding)	Causal Conditions	Core Phenomena	Context Intervening Conditions	& Action/Interaction Strategies	Consequences
Continuous Supervision	The presence of digital interaction from the HC Manager on social media	Percepti on Gap	1. Misperception of authority: employees believe managers have the power to transfer them, leading to suspicion 2. Regulatory gap: the absence of clear company policies regarding social media ethics.	Managers tend to limit their activity on social media, especially for personal content.	1. Maintained credibility: if the communication strategy is correct. 2. Relationship disintegration: if miscommunication occurs. 3. limited expression: the managers freedom on social media became very limited.
Perception gap	Uploads that don't meet employee expectations, such as a	Ideologic al Polarizat ion & Internal Disintegr	1. Misperception of authority: every post, including political ones, is misinterpreted 2. Regulatory gap:	The manager consolidates their professional image by prioritizing	1. Increased credibility: when positive content is uploaded. 2. Internal division: Political trigger

	luxurious lifestyle.	ation	There are no rules to regulate sensitive content.	work-related uploads.	division among employees.
Misperception of authority	Lack of employee understanding of the authority structure within the company, particularly regarding transfers employees.	Ideological Polarization & Internal Disintegration	1. Continuous Monitoring: Employees actively monitor uploads. 2. Perceptual Gaps: Differences in values and lifestyles exist.	The manager is trying to educate indirectly through professional content.	1. Psychological Uncertainty: Employees feel anxious and suspicious. 2. Decreased Trust: Toward the manager and the division.
Ideological Polarization	A manager's upload containing specific political or ideological views.	Ideological Polarization & Internal Disintegration	1. Continuous Monitoring: Every upload is closely monitored. 2. Misperception of Authority: Managers are seen as having significant authority.	The manager avoids sensitive content and focuses on neutral and positive content.	Internal Division: Employee relationships become strained.
Professional Image Consolidation	Manager awareness of the importance of maintaining credibility on social media.	Perceptual Gaps & Ideological Polarization	1. Continuous Monitoring: Recognizing that employees monitor their accounts. 2. Regulatory Gaps: No clear guidelines.	Managers strategically use social media as a tool for image management.	Increased Trust: The manager's image is considered more credible and professional.
Regulatory Gap	The absence of formal company guidelines regarding social media ethics for management.	Perceptual Gaps & Ideological Polarization	1. Continuous Scrutiny: Managers are under the spotlight. 2. Misperception of Authority: Employee misunderstandings.	Companies need to formulate clear digital communication policies.	Increased Reputational Risk: Without rules, managers and companies are vulnerable to a negative image.

Interview Data Analysis (Selective Coding Approach)

Core (Central Categories)	Codes	Managerial Image Dilemma in the Digital Age		
Definition		: A phenomenon where a Human Capital (HC) manager faces challenges in managing their professional image on social media due to constant employee scrutiny, triggered by misperceptions of authority and the absence of company regulations.		
Causal Condition		1. Misperception of Authority: Employees believe that the HR manager has full transfer authority, so every upload is interpreted as a "hidden message" that affects their career prospects.	2. Perceptual Gap:	The discrepancy between the managers' personal lifestyles shared on social media and the reality faced by employees triggers negative assumptions such as insensitivity.
Core Fenomena		1. Ideological Polarization & Internal Disintegration: The manager's personal uploads, especially those related to politics, caused division and discomfort in the work environment.		
Context & Intervening Condition		1. Regulatory gap: The absence of formal guidelines from the company regarding the ethics of social media use for managers, leaving room for interpretation and miscommunication.	2. Continuous Monitoring:	The manager's digital activities are closely and consistently monitored by employees.
Action/Interaction Strategy		1. Strategic Image Management: Managers consciously curate uploads, prioritizing professional content that can	2. Self-Restraint:	The manager limits their freedom of expression on social media to avoid

		strengthen credibility (e.g., training) and avoiding sensitive topics.		misinterpretation.
Consequences	1. Psychological Uncertainty:	Employees feel anxious and suspicious of every manager's action.	2. Increased Reputation Risk:	For both the individual manager and the organization as a whole, as a negative image can erode trust.

Document Analysis Findings: There are no specific company regulations regarding limitations on employee social media uploads, including for management levels. The research findings indicate that the interaction of Human Capital (HC) managers with social media is no longer a mere personal activity, but has become a field that influences their professional perceptions and credibility in the eyes of Company X employees. Analysis of interviews, case studies, and document analysis yielded the following critical findings.

1. Perceptual Disparity: Content vs. Organizational Context

In-depth interviews revealed a significant disparity between managers' intentions when uploading content and employees' interpretations. Posts that are meant to be personal, such as vacation photos or hobbies, are consistently interpreted thru the "lens" of professionalism and hierarchy.

Luxurious Lifestyle, this post not only sparked negative speculation but also created a perception gap between the manager's "reality" and the employees' "reality." This gap fuels the assumption that managers are insensitive to employee well-being, a view that undermines their role as empathetic leaders.

Perception of Mutational Power, The most crucial finding is the acute misperception among employees. They believe that the HC manager has full authority in determining transfers. This belief becomes a lens that filters every upload. As a result, every piece of content, no matter how small, is suspected of containing "hidden messages" or "codes" related to their career prospects. This creates psychological tension and a sense of uncertainty in the work environment.

2. Ideological Polarization and Image Consolidation

Case studies of specific uploads reinforce the finding that social media content has different impacts depending on the context. Political Content uploads that directly address political issues or specific ideological viewpoints cause internal polarization. Employees with different perspectives feel the manager is not neutral, which can damage trust. This shows that in a corporate context, ideological neutrality is an important asset for managerial figures. Professional Content is conversely, uploads relevant to managerial tasks, such as participation in training, workshops, or self-development activities, strengthen a professional image. This kind of content is seen as evidence of the manager's commitment to talent development, thus building credibility and trust.

3. Absence of Regulation as a Risk Gap

Document analysis confirms the absence of company regulations governing the ethical boundaries of social media use, particularly for HR managers. This gap opens the door to significant reputational risk. Without clear guidelines, managers are forced to manage image intuitively, which doesn't always work and can potentially lead to misunderstandings. The absence of this policy is a source of confusion for managers and leads to varied perceptions among employees. Overall, these findings conclude that social media has transformed the role of HR managers from mere leaders in the workplace to public figures whose image is constantly monitored and judged. The absence of

regulation, coupled with the misperception of power, makes social media a treacherous arena, requiring managers to be more discerning with every post.

The research results indicate a dilemma between the human capital manager's right to freedom of expression and the demands of professionalism. Based on impression management theory, social media posts become a 'front stage' that shapes a manager's image in the eyes of employees. However, without the right digital reputation strategy, personal uploads can potentially lead to negative interpretations.

The employees' minimal understanding of the authority structure exacerbates misunderstandings, especially regarding the issue of transfers. This finding is consistent with social identity theory, where a leader's behaviour can influence both group loyalty and resistance. Therefore, ethical and transparent digital communication strategies are needed so that managers can maintain credibility while building employee trust.

The research findings reveal a paradox faced by Human Capital (HC) managers at Company X. They are caught in a dilemma between personal freedom of expression and the unavoidable demands of professionalism in the digital age. This phenomenon can be analyzed in depth using two main theoretical frameworks: impression management theory and social identity theory.

5.1. From an Impression Management Perspective

According to this theory, social media serves as a 'front stage' (Goffman, 1959) where managers present their professional persona. Uploads on digital platforms are no longer just personal content; every upload is a strategic action designed to shape positive perceptions in the eyes of employees. However, without a mature strategy, authentic and personal posts have the potential to create cognitive dissonance—such as luxury lifestyle posts that contradict the perception of empathy toward employees. This can damage the professional image that has been built.

5.2. From a Social Identity Perspective

In this context, the manager is a 'prototype' or representative of the larger group (HC division). Their behaviour, including on social media, directly influences how employees identify and view the leadership group. Misunderstandings regarding transfer authority, which are so prevalent among employees, exacerbate the problem. This is consistent with the finding that when leaders fail to meet group expectations (e.g., are perceived as unfair), it can trigger resistance and weaken loyalty.

Therefore, retelling these findings is not just about caution, but about building ethical and transparent digital communication strategies. The goal is to harmoniously integrate personal and professional identities, ensuring the manager's image not only avoids negative stigma but also becomes a source of trust for all employees.

5.3. Social Media Communication Management Flow for the HC Manager

Here is a flow that can serve as a guide for the HC manager in managing social media communication to build and maintain credibility, particularly within Company X.

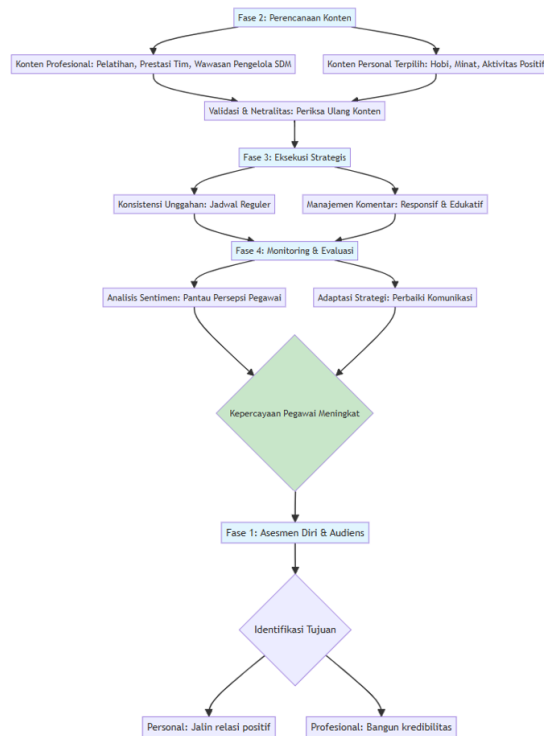


Figure 1. Story Upload Phase on Social Media

Detailed Explanation of Each Phase:

1. **Phase 1: Self & Audience Assessment**
Managers must first understand two things: their own identity and who their audience is. Managers need to determine whether the uploads are intended to build personal relationships or professional image.
2. **Phase 2: Content Planning**
Content must be strictly curated. Professional content (such as photos of training activities, team achievements, or insights into career development) needs to be prioritized. Personal content can be included, but it must be positive and universal (e.g., hobbies, travel, or social activities) to avoid negative interpretations.
3. **Phase 3: Strategic Execution.** Uploads need to be done consistently and on schedule. Managers also need to actively manage comments, provide educational responses, and gradually clarify existing misconceptions (e.g., regarding transfer authority).
4. **Phase 4: Monitoring & Evaluation.** This is a crucial phase. Managers should periodically monitor employee perceptions of their uploads. Simple sentiment analysis (e.g., from responses and comments) can provide valuable input for adapting future strategies. The main goal is to ensure that every digital interaction contributes to increasing employee trust.

Building and maintaining trust (trust capital), which is the foundation of effective leadership in a hybrid/digital environment. This diagram illustrates a continuous process that needs to be consistently followed to build a credible and trustworthy digital image. Therefore, based on the image analysis results, an HR manager cannot perform this task simply. This phenomenon involves four interconnected layers of identity that influence employee perceptions in the workplace. Analyzing a manager's image means dissecting how each of these identity layers is presented, perceived, and managed, especially in the digital space. With the following explanation:

1. **Individual Identity (Personal Identity)** The first layer is the manager's personal identity as an individual. Based on Erving Goffman's concept of social dramaturgy, social media is a digital "stage" where managers perform a "show" of self. Personal content, such as lifestyle

uploads or political views, is part of this show. However, when this upload doesn't align with professional expectations, it can create cognitive dissonance in the eyes of employees. Employees, as "spectators," will interpret and evaluate each upload subjectively, which could damage the manager's image as a fair and empathetic figure.

2. **HC Manager Identity (Professional Identity).** The second layer focuses on the role of managers in a professional context. Impression management theory explains how a manager consciously or unconsciously attempts to control the impression they present to others. Social media posts are the "front stage" that shapes this perception. Research findings indicate that content related to managerial tasks, such as training and self-development, actually strengthens their professional image. Conversely, political posts can trigger internal polarization, damaging the perception of neutrality, which is an important asset for a manager.
3. **Human Capital Division Entity Identity (Divisional Identity)** This layer refers to how managers represent the Human Talent Development division as a whole. According to social identity theory, managers are "prototypes" or representatives of the larger group (HC division). A manager's behaviour on social media can influence how employees identify with and perceive the leadership group. Misunderstandings regarding transfer authority are exacerbating this issue. When managers are perceived negatively, trust in the integrity and fairness of the entire division can also be eroded.
4. **Organizational Identity of PLN (Organizational Identity)** At this level, the analysis extends to the reputation of the entire company, Company X (or PLN UID Kalselteng). This is closely related to reputation management theory, where individual and organizational reputations need to be strategically managed to minimize the risk of a negative image. As a central figure, the HC manager becomes one of the faces of the company. Their behaviour on social media can be a reflection of the company's overall values and culture. The absence of company regulations regarding social media ethics is also considered a significant risk gap that could harm the organization's overall reputation.

5. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

This study explored the impact of HC managers' social media posts on employee perceptions of credibility, trust, and professionalism. By examining the interplay between digital identity and professional image, the study aimed to provide both theoretical insights and practical strategies for managing digital reputation in organizational contexts.

5.1 Summary of Key Findings

The research sought to address three primary objectives:

1. **Objective 1: To examine how social media posts influence employees' perceptions of HC managers.**
 - The study found that social media posts that aligned with professional values, such as those related to self-improvement or organizational development, were positively perceived by employees. In contrast, posts showcasing personal lifestyles, particularly those that were politically charged or overly luxurious, were seen as damaging to managerial credibility and trustworthiness.
2. **Objective 2: To identify what factors make managers appear more credible or less credible due to their digital posts.**
 - The analysis revealed that professional posts (e.g., about training, development, or work-related achievements) enhanced credibility, while posts that deviated from professional norms, especially those related to personal opinions (e.g., political views), negatively affected the perceived credibility of HC managers.
3. **Objective 3: To propose digital communication strategies that help managers maintain a positive reputation.**
 - Based on the findings, the study suggests that HC managers should focus on ethical digital communication strategies. This includes avoiding politically controversial posts and prioritizing content that aligns with organizational values and professional growth.

5.2 Theoretical Contributions

This study makes several contributions to the literature on digital reputation management and Human Capital Development (HRD):

- The integration of Goffman's Impression Management Theory and Social Identity Theory offers a comprehensive framework for understanding how HC managers manage their professional image in the digital space. These theories helped explain how social media behaviors influence employees' perceptions of leadership and organizational trust.
- The study extends existing research on digital reputation in organizational settings (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010; Treem & Leonardi, 2013) by focusing specifically on HC managers and exploring the dual nature of social media's impact on trust: while it can enhance transparency and engagement, it can also lead to reputational risks if not managed carefully.

5.3 Practical Implications for Organizations

The findings provide several practical implications for HC managers and organizations:

1. **Strategic Digital Communication:** HC managers must develop clear guidelines for social media use, ensuring that digital communication aligns with professional standards and organizational values. Regular training on digital reputation management should be offered to managers at all levels to ensure they understand the potential risks and benefits of their online presence.
2. **Maintaining Ideological Neutrality:** To preserve trust and avoid polarization, HC managers should be cautious about posting politically charged content. Posts should be neutral and focused on professional and organizational topics, particularly when addressing large audiences within the organization.
3. **Long-term Trust Building:** HC managers should adopt a long-term approach to building trust through consistent and positive online engagement. By regularly sharing professional achievements, personal growth, and organizational milestones, HC managers can strengthen their leadership credibility over time.

5.4 Research Limitations

While this study provides valuable insights into the role of social media in shaping HC managers' digital reputations, there are several limitations:

1. **Single Organization Focus:** The research was conducted within a single company, which may limit the generalizability of the findings. The organizational culture, policies, and the specific HC managers involved may not represent broader trends in other industries or countries.
2. **Sample Size:** Although the sample size of 15 participants was sufficient for qualitative analysis, a larger sample across multiple organizations could provide a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon.
3. **Cross-sectional Design:** The study used a cross-sectional design, which means it only captured perceptions at a single point in time. Longitudinal studies would provide deeper insights into the long-term effects of HC managers' digital behavior on employee trust and organizational dynamics.

5.5 Future Research Agenda

Building on the findings of this study, future research could address the following areas:

1. **Exploring Longitudinal Impact:** Future studies could examine how the digital reputation of HC managers evolves over time and how this impacts employee trust and organizational loyalty in the long run.
2. **Cross-Cultural and Cross-Industry Comparisons:** Research comparing the digital reputation management practices of HC managers across different industries or cultural contexts could provide valuable insights into the universality of the findings and the role of organizational culture in shaping digital behaviors.
3. **Comparison Between Online and Offline Reputation:** A comparative study of HC managers' online and offline reputations could help explore how digital interactions complement or contradict traditional leadership practices in building employee trust.

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