



Soméah Culture as a Shaper of Brand Personality in Sundanese Ethnic Society: Implications of Personal Branding and Cultural Transactions

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Abstract

This research reviews the role of soméah culture in shaping the brand personality of the Sundanese people. Someméah reflects values such as friendliness, politeness, and openness which are reflected in daily communication behavior. The results showed that soméah culture influenced communication behavior, including the use of words such as "punten" and "mango." Apart from that, soméah culture also influences other aspects, such as a friendly physical appearance and a high sense of humor. Soméah culture plays an important role in building positive cultural relations, especially in interactions with non-Sundanese communities. This research also illustrates how soméah culture can be maintained and inherited and identifies the implications of personal branding and cultural transactions in preserving local culture.

Keywords: Soméah Culture, Brand Personality, Sundanese Community, Cultural Communication

1. Introduction

Indonesia, as the largest archipelagic country in the world, has extraordinary cultural riches. One of the characteristics that distinguishes Indonesia from other countries is the diversity of ethnic groups that inhabit this archipelago. The 2010 population census recorded the existence of 1,331 ethnic categories, covering various levels from tribal names to aliases or other names for an ethnic group (Arifin et al., 2015; Utomo & McDonald 2016). Tribes are ethnic and cultural groups that form society through inheritance from generation to generation. Ethnic identity usually follows the father's lineage, although there are some groups that adhere to the mother's lineage.

Most ethnic groups in Indonesia determine tribal identity through patrilineal lines, which follow the father's line. However, there are also ethnic groups that adhere to matrilineal lines, such as the Minangkabau tribe in West Sumatra or the Enggano tribe in Bengkulu. With this lineage pattern, a network of kinship and social connections is formed that enriches Indonesia's cultural treasures.

Language plays a central role in introducing and understanding the culture of an ethnic group. This is key in understanding and distinguishing one culture from another. Language is also able to form social groups, becoming a forum for the growth of social values in interactions between humans (Siregar, 2021). As a communication tool, language is not just a medium for transmitting information, but also creates space for the formation of diverse socio-cultural groups.

In the Indonesian context, the author feels interested in researching more deeply the cultural values embedded in the use of the language term "soméah" as represented by the Sundanese people. This interest became stronger when survey results showed that people recognized the Sundanese as a community that holds the value of soméah, reflected in the use of words such as "punten" and "mango" in every communication interaction. This understanding comes from experience and knowledge during interactions with Sundanese people who reflect an open, friendly and accepting nature of other people (Widodo, 2021; Kusuma et al., 2023; Hidayat et al., 2021).

The philosophy of life of the Sundanese people, namely "Soméah Hade ka Sémah" which means friendly, kind, looking after, entertaining and making guests or anyone happy even if they are not known, emphasizes the high value of politeness in their culture. This is what makes the Sundanese people recognized as individuals who are generous and full of kindness, especially towards others, especially towards older people. Soméah culture has become a strong characteristic, icon and brand personality attached to the Sundanese people. However, ironically, many people outside

the Sundanese community do not fully understand and identify Soméah as the brand personality held by this group. To overcome this, it is important to understand the concept of brand personality and how this concept can be applied in a cultural context.

Brand personality, initially, was a concept used in marketing to describe the character or identity of a product brand. However, this concept can also be applied to human groups or communities. In a cultural context, this can mean how a group of people is identified through their values, behavior, and characteristics. Soméah culture is considered the brand personality of the Sundanese people. This is because Soméah reflects the unique characteristics and values inherent in Sundanese culture. This includes being friendly, kind, caring, entertaining and giving happiness to guests or anyone, even strangers. This is the characteristic and strong brand personality of the Sundanese people. One way to introduce and promote Soméah Culture as a brand personality for the Sundanese people is through personal branding.

Personal branding is the process of building a person's or group's self-image in the eyes of the public. This can be done by highlighting the characteristics and values you want to promote. In the context of this article, icons that reflect Soméah's communication behavior can be considered personal branding of the Sundanese people (Nuryanto et al., 2021; Rachmadtullah, 2020; Fauzi, 2014). These icons are people or groups that stand out because they represent and promote Soméah Culture through their communication behavior. They are real examples of brand personalities that the Sundanese people want to identify with.

Personal branding and promotion of Soméah Culture can be strengthened through mass media and social media. This media allows information about the brand personality of the Sundanese people to be more easily accessed by the wider public. Through various platforms, such as videos, articles and social campaigns, Soméah Cultural values can be accepted by more people inside and outside the Sundanese community. With strong personal branding efforts, the Sundanese people can be more successful in introducing Soméah Culture as their brand personality to the world. This will not only enrich understanding of Indonesian culture, but can also promote peace, diversity and cross-cultural understanding in global society.

Indirect communication behavior can be a reflection of the Soméah cultural values held by the Sundanese people. However, to be able to communicate messages about Soméah cultural values, seriousness is needed in providing understanding to the public. In the context of this research, the focus on the message to be conveyed is regarding the Soméah cultural values of the Sundanese people. Messages conveyed through communication behavior have great potential to get positive assessments from the public because they have adequate knowledge and understanding of Soméah culture. It is hoped that this positive response will form a strong image of Soméah culture.

Image is an impression that is deliberately formed about an object. In the context of this research, image is the belief and perception that society has regarding communication behavior related to Soméah culture. Images can be positive or negative, depending on each individual's point of view and experience with that community group.

Sundanese people who are famous for their Soméah values are also known as individuals who have a great sense of humor. Their humorous style is reflected in every communication behavior, which often makes other people laugh out loud. They are not only good at generating creative ideas, but also adept at conveying them in a distinctive and unique style. For example, the peculiarities of the Sundanese language and dialect, as well as the pronunciation of certain letters which make the situation even funnier. This characteristic often becomes its own attraction and invites laughter in various circles.

From the explanation regarding Soméah's communication behavior and cultural representation, in this article, the author is interested in conducting a more in-depth study regarding the implications and application of Soméah's cultural values as a brand personality for the Sundanese people. Apart from that, this article will also discuss efforts to introduce Soméah culture to the public through personal branding. The aim of this research is to specifically identify the Soméah cultural values along with their implications and applications for the communication behavior of the Sundanese people. Thus, it is hoped that this research will provide deeper insight into the richness of Indonesian culture and strengthen understanding of global cultural heritage.

2. Research methodology

This research uses an ethnographic public relations approach with a focus on communication behavior to build culture-based relationships. This method adopts the IPPAR model, which includes the Insight, Strategic Program, Program Implementation, Action and Reputation stages.

- a). Insight, the initial stage in mapping reality or phenomena. This involves analyzing the situation and understanding the culturally based background of the communication activity. Insight also determines public settings that are relevant to the activity's objectives.
- b). Strategic Progra, includes activity planning, including type of activity, theme, message content, and message delivery strategy. It also includes the choice of media used in cultural communication.
- c). Program Implementatio, ensuring that planned activities can be implemented in accordance with established rules and regulations. This includes control and evaluation of the implementation of communication activities.
- d). Action and Reputation, measuring public assessment of communication activities and evaluating public responses as a benchmark for the reputation of the Sundanese people.

- e). Purposive Sampling, informants were selected purposively based on criteria relevant to the research, namely the Sundanese people in Tasikmalaya City who have experience and knowledge related to Soméah culture.

By using an ethnographic public relations approach and the IPPAR model, this research aims to understand the communication behavior of the Sundanese people in the context of the Soméah culture. This method allows researchers to gain a deep understanding of how communication can be used to build culturally based relationships within these communities.

3. Research result

The results of this research reveal that soméah culture is an important aspect in the brand personality of the Sundanese people. Someméah contains values such as being friendly, polite and open, and these are reflected in daily communication behavior. Soméah communication behavior, such as the use of words such as "punten" and "mango," has become a crystallized habit within the Sundanese people. This creates cultural relationships that are based on local cultural values, and these cultural relationships strengthen the Sundanese brand personality.

Efforts to introduce someméah culture as a brand personality can be considered a personal branding activity. In this case, the Sundanese are trying to introduce their cultural values as a humble, polite, friendly and open group. They use language and communication messages such as "punten" and "mango" to represent these values in communicating.

The research results also show that the Sundanese people have two important aspects that strengthen the soméah culture. First, they always look attractive with friendly faces and smiles. Second, they have a great sense of humor, which makes them easy to get along with the non-Sundanese people around them.

Soméah culture is also integrated into intercultural relations, where Sundanese people can interact with non-Sundanese people in harmony. This reflects that soméah culture has a positive impact in building intercultural relations. In addition, the use of words such as "punten" and "mango" in communication is a sign of Sundanese cultural identity, which helps maintain and preserve local cultural values. The use of this language also reflects the values of humility, respect and openness.

The importance of soméah culture in the brand personality of Sundanese people is also strengthened by the fact that brand personality is something dynamic and can change over time. Therefore, consistency in introducing soméah cultural values through communication behavior is the key to building and maintaining a positive brand personality. Apart from that, personal branding as a cultural transaction opens the door for cultural acculturation between Sundanese and non-Sundanese people. This creates opportunities for cultural exchange and integration, which can result in better relations between cultures.

The research findings shed light on the pivotal role of Soméah culture within the Sundanese brand personality, emphasizing its significance in shaping the identity of this community. The essence of Soméah, encompassing attributes such as friendliness, politeness, and openness, permeates the fabric of Sundanese society's everyday communication. Through ingrained communication habits like using expressions such as "punten" and "mango," the Sundanese foster cultural connections founded upon these local values, thereby fortifying their brand personality.

It's noteworthy to consider the introduction of Soméah culture as a form of personal branding. In this context, the Sundanese endeavor to project their cultural values as a modest, courteous, amiable, and approachable community. The strategic use of language and communication elements like "punten" and "mango" serves as a means to manifest these values in their interactions with others (Sihombing, 2022; Shuhufi and Purkon 2023). Furthermore, the research findings underline two distinct characteristics that bolster the Soméah culture among the Sundanese. Firstly, their consistent demeanor of appearing welcoming with friendly countenances and warm smiles. Secondly, their well-developed sense of humor, which makes them effortlessly relatable to individuals from outside their cultural sphere.

Soméah culture transcends boundaries and seamlessly integrates into intercultural relationships, facilitating harmonious interactions between Sundanese and individuals from diverse backgrounds. This underscores the positive impact of Soméah culture in nurturing intercultural relationships. Additionally, the use of phrases such as "punten" and "mango" in communication acts as a beacon of Sundanese cultural identity, aiding in the preservation and promotion of local cultural values. These linguistic cues also mirror the values of humility, respect, and openness that are deeply ingrained in Sundanese culture.

The significance of Soméah culture in shaping the Sundanese brand personality is further underscored by the understanding that brand personality is dynamic and can evolve over time. Thus, the consistent portrayal of Soméah cultural values through communication practices becomes imperative for establishing and sustaining a positive brand personality. Beyond this, personal branding as a cultural transaction opens doors to cultural acculturation between the Sundanese and those from different backgrounds. This paves the way for cultural exchange and integration, fostering improved cross-cultural relations that benefit all parties involved.

4. Conclusion

The conclusion of this research is that Soméah culture has a very important role in shaping the brand personality of Sundanese people. Soméah's culture, which includes values such as intimidation, politeness, and openness, is reflected in their daily communication behavior. Soméah's communication patterns, such as the use of words like "punten" and

"mango," have become acculturated habits within Sundanese society, creating strong cultural ties based on these local cultural values.

The importance of Soméah culture in Sundanese brand personality is reinforced by the fact that brand personality is something dynamic and can change over time. Therefore, consistency in introducing Soméah's cultural values through communication behavior is the key to building and maintaining a positive brand personality. Apart from that, personal branding as a cultural transaction opens the door to cultural acculturation between Sundanese and non-Sundanese people. This creates opportunities for cultural exchange and integration, which can lead to better relations between different cultures.

Apart from that, this research also shows that two important characteristics of the Sundanese people, namely a friendly appearance with a smile and a high sense of humor, support the Soméah culture among them. Soméah culture not only influences inter-Sundanese relations, but also integrates well into intercultural relations, facilitating harmonious interactions between Sundanese people and individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds. Overall, Soméah culture not only reflects the cultural identity of the Sundanese people, but also plays an important role in encouraging positive interactions and healthy intercultural relations. This provides valuable insight into how culture can become an integral part of a community's social brand.

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