



The Influence of Digital Content-Based Art Extracurricular Activities on Personal Branding and Non-Academic Achievement of Generation Z

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Abstract:

This study aims to examine the influence of digital content-based arts extracurricular activities on students' personal branding and non-academic achievement, while investigating the mediating role of personal branding in the relationship between extracurricular participation and achievement. A quantitative survey design was employed involving 292 students selected through total sampling. Data were collected using Likert-scale questionnaires and supporting observations. The data were analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling–Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS), including measurement-model assessment, structural-model evaluation, and bootstrapping for hypothesis testing. Digital content-based arts extracurricular activities had a positive and significant effect on personal branding ($\beta = 0.746$; $t = 11.925$; $p < 0.001$). However, their direct effect on non-academic achievement was not significant ($\beta = 0.216$; $t = 1.779$; $p = 0.075$). Personal branding positively and significantly affected non-academic achievement ($\beta = 0.695$; $t = 6.283$; $p < 0.001$) and significantly mediated the relationship between extracurricular activities and non-academic achievement ($\beta = 0.519$; $t = 6.023$; $p < 0.001$). The findings indicate that extracurricular participation alone does not automatically generate achievement; its benefits become more meaningful when creative experiences are transformed into students' personal branding. Schools can therefore integrate digital content creation, creative expression, and responsible self-presentation into arts extracurricular programs to strengthen students' developmental and non-academic outcomes.

INTRODUCTION

The rapid expansion of digital technology has transformed how young people communicate, learn, create, and present their abilities to wider audiences. For Generation Z, digital platforms are not merely communication tools but environments in which identity, creativity, social participation, and personal reputation can be developed. This situation makes schools increasingly responsible for providing learning experiences that connect students' talents with contemporary digital practices. Extracurricular activities are particularly important because they provide structured opportunities to develop interests, creativity, collaboration, confidence, and other competencies beyond formal classroom learning. Research shows that participation in co-curricular activities can contribute to broader developmental outcomes, including engagement, social competencies, and personal growth (Yeo et al., 2023; Hartina & Siahaan, 2025).

Therefore, strengthening digitally oriented extracurricular programs is socially important because schools can help students transform creative participation into meaningful competencies, positive identities, and opportunities for achievement.

This study is grounded in three complementary conceptual perspectives. First, extracurricular activities are understood as structured developmental experiences through which students explore interests, talents, creativity, collaboration, and competencies beyond formal instruction. Previous research confirms that extracurricular participation can support student development and provide opportunities for creativity and talent cultivation (Aimah et al., 2025; Syamsul et al., 2026). Second, personal branding refers to the intentional presentation of identity, abilities, characteristics, and uniqueness through social and digital environments. Social media provides Generation Z with opportunities to communicate their capabilities and construct recognizable identities (Zain & Dwivayani, 2024, Activities, 2025; Zaironi et al., 2021; Lasut & Neman, 2025). Third, non-academic achievement represents demonstrable success beyond classroom performance, including artistic performances, competitions, awards, and recognition. Extracurricular management and participation can provide important pathways for developing students' potential and achievement (Devi & Dinana, 2021; Sinaga et al., 2024).

Despite the developmental potential of extracurricular education, a general problem remains concerning how schools can ensure that participation produces meaningful and recognizable outcomes. Students may participate in activities, practice artistic skills, and produce creative works without necessarily converting these experiences into achievements or broader opportunities for recognition. This problem becomes more complex in digital environments because students must not only possess competencies but also communicate their abilities appropriately and responsibly. Arts activities may encourage creativity, while digital platforms provide opportunities for students to display their work; however, participation alone may not guarantee that these capabilities become visible personal identities or measurable achievements. Evidence indicates that arts participation can support creativity and developmental outcomes, while extracurricular involvement can contribute to broader student development (Soledad & Cortez, 2025; Oyeniran et al., 2024; Sundari & Yusran, 2025). Thus, schools need to understand the mechanism connecting extracurricular participation with students' personal development and achievement.

Previous studies have established important relationships between extracurricular participation, creativity, and student development, but their findings remain fragmented. Studies on extracurricular activities generally emphasize talent development, creativity, participation, and academic or non-academic outcomes, while research on digital environments tends to focus on identity construction and personal branding. For example, arts education has been associated with creativity development, whereas co-curricular participation has been linked to developmental outcomes (Yeo et al., 2023; Naufal, 2024). Similarly, research on Generation Z demonstrates that social media can facilitate personal branding and self-presentation (Aztari et al., 2024; Soim et al., 2026). However, these studies generally examine extracurricular development and digital identity as separate domains. Consequently, the mechanism through which digitally oriented arts extracurricular participation may shape personal branding remains insufficiently explained, particularly among junior secondary students.

The literature also provides evidence that extracurricular participation can contribute to achievement, but the relationship is not necessarily direct or uniform. Research has shown associations between extracurricular management, participation, and non-academic achievement, while other studies indicate that extracurricular benefits may depend on developmental processes and contextual conditions (Nasution & Fadhli, 2023; Parker, 2024). Research on music and visual arts further demonstrates potential developmental benefits, but does not specifically explain how students' digital self-presentation may translate artistic participation into achievement (Ishiguro, 2023; Wijaksono & Affan, 2026). This creates an important research gap: existing studies rarely integrate digital content-based arts extracurricular activities, personal branding, and non-academic achievement within a single explanatory model. Addressing this gap is important because understanding the intervening mechanism may explain why participation produces stronger outcomes for some students than others and may guide schools in designing more effective extracurricular programs.

The state of the art of this study lies in positioning personal branding as a potential developmental mechanism connecting digital content-based arts extracurricular activities with students' non-academic achievement. Rather than treating extracurricular participation as an automatic predictor of achievement, this research examines whether creative digital experiences first shape how students recognize, communicate, and present their abilities before contributing to measurable achievement. The novelty is also reflected in the integration of digital arts, student identity, and achievement within one empirical model involving junior secondary students. This perspective is important because students increasingly operate simultaneously as learners, creators, and digital content producers. By examining these relationships together, the study seeks to provide a more comprehensive explanation of how schools can transform extracurricular participation into developmental value. The findings are expected to offer a practical foundation for designing extracurricular programs that combine artistic development, digital creativity, responsible self-presentation, and achievement-oriented opportunities.

Accordingly, this study addresses the research problem of whether digital content-based arts extracurricular activities influence students' personal branding and non-academic achievement, and whether personal branding explains the relationship between extracurricular participation and achievement. The proposed argument is that digital arts activities provide students with opportunities to create, communicate, collaborate, and demonstrate their abilities; these experiences may strengthen personal branding, which subsequently increases students' confidence, visibility, participation opportunities, and potential for non-academic recognition. The study therefore contributes by testing this proposed mechanism empirically through a quantitative survey and SEM-PLS analysis. By involving students at SMPN 1 Manggeng Abdya, the research provides contextual evidence concerning digitally oriented extracurricular management at the junior secondary level. Ultimately, the study seeks to clarify whether achievement emerges directly from participation or through the development of personal branding, thereby offering both theoretical insight and practical guidance for schools seeking to align extracurricular education with students' digital realities.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed a quantitative explanatory design using a survey approach to examine the relationships among digital content-based arts extracurricular activities,

personal branding, and students' non-academic achievement. A quantitative design was selected because the study sought to test hypothesized relationships among measurable constructs using statistical analysis rather than merely describing students' experiences. This approach is consistent with previous studies examining extracurricular participation and student developmental outcomes through empirical measurement (Sinaga et al., 2024). The research was conducted at SMPN 1 Manggeng, Aceh Barat Daya (Abdya), Indonesia, because the school provides digital content-based arts extracurricular activities that enable students to develop creative competencies and produce digital works. This context is particularly relevant because extracurricular activities can function as structured environments for developing students' talents, interests, and creativity (Widiastuti et al., 2024; Ndruru et al., 2025). The study therefore focused specifically on the school context to examine how participation in digitally oriented arts activities may contribute to personal branding and subsequent non-academic achievement.

The population consisted of 292 students enrolled at SMPN 1 Manggeng Abdya. Because the population was relatively limited and accessible, all 292 students were included as respondents using a total (saturated) sampling technique. Accordingly, the final sample comprised 292 students. Using the entire accessible population enabled the study to obtain comprehensive information concerning the three research constructs. Data were collected through questionnaires and observations. The questionnaire employed a Likert scale and measured three constructs: digital content-based arts extracurricular activities (X), personal branding (Y₁), and non-academic achievement (Y₂). The indicators were developed with reference to the literature concerning extracurricular participation, creativity, student development, and digital personal branding (Prazna & Isy, 2024; Aztari et al., 2024). Observations were also conducted to obtain contextual information concerning students' participation and the implementation of the extracurricular activities. The data collection process followed research-ethics principles by informing participants about the research purpose, maintaining confidentiality, protecting respondent identities, and using the collected information solely for academic purposes.

The collected data were analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling–Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) with SmartPLS. This analytical technique was selected because the study examined simultaneous relationships between extracurricular activities, personal branding, and non-academic achievement, including the mediating role of personal branding. The analysis consisted of outer-model and inner-model evaluation. The outer model was assessed through convergent validity using outer loadings and Average Variance Extracted (AVE), discriminant validity using the HTMT criterion, and construct reliability using Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability. The inner model was evaluated using R² and path coefficients, while hypotheses were tested through bootstrapping with 5,000 subsamples based on t-statistics and p-values. The analytical framework reflects previous research demonstrating that extracurricular participation can produce developmental outcomes through multiple interconnected mechanisms (Yeo et al., 2023). In addition, the inclusion of personal branding responds to emerging evidence that social media can support students' self-presentation and identity development (Aztari et al., 2024; Zain & Dwivayani, 2024).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

This study involved 292 students of SMPN 1 Manggeng Abdya who actively participated in digital content-based arts extracurricular activities as respondents with

total sampling techniques. Based on gender, respondents consisted of 136 male students (46.58%) and 156 female students (53.42%). Based on grade level, respondents consisted of class VII (109 students; 37.33%), class VIII (81 students; 27.74%), and class IX (102 students; 34.93%).

Based on the results of initial observations, digital content-based arts extracurricular activities at SMPN 1 Manggeng have gone well; Students are regularly present, active, and show creativity in making digital artworks. Students' personal branding is also in a fairly positive condition, characterized by students' confidence in presenting their work, the ability to express ideas, and the ethical use of digital media. In addition, students' non-academic achievements are included in the good category, which is characterized by activeness in participating in competitions, art performances, and earning awards in various activities, both inside and outside the school.

Evaluation Results of the Outer Model

An evaluation of the outer model is carried out to ensure the validity and reliability of the research instrument. Convergent validity assessments use outer loadings and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values, while construct reliability is measured through Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability.

Table 1. Outer Model Evaluation Results

Construct	Indicator (Remainder)	Outer Loading	AVE	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability
Extracurricular Activities (X)	X3, X6, X7, X10, X11, X12	0,647–0,849	0,638	0,885	0,913
Personal Branding (Y1)	Y1.3, Y1.4, Y1.7, Y1.8, Y1.11	0,766–0,849	0,637	0,857	0,898
Non-Academic Achievement (Y2)	Y2.3, Y2.4, Y2.7, Y2.8, Y2.12, Y2.13	0,761–0,901	0,683	0,906	0,928

Table 1 shows that all end-model indicators have an outer loading value that meets the threshold (≥ 0.70), except for X12 (0.647) which is maintained because the construct AVE value is still met. The AVE value of the three constructs is above 0.50 (0.638; 0.637; 0.683), so the convergent validity is met. Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability of the entire construct are above 0.70, which indicates excellent reliability (Hair et al., 2019).

Discriminant validity was evaluated using the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) and Fornell-Larcker criteria. The HTMT value between X and Y1 was 0.846, X and Y2 were 0.811, and Y1 and Y2 were 0.966. Although the HTMT Y1-Y2 value is close to the limit of 0.90, this can be understood substantively given that personal branding and non-academic achievement are closely conceptually related in the context of Gen Z students.

Results of Inner Model Evaluation (Structural Model)

The evaluation of the inner model includes the determination coefficient (R^2) and the size of the fit model. The results showed an R^2 Personal Branding (Y1) value of 0.557, meaning that 55.7% of the personal branding variance could be explained by extracurricular activities (X). The R^2 value of Non-Academic Achievement (Y2) is 0.753, meaning that 75.3% of the variance is explained simultaneously by extracurricular activities (X) and personal branding (Y1). The value of R^2 0.753 belongs to the category of

"strong" according to Chin (1998). The fit model size showed SRMR = 0.076 (< 0.10) and NFI = 0.784 (> 0.70), indicating the model had a good match with the data.

Hypothesis Test Results (Bootstrapping)

Hypothesis testing was carried out using Bootstrapping with 5,000 subsamples. The hypothesis is accepted if the T-statistic > 1.96 and the P-value < 0.05.

Table 2. Hypothesis Test Results (Bootstrapping)

Hypothesis	Pathway	Koef. Pathway (β)	T-Statistics	P-Value	Results
H1	X $\rightarrow$ Y1 (Personal Branding)	0,746	11,925	0,000	Accepted
H2	X $\rightarrow$ Y2 (Non-Academic Achievements) – Live	0,216	1,779	0,075	Rejected
H3	Y1 $\rightarrow$ Y2 (Non-Academic Achievement)	0,695	6,283	0,000	Accepted
H4	X $\rightarrow$ Y1 $\rightarrow$ Y2 (Full Mediation)	0,519	6,023	0,000	Accepted

As shown in Table 2, digital content-based arts extracurricular activities have a positive and significant effect on personal branding with a path coefficient of 0.746 and a p-value of < 0.000. Meanwhile, the influence of extracurricular activities on non-academic achievement was not significant with a path coefficient of 0.216 and a p-value of 0.075. Personal branding also had a positive and significant effect on non-academic achievement with a path coefficient of 0.696 and a p-value of < 0.000.

Research Framework

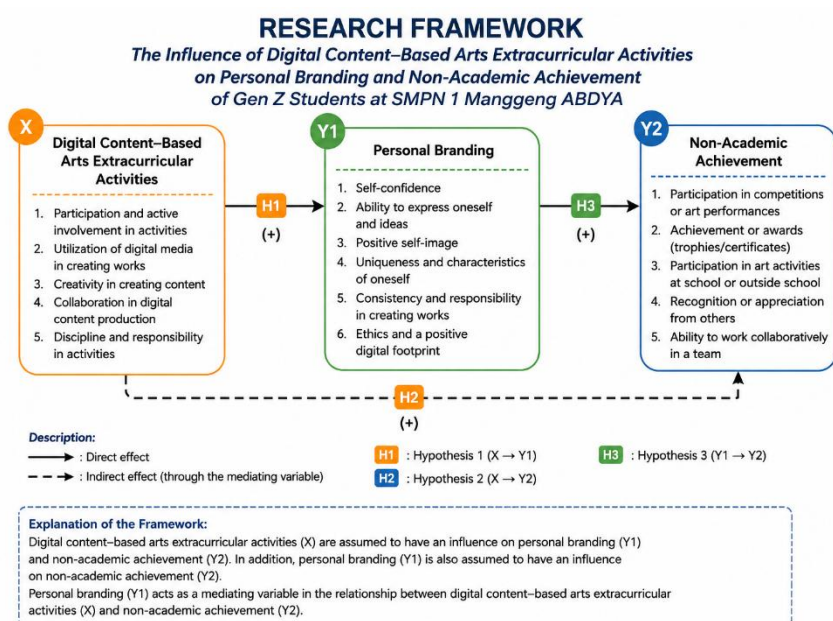


Figure 1. Research Framework

Figure 1 shows that digital content-based arts extracurricular activities (X) are suspected to have an impact on personal branding (Y1) and non-academic achievement (Y2). Personal branding plays a role as a mediating variable in the relationship between digital content-based arts extracurricular activities (X) and non-academic achievement (Y2).

Discussion

The findings demonstrate that digital content-based arts extracurricular activities significantly influence students' personal branding ($\beta = 0.746$; $t = 11.925$; $p < 0.001$), supporting H1. This strong relationship indicates that participation in creative digital activities provides students with opportunities to construct, communicate, and differentiate their identities. The finding is consistent with Aztari et al. (2024), who emphasized social media as a medium for displaying individual qualities and developing personal branding, and with Zain and Dwivayani (2024), who showed that Instagram can facilitate personal branding among Generation Z. Similarly, Ndruru et al. (2025) identified extracurricular activities as a space for creativity development. However, this study extends these findings by demonstrating that digital content-based arts activities specifically function as an extracurricular mechanism for personal branding formation among junior secondary students, rather than merely describing social media use or creativity development.

The direct relationship between digital content-based arts extracurricular activities and non-academic achievement was not significant ($\beta = 0.216$; $t = 1.779$; $p = 0.075$), leading to rejection of H2. This finding differs from studies suggesting that extracurricular participation can contribute positively to student achievement and development (Peparticipant et al., 2023; Sinaga et al., 2024). Nevertheless, it is consistent with Flaherty et al. (2022), who found that extracurricular participation does not necessarily produce substantial academic benefits when other explanatory factors are considered. The present finding suggests that participation alone is insufficient to generate measurable achievement. Students may attend activities without translating participation into competition success, awards, or public recognition. Therefore, the contribution of extracurricular activities depends on how participation develops transferable competencies, visibility, motivation, and opportunities for students to demonstrate their capabilities beyond routine activity involvement.

Personal branding significantly affects non-academic achievement ($\beta = 0.695$; $t = 6.283$; $p < 0.001$), supporting H3. This finding indicates that students who can communicate their abilities, present their creative work, maintain a consistent identity, and use digital platforms responsibly may obtain greater opportunities for recognition and participation in non-academic activities. The result complements Salsabilla et al. (2025), who reported that personal branding can strengthen student confidence and expand social and developmental opportunities. It also supports Aztari et al. (2024), who positioned social media as a medium for displaying individual qualities. However, the present study contributes a more outcome-oriented perspective by demonstrating that personal branding is statistically associated with measurable non-academic achievement, rather than being examined only as an identity or self-presentation construct. Thus, personal branding becomes an important developmental resource linking students' digital self-presentation with achievement opportunities.

The mediation analysis provides the most important contribution of this study. Personal branding significantly mediates the relationship between digital content-based arts extracurricular activities and non-academic achievement ($\beta = 0.519$; $t = 6.023$; $p < 0.001$), while the direct effect of extracurricular activities on achievement is insignificant. This pattern supports H4 and indicates full mediation. The finding complements Yeo et al. (2023), who demonstrated that co-curricular participation can generate developmental outcomes through psychological and developmental processes. It also extends Liem and Fredricks (2025), who highlighted the importance of peer acceptance and achievement goals in co-curricular settings. The novelty of the present study lies in identifying personal branding as a previously underemphasized mechanism through which digital arts extracurricular participation can be translated into non-academic achievement. Thus, achievement is not simply a consequence of participation but emerges through the transformation of participation into visible identity, confidence, and self-presentation.

The full mediation pattern also explains why the direct effect in H2 was insignificant despite the strong effect of extracurricular activities on personal branding. Digital content-based arts activities create opportunities for students to practice creativity, produce digital works, communicate ideas, and develop confidence. These experiences become more consequential when students transform them into a recognizable personal identity and communicate their competencies through appropriate digital channels. This interpretation is consistent with Prazna and Isy (2024) and Soledad and Cortez (2025), who emphasized the contribution of arts education to creativity, while Widiastuti et al. (2024) highlighted extracurricular activities as a means of developing students' potential, talents, and interests. The present study advances this literature by connecting creative development, digital self-presentation, and achievement within one empirical model, showing that creativity-oriented participation alone may not be sufficient unless students can convert their capabilities into a visible and credible personal profile.

The findings offer both theoretical and practical contributions to extracurricular management. Theoretically, the study expands research on extracurricular activities by integrating digital arts participation with personal branding and non-academic achievement, thereby shifting attention from participation as an endpoint toward the developmental mechanism that produces achievement. This perspective complements Yeo et al. (2023), who viewed co-curricular activities through developmental processes, and Ndruru et al. (2025), who emphasized creativity development. Practically, schools should therefore design digital arts extracurricular programs beyond routine production activities by incorporating content creation, portfolio development, ethical social-media use, public presentation, and digital self-presentation. Such integration can help students transform creative experiences into competencies and recognition. The contribution is particularly relevant for Gen Z students because their creative outputs can function simultaneously as learning products, identity expressions, and evidence of achievement.

Despite these contributions, several limitations should be considered when interpreting the findings. First, the study relied on self-reported questionnaire data, meaning that responses may reflect students' subjective perceptions of their participation, personal branding, and achievement. Second, the study focused on 292 students from one school, and the number of students participating in the specific arts extracurricular program was smaller than the overall respondent population.

Consequently, the findings should not be generalized automatically to other schools, age groups, or extracurricular contexts. Future research could involve multiple schools, larger samples, longitudinal designs, and objective indicators of achievement such as competition records, awards, portfolios, or teacher assessments. Nevertheless, the present study provides empirical evidence that personal branding is a critical pathway connecting digital content-based arts extracurricular participation with students' non-academic achievement, offering a novel direction for future research and extracurricular program development.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that participation in digital content-based arts extracurricular activities significantly strengthens students' personal branding ($\beta = 0.746$; $t = 11.925$; $p < 0.001$), while its direct effect on non-academic achievement is not significant ($\beta = 0.216$; $t = 1.779$; $p = 0.075$). However, personal branding significantly enhances non-academic achievement ($\beta = 0.695$; $t = 6.283$; $p < 0.001$) and fully mediates the relationship between extracurricular activities and achievement ($\beta = 0.519$; $t = 6.023$; $p < 0.001$). The key lesson is that extracurricular participation alone does not automatically produce achievement; its value becomes stronger when students transform creative experiences into a distinctive, confident, and positively communicated personal identity. Scientifically, this study contributes a novel empirical model connecting digital arts extracurricular activities, personal branding, and non-academic achievement, positioning personal branding as an important developmental mechanism. Nevertheless, the study is limited by its single-school context, reliance on self-reported questionnaire data, and restricted extracurricular context. Future research should employ larger and multi-school samples, longitudinal designs, and objective achievement indicators to examine whether this mediating mechanism remains consistent across different educational settings and extracurricular domains.

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