

Social media a unique career path, but a degree opens more doors

July 4, 2024 @ 12:16am



To be a social media influencer, one needs to have expertise in content creation, branding, marketing, and audience engagement . - FILE PIC

LETTERS: AS the economy grows and workforce needs rise, school-leavers are increasingly considering a career as social media (socmed) influencers.

They are interested in blazing the same path after following the stories and experiences shared by influencers they idolise.

A study by the UCSI University Poll Research Centre in early 2023 showed only 51 per cent out of 1,000 Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia school-leavers aged 18 to 20 planned to continue studying.

Thirty-four per cent who did not wish to pursue their studies wanted to become influencers and social media affiliates.

ADVERTISING

Part of the reason is having achieved financial stability through a social media "career", a narrative that resonates with many school-leavers, leading them to question the value of furthering their studies to the tertiary level.

Actually, both paths offer unique opportunities and also obstacles.

The first factor concerns education and skill development. Seeking a degree entails an individual engaging in academic study and honing a diverse set of skills, such as critical thinking, research and communication.

This establishes a robust knowledge base applicable across various disciplines, providing a solid foundation for a multitude of careers.

To be a social media influencer, requires expertise in content creation, branding, marketing and audience engagement.

Although these competencies are valuable in today's digital era, they may not offer the same comprehensive knowledge as in formal education.

The second factor concerns career opportunities. Possessing a degree can unlock various career paths across industries. Numerous professions mandate a degree as a basic requirement, augmenting one's employability and potential for higher earnings.

Meanwhile, becoming a successful social media influencer can open doors to brand partnerships, sponsored content, and various monetisation strategies.

However, these opportunities can be unpredictable and may not provide the same level of stability as a traditional career. Success as a social media influencer depends on trends and audience engagement.

The third factor is financial considerations. Pursuing a degree can be costly, often viewed as an investment in future earning potential.

Numerous professions that mandate a degree provide competitive salaries and avenues for career advancement. Over time, the financial return of a degree can be substantial.

Although certain social media influencers can earn substantial income through brand partnerships and sponsored content, this revenue stream can be erratic and might not provide the same degree of financial stability as a conventional career.

Financial stability in this field is not guaranteed, and earnings can be greatly based on an influencer's popularity and market trends.

The fourth factor is personal fulfilment. Acquiring a degree is a significant achievement that brings personal fulfilment and pride. It fosters personal growth and a more expansive worldview.

The academic journey often leads to lifelong learning and development.

Becoming a social media influencer enables individuals to express themselves creatively and engage with a broad audience. However, the pressure to uphold a particular image or online persona can also be stressful.

Ultimately, the choice between pursuing a degree and becoming a social media influencer depends on individual goals, values, and priorities.

It is essential to remember that the journey to success is unique for everyone, whether through the traditional academic route or the dynamic world of social media.

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The views expressed in this article are the author's own and do not necessarily reflect those of the New Straits Times