BUILDING A POSITIVE IMAGE: PERSONAL BRANDING TRAINING FOR SMA 7 BEKASI STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

Personal branding is an important concept that helps individuals build a unique identity that is recognized by others. With the increasing use of social media and digital technology, personal branding is becoming increasingly relevant, especially in the world of education. This training aims to improve the understanding and skills of grade 12 science students in building strong and authentic personal branding through the use of social media. The goal is to help students improve their skills and creativity, introduce their identity, and increase their confidence in public speaking. The training is conducted using interactive methods that include group discussions, simulations, and case studies to understand the concepts of personal branding, new media literacy, and digital media management. In addition, participants are given practical training to develop real skills such as creating a digital portfolio and writing effective personal branding content. Evaluation was conducted through a survey to measure participants' understanding and impressions after the training. The survey results showed that this training was very useful and had a positive impact on participants. Participants felt that this training improved their skills and creativity in personal branding and provided new knowledge that was relevant to today's digital era. Many participants emphasized the importance of personal branding to increase self-confidence and manage social media to build a positive image. They also admitted that this training helped them to know someone's personality through social media and provided insight into the use of technology such as AI in everyday life.

Keywords: personal branding, social media, self-identity

INTRODUCTION

The development of the era makes the world more competitive, students and young people need to develop their abilities and good name in the school environment and social life. By realizing the importance of knowing their potential and setting goals early on, students will find it easier to achieve success when they are adults. Therefore, the best time to develop their potential is during school. Research on this topic was conducted in Romania and showed that job opportunities increased by 37% for people who have good personal branding (Valoria Business Solutions).

Merdin (2011) explains how graduates should know how to promote themselves to manage their careers and provides an example of a self-promotion plan that graduates can follow. Gander (2014) also adds important ideas about how people can build self-image, especially in higher education. In the digital era like today, storytelling and creating e-Portfolios can be great tools for students to build their personal image and identity (Jones and Leverenz, 2017).

The concept of branding has become a major focus both scientifically and practically in recent years. Almost all products and services sold by companies today must be branded to increase competitiveness and ease of sale. The opportunity to form a brand has also penetrated into individual life, including in political situations, entertainment, recruitment, leadership, and entrepreneurship. Individuals who care about personal and professional development are beginning to realize that applying the concept of branding into life can help build a strong identity, a good reputation, a better position at work, and a successful career. Rein, Kotler, Hamlin, and Stoller (2006) highlighted that individuals can utilize marketing techniques from the business world to increase individual visibility, with having a high level of visibility currently being the main goal for everyone who wants to succeed in their career (Rein et al., 2006). As a result, personal branding becomes a key element to achieve high visibility, where people who succeed in forming a distinctive brand will be recognized by the target audience, have a long-lasting position in people's minds, and also have unique points that are different from competitors (Rein et al., 2006).

Building a personal brand that sticks to an individual is not an easy task. Personal brand consists of three main elements, namely appearance, personality, and character. (Juwito, 2022) An individual's brand grows through the activities he or she does, requiring a person to have life skills. Life skills include the ability to explore alternatives, weigh good and bad consequences, and make rational decisions when facing problems and issues. These skills help a person understand themselves, set goals, solve problems, and interact productively with others. Scientific research shows that life skills education helps students protect themselves from various dangers, including drug use, and

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provides a foundation of life skills to enter adulthood. SMAN 7 Bekasi, as a leading school, has an important role in providing an understanding of the benefits of personal branding to students. This will help students develop superior character and competitiveness needed to succeed in society.

This activity is in accordance with the Community Service Master Plan (RIPkM) with the theme Cyber Public Relations. Community service activities were also carried out at the same location last year, also with the theme of personal branding. The results of the activity showed enthusiasm in students and schools regarding personal branding. After further research, it was found that digital literacy is also related to personal branding. Research conducted by Martina Shalaty Putri with the title digital literacy competency in students of SMAN 7 Bekasi, found that some students found it difficult to build personal branding on social media because of fear of cyber bullying, cybercrime and hate speech.

Cyber Public Relations and personal branding are closely related to students. Through cyber public relations strategies, students can build a positive and professional image in the digital world, including on social media. Meanwhile, personal branding provides a framework for students to develop a consistent and convincing online identity. Both help students understand and manage their own image online, thus building a good reputation in the eyes of their online audience.

Building a strong personal brand in an individual requires not only life skills, but also involves new media literacy and digital media management. In an era where information is widely distributed through various online platforms, students need to understand how to utilize digital media to build their reputation positively. New media literacy skills help students identify relevant information, understand its context, and manage it wisely. In addition, digital media management involves the ability to choose the right platform, manage content shared online, and build useful networks. SMAN 7 Bekasi, as a leading school, can expand the learning approach to new media literacy and digital media management to provide students with a solid foundation in understanding and using media effectively in building their personal brands. This will not only equip them with relevant skills in this digital era, but also increase their competitiveness in an increasingly online society.

As mentioned above, this activity is a continuation of the Community Service Activity also carried out at the same location last year, also with the theme of personal branding. The results of the activity showed enthusiasm in students and schools regarding personal branding. After further research, it was found that digital literacy is also related to personal branding. Research conducted by Martina Shalaty Putri with the title digital literacy competency in students of SMAN 7 Bekasi, found that some students found it difficult to build personal branding on social media because of fear of cyber bullying, cybercrime and hate speech (Putri et al., 2024). This needs to be used as a reference for how the discussion should be brought up in this year's community service activities. To provide comprehensive data, here are some of the problems faced by partners:

- Lack of Awareness of New Media Literacy: Students may not fully realize the importance of new media literacy in the context of widespread information in digital media. Lack of understanding of how to identify relevant information, understand its context, and manage information wisely can be a problem.
- Digital Media Management Limitations: Students may not have adequate skills in selecting the right platforms, managing content shared online, and building useful networks. Lack of understanding in this regard can hinder students' ability to utilize digital media effectively.
- Underutilization of Personal Branding Potential: While students may recognize the importance of personal branding, they may not fully understand how to leverage digital media to build a positive reputation. There is potential to optimize the use of social media platforms and personal content management.

Skills Mismatch with Market Needs: The skills currently taught may not fully match the needs of an increasingly digitally connected job market. There is potential to refine the curriculum to better reflect the demands of today's digital world.

METHOD

To get the results according to the stated objectives, it is necessary to state the steps and methods to achieve them. Here are some methods compiled by the author according to the background and objectives to be achieved:

- Interactive Training
  Description: Interactive training sessions engage participants in group discussions, simulations, and case studies to deeply understand the concepts of personal branding, new media literacy, and digital media management.

Objective: To encourage active participation of participants, build a strong understanding of the issues, and stimulate critical thinking. The training is designed to make participants more directly involved so that they can develop analytical thinking skills and solve problems in real contexts.

- Case Study Discussion
Description: Presents case studies of individuals or professionals who have successfully built their personal branding, including the challenges they faced and the strategies they implemented.
Objective: To inspire participants, illustrate best practices, and provide first-hand insight into the personal branding journey. By studying real-world examples, participants can gain valuable insights into practical steps and effective tactics in developing their own personal branding.

- Continuous Monitoring and Evaluation
Description: Provides ongoing monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to measure participant progress after training. This may involve follow-up sessions, surveys, or project assignments.
Objective: Ensure the application of the concepts taught, assess the long-term impact of the training, and make adjustments if necessary. Ongoing monitoring allows for assessment of the effectiveness of the training and provides additional support if participants have difficulty implementing what they have learned.

The solution being developed based on the problems described by the partners is:

Building Awareness of New Media Literacy:
The form of awareness is by providing an understanding of the importance of having digital literacy skills, which will later encourage students to utilize these digital literacy skills to develop their abilities in building personal branding on social media. Students not only become spectators or audiences, but also creators without the fear of cyberbullying, cybercrime, and hate speech.

Utilization of Personal Branding Potential:
This is the main point in the proposed solution, by conducting monitoring and training activities in small groups with personal branding experts to guide students in utilizing personal branding potential on social media platforms. Furthermore, encouraging students to create digital portfolios that highlight their achievements, skills, and positive values to strengthen their online personal branding.

Match Skills with Market Needs:
Next, provide students with insights and options regarding trends and variations in skills developing in the digital era, to serve as additional information and a means to train new skills that continue to evolve and innovate in this modern age.

This community service activity aims to disseminate knowledge and research results to the wider community through various platforms. One of them is by publishing scientific articles through journals that have an ISSN number or through scientific seminar proceedings. Through these publications, information and findings from the research can be accessed by academics, practitioners, and the general public, thereby making a significant contribution to the enhancement of knowledge and understanding of the researched topic. Additionally, these activities also include publications through mass media, both print and online, as well as through university repositories. In this way, relevant information can be disseminated more widely and reach various groups, thereby increasing the impact of the research conducted and strengthening the connection between the academic world and society.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Personal branding is based on human meaning about life and has a strong relationship to a person's character. Personal branding becomes a person's personal identity, which sticks in the minds of others when they think of that person, and makes a person unique and different from others. According to McNally and Speak, there are three main dimensions that form personal branding, namely: (a) Individual competence or ability, (b) Personal style, and (c) A person's personal standards (Yunitasari and Japarianto, 2013).

Individual competence or ability includes the skills and knowledge that a person has, which enable him/her to perform a particular task or job well. This competence can come from formal education, work experience, training, or independent learning. Strong skills in a particular field not only increase a person's self-confidence but also strengthen his/her professional image in the eyes of others. Good competence also shows a person's dedication and commitment to continue learning and developing, so that they are able to compete and excel in their field.

Personal style refers to the way a person presents themselves, including their physical appearance, how they dress, how they speak, and how they interact with others. A consistent and authentic personal style can help a person build an emotional connection with their audience. It doesn't have to follow the latest trends, but it should reflect the individual's personality and values, so that others can easily recognize and remember them. A distinctive and original style can be a distinguishing feature of a person, and can be a key factor in building strong and meaningful relationships with others.

Personal standards include the values, principles, and ethics that a person holds dear. These standards reflect a person's integrity and commitment to quality and excellence. Having high personal standards means that a person strives to always give their best in everything they do. These standards not only shape daily behavior and decisions but also determine how a person wants to be seen and appreciated by others. Good personal standards demonstrate consistency and credibility, and are the foundation for a positive reputation and trust from others.

By understanding and developing these three dimensions, one can build a strong and authentic personal branding. Good personal branding not only helps individuals achieve personal and professional goals but also improves their reputation and credibility in the eyes of the wider community. The material presented is based on this understanding, and looks at case studies from celebrities or famous people on social media. By providing direct examples of how celebrities build brand image or self-image, the celebrity is known for his or her distinctive character or special traits that show him or her to be different from others. People who have special traits will find it easier to compete in the future.

Overall, the Personal Branding Training activity was carried out well, and was attended by 34 students from class 12 IPA. After the event, a survey was distributed to find out how the development and improvement of students' understanding and impressions and messages about the training activity. It was found that the personal branding training activity using social media showed that this training was very useful and had a positive impact on participants. Participants felt that this training improved their skills and creativity, helped in personal branding, and provided new knowledge that was relevant to the current digital era.

Many participants emphasized the importance of personal branding as a tool to introduce self-identity and increase self-confidence in public speaking. They appreciated that this training gave them real skills that could be applied immediately, especially in managing social media to build a positive image. In addition, participants also acknowledged that this training helped them get to know someone's personality through social media, provided insight into the use of technology such as AI in everyday life, and provided a deeper understanding of good communication. They felt that the knowledge gained from this training was very valuable and applicable in their lives.

Overall, the training was considered very enjoyable, informative, and interactive. Participants felt motivated and interested in exploring the topics taught further. They also hoped that activities like this would be held more often and more materials would be discussed in the future to continue developing their skills in facing the digital world.

Figure 1. Documentation of the Activity

Figure 2. Photo of the Participants

CONCLUSION

Personal branding is an important concept based on human meaning about life and individual character. Personal branding helps a person to be unique and recognized by others through three main dimensions: competence, personal style, and personal standards. Personal branding training, such as that conducted for grade 12 science students, has a significant positive impact. This training not only improves the skills and creativity of the participants, but also helps them understand the importance of personal identity and confidence in public speaking.

The training participants felt that the material presented was very relevant to the current digital era, giving them new knowledge that is applicable in everyday life, especially in managing social media to build a positive image. The training also provided insight into the use of technology such as AI, and the importance of good communication. Overall, the training was very well received by the participants, who felt motivated and more confident. They also hope that similar activities will be held more often with more material discussed to continue developing their skills in facing the digital world.

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