

CRAFTING SUCCESS: AMPLIFYING PUBLIC SPEAKING AND PERSONAL BRANDING FOR KINABALU HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS, MALAYSIA

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ABSTRACT

Public speaking is a critical component of strengthening personal branding, as it allows individuals to build credibility, connect authentically with their audience, and demonstrate their expertise. This article provides an overview of how public speaking and personal branding create success for high school students, along with effective strategies for leveraging these skills using descriptive analytical methods. The importance of public speaking in personal branding is highlighted, including its role in increasing visibility and credibility, enabling authentic connections, and positioning individuals as thought leaders. Strategies for effective public speaking are discussed, such as crafting a compelling narrative, knowing your audience, mastering non-verbal communication, leveraging technology and social media, and continuous improvement. Challenges in overcoming public speaking anxiety are discussed, with suggestions such as thorough preparation by mastering the material well, visualization techniques, and focusing on the value provided to the audience. The article concludes by emphasizing that mastering public speaking is a powerful tool for shaping and enhancing personal branding, and that by using effective strategies and continually refining skills, individuals can significantly enhance their professional identity and create lasting impressions that foster career growth.

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INTRODUCTION

Vocational High School (SMK) is an educational unit that prepares its graduates to be ready to enter the world of work (Watrianthos et al., 2022). Getting a decent job that suits your wishes is a dream for vocational school graduates. However, this cannot be achieved if these graduates do not prepare themselves first before entering the world of work. This can result in vocational school graduates or what we can call job seekers not knowing what they should do to compete in getting a suitable job (Li & Pilz, 2023).

Vocational education is directed at producing graduates who have a professional outlook, work smart and fast, precisely and efficiently without or with the supervision of others, value time, and maintain reputation (Suharno et al., 2020). Characters like this are the characteristics of the workforce needed by the world of work. It requires an effort to form a systematic professional attitude and a long time in vocational school to achieve this goal. Special treatment is also required (*special treatment*) for certain students, certain groups of students, or certain schools to form advantages according to the conditions of the students, the school where they study, and the potential of the area where the vocational school is located (Supriadi, et al, 2002: 236).

By focusing on the group of students who plan to look for work after graduating from school, it is hoped that students will be able to have one *soft skill* in supporting their readiness to enter the world of work (Nanayakkara & Dissanayake, 2020). Considering the increasingly high ratio between employment opportunities and the human resources needed, it is not balanced. Basically, the industrial sector and the government have focused on cooperation between industrial needs and the provision of human resources from the vocational school environment (Gorbatov et al., 2018).

Based on the description above, various problems can be identified as follows:

- 1) How do you shape the attitudes and behavior of students who are confident in accordance with their identity and qualifications?
- 2) How do you communicate well in written communication media to be able to win the competition to get a job?

Based on the problem identification above, the problem formulation in this community service program is: *Crafting Success: Amplifying Public Speaking and Personal Branding for Kinabalu High School Students, Malaysia*. It is planned that 50 participants will attend this

training, who are high school students in Kinabalu, Malaysia.

Objectives of this training include two parts:

- 1) Forming students' self-confidence to be able to present a personality that meets the criteria and competencies they possess so that they can gain confidence to carry out tasks or mandates in the world of work.
- 2) Helps improve students' skills in formal written communication to present adequate written presentations about themselves and their abilities.

The expected competencies for this training are:

- 1) Skills in public speaking
- 2) Participants' skills form personal branding

The benefits obtained from this training for students, this is a practical direction that can support their abilities in the aspect of communication skills so that they have high competitiveness in the industrial world, because they are able to display a good and attractive self-image.

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Communication Concept

As social creatures, humans always want to connect with other humans. Want to know the surrounding environment, even want to know what is happening inside him. This curiosity forces humans to need to communicate. In social life, people who never communicate with other people will undoubtedly be isolated from their community (Reith-Hall & Montgomery, 2023). Communication is a contact relationship between and between humans, both individuals and groups. In organizational life, communication is very important in the process of conveying information from the communicator to the communicant, both internal and external (Xu et al., 2023). According Gutiérrez-Puertas et al., (2020), smooth communication is one of the keys to the success or failure of the information conveyed and this will also influence the activities carried out within the organization.

Harrold D. Lasswell (Lasswell, 2007) said that a quick way to explain an act of communication is to answer the questions "Who conveyed, what was conveyed, through what channel, to whom and what was the effect" or what is commonly known as "*who says what to whom in which channel with what effect*" (Cangara, 2014: 25). The definitions stated above certainly do not represent all the definitions of communication that have been made by many

experts, but to a greater or lesser extent we can get an idea

2.1.1 Communication Elements

Laswell's (Lasswell, 2007) definition, it can be concluded that the elements of communication depend on each other, namely:

- a) Source(*source*)/send(*sender*)/The communicator is the party who takes the initiative or has a need to communicate. Sources can be individuals, groups, organizations or companies.
- b) Message, namely what is communicated/conveyed by the source (communicator) to the recipient (communicant). Messages can be in the form of verbal or non-verbal symbols that represent feelings, values, ideas/intent of the source.
- c) Media, namely the tools used by the source/communicator to convey messages to the communicant or recipient.
- d) Receiver (communicant), namely the person who receives the message from the source (communicator).
- e) Influence, namely what happens to the recipient when he receives the message.

2.1.2 Communication Function

Function is a potential that can be used to fulfill certain goals. To understand the function of communication, it is necessary to first understand the types of communication. There are 4 types of communication, namely communication with oneself, interpersonal communication, public communication, and mass communication. According to (Xu et al., 2023), the communication functions of the four types of communication are as follows:

- a) Communication with oneself functions to develop creative imagination, understand and control oneself, and increase maturity in thinking before making decisions
- b) Interpersonal communication functions to improve *human relations*, avoiding and resolving personal conflicts, reducing uncertainty about something, as well as sharing knowledge and experience with other people. Interpersonal communication, can improve human relations between the parties communicate.
- c) Public communication functions to foster a spirit of togetherness (solidarity), influence other people, provide information, educate and entertain.

- d) Mass communication functions to disseminate information, promote education, stimulate economic growth and create joy in one's life. However, with the rapid development of communication technology, especially in the fields of broadcasting and visual media (*audiovisual*), causing the function of mass media to have undergone many changes.

Sean MacBride, chairman of the UNESCO communications issues commission (1980) stated that communication cannot be interpreted as the exchange of news and messages, but also as individual activities regarding the exchange of data, facts and ideas. Therefore, mass communication can function as information, socialization, motivation, discussion material, education, advancing culture, entertainment and integration (Suen et al., 2020).

2.2 Personal Branding

A comprehensive strategy for personal branding on social media involves several key components that can enhance visibility, credibility, and engagement with your target audience.

Here are the main strategies derived from the search results:

1. **Understanding Your Brand:** Begin by identifying your unique strengths, values, and what you want to be known for. This foundational understanding will guide your branding efforts and help you articulate your personal story effectively.
2. **Building a Consistent Online Presence:** Maintain a professional and cohesive profile across various social media platforms. Consistency in your messaging, visuals, and engagement style is crucial for reinforcing your brand identity.
3. **Creating and Curating Quality Content:** Regularly produce high-quality, engaging content that resonates with your audience. This can include articles, videos, infographics, and personal insights. Content should provide value and reflect your expertise and interests.
4. **Engagement and Networking:** Actively engage with your audience by responding to comments, asking questions, and participating in discussions. Building relationships with followers and other influencers can expand your network and enhance your credibility.
5. **Utilizing Various Platforms:** Different social media platforms serve different purposes. Tailor your content and engagement strategies to fit the unique characteristics of each platform, whether it be LinkedIn for professional networking or Instagram for visual storytelling.

6. Measuring and Adjusting Your Strategy: Regularly analyze your social media metrics to assess the effectiveness of your branding efforts. Use insights from your audience's engagement to refine your content and approach, ensuring that your strategy evolves with your audience's needs.
7. Positioning as a Thought Leader: Share your knowledge and insights on relevant topics within your industry. Establishing yourself as a thought leader can significantly enhance your personal brand and attract opportunities for collaboration and growth.
8. Setting Personal Branding Goals: Define clear, actionable goals for your personal branding efforts. These goals will guide your strategy and help you stay focused on achieving specific outcomes, such as increasing your follower count or enhancing your professional reputation.

By implementing these strategies, individuals can effectively build and enhance their personal brands on social media, positioning themselves as credible and influential figures in their respective fields.

MATERIAL AND METHOD

Stages in the training "Improving Public Speaking and Personal Branding in Preparation for Entering the World of Work for High School Students at the Indonesian Embassy School in Kinabalu, Malaysia" which includes these two parts is as follows:

1. Needs Analysis

Based on discussions carried out by the community service team in this training program, the training participants need this training considering:

- Lack of it *soft skill* in terms of communication, especially interviews for vocational school students.
- Lack of personal branding capabilities in order to highlight personal potential and qualifications that are already owned.

2. Instructional Plan

In determining this instructional design, the following aspects need to be considered, namely:

- The contents of the training program material are relevant to the needs of the training participants.

- The modules used in this training must be able to help participants easily understand the material contained in the modules provided.

3. Development Stage

In order to develop the training program, the community service team is trying to develop this training, both in terms of training materials, modules and questions and answers in a form that is relevant to various aspects of developing students' communication skills in Understanding and Preparing Themselves to Enter the World of Work.

Realization of Problem Solving

- The implementation of this training program is planned for August 2024. The time allocated for this training consists of 3 hours, or is estimated to start at 09.00-12.00 WIB.
- The community service team will prepare an evaluation related to participants' understanding of the training material, the overall implementation of the training to accommodate the possibility of requiring further training with other material to complement the training material that has been provided previously.
- Target audience around 50 participants will attend the training from representatives of vocational school students in Kinabalu, Malaysia.

It is hoped that the method used in this training program will provide ease of understanding for the training participants. In this training, the methods used are the Lecture Method and Question and Answer. Instructors are required to create *slide formatted presentation power point* which is distributed to training participants before the program starts. The training materials that will be delivered and the instructors in this training program are explained in the table below.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The first material presented in this community service activity is related to public speaking. The material includes the importance of public speaking skills for leaders, presented during a workshop at Sekolah Indonesia Kota Kinabalu. The training aims to equip future leaders with effective communication abilities that are critical for leadership roles. Public speaking is the process of communicating information to an audience. It is usually done in a structured,

deliberate manner intended to inform, influence, or entertain listeners. Public speaking is a valuable skill that can enhance the students personal and professional life by improving their ability to communicate clearly and persuasively.

The second material is about personal branding. Personal branding is the practice of marketing oneself and one's career as a brand. It involves creating a unique professional identity and coherent message that sets someone apart from others. The process begins with self-awareness, where we understand our strengths, values, passions, and unique qualities. Knowing the target audience is crucial, as it helps tailor our brand message to needs and expectations. Developing a clear and consistent brand message that reflects the personal and professional values is essential. In today's digital age, having a strong online presence through a professional website, active social media profiles, and a LinkedIn profile is vital. Sharing valuable content related to our field establishes the expert and builds credibility. Networking within the industry is a key component, as it can lead to opportunities and collaborations that enhance the brand. Consistency in the brand message across all platforms and interactions reinforces our brand and makes it more recognizable. Authenticity is crucial, as being genuine builds trust and makes the brand more relatable. Personal branding is an ongoing process that requires regular assessment, feedback, and adjustments to stay relevant and impactful. Effective personal branding can open doors to new opportunities, enhance the professional reputation, and help us to achieve the career goals.





Figure 1. Providing Education Economics Material

In this community service activity, a pre-test and post-test were conducted to assess the understanding of students at Sekolah Indonesia Kota Kinabalu before and after the seminar sessions and materials.

Based on the pre-test and post-test results, it can be concluded that, in general, the students have understood the definition of public speaking, which is the art of communicating confidently. The students of SIKK also comprehend that public speaking consists of five elements: communication, message, medium, audience, and effect. The results also show that students were able to identify the three golden rules of public speaking: Introduction, Content, and Conclusion. Regarding personal branding, the students were able to recognize the various stages involved in building a personal brand, which include knowing yourself, setting clear goals, and identifying values. The final question on the pre-test and post-test also helped students understand that building a personal brand on social media requires more than just advanced technology.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This activity aims to improve public speaking skills and create good personal branding for SMK SIKK Kinabalu students, Malaysia. These two soft skills are important to have and improve their abilities to support students' careers after graduating from SMK. During the activity, participants actively participated and showed their readiness to learn and understand what strategies must be done to improve public speaking and personal branding according to the needs of the world of work. This can be seen from the enthusiasm of the participants with various questions, both on public speaking material and personal branding material. In addition, the achievement of this goal can be seen from the results of the post-test carried out by showing 87% the results of a large increase in student understanding compared to the pre-test at the beginning of the activity.

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