



THE ROLE OF DIGITAL LITERACY IN OPTIMIZING STUDENTS' PERSONAL BRANDING THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA AT SMK MASTER INDONESIA

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Abstract

The development of information technology and social media provides significant opportunities for students to build positive personal branding in the digital space. This study aims to analyze the role of digital literacy in optimizing students' personal branding through social media at SMK Master Indonesia. The research method used was a quantitative approach, distributing questionnaires to students as research respondents. The results show that a good level of digital literacy can improve students' ability to use social media creatively, ethically, and productively, thereby building a positive self-image in the educational environment and society.

Keywords: Digital Literacy, Personal Branding, Social Media, Vocational High School Students

INTRODUCTION

The development of the digital era has transformed communication and interaction patterns in society, particularly among students. Social media platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube have become primary platforms for students to express themselves, share their work, and build personal identities in the digital world. Digital literacy is a crucial skill for students to use social media wisely, critically, and responsibly. This skill encompasses not only technology use but also an understanding of digital ethics, information security, and the ability to create positive content (Maspuroh et al., 2022).

Personal branding is the process of developing a positive self-image through the public presentation of abilities, character, and achievements. In an educational context, personal branding can help students improve their self-confidence, communication skills, and prepare them for the world of work and digital entrepreneurship. Vocational high school students, as the digital generation, have a significant opportunity to utilize social media for self-promotion and competency development. However, a lack of digital literacy can lead to misuse of social media, the spread of negative information, and a low awareness of their digital footprint (Pertiwi & Irwansyah, 2020).

Research on the role of digital literacy in optimizing students' personal branding through social media at SMK Master Indonesia is important because the development of digital technology has made social media a central part of student life. Students not only use social media for entertainment, but also as a means of communication, self-promotion, and potential development that can influence their self-image in society. Through this research, it can be determined to what extent students' digital literacy skills in using social media wisely, creatively, and responsibly so as to build a positive personal branding. Furthermore, the research results are expected to provide a basis for schools in developing effective digital



literacy education programs to improve the quality of human resources who are adaptive, productive, and ready to face the challenges of the digital era.

METHOD

This study employed a descriptive quantitative method, collecting data through the distribution of questionnaires to students of SMK Master Indonesia. The sample was selected using a purposive sampling technique, with 60 active students as respondents. The research instrument consisted of several indicators: digital media usage skills, understanding of social media ethics, positive content creation skills, and personal branding skills through social media. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics to determine the relationship between digital literacy and optimizing students' personal branding.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The research results show that the majority of Indonesian Master Vocational School students actively use social media on a daily basis. The most frequently used platforms are Instagram, TikTok, and WhatsApp. Seventy-eight percent of respondents stated that social media helps them showcase their talents, skills, and achievements to the wider community. Furthermore, students with high digital literacy tend to be better able to create creative content, maintain ethical digital communication practices, and understand the importance of a digital footprint in building a positive self-image.

This study also found that digital literacy influences students' ability to sort information, avoid the spread of hoaxes, and maintain the security of their social media accounts. Students who understand digital ethics are more careful when uploading content and are able to build positive social relationships in the digital space. This demonstrates that digital literacy not only improves technical skills in using technology but also shapes students' character and fosters healthy interactions on social media.

Furthermore, the personal branding students build through social media has a positive impact on increasing self-confidence and motivation to learn. Many students have begun using social media to promote their design work, organizational activities, and even small businesses. These activities demonstrate that social media can be a tool for developing personal potential when used productively and supported by strong digital literacy skills.

However, this study also identified several obstacles, such as a lack of supervision of social media use, low awareness of personal data security, and a tendency for some students to use social media solely for entertainment. Therefore, schools need to provide ongoing digital literacy education through training, seminars, and technology-based learning to enable students to use social media optimally and responsibly.

CONCLUSION

Digital literacy plays a crucial role in optimizing students' personal branding through social media at SMK Master Indonesia. Understanding digital technology, social media ethics, and creating positive content has been proven to help students build a positive and productive self-image in the digital space. The use of social media, supported by digital literacy, can enhance students' creativity,



self-confidence, and readiness to face the evolving digital world. Therefore, support from schools and the educational environment is needed to improve students' digital literacy competencies so that social media can be optimally utilized for self-development and future development.

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