

Digital Communication Strategy Of Communication Students In Building Entrepreneurial Personal Branding Through Social Media

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Abstract. The rapid growth of social media has transformed communication patterns and economic activities, including among university students who utilize digital platforms to promote their businesses. However, many students still use social media mainly for product promotion without applying a structured personal branding strategy. This study aims to analyze the digital communication strategies used by Communication Science students at Universitas Dehasen Bengkulu in building entrepreneurial-oriented personal branding through social media. This research employed a descriptive qualitative approach. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, observation of Instagram accounts, and documentation involving students who run businesses and use social media as a promotional medium. The data were analyzed using the interactive model of Miles and Huberman, including data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The findings indicate that students have begun utilizing social media to establish their business identity; however, the implementation is still inconsistent. Most of the content focuses on product promotion rather than presenting personal values, uniqueness, and continuous audience engagement. The study concludes that students' digital communication strategies are still basic and not yet systematically planned. Strengthening personal branding requires message consistency, clear identity, and active interaction with audiences to support entrepreneurial development.

Keywords: *Personal Branding, Digital Communication, Social Media, Student Entrepreneurship, Digital Identity.*

INTRODUCTION

The rapid development of digital technology has significantly transformed communication patterns in contemporary society. One of the most influential developments is the emergence of social media as a dominant communication platform that enables individuals to interact, share information, and build networks without spatial and temporal limitations. Social media platforms have evolved from simple communication tools into complex digital ecosystems that influence social interaction, cultural trends, and economic activities. The increasing number of global social media users reflects the growing importance of these platforms in everyday life. Recent data indicate that global social media users have reached more than five billion people, representing a large portion of the world's population (The Global Statistics, 2025). In Indonesia, internet penetration has also increased rapidly, with millions of users actively engaging in various social media platforms as part of their daily communication practices (Datareportal, 2025). The widespread use of social media has not only changed the way people communicate but has also opened new opportunities in the economic sector. Social media platforms allow individuals to promote products, build business networks, and develop entrepreneurial activities through digital communication strategies. As a result, digital platforms are increasingly used as

marketing tools by individuals, organizations, and small businesses. In this context, social media serves not only as a medium of communication but also as a strategic space for building identity, reputation, and professional credibility in the digital environment (Nasrullah, 2020).

One of the important concepts that emerges in the context of digital communication is personal branding. Personal branding refers to the strategic process of building and managing public perceptions of an individual's abilities, personality, values, and expertise. Through personal branding, individuals can shape how they are perceived by others and position themselves in a competitive environment. A strong personal brand enables individuals to differentiate themselves from others and create a distinctive identity that can influence professional opportunities and social relationships. According to Kurniati et al. (2022), personal branding plays an important role in shaping public perception and building trust in the digital era. When individuals successfully communicate their competencies and values through digital platforms, they can develop credibility and strengthen their professional reputation. In the context of social media, personal branding is often developed through the strategic use of content, visual identity, and interaction with audiences. Social media platforms provide users with the ability to produce and distribute content independently, allowing them to construct their digital identity through storytelling, visual representation, and communication styles. The effectiveness of personal branding in social media depends on several factors, including message consistency, authenticity, audience engagement, and content relevance. When these elements are managed strategically, individuals can develop a strong digital presence and influence how they are perceived by audiences.

Among various social media platforms, Instagram has become one of the most popular platforms used by young people, including university students. Instagram emphasizes visual communication through photos, videos, and short captions, making it a suitable platform for presenting personal identity and promoting products or services. Many students utilize Instagram as a platform for creative expression, networking, and business promotion. The visual nature of Instagram allows users to showcase their activities, achievements, and business ventures in a more engaging and accessible format. In recent years, the use of social media for entrepreneurial activities among university students has increased significantly. Many students start small-scale businesses while pursuing their academic studies, such as selling food, fashion products, beauty products, or offering creative services like photography and event organizing. Social media platforms enable students to promote their businesses with relatively low costs while reaching wider audiences. Through digital communication strategies, students can build relationships with customers, share product information, and develop marketing strategies that support the growth of their businesses.

However, despite the widespread use of social media for entrepreneurial purposes, many students still use these platforms primarily as tools for product promotion rather than as strategic spaces for building personal branding. In many cases, the content shared by students focuses mainly on product advertising without highlighting personal identity, values, expertise, or unique characteristics. As a result, the professional identity of students as entrepreneurs is often not clearly communicated to audiences. This situation indicates that although students actively use social media, many of them still lack an effective digital communication strategy that integrates personal branding with entrepreneurial activities (Fajriati, 2020). Several previous studies have examined the role of social media in developing personal branding and digital communication strategies. Winayu et al. (2025) found that consistent content strategies on Instagram can strengthen personal branding and create a strong image among audiences. Their research shows that individuals who maintain consistent messaging and visual identity are more likely to be recognized and trusted by their followers. Similarly, Putri and Burhan (2025) highlight that social media platforms can significantly contribute to the development of digital careers and professional identity when supported by effective personal branding strategies.

Despite these findings, there is still a gap between theoretical knowledge about personal branding and its practical implementation among university students. Many students understand the importance of using social media for promotion, but they often do not apply structured strategies to build their digital identity. As a result, their social media activities remain limited to promotional content without developing a clear personal brand that reflects their entrepreneurial values and competencies. This gap becomes particularly relevant in the context of communication students who are expected to possess knowledge and skills related to digital communication strategies. Communication students are theoretically equipped with an understanding of media, audience engagement, and communication management. However, it remains unclear how effectively they apply these theoretical concepts in real-life entrepreneurial practices through social media. Investigating this issue can provide valuable insights into how digital communication strategies are implemented by students in developing their entrepreneurial identity.

Therefore, this study aims to analyze the digital communication strategies used by Communication Science students at Universitas Dehasen Bengkulu in building entrepreneurial-oriented personal branding through social media. This research focuses on how students utilize Instagram to present their business identity, communicate with audiences, and develop their digital presence. The study also examines how students apply the principles of personal branding in managing their social media content and interaction with audiences. This research contributes to the development of knowledge in the field of digital communication and entrepreneurship, particularly in understanding how university students utilize social media to build personal branding. The findings are expected to provide insights for students, educators, and researchers regarding the importance of strategic digital communication in supporting entrepreneurial activities in the digital era.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Digital Communication and Social Media

The development of digital communication technologies has significantly transformed how individuals interact, exchange information, and build relationships. Social media platforms allow users to communicate in real time and share various forms of content, including text, images, audio, and video. Unlike traditional media, social media enables interactive communication where users act not only as information consumers but also as content producers. This communication pattern is often described as many-to-many communication because users can simultaneously send and receive information within digital networks (Nasrullah, 2020). The growing influence of social media has also changed marketing and business strategies. Individuals and small businesses increasingly rely on social media to promote products, communicate with customers, and build brand awareness. Digital platforms provide a cost-effective marketing channel that allows entrepreneurs to reach wider audiences without relying on traditional advertising methods. As a result, social media has become an important tool for developing digital identity and promoting entrepreneurial activities in the contemporary digital economy.

Among various social media platforms, Instagram has become one of the most widely used platforms, particularly among young people and university students. Instagram emphasizes visual communication through photos, videos, and captions, allowing users to present their activities and identities in a visually engaging way. The platform also provides interactive features such as comments, direct messages, stories, and highlights, which support continuous interaction between users and audiences. These features make Instagram an effective platform for building personal branding and promoting entrepreneurial activities.

Personal Branding in the Digital Era

Personal branding is a concept that refers to the process of shaping public perceptions about an individual's abilities, values, and personality. The term originates from the concept of branding in marketing, which refers to creating a distinctive identity that differentiates a product or service from others. In the context of individuals, personal branding involves strategically communicating personal strengths and characteristics in order to create a recognizable identity in the minds of others (Amaliah et al., 2024). According to Bezos, a personal brand can be understood as what people say about an individual when that person is not present. This definition highlights the importance of perception in shaping personal reputation. Personal branding therefore involves managing impressions and communicating identity in a consistent manner. When individuals successfully communicate their competencies and values, they can create a positive reputation that influences professional opportunities and social relationships.

In the digital era, social media plays a crucial role in the development of personal branding. Social media platforms allow individuals to construct their digital identity through content creation, visual presentation, and interaction with audiences. Through consistent communication strategies, individuals can establish credibility, expand networks, and strengthen their professional image. In entrepreneurial contexts, personal branding can also contribute to building consumer trust and strengthening the market position of a business (Kurniati et al., 2022).

The Eight Laws of Personal Branding

One of the widely recognized theoretical frameworks for understanding personal branding was proposed by Peter Montoya. Montoya introduced the concept of the Eight Laws of Personal Branding, which explains how individuals can build a strong personal brand by strategically managing their identity and communication. According to Montoya, personal branding is not merely about self-promotion but about consistently communicating one's unique value and expertise to the public (Samatan et al., 2024).

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The first principle is specialization, which emphasizes the importance of focusing on a specific field of expertise. Individuals who concentrate on a particular area are more easily recognized and remembered by audiences. Specialization allows individuals to position themselves as experts in a specific domain.

The second principle is leadership, which refers to the ability of individuals to demonstrate credibility and authority in their field. Leadership in personal branding involves gaining recognition as someone who possesses knowledge, experience, and competence that others can rely on.

The third principle is personality, which highlights the importance of authenticity in personal branding. A strong personal brand should reflect the individual's real personality rather than an artificial image. Authenticity helps audiences build emotional connections and trust with the individual.

The fourth principle is distinctiveness, which emphasizes the need for differentiation. Personal branding should highlight unique characteristics that distinguish an individual from others. Without distinctiveness, an individual's identity may be difficult to recognize in competitive environments.

The fifth principle is visibility, which refers to the need for continuous exposure. A personal brand becomes stronger when individuals consistently appear in public spaces, including digital platforms. Consistent visibility allows audiences to become familiar with the individual's identity.

The sixth principle is unity, which emphasizes the consistency between an individual's public image and real-life behavior. Personal branding should reflect genuine values and

actions, ensuring that the identity communicated to the public aligns with the individual's real character.

The seventh principle is persistence, which highlights the importance of long-term commitment. Building a strong personal brand requires continuous effort and cannot be achieved instantly. Consistency over time strengthens credibility and reputation.

The final principle is goodwill, which refers to the importance of maintaining a positive reputation through ethical behavior and meaningful contributions. A personal brand that reflects positive values tends to gain greater trust and long-term support from audiences.

Social Media and Student Entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship refers to the process of creating new business opportunities by utilizing available resources, creativity, and innovation. Entrepreneurs are individuals who identify opportunities, organize resources, and take calculated risks to generate value and profit (Hermawan, 2023). In recent years, entrepreneurial activities among university students have increased significantly. Many students engage in small-scale businesses while continuing their academic studies. Social media platforms provide students with opportunities to promote their products, communicate with customers, and expand their market reach. Through digital communication strategies, students can introduce their products to a wider audience while simultaneously building their personal identity as entrepreneurs.

However, several studies indicate that many students still use social media primarily as a promotional tool rather than as a strategic platform for building personal branding. As a result, their digital communication activities often focus on product promotion without clearly presenting their personal values, expertise, or unique identity. This situation highlights the importance of understanding how students develop digital communication strategies to build entrepreneurial-oriented personal branding through social media.

METHODS

This study employed a descriptive qualitative research design to explore how university students implement digital communication strategies in building entrepreneurial-oriented personal branding through social media. Qualitative research is appropriate for understanding social phenomena from the perspectives and experiences of participants, allowing researchers to explore meanings, motivations, and behaviors in depth (Sugiyono, 2020). The research focused on Communication Science students at Universitas Dehasen Bengkulu who actively use social media as a platform for entrepreneurial activities. The units of analysis in this study were individual students who operate small-scale businesses and utilize Instagram as a digital platform to promote their products or services and communicate with their audiences.

Participants were selected using a purposive sampling technique, which allows researchers to choose participants based on specific criteria relevant to the research objectives. The criteria for selecting participants included students who were enrolled in the Communication Science program at Universitas Dehasen Bengkulu, had operated a business for at least one year, actively used Instagram as a promotional platform for their business, and were willing to participate in the research. Based on these criteria, three student entrepreneurs were selected as research informants. The participants represented different types of entrepreneurial activities, including entertainment services, culinary businesses, and fashion retail. The diversity of business backgrounds provided richer insights into how different students apply digital communication strategies and personal branding practices through social media.

Data collection was conducted through several qualitative techniques to obtain comprehensive information. The primary data were collected through in-depth interviews with the selected informants. Semi-structured interview guidelines were used to allow participants to explain their experiences, strategies, and perspectives regarding the use of social media in

developing their entrepreneurial identity. In addition to interviews, observation was conducted by examining the participants' Instagram accounts to understand how they present their businesses and personal branding in the digital environment. The researcher analyzed the types of content shared, communication styles, and interactions with audiences. Documentation was also used to support the research findings, including screenshots of Instagram posts, account profiles, and other digital materials related to the participants' entrepreneurial activities. These multiple data sources allowed the researcher to triangulate information and enhance the credibility of the research findings.

The analysis of this study was guided by the theoretical framework of the Eight Laws of Personal Branding proposed by Montoya, which explains how individuals can build a strong personal brand by strategically managing their identity and communication (Samatan et al., 2024). The analysis focused on several key dimensions, including specialization, leadership, personality, distinctiveness, visibility, unity, persistence, and goodwill. These dimensions were used as analytical indicators to understand how students present their expertise, authenticity, uniqueness, and reputation through social media communication. Data were analyzed using the interactive model proposed by Miles and Huberman, which involves three main stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Through this process, the researcher systematically organized the collected data, identified patterns, and interpreted the findings related to the digital communication strategies used by student entrepreneurs in building their personal branding through social media.

RESULTS

This section presents the findings obtained from interviews, observations, and documentation regarding the digital communication strategies used by Communication Science students at Universitas Dehasen Bengkulu in building entrepreneurial-oriented personal branding through Instagram. The analysis was conducted using the framework of the Eight Laws of Personal Branding proposed by Montoya, which includes specialization, leadership, personality, distinctiveness, visibility, unity, persistence, and goodwill.

Specialization

The findings indicate that most participants have begun to demonstrate specialization in presenting their entrepreneurial identity through Instagram. Specialization refers to the ability of individuals to focus on a specific field of expertise and consistently communicate that identity to their audience. Two participants showed clear specialization in their social media content. One participant who operates an entertainment service business frequently uploads content related to event activities, behind-the-scenes preparations, and client testimonials. This content consistently highlights the participant's role as an entertainment service provider.

Similarly, another participant who manages a culinary business focuses on sharing content related to menu offerings, customer activities, and the atmosphere of the food stall. The Instagram account also clearly presents the identity of the business through its profile description and promotional posts. However, another participant who operates a fashion retail business has not yet demonstrated strong specialization. The content posted on the Instagram account still combines personal photos with product promotions, making the entrepreneurial identity less clearly communicated.

Leadership

Leadership in personal branding refers to the ability of individuals to present themselves as credible and knowledgeable figures within their field. The findings show that two participants have attempted to build credibility through their Instagram content. The participant who operates the entertainment service business shares documentation of professional work and testimonials

from clients. These posts highlight the participant's experience and competence in organizing events.

Another participant who manages a culinary business shares stories about the process of starting the business from limited capital and the challenges encountered during the early stages. These narratives create an inspirational image and position the participant as a student entrepreneur who demonstrates determination and entrepreneurial spirit. In contrast, the participant involved in fashion retailing has not yet shown strong leadership representation on social media, as the content mainly focuses on product images without additional storytelling or educational content.

Personality

Personality plays an important role in strengthening personal branding because it reflects the authenticity of individuals in presenting themselves to audiences. The findings indicate that two participants present their personalities in a natural and authentic manner through their Instagram content. One participant combines professional content with personal reflections about event preparation and work experiences. This approach allows audiences to see both the professional and personal sides of the entrepreneur.

Another participant adopts a simple and honest communication style, presenting the culinary business as it appears in reality without excessive visual modification. This authenticity helps create a sense of closeness with customers and audiences. However, the third participant shows limited expression of personality in social media content, as most posts focus solely on product images without narrative captions or storytelling.

Distinctiveness

Distinctiveness refers to the uniqueness that differentiates an individual's personal brand from others. The findings reveal that two participants have developed unique characteristics in their Instagram content. The entertainment service provider differentiates the business through visually consistent promotional designs and detailed documentation of events. The culinary business owner highlights uniqueness through storytelling about entrepreneurial struggles and daily business activities.

In contrast, the fashion retail participant has not yet developed a distinctive communication strategy. The content posted is similar to other online clothing sellers, often reposting product images provided by suppliers. As a result, the personal brand lacks a clear and unique identity that distinguishes it from competitors.

Visibility

Visibility refers to the frequency and consistency of social media activity. The findings indicate that participants who manage entertainment and culinary businesses demonstrate relatively strong visibility on Instagram. These participants frequently upload posts and Instagram Stories to share updates about business activities, promotional offers, and customer interactions. Consistent posting helps maintain audience awareness and engagement with the brand.

On the other hand, the fashion retail participant shows lower visibility due to irregular posting patterns. The participant occasionally uploads product photos but does not consistently maintain social media activity. This inconsistency reduces the overall visibility of the business and limits opportunities for audience engagement.

Unity

Unity in personal branding refers to the alignment between the identity presented on social media and the individual's real-life activities. The findings show that two participants maintain

strong alignment between their digital representation and their actual business activities. The content shared on Instagram accurately reflects the real conditions of the businesses they operate.

In contrast, the fashion retail participant demonstrates weaker unity because product promotions are sometimes posted without clear evidence of ongoing business activity. Limited documentation of real business processes makes it difficult for audiences to fully understand the participant's entrepreneurial role.

Persistence

Persistence refers to the consistency and long-term commitment required to build a strong personal brand. The findings indicate that two participants demonstrate persistence in maintaining their entrepreneurial presence on social media. Despite facing challenges such as fluctuating customer demand and academic responsibilities, these participants continue to update their accounts and promote their businesses.

However, the fashion retail participant admits that maintaining consistency is challenging due to academic commitments and limited time. As a result, the development of personal branding through social media remains inconsistent.

Goodwill

Goodwill refers to maintaining a positive reputation and ethical communication with audiences. All participants demonstrate awareness of the importance of maintaining positive communication with customers and followers. Participants respond to inquiries politely, provide clear product information, and attempt to maintain friendly interactions with audiences.

Nevertheless, the level of goodwill reflected in social media engagement varies among participants. The entertainment and culinary business owners demonstrate stronger goodwill through active interaction with followers and the presence of customer testimonials. In contrast, the fashion retail participant shows limited interaction due to lower posting frequency and minimal engagement with audiences.

Overall, the findings indicate that students have begun to utilize Instagram as an important platform for developing entrepreneurial-oriented personal branding. Social media, particularly Instagram, provides a space where student entrepreneurs can introduce their businesses, showcase their activities, and communicate directly with their audiences. Through visual content, captions, and interactive features such as comments and stories, students are able to present their entrepreneurial identity and promote their products or services simultaneously. This indicates that social media has become a strategic tool for supporting entrepreneurial activities among university students in the digital era. However, the findings also reveal that the implementation of digital communication strategies varies significantly among participants. While some students demonstrate a relatively structured and consistent approach to personal branding, others still use social media primarily as a platform for simple product promotion without integrating a clear branding strategy. Participants who consistently upload content related to their business activities, interact actively with audiences, and highlight their personal values tend to build stronger personal branding. Their social media presence reflects a clear identity, which helps audiences recognize their expertise and entrepreneurial role.

In contrast, participants who post content irregularly or combine business promotion with unrelated personal content often struggle to build a clear and recognizable personal brand. The absence of a consistent communication strategy makes it difficult for audiences to associate the account with a specific entrepreneurial identity. As a result, the potential of social media as a strategic branding platform is not fully utilized. The results also highlight that several key factors influence the effectiveness of personal branding in the digital environment. First, consistency in posting content and maintaining communication with audiences is crucial in sustaining visibility

and building audience trust. Second, uniqueness or distinctiveness helps individuals differentiate themselves from competitors who operate in similar fields. Third, audience interaction plays an important role in strengthening relationships between entrepreneurs and their followers, which can enhance credibility and customer loyalty.

In addition, authenticity and alignment between online representation and real-life activities also contribute to the effectiveness of personal branding. Audiences tend to trust individuals who present themselves honestly and consistently in both digital and real-life contexts. When students are able to communicate their entrepreneurial journey, experiences, and challenges openly, they are more likely to create emotional connections with their audiences.

Therefore, the findings suggest that successful personal branding on social media requires not only active participation but also a well-planned digital communication strategy. Students who strategically manage their content, maintain consistent engagement with audiences, and highlight their unique entrepreneurial identity are more likely to develop a stronger and more sustainable personal brand in the competitive digital environment.

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to analyze how Communication Science students at Universitas Dehasen Bengkulu utilize digital communication strategies to build entrepreneurial-oriented personal branding through social media. The findings demonstrate that Instagram has become an important platform for students to present their business activities, communicate with audiences, and construct their digital identity as student entrepreneurs. However, the results also show that the effectiveness of these strategies varies among participants depending on how consistently and strategically they manage their social media presence. The findings reaffirm the importance of digital communication strategies in strengthening personal branding in the digital era. Students who consistently share content related to their business activities, maintain interaction with audiences, and communicate their entrepreneurial experiences tend to build stronger personal branding. In contrast, students who use social media mainly for occasional product promotion without consistent messaging or storytelling experience difficulties in developing a clear digital identity. These results highlight that personal branding requires not only the presence of social media accounts but also the strategic management of content, identity, and communication with audiences.

The results of this study are consistent with the theory of personal branding proposed by Montoya, which emphasizes that strong personal branding is developed through several key principles, including specialization, visibility, consistency, and credibility (Samatan et al., 2024). Individuals who clearly communicate their field of expertise and maintain consistent communication with audiences are more likely to establish a recognizable and trusted personal brand. In the context of this research, participants who consistently shared entrepreneurial activities and maintained interaction with followers were able to develop stronger visibility and credibility in the digital environment. Furthermore, the findings support previous studies highlighting the importance of digital communication strategies in developing personal branding through social media. For example, Winayu et al. (2025) found that consistent Instagram content can strengthen personal branding and create a strong public image. Similarly, Putri and Burhan (2025) emphasized that social media platforms can play a significant role in shaping professional identity when supported by effective communication strategies. The results of this study extend these findings by demonstrating how student entrepreneurs apply personal branding principles in real entrepreneurial practices through Instagram.

However, the study also revealed several challenges faced by student entrepreneurs in developing their personal branding through social media. One of the main challenges is maintaining consistency in posting content and managing social media accounts while

balancing academic responsibilities. Some participants acknowledged that academic workload often affects their ability to maintain regular social media activity. This finding suggests that time management and digital marketing skills are important factors influencing the effectiveness of student entrepreneurship in the digital environment. From a practical perspective, the findings of this study have several managerial implications for students and educational institutions. For student entrepreneurs, the results emphasize the importance of developing clear digital communication strategies when using social media for business purposes. Students should focus on presenting consistent content, highlighting their unique entrepreneurial identity, and building interactive relationships with audiences. These strategies can help strengthen credibility and increase audience trust, which are important factors for business growth.

For educational institutions, the findings highlight the need to provide training or educational programs related to digital entrepreneurship and personal branding. Universities can play an important role in equipping students with digital marketing skills, communication strategies, and content management techniques that support entrepreneurial development in the digital era.

Despite its contributions, this study has several limitations that should be considered when interpreting the findings. First, the research involved a limited number of participants from a single study program at one university, which may limit the generalizability of the results to broader contexts. Second, the study focused primarily on Instagram as the social media platform for analysis, while other platforms such as TikTok, YouTube, or Facebook may also play important roles in developing personal branding for student entrepreneurs. Future research could expand this study by involving a larger number of participants from different universities or academic disciplines to obtain a broader understanding of digital communication strategies among student entrepreneurs. In addition, future studies could compare the effectiveness of personal branding strategies across different social media platforms. Further research may also explore quantitative approaches to examine the relationship between digital communication strategies, personal branding, and business performance among student entrepreneurs. Overall, this study highlights the growing importance of digital communication strategies in supporting entrepreneurial activities among university students. By strategically utilizing social media platforms such as Instagram, students can not only promote their businesses but also develop strong personal branding that enhances their credibility and competitiveness in the digital economy.

CONCLUSION

This study examined how Communication Science students at Universitas Dehasen Bengkulu utilize digital communication strategies to build entrepreneurial-oriented personal branding through Instagram. The findings indicate that social media has become an important platform for student entrepreneurs to promote their businesses, communicate with audiences, and develop their digital identity. Through the use of Instagram features such as posts, stories, and interactive communication, students are able to present their entrepreneurial activities and introduce their products or services to a wider audience. However, the study also reveals that the implementation of personal branding strategies varies among students. Some participants demonstrate relatively strong personal branding by consistently presenting content related to their business activities, maintaining active interaction with followers, and highlighting their entrepreneurial identity. In contrast, other participants still use social media mainly for simple product promotion without developing a clear communication strategy. These differences suggest that consistency, authenticity, and audience engagement play important roles in strengthening personal branding in the digital environment.

The findings also highlight the importance of developing strategic digital communication skills among student entrepreneurs. Effective personal branding requires consistent messaging,

clear positioning, and active engagement with audiences. Students who are able to communicate their entrepreneurial experiences, values, and unique characteristics are more likely to build stronger credibility and trust among their followers. Despite the contributions of this study, several limitations should be acknowledged. First, the research involved a limited number of participants from a single university program, which may restrict the generalizability of the findings. Second, the study focused primarily on Instagram as the platform for analysis, while other social media platforms may also influence the development of entrepreneurial personal branding. These limitations do not invalidate the results but indicate that the findings should be interpreted within the specific context of this study.

Future research is recommended to involve a larger number of participants from different universities and academic backgrounds in order to provide a broader understanding of digital communication strategies among student entrepreneurs. In addition, future studies could explore the role of other social media platforms or employ quantitative approaches to examine the relationship between digital communication strategies, personal branding, and entrepreneurial performance. Such studies may provide deeper insights into how digital platforms can support the development of sustainable student entrepreneurship in the digital era.

LIMITATION

This study has several limitations that should be acknowledged in order to provide a balanced interpretation of the findings. First, the study involved a relatively small number of participants, consisting of only a few Communication Science students from a single university. As a result, the findings reflect the experiences and perspectives of a limited group of student entrepreneurs and may not fully represent the broader population of university students engaged in entrepreneurial activities. This limitation may affect the generalizability of the results, meaning that the conclusions should be interpreted within the specific context of the participants involved in this research. Second, the study focused primarily on Instagram as the main social media platform used by the participants to develop their entrepreneurial personal branding. While Instagram is widely used among young people and student entrepreneurs, other social media platforms such as TikTok, YouTube, or Facebook may also play significant roles in shaping digital communication strategies and personal branding practices. The exclusive focus on Instagram may therefore limit the ability of the study to capture a more comprehensive understanding of digital entrepreneurial branding across multiple platforms.

Third, the data collected in this research relied mainly on interviews, observations of social media accounts, and documentation of online activities. Although these qualitative methods allowed for an in-depth exploration of participants' experiences, they also depend on the honesty and openness of participants when sharing information about their strategies and practices. Consequently, the findings may be influenced by subjective interpretations or potential bias in participants' responses. Despite these limitations, the study still provides valuable insights into how university students utilize social media as a tool for developing entrepreneurial-oriented personal branding. Acknowledging these limitations helps clarify the scope of the research and provides direction for future studies that may involve a larger number of participants, different social media platforms, or additional research methods to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of digital communication strategies in student entrepreneurship.

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