Branding of the Digital Talent Scholarship Program as a Strategy for Strengthening Indonesia's Digital Talent

Bagus Winarko[1] , Ratih Hurriyati[2]

and Heny Hendrayati[3]

[1,2,3] Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia, Bandung EJ 40154, Indonesia
bagus.winarko@upi.edu

Abstract. The government's initiative to cultivate future digital talent continues to face an uphill battle to gain public recognition as a vital necessity. To address this challenge, a research study aimed to assess the impact of social branding on the Digital Talent Scholarship program's effectiveness in boosting digital literacy and talent within the community. Utilizing a construct model approach, the study gathered data from 100 respondents, which was subsequently analyzed using the Structural Equation Modelling method with SmartPLS 3.0 software. The findings revealed a significant and positive correlation between social branding and the strengthening of digital talent while also underscoring the indirect influence of the community's digital literacy needs. This research's originality lies in proposing social branding as a crucial component in the government's training programs, thereby paving the way for policymakers to reassess the role of training in enhancing digital talent and addressing global challenges.

Keywords: Social Branding, Digital Skills, Digital Talent.

1   Introduction

Digital Talent Scholarship (DTS) is a comprehensive training initiative implemented in Indonesia since 2018 to catalyze the development of digital competencies among the country's burgeoning talent pool. Aiming to propel Indonesia's information and communication technology (ICT) sector forward, the program seeks to bolster the skills, competencies, and professional capacities of Indonesia's young workforce, the general public, and civil servants within the Communication and Informatics sector, ultimately enhancing the country's human capital and competitiveness in the digital landscape. The overarching objective of the Digital Talent Scholarship (DTS) is to strategically elevate Indonesia's economic productivity and competitiveness in the Industry 4.0 era by developing a robust pipeline of skilled professionals capable of meeting the burgeoning demand for technological expertise, thereby driving the nation's digital transformation and sustainable economic growth. [1][2]. Although the results shown in the program evaluation are significant, achieving the target of preparing Indonesia's digital talent by 2045 still requires more comprehensive efforts and strategies. One strategy is to package the DTS program to establish a strong brand as a platform providing

competency certification training programs. This would consciously encourage the community to enhance their quality and capacity regarding digital skills and expertise [3][4]. The weakness of government training programs is that they are still perceived as not being widely needed by the community.

In the research conducted by Kevin Lane, several branding concepts and marketing principles are discussed, along with insights gained from applying these concepts and principles to social marketing programs addressing public health issues such as addiction or drug abuse [5]. The research also explores the theoretical underpinnings of brand equity and the pivotal role of branding in social marketing, highlighting the significance of brand identity, reputation, and value in shaping the perceptions and behaviors of stakeholders, including the target audience for the Digital Talent Scholarship (DTS) program. The creation of brand image and the design of integrated marketing communication programs that raise awareness about self-destructive behaviors and communicate the desired behavioral responses are covered as well [6][7]. The research aligns with the strategic efforts model to be implemented by forming the branding of the DTS program with a focus on social concepts and behavioral change within the community through marketing communication media [8][9][10][11]. Social Branding is a strategy for building and managing the identity of a program (brand) through social media platforms [5][12]. In the context of government programs, Social Branding aims to increase public awareness of government programs and policies, encourage public participation and support for government initiatives, build a positive image of a transparent, accountable, and responsive government, and strengthen two-way communication between the government and the community. It should be noted that branding encompasses various activities undertaken by businesses to build and elevate a brand [10][13]. This includes selecting the appropriate locations to market the brand effectively. One way is by optimizing social media platforms [9][14][15]. In the era of digitalization, it is undeniable that the number of social media account users is increasing.

Through social media, businesses can reach target markets globally. Consequently, business marketing can be executed optimally. Social branding is a highly important strategy to implement. The branding process can be executed through a multi-channel approach, with social media as a key platform to foster deeper engagement with target audiences and facilitate the creation of online communities. As a component of an integrated e-marketing strategy, social media can be leveraged in conjunction with other digital channels to amplify brand reach, build brand awareness, and drive consumer interactions, thereby enhancing the overall effectiveness of the branding initiative. Additionally, it serves as a pathway to discover or create brand evangelists. Social media provides opportunities to enter existing communities and allows for direct feedback [8][10]. Thus, within the context of this research, an attempt is made to formulate a strategic model for preparing and strengthening digital talent to compete by providing training on the digital talent scholarship platform. On the other hand, strengthening digital competency skills as the foundation for understanding the digital ecosystem is crucial for the branding program's effective functioning.

2   Methods

This study employed a quantitative research design, leveraging a sample of 100 participants who had undergone training through the Digital Talent Scholarship program administered by the Ministry of Communication and Informatics of the Republic of Indonesia, specifically targeting East Java and West Nusa Tenggara regions. The study employed a descriptive quantitative approach with three variables in the formulation model of the strategy, namely, social branding, digital skills and digital talent strengthening. The data analysis methodology adheres to a rigorous framework, transforming the collected data into a coherent, organized, and interpretable format through systematic processing and analysis, thereby rendering the data actionable and relevant for strategic insights and decision-making purposes. The data analysis technique utilizes the SEM PLS model, where outer analysis and inner analysis stages are conducted within the model [16][17][18].

3   Result and Discussion

Internal consistency analysis.
A variable is considered reliable if the composite reliability value > 0.60 [19][20][21]. Based on the internal consistency analysis results in **Table 1** below, all variables are considered reliable if the composite reliability value is greater than 0.600.

Table 1. Internal Consistency Analysis.

	Cronbachs Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Digital Talent	0.954	0.958	0.964	0.844
Digital Skills	0.919	0.922	0.937	0.712
Social Branding	0.795	0.830	0.878	0.705

Sources: Author's work
Convergent Validity
   A threshold criterion of outer loading value ≥ 0.7 is established to ensure the validity of each indicator, signifying that only those indicators with a loading value exceeding this benchmark are deemed reliable and worthy of further analysis [19][20][21]. The results of the convergent validity test in Figure 1 below indicate that all items tested are greater than 0.7; therefore, all indicator variables are considered valid. In the structural model, indicators X1 and X2 were removed from the social branding variable because outer loading values were less than 0.7.
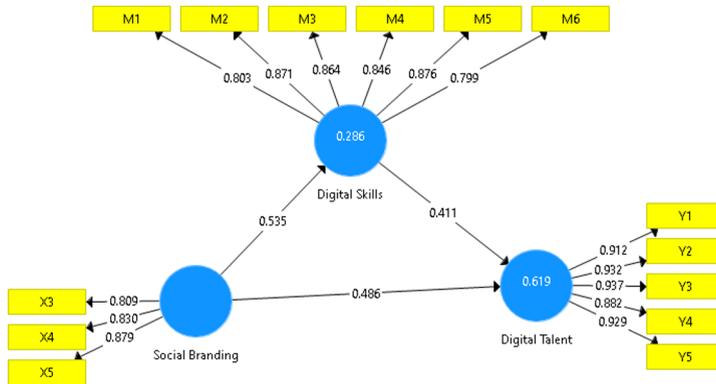
Fig. 1. Convergent Validity at structure model.

Testing Direct and Indirect Effects

A statistical significance threshold is established, where effect sizes are deemed significant if the associated probability value (P-value) falls below a predetermined alpha level of 0.05 and nonsignificant if the P-value exceeds this threshold. Specifically, the indirect effect is considered statistically significant if the coefficient value is associated with a P-value < 0.05, thereby indicating a reliable and meaningful relationship between the variables in question. Conversely, if the P-value > 0.05, the effect is deemed non-significant and inconsequential.

Based on the results of the indirect effect testing, it can be observed that the P-value < 0.05 indicates that both direct and indirect effects between variables are significant. According to the analysis of direct effects in the inner model, the following can be observed: (a) The direct effect of digital skills on digital talent is 0.411, meaning that if digital skills increase by one unit, digital talent can increase by 41.1%. This effect is positive. (b) The direct effect of social branding on digital skills is 0.535, indicating that if social branding increases by one unit, digital skills can increase by 53.5%. This effect is positive. (c) The direct effect of social branding on digital talent is 0.486, meaning that if social branding increases by one unit, digital talent can increase by 48.6%. This effect is positive. Furthermore, the indirect effect of social branding on digital talent through digital skills is 0.220, indicating that if social branding increases by one unit, digital talent can increase indirectly through digital skills by 22%. This effect is positive.

The results of direct and indirect testing between variables show that, overall, it has a positive and significant effect. The conditions of the influence of digital skills and the strengthening of digital talent in the study align with other studies showing that digital talent positively affects individual innovation behavior with the skills of the Industrial Revolution 4.0 as a successful construct mediator. The stronger the influence of digital talent, the stronger the impact of individual innovation behavior, and this is accelerated by the industrial skills revolution [32–34]. Another study revealed that in an open talent economy, employer brand is critical in recruiting and retaining high-potential employees and should focus on learning & leadership development, mobility, rewards, and competency systems. Today, to capture business value, one of the major challenges HR needs to face is the development of digital skills for managers and employees

[22][23][24]. This aligns with the relationship model of training branding to digital skills. The overall and variable models have a significant effect, which is also explained in the study results, which show that HR management, digital literacy, HR risk, digital leadership, and digital culture affect digital talent. Then, digital culture can mediate HR management, digital literacy, and HR risk on digital talent. Meanwhile, digital culture does not successfully mediate digital leadership [22][25][26].

4   Conclusion

Strengthening digital talent has become an inevitability for the progress of a nation in facing the era of globalization and rapid technological development. The government has provided various training programs to address these challenges. However, training requires a specific penetration pattern so that the public can perceive it as necessary to fulfill and enhance digital talent competency. The discussion results show that community penetration through social branding models has a positive and significant impact on strengthening digital talent. However, this must also be accompanied by digital literacy among the public to ensure that the penetration is maximized.

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