Optimizing Public Speaking Skills to Enhance Marketing Competence of Vocational School Students in Kampung Ilmu

Ronald Maraden Parlindungan Silalahi[1)], Yohanes Totok Suyoto [2)]

[1]Ilmu Komunikasi, Universitas Pembangunan Jaya
[2]Manajemen, Universitas Pembangunan Jaya
[1,2] Blok B7/P, Jl. Cendrawasih Raya Bintaro Jaya, Sawah Baru, Kec. Ciputat, Kota Tangerang Selatan, Banten 15413
E-mail: ronald.maraden@upj.ac.id [1)], totok.suyoto@upj.ac.id [2)]

ABSTRACT

Public speaking is a critical communicative competency in the contemporary era, functioning not only as a component of personal development but also as a strategic element in marketing practices. The ability to deliver messages, ideas, or promotional content in a persuasive and structured manner plays a significant role in shaping audience perception and supporting business success. In response to this need, Pembangunan Jaya University is implementing a community service program in the form of public speaking skills training for Tegalwaru Vocational High School (SMKN) students. This initiative aimed to enhance students communication capacities in alignment with current industrial and professional demands. The training addressed both technical and practical dimensions of public communication, including effective speaking techniques, confidence building, appropriate use of body language, vocal intonation control, and strategies for designing and delivering engaging presentations. Additionally, participants were equipped with skills to respond to audience questions in a professional and composed manner. This activity is expected to foster practical competencies that will improve students readiness to face the challenges of the workforce and compete within increasingly dynamic and competitive labor markets. Moreover, the program reflects the tangible contribution of higher education institutions to human resource development through community-based empowerment initiatives, particularly those grounded in 21st-century skill development.

Keywords: Public Speaking, Marketing, Vocational School, Communication Skills, Community Service

1. INTRODUCTION

Community service represents one of the core pillars of Higher Education, alongside education and research Supartono dkk, (2024). This pillar emphasizes that universities are not only responsible for producing quality graduates and conducting relevant research but also for being present within society to contribute to social and economic development (Rahayu dkk, 2024; Maulana, 2024). A concrete example of this commitment was demonstrated by Universitas Pembangunan Jaya, which organized a public speaking training program at SMKN Tegalwaru (a Vocational High School). The program, themed "Optimizing Public Speaking in Marketing", aimed to enhance students communication skills as a strategic tool for personal and professional development, particularly in the marketing field (Puspitasari dkk, 2023; BPS, 2023).

Public speaking is widely recognized as one of the most important soft skills (Kurniawati & Septiana, 2021). It not only fosters self-confidence but also serves as an effective communication tool across various professional contexts (Beebe & Beebe, 2021; Hojanto, 2017; Wrench dkk, 2020). In the field of marketing, public speaking plays a particularly strategic role (Wulandari & Susanto, 2022). Marketers must be able to deliver ideas persuasively, build strong relationships with clients and colleagues, and influence consumer purchasing decisions

(Hidayah & Fauzi, 2024). Effective public speaking enables professionals to form emotional connections with their audience an emotional element that has been shown to significantly impact consumer behavior (Yulianto dkk, 2023).

Furthermore, public speaking is crucial in simplifying complex marketing concepts such as branding strategies, market segmentation, and product innovation making them easier to understand and more appealing. With strong communication skills, speakers can establish credibility and elevate the perceived value of the products or services they promote (Aditia, 2024). This aligns with the views of marketing experts such as Kotler and Keller (2016), who highlight that effective communication is a key element in brand building and creating customer value.

The training program at SMKN Tegalwaru was designed to be holistic, combining both theoretical knowledge and practical application (Suryani dkk, 2021; Nugroho, 2023). Students were not only taught the fundamentals of communication techniques, but were also trained to craft engaging presentations, manage anxiety when speaking in public (Pratiwi, 2020), use appropriate body language (Saputra, 2022), and modulate their voice to convey messages effectively. Equally important, they were guided on how to respond to audience questions or feedback with professionalism and confidence. This

training approach aimed not just to improve individual speaking performance but to equip students with real-world skills applicable in the field of product marketing (Rahmat dkk, 2019).

Interestingly, the program was also tailored to align with the local economic potential of Kampung Ilmu an area known for its valuable local products such as moringa leaves, goat milk, and catfish. These products offer promising opportunities for economic development if promoted effectively (Dewi dkk, 2023; Sari dkk, 2020). Therefore, the training encouraged students not only to practice speaking in general terms but also to apply their communication skills to realistic scenarios: presenting and marketing local products persuasively (Arifin dkk, 2024). They were challenged to explore how a product can be attractively packaged, communicated with a compelling narrative, and sold using emotional and strategic communication techniques.

In this way, the program not only enhanced students individual competencies but also fostered entrepreneurial awareness and economic empowerment within the community. The collaboration between the university and the vocational school represents a model of education that responds to 21st-century challenges by integrating communication skills, marketing innovation, and local resource development.

Overall, this program serves as a clear example of how community service initiatives from higher education institutions can generate wide-reaching impact. Beyond strengthening student capacity, such programs can also stimulate community-based economic development. By emphasizing collaboration, contextual training, and practical application, Universitas Pembangunan Jaya demonstrates how education can serve as a powerful driver of social transformation. Initiatives like this should be continuously encouraged and replicated to ensure that universities remain relevant and active agents of change in society.

2. FOCUS AND SCOPE

This community service initiative was designed with a well-defined scope and clear limitations to ensure that its implementation remains effective, targeted, and aligned with its primary objectives. The program specifically focused on students of the State Vocational High School (SMKN) located in the Tegalwaru area. The selection of this particular target group was based on a strategic consideration: vocational high school students are typically being prepared to either directly enter the workforce or pursue entrepreneurial endeavors upon graduation. Therefore, equipping them with relevant and practical soft skills particularly in communication is crucial to enhancing their readiness and competitive in the real world.

The core objective of this program was to introduce and provide training in various aspects of public speaking. Public speaking was chosen as the central theme because it is a universally applicable soft skill, playing a vital role across diverse fields, especially in marketing. The ability to speak confidently, deliver messages clearly, and communicate persuasively is essential for individuals who aspire to engage with the public, clients, or stakeholders. Thus, the training sought to empower students with the foundational techniques of effective communication, enabling them to articulate their ideas, present products, and build trust in both personal and professional contexts.

An additional goal of the program was to encourage students to directly apply their public speaking skills in promoting local products either items they produced themselves or goods that represent the economic potential of the Tegalwaru region. By connecting communication skills with product-based marketing, the initiative aimed to generate dual impact: enhancing the students personal competencies while also contributing to the promotion and development of the local economy.

To ensure that the community service program was effectively implemented and met its objectives, it was carried out through a series of systematic and structured stages. These stages were designed not only to guide the delivery of the training but also to promote sustainability and contextual relevance.
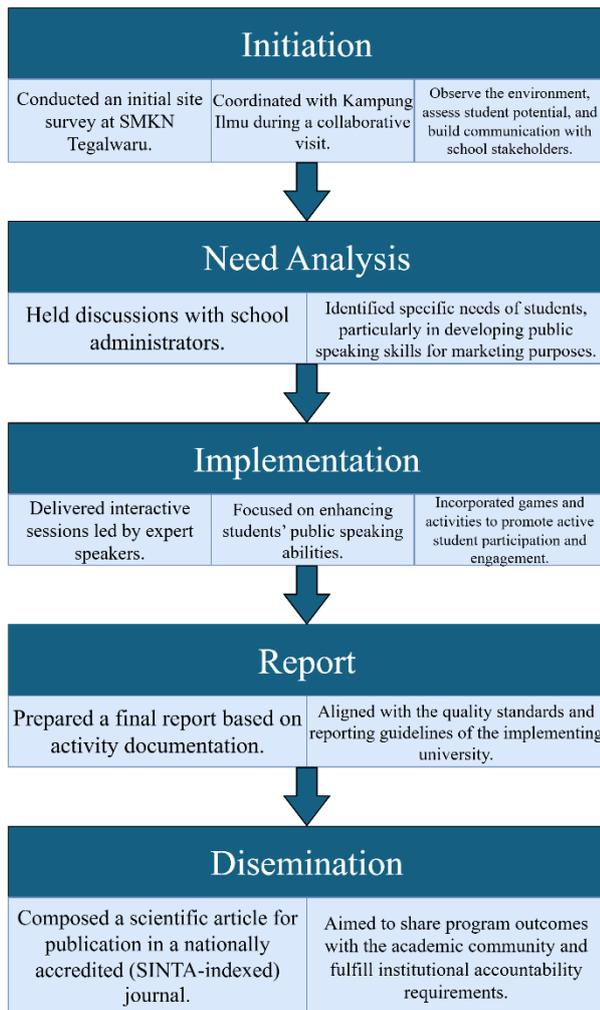
The first stage was Initiation, which began with a preliminary survey at the intended location SMKN Tegalwaru. This initial visit coincided with an existing collaborative activity involving Kampung Ilmu, a community-based educational initiative in the region. During this stage, the team conducted observational assessments of the school environment, explored the existing capabilities and interests of the students, and established communication with the school administrative leadership and key local stakeholders. This groundwork was essential to ensure mutual understanding and cooperation before the formal execution of the program.

Following the initiation, the second stage was Needs Analysis. This step was conducted through direct dialogue and interviews with school administrators and teaching staff. The purpose of this stage was to identify the specific needs and skill gaps among students, with a particular emphasis on their communication competencies. It was revealed through these discussions that many students lacked the confidence and structure necessary to effectively communicate in public settings, especially in contexts involving product promotion or business presentations. This insight confirmed the relevance and necessity of public speaking as the focal skill of the program.

The third and most substantial stage was the Implementation of the Enrichment Program. This stage featured a series of interactive training sessions led by qualified experts in communication and marketing. The instructional approach was deliberately designed to be engaging and student-centered. Rather than relying solely on lectures, the program included a variety of interactive methods, such as group activities, role-playing, storytelling, games, and simulation exercises. These methods were employed to stimulate active participation,

encourage creativity, and create a positive and enjoyable learning atmosphere.

Students were given opportunities to practice speaking in front of their peers, receive constructive feedback, and refine their performance. Several sessions also focused on real-world applications, where students practiced delivering persuasive presentations for local products, thereby simulating a marketing pitch. Through this approach, students not only improved their public speaking skills but also began to understand how to connect those skills to economic and entrepreneurial goals.

Initiation

| Conducted an initial site survey at SMKN Tegalwaru. | Coordinated with Kampung Ilmu during a collaborative visit. | Observe the environment, assess student potential, and build communication with school stakeholders. |

Need Analysis

| Held discussions with school administrators. | Identified specific needs of students, particularly in developing public speaking skills for marketing purposes. |

Implementation

| Delivered interactive sessions led by expert speakers. | Focused on enhancing students' public speaking abilities. | Incorporated games and activities to promote active student participation and engagement. |

Report

| Prepared a final report based on activity documentation. | Aligned with the quality standards and reporting guidelines of the implementing university. |

Disemination

| Composed a scientific article for publication in a nationally accredited (SINTA-indexed) journal. | Aimed to share program outcomes with the academic community and fulfill institutional accountability requirements. |

Figure 1. Implementation Stages

Figure 1 shows, upon completion of the activity, the Report Compilation stage was carried out as a crucial step to document the entire process and outcomes of the program. The final report was systematically prepared based on the collection of supporting documents such as attendance lists, activity photos, pre- and post-training evaluations, and feedback from participants. This report adhered to the quality standards and guidelines for community service as stipulated by the implementing higher education institution. The documentation process

aimed to ensure that every stage of the program was transparently recorded, allowing for both internal evaluation and potential replication in future initiatives.

The final stage in the community service workflow was the Dissemination of the Program, which involved the preparation and submission of a scientific article derived from the implementation and results of the activity. This article was written following the academic writing standards required for publication in a nationally accredited SINTA journal. The dissemination of the program served a dual purpose: first, to contribute to the body of knowledge within the academic community by sharing best practices, challenges, and measurable impacts of the program; and second, as a form of institutional accountability that demonstrates the higher education institutions commitment to public engagement and the advancement of community empowerment. Furthermore, publishing the outcomes in a reputable journal helps to elevate the visibility and credibility of the initiative, encouraging interdisciplinary collaboration and inspiring similar programs across other educational institutions.

3. MATERIALS AND METHODS

To enhance the effectiveness of this enrichment program, digital-based learning materials were employed. The program began with an introduction to various forms of marketing strategies, aiming to provide participants with a comprehensive understanding of the diverse methods of marketing that can be optimized through digital platforms. This foundational material was designed to build awareness of the evolving nature of marketing in the digital era, where adaptability and creativity are essential.

The second component of the program focused on developing public speaking skills. This section introduced participants to different types of public speaking, highlighting its functions and objectives in both personal and professional contexts. Emphasis was placed on how effective communication can significantly influence audience perception and engagement. Through this material, participants were encouraged to explore how public speaking techniques can be applied to marketing contexts to create a more persuasive and impactful message.

In the integration phase, participants were asked to elaborate on how the principles of marketing could be combined with public speaking to support the promotion of various products or services. This segment allowed for interactive activities where participants practiced delivering marketing messages using public speaking strategies.

Finally, the program concluded with an activity where participants identified and optimized appropriate communication channels to promote local featured products from their surrounding areas. This task aimed to reinforce the practical application of the skills acquired

throughout the program, fostering not only technical competencies but also a sense of empowerment in promoting local economic potential through digital communication tools.

3.1 Marketing Strategies

Marketing strategies are comprehensive plans developed by organizations to promote their products or services, attract target audiences, and achieve competitive advantage. A successful marketing strategy integrates the 4Ps: product, price, place, and promotion, aligning them with market trends and customer preferences (Kotler & Keller, 2016). Businesses often use a mix of traditional and digital approaches, such as advertising, social media marketing, search engine optimization (SEO), influencer collaborations, and content marketing.

Segmentation, targeting, and positioning (STP) are also core components. By identifying market segments, selecting appropriate targets, and positioning offerings effectively, companies can tailor messages to resonate with specific consumer groups (Armstrong & Kotler, 2022). Data analytics further empowers marketers to track behavior and refine strategies in real time.

Modern strategies emphasize customer engagement and relationship building. For example, brands that create meaningful content and personalized experiences foster loyalty and word-of-mouth promotion. Moreover, sustainable and ethical marketing is becoming increasingly important as consumers favor brands that align with their values.

Ultimately, strategic flexibility is vital. In a rapidly changing digital landscape, companies must continuously adapt their marketing efforts to stay relevant and competitive.

3.2 Public Speaking

Public speaking is the art of effectively communicating ideas, information, or emotions to an audience through spoken word. It is a vital skill across various domains education, business, politics, and community engagement enabling individuals to inform, persuade, inspire, or entertain (Lucas, 2020). Successful public speaking involves clear organization of content, confident delivery, audience awareness, and the ability to engage listeners through storytelling, rhetorical questions, or appropriate body language.

A well-structured speech typically includes an introduction, body, and conclusion. Practicing delivery helps manage anxiety and improve vocal variety, pacing, and eye contact. Confidence grows with experience, but even seasoned speakers benefit from feedback and continuous refinement.

Active engagement with the audience, such as using relatable examples, visual aids, or humor enhances understanding and retention. Additionally, adapting ones tone and message based on the audience background and expectations is crucial for effectiveness.

Public speaking is not merely about performance; it is about connection. In today digital world, this skill also extends to virtual presentations and webinars, where clarity, presence, and interaction remain essential.

3.3 Public Speaking for Marketing

Public speaking is a powerful tool in marketing, enabling professionals to build brand awareness, establish credibility, and directly influence target audiences. Whether delivering a product pitch, keynote address, webinar, or press conference, marketers use public speaking to humanize their brand and communicate value propositions effectively (Kotler & Keller, 2016).

An engaging marketing speech requires a deep understanding of the audience, a compelling message, and confident delivery. Techniques such as storytelling, visual aids, and real-world examples help make messages memorable and persuasive. Great marketing speakers tailor their language and tone to align with the brands identity and the audience needs, fostering trust and emotional connection.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This activity reflects the implementation team awareness of the need to optimize various marketing channels in order to enhance outreach and promotional effectiveness. Situated in a rural area far from urban centers, the local community understanding of social media usage, particularly as a platform for public speaking in the context of marketing is notably limited.

The training aimed to provide a foundational understanding of how public speaking can be conducted without requiring physical, face-to-face interactions. In this context, public speaking is not confined to traditional, on-stage performances in front of a live audience; instead, it encompasses the ability to speak effectively to an audience through digital platforms and electronic devices. This expanded definition of public speaking is critical in today digital age, where communication is increasingly mediated by technology.

To address this gap, the training began with an explanation of various forms of communication that can be optimized using everyday digital tools and gadgets owned by the participants. To ensure relevance and applicability, the team conducted an initial observational study to assess the types of devices possessed by students at the vocational high school level. In addition, the team identified the social media platforms most frequently used by these students. The observation revealed a striking pattern: although the students resided in a rural area, approximately 90% of those who owned mobile gadgets were active users of Instagram. This finding highlights the platforms widespread accessibility and appeal, even in non-urban contexts.

Given this insight, the team concluded that Instagram represents the most effective and contextually appropriate social media platform for developing public speaking skills in a digital marketing framework. Figure 2

illustrates an example of promotional activity conducted through Instagram. While the students were already familiar with the platform, their usage had been largely confined to informal communication connecting with friends, peers, or classmates in a personal capacity. Its potential for professional or entrepreneurial purposes, such as digital marketing and brand promotion, remained untapped.
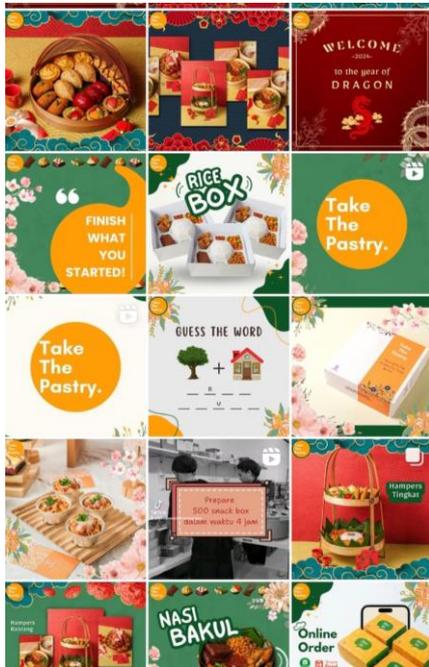

Figure 2. Promotion by Using Instagram

Figure 2 shows, to bridge this gap, the training incorporated practical examples and demonstrations of how products could be marketed through social media, particularly Instagram. Participants were guided on how to create engaging content, use persuasive language, and structure their messages to appeal to broader online audiences. This approach was designed to enhance their public speaking skills not only in traditional formats but also through dynamic, visually oriented, and widely accessible digital channels.

In the subsequent phase of the training, the focus shifted toward how public speaking can be effectively utilized through social media platforms to promote products or services. To facilitate a comprehensive understanding of public speaking in relation to marketing, the implementation team began by introducing the conceptual definition of public speaking and distinguishing it from face-to-face communication. This distinction was important in helping participants recognize that public speaking is not limited to physical interaction but includes speaking to broader audiences via digital channels.

Participants were also introduced to common barriers and challenges often encountered during public speaking. These included issues such as stage fright, inappropriate intonation, and general anxiety experienced prior to delivering a public presentation. Such obstacles were discussed not only to build awareness but also to help participants acknowledge their presence as normal elements of the public speaking process.

Following this, participants were encouraged to reflect on and identify the specific difficulties they personally face when engaging in public speaking. They were then guided to explore effective strategies to address and overcome these challenges. The majority of participants agreed that one of the most prevalent issues in public speaking is the fear of making mistakes in front of an audience. This fear often leads to hesitation, decreased confidence, and diminished performance.

Figure 3. Community Service Activity

Figure 4. Community Service Activity

Figure 3 and 4 shows, to mitigate such fear, the facilitators emphasized the importance of preparation. Participants were advised that mastering the content to be presented is a key strategy in overcoming anxiety and ensuring a successful delivery. By gaining confidence in their material, speakers are better positioned to focus on audience engagement and message clarity, rather than on the fear of error.

This stage of the training was crucial in bridging theoretical understanding with practical skill-building. It also laid the groundwork for the integration of public speaking techniques with digital marketing practices on social media platforms.

After identifying their individual weaknesses, students were instructed to engage in a practical public speaking exercise. Each participant was asked to speak freely in front of the class for a continuous duration of three minutes on a topic of their choice. This exercise aimed to

build confidence, enhance verbal fluency, and reduce anxiety associated with spontaneous speaking in public settings.

Following this initial activity, students were given a task that more directly connected public speaking with marketing application. They were asked to select an object within the classroom that they believed could be marketed or sold. Each student then delivered a short presentation in which they explained the features, benefits, and selling points of their chosen item to their classmates. This exercise encouraged students to apply persuasive communication techniques, structure their messaging clearly, and demonstrate an understanding of basic marketing principles such as product positioning and value proposition.

By combining impromptu speaking with product-based presentations, this stage of the training provided students with an experiential learning opportunity. It allowed them to practice speaking in a semi-formal context while applying critical thinking and creativity both of which are essential skills in digital marketing and entrepreneurial communication.

In the next stage, students are asked to work in groups to promote the product they have chosen through their respective Instagram accounts. Each participant is equipped with the knowledge and skills to create an engaging tagline, a catchy jingle, and appealing visual elements that can effectively capture the interest of potential buyers. This activity not only encourages creativity but also allows students to apply marketing strategies in a real-world digital context. They are expected to utilize their understanding of branding and visual communication to develop a promotional approach that is both persuasive and appropriate for the target audience.

To support this process, students receive guidance on how to make their Instagram content attractive, using appropriate colors, layout design, hashtags, and captions that align with the brand message they want to convey. The use of short videos or Instagram reels is also encouraged to boost engagement.

Each promotional output produced by the groups is then analyzed using a set of assessment parameters provided by the instructor. These parameters may include creativity, clarity of message, audience engagement, visual consistency, and overall impact. The assessment helps students reflect on their promotional choices and provides feedback for improvement.

This stage of the activity aims to sharpen students digital marketing abilities, enhance teamwork, and foster a deeper understanding of how social media platforms can be used as effective tools for entrepreneurship and product promotion in today competitive market environment.

## 4.1 Student Perception toward Enrichment Program

To evaluate the quality of this activity, a questionnaire was distributed to 46 student participants. The survey included several statements for assessment: the clarity of

the speakers material, the participants understanding of the content, the usefulness of the material, and whether the speaker encouraged discussion. These points aimed to gather participants feedback on how effective and engaging the training session was, as well as its relevance and impact on their personal development.
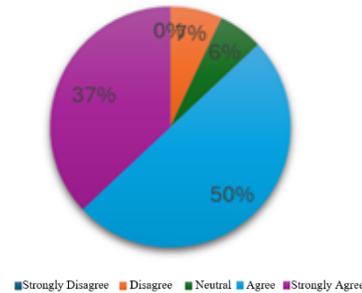
Figure 5. I understood the material that was presented.

Figure 5 shows, the majority of respondents chose "Agree" (50%), indicating that they understood the material presented. Additionally, 37% selected "Strongly Agree," showing a very high level of understanding. Only 8% chose "Neutral," and 5% chose "Disagree." No respondents selected "Strongly Disagree." This indicates that overall, the material delivered was clear and easy to understand for most participants.
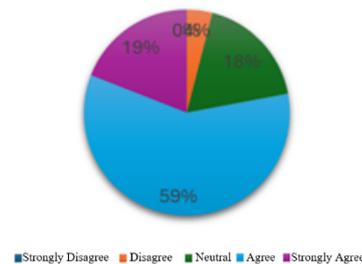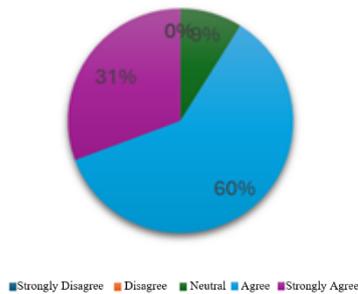
Figure 6. The material delivered by the speaker was beneficial to me.

Figure 6 shows, most respondents selected "Agree" (59%) and "Strongly Agree" (19%), indicating that the material delivered was beneficial to them. Meanwhile, 15% chose "Neutral," and 7% selected "Disagree." No respondents selected "Strongly Disagree." This suggests that the material was relevant and provided value to the participants.
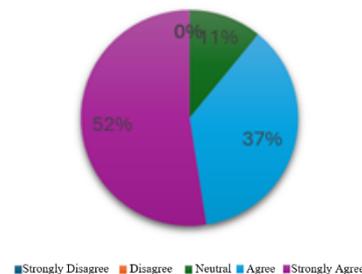
Figure 7. The speaker provided an opportunity for discussion.

Figure 7 shows that 60% of respondents selected "Agree" and 31% chose "Strongly Agree," suggesting that the majority felt that the speaker provided opportunities for discussion. 9% selected "Neutral," while none chose "Disagree" or "Strongly Disagree." This indicates that the session was interactive and encouraged active participation.


Figure 8. The time allocated was appropriate for the material.

Figure 8 shows, most respondents chose "Strongly Agree" (72%) and "Agree" (19%), indicating that the time allocated for the material was appropriate. 9% selected "Neutral," and none selected "Disagree" or "Strongly Disagree." This suggests that the session's time management was effective.
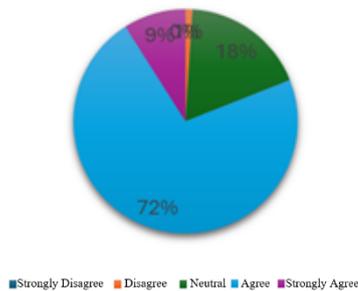
Figure 9. The material provided can be implemented in my place.

Figure 9 shows, the majority of respondents selected "Agree" (61%) and "Strongly Agree" (19%), indicating that the material delivered could be implemented in their respective places. 9% chose "Neutral," 9% selected "Disagree," and none chose "Strongly Disagree." This suggests that most participants found the material relevant and applicable to their contexts.
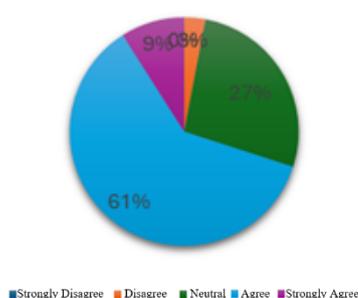
Figure 10. I will participate in the next training activity.

Figure 10 shows, the results show that 72% of respondents chose "Strongly Agree" and 19% chose "Agree," indicating that most participants were motivated to join future training activities. 9% selected "Neutral," and none selected "Disagree" or "Strongly Disagree." This reflects a positive response and interest in continued participation in similar programs.

Overall, it can be concluded that the material provided encouraged participants to further develop themselves in the areas of marketing and public speaking. In addition, the participants expressed a desire to explore and develop the opportunities and potential of their surrounding areas.

5. CONCLUSION

The community service program conducted by Universitas Pembangunan Jaya at SMK Negeri Tegalwaru stands as a compelling model of how higher education institutions can extend their impact beyond academics and research. By focusing on the development of public speaking skills within the context of marketing, the initiative addressed critical soft skill gaps while simultaneously fostering economic empowerment among vocational high school students.

This program successfully merged theoretical knowledge with practical application. It introduced students to the essential components of public speaking such as structuring messages, managing anxiety, and engaging audiences while tailoring the content toward marketing purposes. Importantly, it acknowledged the digital realities of modern communication, recognizing Instagram as a potent and accessible platform even in rural settings. Through structured stages of training, students learned not only to present ideas persuasively in front of a class but also to create impactful promotional content for social media.

By incorporating local economic themes, particularly the promotion of regional products like moringa, goat milk, and catfish, the program cultivated entrepreneurial thinking. It bridged the gap between education and community development, encouraging students to apply their skills in realistic scenarios. In doing so, the program demonstrated that public speaking is not just a performance art but a strategic communication tool essential for success in marketing and business.

The implementation of group-based Instagram marketing projects further enhanced collaboration and creativity, empowering students to design visual and verbal content aligned with branding principles. Assessments based on creativity, engagement, and clarity reinforced the application of marketing concepts while building digital literacy.

Ultimately, this initiative exemplifies how community service can be both transformative and sustainable. It empowered students with vital competencies, strengthened the bond between higher education and local communities, and contributed to regional economic development. The program proves that with the right approach, soft skill training when grounded in real-world

application can serve as a bridge between education and entrepreneurship. Such initiatives are essential for preparing students to thrive in the 21st-century digital economy and should be replicated widely to maximize their societal impact.

6. SUGGESTION

To enhance the impact and sustainability of the program, it is recommended to extend the duration of the training to allow deeper practice and reflection, expand participation to other vocational schools, and establish follow-up mechanisms such as post-training evaluations and alumni communities. Involving local entrepreneurs could provide real-world marketing experience, while integrating financial and entrepreneurial literacy would equip students with broader business skills. The inclusion of practical training on digital tools like Canva or CapCut and expanding to platforms beyond Instagram such as TikTok or Facebook Marketplace could enrich students digital marketing capabilities. Additionally, the program could be integrated into the school curriculum to ensure long-term relevance and formally documented as a case study to encourage replication by other institutions.

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