

Significance of Personal Branding in Enhancing Employability

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Abstract

The purpose of pursuing higher education is to secure employment. The hospitality sector is wide sector growing at very fast pace and thus holds immense potential for enormous job opportunities. The graduates are looking forward to take up a job and they inculcate the skills during their course. But with growing competition, it is necessary that the students should be able to create an impression over the employers and others in the outside world. This research undertakes the study which includes importance of Personal Branding and simultaneously explores awareness about the same amongst young graduates. The data was collected through a structured questionnaire which was floated through internet. The population selected for study was the hospitality students from Pune city. 105 responses were received through the Google forms. The findings reveal that building your brand is not a very familiar aspect with the students of hospitality management. They need to be made aware of the significance of the same. They also need to be trained with various techniques and tools which will help them in creating a brand for themselves. This will help them in their pursuit of searching for a job and also in their career progression.

Keywords: Personal Branding, Employability, Personal Positioning, Intrapersonal skills

1. Introduction

When we say “Brand”, the first thing comes to our mind is a logo or a slogan. We all have been associating brand with products and goods, companies etc. it is more than just a product or the logo. It is an experience and connect with that particular product and its use. It builds over a period of time. But when we talk about Personal Branding, there are question marks on the faces of the students. One needs to understand as to what is Personal Branding and then the students can understand the significance of building their own personal brand. The students need to understand the concept of Personal Branding and how to go about creating that impression.

Now-a-days every individual is quite active on social media. Even if someone wants to see your profile, there are many platforms like LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter. When others search for your profile and information through social media, everyone wants to create a good impression about themselves. This is possible only when one is aware of how to project themselves in-front of others and create a positive impression. This goes a long way in building collaborations and relationships with people around you. This benefits with the work relationships in a very effective manner.

2. Background of Study

This is an obvious question which is asked. The founder of Amazon, Jeff Bezos explains the concept in a very simple way. He says that Personal Brand is nothing else but what people talk about you in your absence. In simple words it means that Personal Brand is your character and the attributes that you carry within you. The same is projected when you interact with people around you. The graduates are always told or guided about personality development, acquiring skills which will help them in their career but at the same time, they also need to be informed about the importance of Personal Branding and the techniques used to achieve the same. This will aid in showcasing their attributes and marketing themselves at the time of employment.

3. Scope and Significance of Study

Today's world is very competitive and one needs to stand apart from others. It is possible when one will know how to exhibit their personal as well as professional characteristics to the recruiters and the others like the colleagues and the superiors. In academic institutes, the concept of personal branding is used by career counselors for guiding the graduates in securing jobs, career planning and guidance. Personal Branding helps in many ways. It is about your personality and other characteristics which makes you different and you stand apart from the crowd. When an individual wants to build Personal Brand, one has to be aware of his or her strong points. This introspection helps in understanding your own personality, the special traits of oneself and what makes you a special individual. You are aware of the uniqueness about your personality which makes you stand apart from others around you and who your competitors are. You can make your profile visible to many people connected with that particular platform. The recruiters are always looking for such candidates and that gives you more opportunity for better employment. There are many opportunities and employers are looking out for right candidates. The online presence helps to a large extent in creating your visibility. People in your network can share your work profile with others i.e. the industry or the recruiters and will promote you as prospective candidate for the job.

- **Strategies to Build Your Personal Brand:**

Building your Personal Brand is a time-taking process. But it is not difficult if you have a clear roadmap in front of you. Here are some useful tips towards building a Personal Brand.

Authenticity: When you start with building your own brand, you need to be authentic and clear with your plus points. Be true in projecting yourself. Promote a reputation about yourself which will attract the attention of employees and may turn into a job opportunity.

Passion: Show your true passion through an essay or "Personal Story". This gives your followers a clear picture about your personality and your traits.

Strengths: It is important to understand the strong points in your personality. These aspects give you an edge over others and makes you different from the group. Give a deep thought while understanding your strengths and highlight them in Personal Brand. If you are able to portray your personality with the strong aspects of your persona, it will give you an advantage over others in the competition.

Offline Presence: We have been discussing about increasing online presence. Connecting with people through social media. Creating and expanding your network for building your Personal Brand. But at the same time, your offline presence is also equally important. It contributes effectively to your Brand. What you do and what you are in real life is equally important. Your actions in real life will have a great impact on your Brand.

Behavior at Workplace: On the same lines, your behavior and conduct at workplace is of immense importance. Your persona will be judged by your behavior at the workplace. It makes a lot of impact as to how is your behavior with your colleagues, subordinates and your superiors. It is essential to maintain cordial relations with everyone at the workplace.

Consistency in Planning: Today, many recruiters are carrying out employment background search to understand the character and interests of the candidate who may be their potential employees. Developing your Personal Brand can lay a path for advancement in career. It also helps in successful professional life and aids in creating encouraging picture of oneself in the industry.

4. Literature Review

Sergey Gorbotav, Svetlana N Khapova, Evgenia Lysova (2019)- Get Noticed to Get Ahead: The Impact of Personal Branding on Career Success In this article the author has emphasised on contemporary employability which helps an individual to have an impressive image about himself. It is important for the employees to self-position themselves in the most positive manner to progress in life. The article also focuses the origin on personal branding and how since then it has become the essential part of one's life. It is important that people focus and work on career management and impression management for better employability.

Jennifer Herrity (2023)- How to create a personal brand (And Why it's important) in this article the writer has emphasised about the ways in which a personal brand can be created. One can differentiate oneself from their talent, skills and goals to have a great career. Personal branding is essential so as to differentiate oneself from the competition and have an edge above them. It is important to have a good network to advance in your career. The author also mentions about that it is important that we understand what we are good at and the skills that we can encash to have a great career. We need both hard skills and soft skills to develop ourselves and career enhancement.

Julian (2022) Personal Branding: Why it matters? In the journal the author has written about the strategies that are required to influence peoples thinking about oneself. We can reach our goals easily if we have a strong personal brand. If we have a strong personal brand it will draw the employer's attention towards us and it will help us with good jobs. Strong personal branding helps us to attract customers and clients which also gives better professional opportunities. It's also easy to build trust with the customers and clients when we have strong personal brand.

Mugdha Vinod Dani (2018) Personal branding is a practice followed by people to market themselves and their career as a brand. With the shift in the corporate culture and increasing competitive market, it is becoming difficult for individuals to differentiate themselves from the competitors. The general purpose of this qualitative study is to investigate the importance of personal branding for career development. The study focus on the tools of personal branding, its importance and uses by various professionals from different fields. The researcher analysed 8 professional individuals using a method of qualitative content analysis as an empirical way. This is a self-funded research.

Shayna Waltower (2023) The Secret to Career Success: Branding Yourself in the paper has emphasised that one should identify its unique qualities and focus on what makes you different from others. The paper tells us that we can build a personal brand that's a clear reflection of your work and the value you bring to the table. As you establish your brand, don't get discouraged if you have a hard time at first building something meaningful or genuine. Take your time landing on the personal brand that best suits your ideas about the future of your work. In time, you'll find and develop a brand that fully expresses your personality and expertise.

Katryna Johnson (2017) The Importance of Personal Branding in Social Media: Educating Students to Create and Manage their Personal Brand in the research had written about to manage oneself and create impressions on others by having unique skills, experiences and abilities which make us different form one

another. It is important for an individual and how they represent themselves especially social platform such as Instagram, Facebook, blogs etc. The paper is about to help the students to represent themselves on social platforms for them to have successful career. Examples of class assignments from student's use of blogs, Pinterest and LinkedIn will be discussed.

Molly Hitchings (2014) *The Importance of Personal Branding: How to create and maintain a successful personal brand*. The following project explores the importance, development process, and maintenance of personal branding. The studies apply to Cal Poly juniors and seniors who are looking to make them stand out from their peers in the professional world. Having a personal brand allows for one's individuality and creativity to speak for itself when presented to employers. Personal branding means something different to everyone; this project will help better understand the definition of having a personal brand.

Sara Dombek, Joanna Wińska (2018) *Journal of Corporate Responsibility and Leadership* in the paper the purpose of the research was to investigate the way Polish students perceive personal branding as a tool for job recruitment and how it differs between those in the first and last years of study. Another aim was to check what social media students use as a personal branding tool. : The research shows that in personal branding the most important elements for students are interpersonal skills and the ability to behave in a difficult situation as well as student's evaluation during studies at the university. Students from the first year are not focused on development of their own brand. On the other hand, students from the fifth year of studies try to build their personal brand as they are more aware how to create it. They check the results searching their names in the Internet. The most popular Internet personal branding tool is Facebook.

Jill Avery, Rachel Greenwald (2023) *A New Approach to Building Your Personal Brand: Personal branding is an intentional, strategic practice in which you define and express your own value proposition*. And though people have always carefully cultivated their public personas and reputations, online search and social media have greatly expanded the potential audience for—and risks and rewards associated with—such efforts. The author of the paper has defined a seven step process in which a personal brand can be created and how our approach to make a personal brand which will help us in future development.

Brenna Collins (2012) *The Importance of Personal Branding: Uses of Personal Branding for Career Development and Success*: The following study investigates how to develop and maintain a personal brand in order to further career development and success. With the current state of today's job market, it is becoming increasingly difficult for individuals to differentiate themselves from competitors. Personal branding is an important tool for jobseekers as it helps define their strongest attributes and sell themselves to companies. This study focuses on the best practices to create and manage a professional self-image in order to achieve career success.

Le Ngoc Nguyen Anh (2019) *Personal branding concept for graduates* in the paper the author has emphasised on the usage of internet and social media in building the personal brand. The objectives of this study are to create a concept of personal branding for recent graduates and shine a new light on the new phenomenon through an examination of current theories. Traditional frameworks of product-based branding are utilized as the grounded foundation. This study focuses on the case of recent graduates for the significant benefits and necessity toward this subject. Qualitative research method has been conducted to gain in-depth insight and test the theoretical findings and to establish a practical and precise new concept.

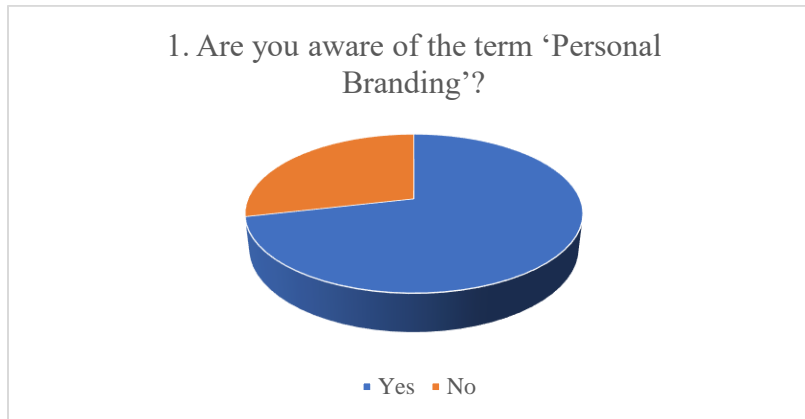
Kevin Lane Keller and Donald R. Lehmann (2006) *Brands and Branding: Research Findings and Future Priorities*. In the paper has discussed about how branding has become the most important part of the management and how the companies have started focussing on branding themselves. This paper has found some important areas like positioning the brand, brand integration, managing the brand and also checking how the brand is growing. The paper also outlines some gaps that exist in the research of branding and brand equity and formulates a series of related research questions. Choice modelling implications of the branding concept and the challenges of incorporating main and interaction effects of branding as well as the impact of competition are discussed.

5. Research Methodology

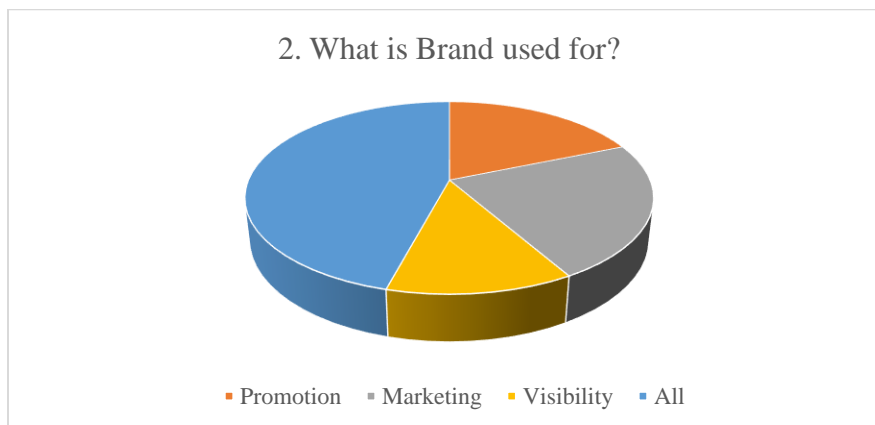
The study is undertaken to understand the awareness of Personal Branding amongst the students. It also studies the perception about significance and need of Personal Branding for employability and career progression. A structured questionnaire was designed which included various questions to understand the importance given to Personal Branding by the students. How does it impact the job-search and career advancement and are the students aware of the concept and importance of Personal Branding for their career. The questionnaire was floated through Google Form. There were 105 responses.

The data was analysed with the help of pie charts and the findings and conclusion are elaborated further.

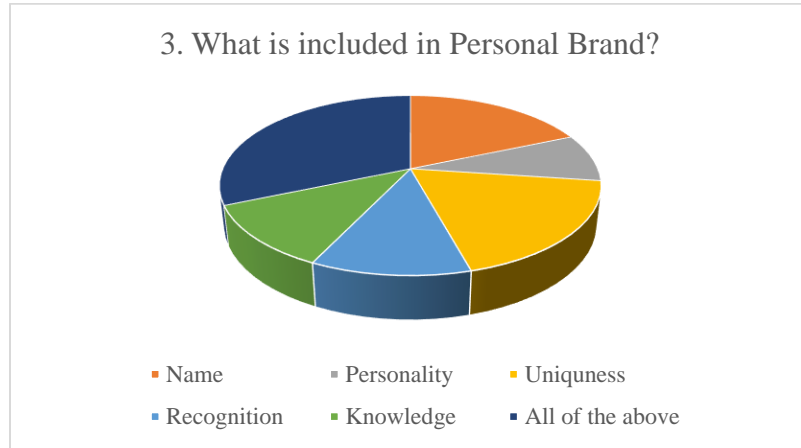
6. Data Analysis



Maximum respondents (75%) said that they are aware of the term and concept of Personal Branding and the other respondents are not aware of the same.

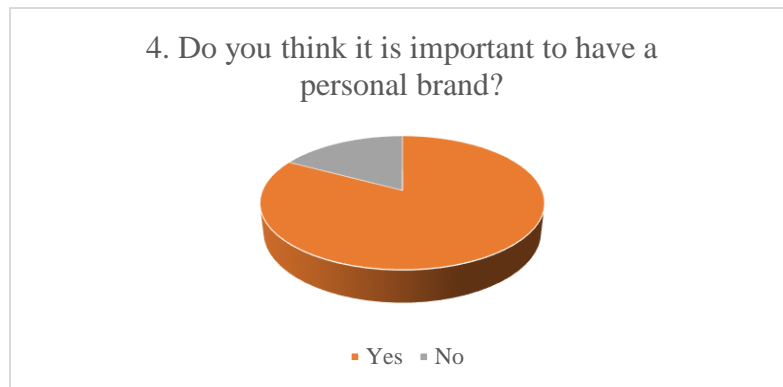


Majority respondents (23%) state that a brand is used for Marketing of a product. 19% respondents state that a brand is used for Promotion and 13% respondents state that a brand is used for increasing Visibility of a product in the market. And 46% respondents stated that a brand is used for marketing, promotion and increasing the visibility of a product.

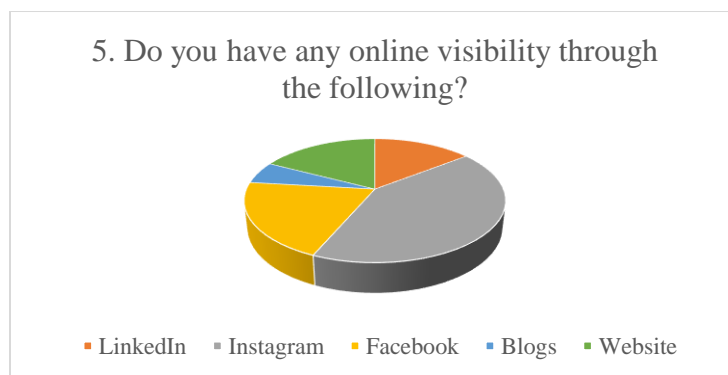


The respondents were asked about various aspects which are included in Personal Brand. 19% respondents state that it is the Name, 19% respondents state that it depicts the Uniqueness about the person. 11% respondents state that the Personal Brand includes Recognition and equal number of respondents state that it is used as Knowledge about that entity. 9% respondents state that the Personal Brand includes the Personality of a particular person.

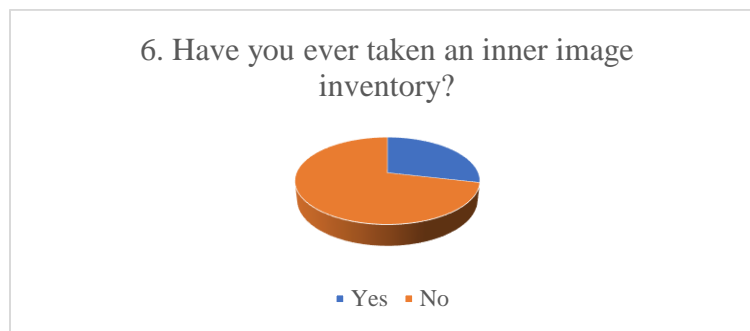
31% respondents state that Personal Brand includes all the aspects mentioned above.



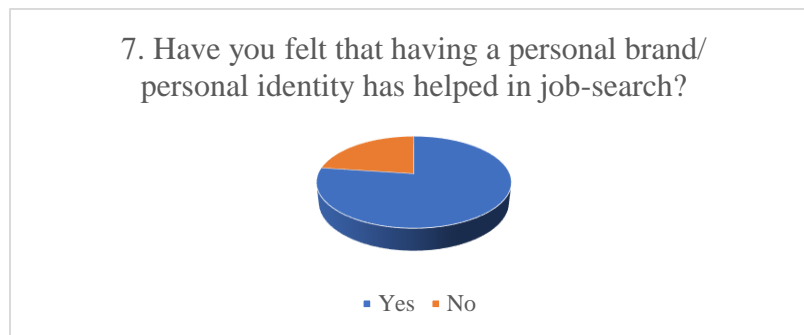
The respondents were asked about significance of having Personal Brand. To which, 83% respondents stated that it is necessary and important to have Personal Brand and remaining respondents opine that they do not feel it is important to have Personal Brand.



The respondents were asked about the platforms they use for online visibility. Majority of them (42%) stated that they use Instagram, 20% state that they use Facebook, 17% respondents state that they use Websites, 14% state that they use LinkedIn and 6% state that they use Blogs to create their online visibility.



The respondents were asked if they have ever taken the Inventory of their Inner Image. To which, maximum (71%) respondents state that they have never take the Inventory of Inner Image and very few (29%) respondents state that they have taken the Inventory of their Inner Image.

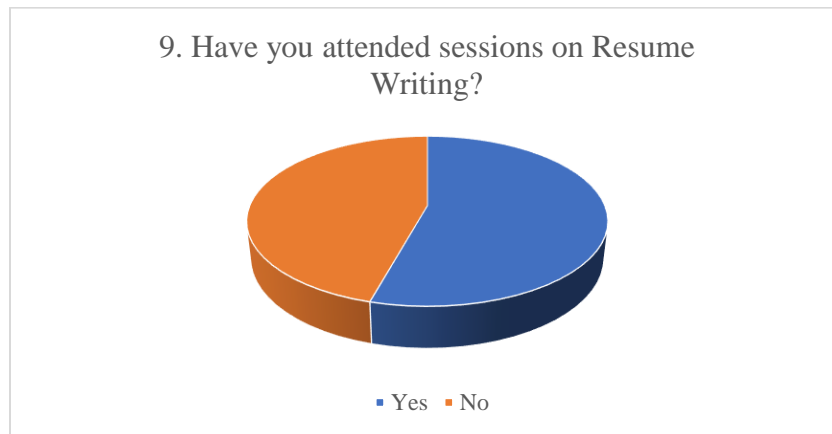


The respondents were asked about the impact of having Personal Brand or Personal Identity on Job-Search. Majority (77%) respondents stated that having a personal brand has a positive impact on the Job-Search and very few (23%) respondents state that the Personal Brand does not have any impact on Job-Search.



In continuation with the above, the respondents were asked if having Personal Brand has any impact on Professional Life or Career Progression. Majority (83%) respondents state that having Personal Brand has

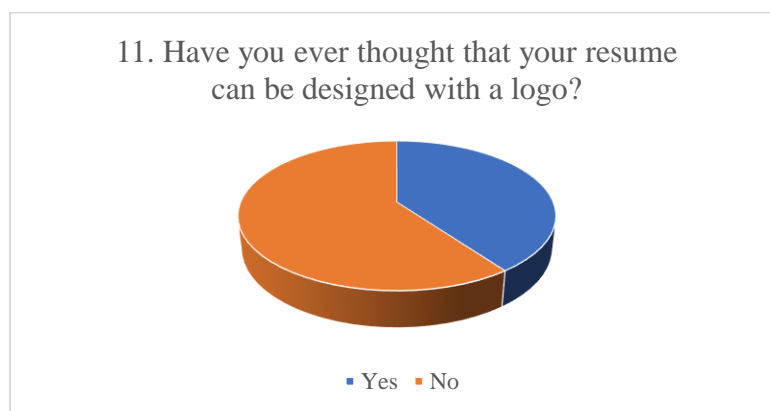
direct and positive impact on Career Progression. Very few (17%) respondents state that having Personal Brand does not impact the Career Progression.



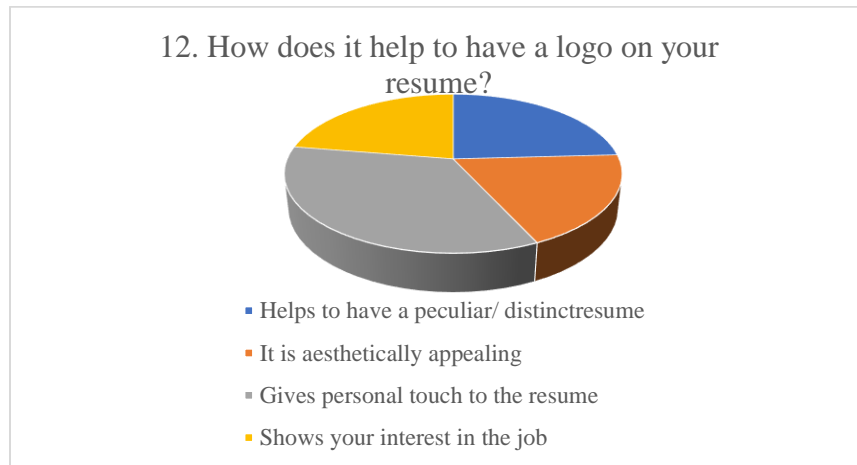
Respondents were asked if they have attended session on resume writing. 54% respondents state that they have attended the session and 46% respondents state that they have not attended the session on resume writing.



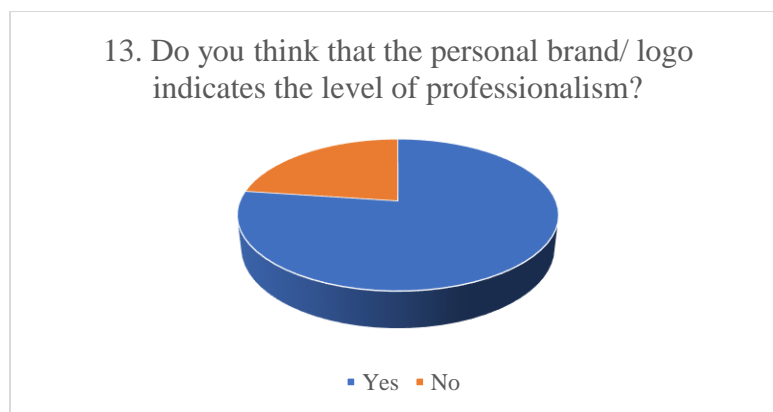
Majority (74%) of the respondents stated that they have not included the logo in their resume whereas only 26% respondents stated that they have included logo in their resume.



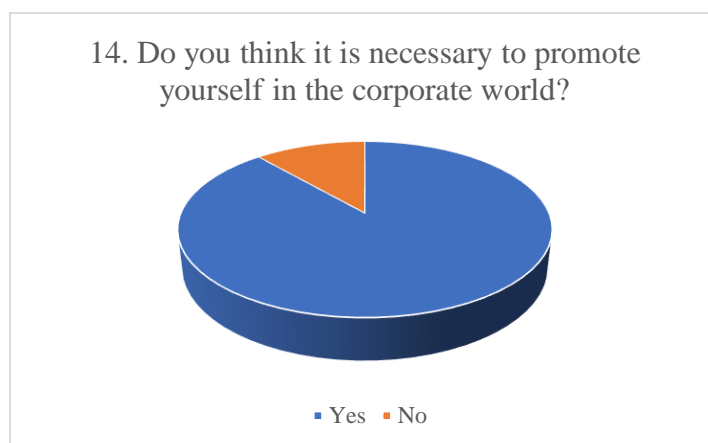
60% respondents state that they never thought a resume can be designed with a logo and 40% respondents state that a resume can include a logo for better impact.



The respondents were asked to underline the impact of logo in the resume. 34% respondents stated that it gives Personal Touch to the resume. 24% respondents stated that it makes it a Distinct Resume. 22% stated that it shows that a candidate is interested and dedicated towards the job. And 19% respondents stated that it is aesthetically appealing.



77% respondents stated that including a logo or Personal Brand to the resume indicates that a candidate is professional and 23% respondents do not agree with the statement.



89% respondents agreed to the statement that it is necessary for an individual to promote oneself in the corporate world and Personal Branding can achieve the same. 11% respondents are not in agreement with the statement.

7. Findings

- It is observed that majority of the students are aware of the concept of Personal Branding.
- The students also opined that a brand is used for various purposes like promotion, marketing and visibility of product in the market.
- Students also stated that there are various aspects included in the Personal Brand. When one talks about a Personal Brand, it generally involves name, personality, uniqueness about an individual. It also depicts recognizing a person and the knowledge about that individual.
- Maximum number of respondents feel that it is important to develop a Personal Brand.
- Online visibility also helps in creating a Personal Brand. The students were asked about the social media platforms they use for developing their own brand. Majority of them use Instagram, followed by Facebook & websites.
- Inventory of Inner Image is very important to know your strengths and weaknesses. Surprisingly, maximum number of students have never taken the inventory of inner image.
- On the contrary to the above observation, maximum students state that they are aware of the fact that the Personal Brand helps in Job-Search
- Also, maximum students understand the importance of Personal Brand and its positive impact on professional life and career progression.
- Attractive resume is one of the tools which can be used for building your own Personal Brand. It is surprising to note that just little more than half the respondents have attended sessions on resume writing. Nearly half of the respondents have not attended any sessions on resume writing.
- Logo is a symbol which is unique and used to create identity of a specific product. It is a unique identification of that particular product. It is evident that maximum students have not included a logo in their resume as they have not attended the sessions on resume writing.
- Maximum students are not aware that they can include a logo in the resume to make it more impressive and aid in creating an impression about you in the mind of the recruiter.
- Majority students opine that a logo can give a personal touch to the resume and others feel that it will help in depicting that the candidate is interested in the job. A logo can make the distinct from others and will look aesthetically appealing.
- The students agree that if one includes a logo in the resume, it shows that the candidate is professional and dedicated towards the job.
- All such efforts are required to promote oneself in the market, to increase your visibility in the market, to have a distinct resume so that you create a positive impression in employers mind. Thus, it is necessary that the students should be made aware of such techniques which will help them in searching a job and even further in their career advancement.

8. Conclusion

The students seem to understand the significance of resume writing. They also understand its role in job-search. They also know that building a personal brand has positive impact on career progression. The students are aware of the concept of brand and the use of a brand. They are also aware of the characteristics of a Personal Brand. But at the same time they do not know the proper direction towards building their own brand. They are not aware of the techniques and tools to be used for building a Personal

Brand. The students should be made aware of various techniques which help in building their own peculiar brand so that their market visibility is increased.

Creating an interesting resume, maybe with logo or your name written in a peculiar manner can make your resume stand apart from others. This creates interest of the recruiter in the candidate and it is more likely that you would be invited for an interview where you already have created a positive impression about yourself. Having a Personal Brand shows the interest of a candidate towards the job and the organization. It shows that the student is dedicated and interested in acquiring the job.

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