

How Personal Branding Affects Millennials' Career Success

Melissa T. Nugraha¹, Dixie Dwimaida², Lili Hasan.³, Rini Setiowati⁴

^{1,2,3,4}Business Management Program, Management Department, Binus Business School Master Program, Bina Nusantara University, Jakarta 11480, Indonesia

¹mellisa.ningtyas@binus.ac.id, ²dixiedwimaida@binus.ac.id, ³lilihanut@gmail.com, ⁴rsetiowati@binus.edu

ABSTRACT

In a very competitive job market, personal branding has become one of the most important career management tools for success. As such, people may aspire to be different from others by having the right branding for themselves. In Indonesia, it has become increasingly difficult to compete in the job market due to an increasing number of people applying for limited job vacancies. This study investigates the relationship between personal branding and career success among millennials. It aims to see how the millennial generation in Jakarta perceives personal branding and determine strategies they use for career advancement. In this study, a questionnaire was distributed online to employees in Jakarta between the ages of 21 to 38 years old. Multiple regression analysis was employed to analyze the data. This study finds that only self-promotion and ingratiation have a significant and positive relationship towards career success

Keywords

Career Success, Exemplification, Ingratiation, Intimidation, Millennial Generation, Personal Branding, Self-Promotion, Supplication

Article Received: 10 August 2020, Revised: 25 October 2020, Accepted: 18 November 2020

Introduction

Personal branding capitalizes on a strong personal identity based on a perception about what people stand for and what set them apart from others (Kaputa, 2003). Personal branding has been known as a powerful career management tool. Therefore, building a personal brand is paramount for success-oriented people who are strongly motivated to develop their own careers (Figurska, 2016). Personal branding is a strategic process that is purposely designed to manage how others are perceived and how those perceptions are managed (Ogutu & Ougo, 2016). By having a strong brand, an individual can communicate and promote unique personal values to current or future employers, and as a result, a bigger opportunity for career advancement awaits (Horton, 2011).

These days, branding is not merely limited to companies and celebrities. Individuals may take action and make the most out of it (Kaputa, 2003). Success is no longer determined by an individual's internal sets of skills, interests, and motivations but considerably by how productively they are organized and labeled (Cheney et al., 2005).

The millennial generation has been put under the spotlight around the world due to their unique characteristics compared to previous generations. People who were born between 1980 and 2000 are often called as millennials (Pyoria, 2017). This cohort will play important roles in various aspects of life in the next 10 to 20 years. According to the Indonesian Central Bureau of Statistics (Badan Pusat Statistik), 50% of Indonesia's productive age population today belongs to the millennial generation. By 2020 until 2030, they are expected to make up 70% of the total productive age population. This means that they need to compete more fiercely to achieve career success.

Based on a close-ended survey study, (Ogutu & Ougo, 2016) most employees believe that personal branding is important. The same study discovered that only the tactic of self-promotion was found to have a positive and significant

relationship toward career success. Brouer et al., (2015) stated that more frequent use of positive Impression Management tactics (self-promotion, ingratiation and exemplification) led to positive interpersonal relationships and enhanced success factors. In the Indonesian context, very few studies have been done to investigate personal branding and career success. A study done by Ariani (2014) found that intimidation has a positive relationship with organizational loyalty, while supplication has a negative relationship with the same variable. However, it is not yet established how the millennial generation employees in Jakarta perceive personal branding as a fundamental part of career growth and which tactics are implemented for career success. This study, therefore, aims to fill this gap by analyzing the relationship between personal branding tactics, namely, self-promotion, ingratiation, supplication, exemplification and intimidation and career success of Indonesian millennial employees in Jakarta. This study may provide insights into how the millennial generation may excel in their chosen career paths through the appropriate personal branding tactics.

Literature Review

Career success is the personal experience of individuals in achieving meaningful goals which often involves a promotion in an organizational hierarchy, a rise in salary, a broad job responsibility, an increase in power and a feeling of satisfaction with their career (Mirvis, 1994). Career success can be categorized as objective and subjective (Judge et al., 1995). Objective career is usually comprised of noticeable components like salary, status and promotion (Aslan, 2015). Subjective career success, on the other hand, is one's personal satisfaction with his or her career (Judge et al., 1995). Based on empirical findings, Bolino concluded that personal branding influences important outputs, including hiring decisions, performance evaluations and career advancement (2003). Aslan found out in his research

that personal branding is positively and significantly related to subjective career success (Aslan, 2015).

Millennials belong to the generation after baby boomers and Generation X, who were born between 1979 and 1994. This generation demands for higher salaries and more flexible work arrangements as compared to the generation before them. Furthermore, millennials are a generation that is always connected to the internet. They are also vocal about their opinions (Smola & Sutton, 2002). In addition, Rickes (2009) explained that they also have some different characteristics, such as specialness, strong ties with family and friends, and confidence.

A brand is defined as a distinguishing name and/or symbol (such as a logo, trademark, or package design) intended to set apart goods or services from those of competitors (Ghodeswar, 2008). According to Rampersad (2011), a personal brand is the synthesis of all the expectations, images and perceptions created in the minds of people when they see or hear someone's name. A desirable personal brand can effectively communicate an individual's unique value, and sets him apart from his competitors (Morton, 2012).

People always want to make a good first impression on others. Therefore, during social interactions they try to create certain images both consciously and unconsciously. These images, known as personal branding strategies, make them behave the way they do and how they brand themselves (Gwal, 2015). Personal branding involves continuously creating exceptional interactions with a target audience; therefore, personal branding strategies are considered as an effective promotional technique (Wee & Brooks, 2010).

Personal branding strategies that individuals commonly use were developed by Jones and Pittman (1982). They introduced self-promotion, ingratiation, exemplification, intimidation, and supplication. The employment of a certain strategy depends on the kind of acknowledgement the first party is seeking from the second party. Also, these strategies can be used alone or combined to influence other people's perceptions (Jones & Pittman, 1982).

According to Turnley (2001), individuals involved in self-promotion techniques usually strive to create an impression of competence. On the other side Zia-ur-Rehman & Javed (2015) explained that self-promotion usually refers to highlighting the qualities of someone to be perceived as competent and capable by others. This strategy provides an opportunity for individuals to manage or maximize their ability to be recognized as a competent individual. This study has found that self-promotion has a positive relationship towards career success (Siswanti & Muafi, 2010). Furthermore, Higgins & Judge (2004) also said that self-promotion creates a positive impression towards career success. These days some researches also founded a positive relationship between self-promotion and career success.

H1: There is a positive relationship between self-promotion and career success.

According to Jones, ingratiation is a strategy that makes a person more attractive and likeable to others (Jones & Pittman, 1982). Ingratiation is the attempt to be liked, which includes flattery, opinion conformity, and doing favors for someone (Drory & Zaidman, 2007). Ingratiation used to increase interpersonal attraction or liking by employing

subtle mechanisms or influence. So that, Proost, et al. (2010) argue this strategy is other-focused, not self-focused like self-promotion. Studies have found that ingratiation has a positive relationship toward career success (Bolino et al., 2014). A research by Zia-ur-Rehman & Javed (2015) found that ingratiation has a positive relationship towards career success because this strategy tries to create a positive image of someone through pleasing others.

H2: There is a positive relationship between ingratiation and career success.

Exemplification strategies refer to how individuals show dedication and commitment to their job. The exemplifiers will try to influence and control others through inducing guilt or attributions of virtue. The actor impersonates behaviors to present himself as an ideal employee who works beyond the call of duty (Arif et al., 2011). Their idea of creating the image of being a model employee may help in convincing decision-makers of their value to the organization. This strategy has the risk of being branded hypocritical by others if used too much (Jones, 1990). Bolino & Turnley (1999) also explained that exemplification defined as where people self-sacrifice to gain the attribution of dedication from observers. Some studies have found that this strategy has a relationship towards career success (Aslan et al., 2015). The study from Zia-ur-Rehman & Javed (2015) also found that exemplification has a positive relationship towards career success because of this strategy creates a positive image through getting in their good looks.

H3: There is a positive relationship between exemplification and career success.

Supplication as a personal branding strategy is seen in individuals who will try to draw sympathy from their target by showing their shortcomings. According to Schokker (2007), individuals may show their weaknesses to get help from others. They emphasize the principle of social responsibility where everyone should help others in need. Supplication also explained as a condition where individuals advertise their weakness in order to elicit an attribution of being needy from observers (Bolino & Turnley, 1999). A study was done in China which investigates the relationship between employee supplication and job performance in the Chinese context. The findings were consistent with previous research, which revealed that supplication is negatively related to job performance (Lai, 2010). According to Zia-ur-Rehman & Javed (2015), the used of supplication will generate negative impressions by obnoxiously needy on others.

H4: There is a negative relationship between supplication and career success

Intimidation is a strategy used to create an identity of authority. This strategy is designed to intensify the credibility of one's threats and in turn magnify the chance that the target will obey the actor's demands and agree with him (Soran & Balkan, 2013). People who use this method want to show attributes of danger and elicit fearful respect from their audiences (Jones, 1990). However, Ogotu and Ogo (2016) explain in their study that intimidation as a personal branding strategy is negatively related to career success. On the other side, the research that have done by Gwal (2015) explained that this strategy would impact as a negative relationship towards career success, because in some cases someone will get the favorable performance

evaluations because of fear. Furthermore, the research that have done by Zia-ur-Rehman & Javed (2015) also explained that intimidation has negative and significant relations.

H5: There is a negative relationship between intimidation and career success.

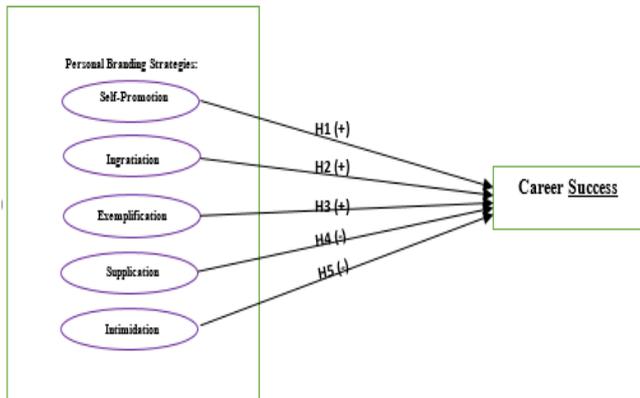


Figure I. Research Model

Methods

Measurements

A close-ended survey questionnaire was adapted from Ogutu & Ougo, (2016). The questionnaire consists of variables from personal branding strategies measured by a scale taken from Bolino et al. (1999) based on the classification system proposed by Jones et al. (1982). The questionnaire consists of 2 questions for personal branding; 6 questions for self-promotion; 4 questions for ingratiation; 5 questions for exemplification; 4 questions for intimidation; 3 questions for supplication. Career success was measured using the scale adapted from Gattiker et al. (1986). The questionnaire consists of 6 questions for career success (see Appendix III).

Data collection and survey

This study is empirical, cross sectional and quantitative in nature, with a non-contrived study setting and minimal interference from the researchers. A questionnaire-based survey was conducted to collect data from 200 respondents with convenience sampling method. The questionnaires were distributed online to employees in Jakarta who are 21 to 38 years old. The researchers tried to get the best representation of Jakarta by distributing it online to some companies in West, East, North, Central and South Jakarta.

Data Analysis

This study used Confirmatory Factor Analysis and Cronbach Alpha to measure the validity and reliability of the research instrument. The index alpha of 0.7 or above is considered good for instruments (Chan & Idris, 2017). KMO is considered satisfactory with a minimum limit of 0.5 and a desirable limit of 0.8 or greater (Arthur-Aidoo et al. 2017). While loading factors for each construct is considered good with a minimum limit of 0.55 (DiStefano & Hess, 2005). To determine the relationship between each independent variable and the dependent variable, multiple regression analysis from SPSS version 24.0 was employed.

Results And Discussions

Two hundred respondents (80 men and 120 women) participated in the study. 80 percent had completed bachelor's degree. All the respondents are employees with different positions. 56 percent are regular staff and in terms of income, 50 percent of the respondents earn 5.000.000-10 million IDR per month.

After collecting the data, the researchers conducted a reliability and validity test on the constructs. The results show that the reliability test for all variables are reliable with a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.884, which is above the 0.60 threshold. The result of the validity test using the Confirmatory Factor Analysis, with the measure of sampling adequacy value is 0.825, which is also above the 0.5 threshold. All indicators are considered valid with values between 0.613 and 0.916 (See Appendix 1). The result proves that the indicators used to measure the concept are valid.

To test the hypotheses, a multiple regression analysis was undertaken to develop the relationship between career success and personal branding strategies, namely, self-promotion, ingratiation, exemplification, supplication and intimidation. The results showed that 30% of the variance in career success was explained by personal branding strategies (R-square = 0.302). The other 70% of the variance was explained by other unknown variables. The significance of the overall model was assessed by evaluating the p-value of the ANOVA analysis. The overall regression model was a significant fit to the data since the p-value = 0.000 < 0.05. Thus, it can be concluded that personal branding strategies were significant predictors of career success. Moreover, personal branding strategies were subsequently assessed for significance. The findings as presented in the table below suggest that self-promotion (B = 0.344, p = 0.000) was statistically significant and had a positive relationship with career success. Ingratiation (B = 0.148, p = 0.004) was also statistically significant and had a positive relationship with career success while exemplification, intimidation and supplication were not statistically significant. Therefore, hypotheses H1 and H2 were supported, while H3, H4 and H5 were rejected. (See Appendix 2)

This paper is an empirically validation of existing theories into the millennial generation's life which will become the majority of our population in the near future. It investigated the relationship of self-promotion, ingratiation, exemplification, intimidation and supplication to career success. Which was found that only self-promotion and ingratiation were considered important by millennial generation in Jakarta in order to achieve career success. And these results could be logically verified by Hofstede Cultural Dimensions theory and millennial generation's characteristics.

Indonesia scores 46 on Masculinity dimension and it is considered low masculine. Unlike most of European countries who are considered Feminine, Indonesia is less masculine than some other Asian countries like Japan, China and India. In Indonesia, status and visible symbols of success are meaningful but it is not always about material gain. Often it is the position that a person holds. There's a concept in Indonesia that's known as "gengsi" – can be

translated as, “outward appearances”. It is essential for Indonesian people that “gengsi” be strongly maintained by making others impressed and creating the aura of status (Hofstede, 2013). This phenomenon can be proved with a statement from Berkup (2014) who said that Millennials are also known as the “Look at Me” generation because they are thought to be overly self-confident and that they want to be known by their careers and not just by their job. Therefore, self-promotion is considered important for career success.

Indonesia scores 48 on the Uncertainty Avoidance dimension which means Indonesia has a low preference for avoiding uncertainty. The main manifestation of this trait is conflict avoidance. It is a habit for Indonesian people to hide negative emotion or anger. They will try to keep smiling and be polite, regardless of how angry they really are inside. Which shows that maintaining workplace and relationship harmony is crucial. Most people do not enjoy confrontational encounters, but Millennials will do anything to avoid them. Millennials place a high value on harmony. The way they feel about their employer and relationships with their colleagues matter greatly to them and they need to work in a place that feels good. One phrase in Indonesian language that could describe this phenomenon is ‘Asal Bapak Senang’ (keep the boss happy). Keeping the boss happy means that the employees who do such things will be rewarded and kept as a valuable member of the company (Hofstede, 2013). Thus, ingratiation is considered important by millennials.

On the other hand, exemplification, intimidation and supplication were not considered important by millennial generation in Jakarta can also be explained by millennial generation’s characteristics in the workplace. Millennial generation perceived career success as an important state in life. They focus on their personal success but at the same time, they still want to have a work-life balance and they believe more in quality of work than quantity (Espinoza et al., 2011). According to Dr. Stanimir, if they know that by completing the task sooner, they will be able to spend the rest of time on private matters, then they will try to do it and with greater involvement. Unlike previous generation, millennials do not like to work overtime. They just don’t understand how one could sacrifice personal time for work (Stanimir, 2015). Therefore, exemplification was not considered important by them. Because they will try to do their best in each task and to finish everything on time, so they don’t need to work overtime.

Furthermore, intimidation and supplication were not believed as a way to achieve career success, by reason of in organizations, this generation prefers teamwork, and they are tolerant, focused on relationships and valuing friendships (Mendryk, 2015). That is why intimidation is not a tactic they would use in order to achieve career success. They also consider self-promotion as an important tactic for career success, as a consequence, supplication is considered unimportant because supplication and self-promotion is an opposite trait. Supplication is opposite to self-promotion, in which attribution of competence is the sought-after impression (Lai, 2010).

Conclusions And Managerial Implications

This study seeks to establish the importance of personal branding among millennials and investigate the relationship between the personal branding strategies of self-promotion, ingratiation, exemplification, supplication, and intimidation towards career success. The results show that personal branding is considered important by the millennial generation in Jakarta. Only self-promotion and ingratiation are found to have a positive and significant relationship toward career success.

It can be concluded that a company should encourage their employees to pursue higher and better education, also attempt to possess new skills or knowledge with professional certifications to strengthen their personal branding strategies, particularly self-promotion. And provide opportunities such as training and development in personality, behavior and attitude at work to enrich their ingratiation technique. Because the millennial generation should improve their self-promotion and ingratiation skills to accelerate their career growth.

Limitation Of The Study And Future Research

This study is limited to the millennial generation of Jakarta. A wider assumption of results should be done with discretion since the study only considers employees who live or work in Jakarta as the target population. For future research, we recommend further research into personal branding by comparing different age groups or generations from baby boomers, generation X, millennials to generation Z

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Appendix 1

Table I – Loading Factors & Cronbach Alpha

Variable Item	Factor Loading	Cronbach Alpha
SP1	.744	.866
SP2	.790	
SP3	.868	
SP4	.867	
SP5	.862	
SP6	.805	
IG1	.871	.782
IG2	.802	
IG3	.899	
IG4	.824	
EX1	.613	.760
EX2	.772	
EX3	.723	
EX4	.853	
EX5	.840	
IT1	.812	.808
IT2	.812	
IT3	.810	
IT4	.878	
SU1	.800	.680
SU2	.916	
SU3	.901	
CS1	.758	.818
CS2	.669	
CS3	.791	

CS4	.831	
CS5	.874	
CS6	.882	

Appendix II

Table II – Multiple Regression

Path	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.	Result
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
SELF PROMOTION → CAREER SUCCESS	.344	.059	.407	5.784	.000	Supported
INGRATIATION → CAREER SUCCESS	.148	.051	.216	2.928	.004	Supported
EXEMPLIFICATION → CAREER SUCCESS	-.116	.064	-.119	-1.809	.072	Not Supported
INTIMIDATION → CAREER SUCCESS	.044	.049	.057	.896	.372	Not Supported
SUPPLICATION → CAREER SUCCESS	.042	.048	.055	.870	.386	Not Supported

Appendix III

Research Personal Branding

Yth. Bpk./Ibu/Sdr./Sdri. teman-teman sekalian

Perkenalkan kami (Melissa Trihastuti, Dixie Dwimaida, & Liliwati Hasan) adalah mahasiswi S2 Universitas Bina Nusantara (BINUS) fakultas School of Business jurusan MM Young Professional Business Management. Saat ini kami sedang mengkaji dan mempelajari lebih lanjut penelitian mengenai "THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PERSONAL BRANDING AND CAREER SUCCESS FOR MILLENNIAL GENERATION IN JAKARTA"

Kami memohon bantuan dan kesediaan anda sekalian untuk berkontribusi dalam mengisi kuisisioner ini agar dapat melengkapi informasi dalam penelitian yang kami lakukan. Tidak ada jawaban benar atau salah dalam kuisisioner ini, maka dari itu kami berharap teman-teman sekalian dapat mengisi kuisisioner ini berdasarkan pendapat pribadi masing-masing.

Kami menjamin kerahasiaan identitas bapak, ibu, saudara, saudari sekalian dan kami sangat menghargai bantuan dan kejujuran pendapat anda. Terima kasih.

* Wajib

Jenis Kelamin *

- Laki - laki
- Perempuan

Tingkat Pendidikan *

- SD
- SMP
- SMA
- S1
- S2
- Yang lain: _____

Figure I – Questionnaire Form

Pekerjaan *

- Pegawai Negeri Sipil (PNS)
- Pegawai Swasta
- Wiraswasta
- Yang lain: _____

Jabatan *

- Staff
- Asisten
- Supervisor
- Manager
- Executive
- Yang lain: _____

Pendapatan Perbulan *

- < Rp. 5.000.000
- Rp. 5.000.000 - 10.000.000
- Rp. 10.000.001 - 20.000.000
- Rp. 20.000.001 - 30.000.000
- > Rp. 30.000.000

Figure II – Questionnaire Form

SP - Self Promotion / Promosi Diri *

	Sangat Tidak Setuju	Tidak Setuju	Netral	Setuju	Sangat Setuju
SP-1 Saya berbicara dengan bangga tentang pengalaman saya.	<input type="radio"/>				
SP-2 Saya berbicara dengan bangga tentang pendidikan saya	<input type="radio"/>				
SP-3 Saya membuat orang sadar akan bakat saya.	<input type="radio"/>				
SP-4 Saya membuat orang sadar akan kualifikasi saya.	<input type="radio"/>				
SP-5 Saya ingin membuat orang lain sadar bahwa saya berharga bagi organisasi.	<input type="radio"/>				
SP-6 Saya membuat orang lain sadar akan pencapaian saya.	<input type="radio"/>				

Figure III – Questionnaire Form

IG - Ingratiation / Persona Diri *

	Sangat Tidak Setuju	Tidak Setuju	Netral	Setuju	Sangat Setuju
IG-1 Saya memuji rekan saya supaya mereka melihat saya sebagai seorang yang menyenangkan.	<input type="radio"/>				
IG-2 Saya menaruh minat pada kehidupan pribadi kolega saya untuk menunjukkan kepada mereka bahwa saya adalah orang yang ramah.	<input type="radio"/>				
IG-3 Saya memuji rekan-rekan saya atas prestasi mereka supaya mereka menganggap saya sebagai orang yang baik.	<input type="radio"/>				
IG-4 Saya bersedia memberikan bantuan pribadi untuk rekan-rekan saya untuk menunjukkan kepada mereka bahwa saya adalah orang yang ramah.	<input type="radio"/>				

Figure IV – Questionnaire Form

EX - Exemplifications / Contoh Keteladanan *

	Sangat Tidak Setuju	Tidak Setuju	Netral	Setuju	Sangat Setuju
EX-1 Saya pulang kerja lebih lama agar orang lain tahu bahwa saya pekerja keras.	<input type="radio"/>				
EX-2 Saya mencoba tampil sibuk bahkan pada waktu-waktu ketika saya tidak terlalu sibuk.	<input type="radio"/>				
EX-3 Saya tiba lebih awal di kantor agar terlihat berdedikasi tinggi.	<input type="radio"/>				
EX-4 Saya datang ke kantor pada malam hari untuk menunjukkan bahwa saya orang yang berdedikasi tinggi.	<input type="radio"/>				
EX-5 Saya datang ke kantor pada akhir pekan untuk menunjukkan bahwa saya orang yang berdedikasi tinggi.	<input type="radio"/>				

Figure V – Questionnaire Form

IT - Intimidation / Intimidasi *

	Sangat Tidak Setuju	Tidak Setuju	Netral	Setuju	Sangat Setuju
IT-1 Saya bisa mengintimidasi team saya agar pekerjaan team saya dapat terselesaikan dengan cepat.	<input type="radio"/>				
IT-2 Saya memberi tahu orang lain bahwa saya dapat mempersulit mereka jika mereka keterlaluan.	<input type="radio"/>				
IT-3 Saya berdebat dengan kuat dan agresif dengan rekan kerja yang mengganggu bisnis saya.	<input type="radio"/>				
IT-4 Saya menggunakan intimidasi untuk membuat kolega berperilaku pantas.	<input type="radio"/>				

Figure VI – Questionnaire Form

SU - Supplication / Bantuan *

	Sangat Tidak Setuju	Tidak Setuju	Netral	Setuju	Sangat Setuju
SU-1 Saya mencoba untuk mendapatkan simpati dari orang-orang dengan berperilaku lemah di beberapa area.	<input type="radio"/>				
SU-2 Saya pura-pura tidak mengerti sesuatu untuk mendapatkan bantuan seseorang.	<input type="radio"/>				
SU-3 Saya bertindak seperti saya butuh bantuan sehingga orang akan membantu saya.	<input type="radio"/>				

Figure VII – Questionnaire Form

CS - Career Success / Kesuksesan Karir *

	Sangat Tidak Setuju	Tidak Setuju	Netral	Setuju	Sangat Setuju
CS-1 Saya mendapat respon balik yang positif tentang kinerja saya dari semua kolega.	<input type="radio"/>				
CS-2 Saya ditawari peluang untuk pendidikan lebih lanjut.	<input type="radio"/>				
CS-3 Saya memiliki cukup tanggung jawab dalam pekerjaan saya.	<input type="radio"/>				
CS-4 Saya sepenuhnya didukung oleh supervisor saya dalam pekerjaan saya.	<input type="radio"/>				
CS-5 Saya ada diposisi dimana saya ditawarkan kesempatan untuk mempelajari keahlian baru.	<input type="radio"/>				
CS-6 Saya ada diposisi dimana saya ditawarkan kesempatan untuk mempelajari pengetahuan baru.	<input type="radio"/>				

Figure VIII – Questionnaire Form

PB - Personal Branding *

	Sangat Tidak Setuju	Tidak Setuju	Netral	Setuju	Sangat Setuju
PB-1 Saya yakin Personal branding itu penting	<input type="radio"/>				
PB-2 Saya percaya personal branding akan mempengaruhi kesuksesan karir.	<input type="radio"/>				

Figure IX – Questionnaire Form