Symbolic Interaction as a Communication Strategy to Increase the Competitiveness of Job Applicants in the Context of Corporate Communication

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KEYWORDS	ABSTRACT
corporate communications; CV; Portfolio; symbolic communication; interpersonal communication; Recruitment	Corporate communication plays a vital role in shaping organizational image and attracting talent, with digital platforms increasingly used in recruitment. Curriculum Vitae (CVs) and portfolios serve as crucial communication tools reflecting professional identity, yet CVs often fail to convey personality or in-depth expertise. This study aims to analyze how the integration of CVs and portfolios can increase applicant competitiveness in job selection by examining the perceptions of users (employers) and HR, through the lens of Goffman's Symbolic Communication Theory and DeVito's Interpersonal Communication Theory. Employing a qualitative approach with a case study method, data was collected through in-depth interviews with employees, users, and HR involved in the selection process, supplemented by analysis of CV and portfolio documents. A well-structured CV attracts initial HR attention, while an informative, narrative portfolio provides concrete evidence of skills, especially for roles requiring visual proof of work. Both act as communication symbols reflecting an individual's values and competencies, with interview communication effectiveness influenced by adaptability and storytelling. This research provides insights for companies and HR to improve recruitment effectiveness and for applicants to optimize digital CV and portfolio integration, highlighting the importance of balancing professionalism with authenticity.

INTRODUCTION

Corporate Communication is defined as strategic communication activities undertaken by organizations to build, manage, and maintain relationships with various stakeholders, including employees, customers, investors, the media, and the wider community. Corporate communication includes various aspects such as branding, internal communication, marketing communication, public relations, and crisis communication. Corporate communication plays a crucial role in shaping a company's image and attracting top talent through effective communication strategies (Fero, 2023; Tyasari & Ruliana, 2021).

Corporate communication not only functions as a means of conveying information, but also as a tool to create perceptions, build organizational identity, and strengthen employer branding.

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Corporate communication assists organizations in managing reputation and ensuring that the message conveyed to the public is aligned with the company's values and goals (Tyasari & Ruliana, 2021). With the development of digital technology, corporate communication has also undergone significant changes, including in the recruitment process. Many companies now use digital platforms such as LinkedIn and social media to interact with potential workers, introduce work culture, and build an image as an attractive workplace (Putra, 2021).

The workforce recruitment process continues to undergo significant changes as companies increase their need for candidates who not only meet technical qualifications but also have certain added value. Curriculum Vitae (CV) and portfolio in recruitment can be understood in the context of corporate communication, where the document serves not only as a selection tool, but also as a strategic communication medium that helps build relationships between applicants and the organization. A Curriculum Vitae (CV) is a formal document that contains a summary of important information related to a person's educational background, work experience, skills, and achievements. As the main document used in assessing applicants' initial qualifications, a CV has the function of providing an overview of the applicant's competencies (Rachmawati et al., 2024). However, CVs are often considered incapable of reflecting personality, values, and expertise in depth. This makes it difficult for applicants to showcase their unique side and specific relevance to the position being applied for.

A portfolio is a collection of proofs of work designed to visually and in-depth demonstrate the applicant's work, achievements, and abilities. A portfolio can include a variety of elements, such as completed projects, case studies, designs, papers, or other documents relevant to a particular profession or industry. The portfolio also provides an overview of the process, context, and added value that can help recruiters understand the applicant's abilities more thoroughly (Chairunisa, 2018). In recruitment, CVs and portfolios are not only a communication tool for applicants to companies, but also part of organizational communication in conveying company expectations and culture to candidates. A CV and portfolio not only serve as factual documents, but also become a communication symbol that reflects an individual's professional identity. Previous research also supports the relevance of portfolio use in the job selection process. Some studies have shown that visual portfolios can increase applicants' attractiveness in the eyes of recruiters by presenting tangible evidence of their competencies (Holtzman et al., 2021).

This approach is relevant within the framework of Symbolic Interactionism by Erving Goffman which states that humans use symbols to interact and build their identity (Musta'in, 2010). A CV and portfolio can be seen as a symbol that reflects an individual's value in the presence of recruiters so that the integration of the two has the potential to strengthen the competitiveness of applicants. A CV is often the primary document used to assess an applicant's initial qualifications in the job selection process. A CV alone is not always able to reflect a person's personality, values, and skills as a whole.

Interpersonal Communication Theory discusses how interactions between individuals can build initial impressions that determine the quality of relationships (DeVito, 2013). CVs and portfolios become indirect forms of interpersonal communication that provide initial information about the applicant's personality, values, and competencies to recruiters. This relationship, although it does not occur directly, still has the power to build initial perception.

The Theory of Symbolic Communication put forward by Goffman emphasizes the importance of symbols in communication and the formation of meaning. Goffman states that individuals use symbols to convey their identity and values in social interactions (Goffman, 1956).

A CV and portfolio can be understood as symbols that not only convey factual information but also shape the perception of the applicant's professional identity. These two documents act as a medium of communication that represents the abilities, personalities, and values that individuals have in the presence of the recruiter.

Goffman also introduced the concepts of "front stage" and "back stage" in his theory of social interaction. The "front stage" describes how individuals present themselves in front of the audience, while the "back stage" reflects the behind-the-scenes activities that are invisible to the audience. A CV and portfolio can be thought of as part of the "front stage," which is designed to create a positive impression on recruiters. Dramaturgy theory also explains that individuals "present themselves" before an audience to create a certain impression (Goffman, 1956). A CV and portfolio are the "front stage" of applicants designed to influence HR decisions. Portfolios allow applicants to showcase their work and tell stories about how the work was created and reflect their values and dedication.

Symbolic interactionism theory is a theoretical perspective that emerged from the development of action theory, with a focus on interactions between individuals and groups. Leading figures such as George Herbert Mead and Charles H. Cooley underline that humans interact primarily through symbols, such as signs, gestures, and words, both written and oral. This symbol has no intrinsic meaning, but acquires meaning through social agreement in interaction. According to Herbert Blumer, symbolic interaction is explained through three main elements: *act thing*, and *meaning*. Humans act towards something based on the meaning they give to it. This meaning does not arise automatically, but is the result of social interaction and is processed through interpretation. This interpretive process allows humans to understand and give meaning to something they encounter. In other words, meaning is always the result of dynamic social constructions and is influenced by the experience of individual interactions (Jermias & Rahman, 2022).

This research has strong relevance because it highlights how written and visual communication can be used as strategies to build impressions and increase competitiveness in the workforce. A CV and portfolio are a form of strategic communication that reflects a person's professional identity. This research can enrich the study of communication in the realm of organizational communication, interpersonal communication, and strategic communication in the context of recruitment and personal branding.

This research has strategic implications for companies and HR because it can provide insights into how symbolic and interpersonal communication-based approaches can improve the effectiveness of the recruitment process. This research can also provide insights into how applicants can optimize the integration of CVs and portfolios in a digital format that is increasingly relevant in the modern world of work. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the perception of Users and HR towards the integration of CV and portfolio as a communication strategy to increase the competitiveness of job applicants in the job selection process. Through the approach of corporate communication and symbolic communication, this study aims to understand how CVs and portfolios are not only administrative tools in recruitment, but also as communication mediums that represent the applicant's professional identity as well as shape the recruiter's perception of the candidate.

The current research distinguishes itself by specifically analyzing the perceptions of "users" (employers) and HR regarding the integration of CVs and portfolios as a communication strategy to enhance job applicant competitiveness. While previous studies support the relevance of

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portfolios in selection by showcasing competencies (Holtzman et al., 2021), and Goffman's Symbolic Interactionism addresses identity construction through symbols (Musta'in, 2010), this research delves into the combined communicative and symbolic function of both documents from the perspective of key decision-makers. It further explores how these documents, as indirect forms of interpersonal communication, build initial perceptions in line with DeVito's (2013) theory.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study method to understand the perception of *users* (employers) and HR towards the integration of CV and portfolio in the job selection process. The qualitative approach was chosen because it provides space to explore the subjective views of the research subjects, especially related to their experiences and perceptions of two important elements in the job selection process. Case studies allow researchers to analyze specific phenomena in job selection in companies.

The research subjects consisted of two main groups, namely *users* who were directly responsible for the position applied for by the applicant, and HR who played an important role in the early stages of screening and assessing applicants' documents. *The user* in this study is someone who has the authority to assess the suitability of the applicant for specific job needs, while HR is responsible for the initial screening process which includes the evaluation of the application documents. The research subjects were selected through *purposive sampling techniques*, where individuals who had experience and direct involvement in the job selection process were selected as informants. The number of informants is determined based on the principle of data saturation, i.e. when the interviews no longer produce new findings that are relevant to the research.

The data sources used in this study are divided into two types, namely primary data and secondary data. Primary data was obtained through in-depth interviews with employees, *users* and HR. This interview aims to explore their views on the effectiveness of integrating CVs and portfolios in the job selection process, as well as to understand how the two documents are viewed from a communicative and symbolic perspective. Secondary data is collected from CV and portfolio documents provided by applicants. This document is analysed to assess how applicants structure their professional identity and how the elements in the CV and portfolio reflect their abilities and values in the eyes of recruiters.

The data collection procedure was carried out through structured interviews with the research subjects, both face-to-face and online. This interview is designed to focus on two main aspects: the user's perception of the strengths and weaknesses of the CV and portfolio, and the HR preference in assessing applicants based on these two documents. Interview data will be recorded and transcribed to ensure the accuracy of the information obtained, while CV and portfolio documents will be analyzed to explore the elements contained in them, such as design, content, and suitability for the position being applied for.

After the data is collected, the analysis process is carried out using a thematic approach based on the Theory of Symbolic Communication. This approach allows researchers to understand how symbols in CVs and portfolios shape applicants' professional identities and affect user and HR perceptions. Thematic analysis is carried out by identifying the main themes that emerge from the interviews and documents and then interpreting those themes in the context of professional communication.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Employee, HR, and User Perspectives on the Role of CV and Portfolio

The results of interviews with five resource persons, namely employees (Danya, Qanitan, Mike), HR (Gina), and users (Aria), provide an overview of the role of CVs and portfolios in the recruitment process as well as how aspects of symbolic communication, interpersonal communication, and dramaturgy play a role in recruitment interactions. The results of the thematic analysis are presented in Table 1. The results of the interview generally show that CV and portfolio play a role in job selection but with different functions. A CV plays more of a role in the initial screening, while a portfolio provides additional evidence of a candidate's skills.

Table 1. Results of Thematic Analysis of Resource Persons

Category	Theme	Description	Data Source
Recruitment Experience	Different Recruitment Processes	Some candidates enter through the recommendation pathway without regular selection, while others follow a standard process.	Danya
	Role of Recommendations	Some candidates are recruited because of a recommendation from their previous superiors.	Danya
	The Role of Transparent Selection	The selection process is transparent with clear stages.	Mike
The Role of CVs in Selection	CV as an Initial Screener	A CV is used as an initial screening before the candidate progresses to the next stage.	Gina (HR), Aria (Hiring Manager)
The Role of Portfolios in Selection	Portfolio as Real Proof	Portfolios are more relevant for positions that require visual proof of work.	Gina (HR), Aria (Hiring Manager)
	Portfolio Suitability with Position	The portfolio should be appropriate to the needs of the position being applied for to be more attractive to recruiters.	Aria (Hiring Manager)
CV and Portfolio Evaluation Criteria	CV Assessed Based on Experience and Achievement	CVs are assessed based on experience, responsibilities, and achievements.	Gina (HR), Aria (Hiring Manager)
	Portfolio Emphasizes Relevance and Impact	Portfolios showcase the relevance, presentation, and tangible impact of the candidate's work.	Gina (HR), Aria (Hiring Manager)

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The Importance of CVs and Portfolios in Recruitment	CV as an Initial Factor (*Initial Screening*)	A CV helps attract the attention of recruiters and headhunters in the early stages of selection.	Qanitan, Mike
	Portfolio as a Differentiator	Portfolios can be a key factor in highlighting candidates, especially in the creative and fintech industries.	Qanitan, Mike, Aria (Hiring Manager)
CV and Portfolio Preparation Strategy	Adjustments with the Company	Some candidates tailor their CVs to the company's culture, while others focus more on experience and skills.	Danya, Qanitan, Mike
	Relevance of Portfolio to Position	A good portfolio shows relevance to the position being applied for and includes projects that make a real impact.	Aria (Hiring Manager), Gina (HR)
Portfolio Structure and Presentation	A More Attractive Structured Portfolio	A clearly structured portfolio is more appealing to recruiters than one that only contains a framework with no concrete impact.	Aria (Hiring Manager)
Interaction in the Recruitment Process	The Difference in Communication with HR and Users	Communication with HR tends to be informal and administrative, while with users it is more technical and in-depth.	Danya
Interaction in the Recruitment Process	The Difference in Communication with HR and Users	Communication with HR tends to be informal and administrative, while with users it is more technical and in-depth.	Danya
Determining Factors in Final Selection	Hard Skills and Soft Skills	Candidates are assessed based on technical skills, communication, and suitability with the company's culture.	Aria (Hiring Manager)
	Project Impact in the Portfolio	Candidates who are able to explain challenges, solutions, and project outcomes are more attractive to users.	Aria (Hiring Manager)
Conclusion	CV as Initial Screening, Portfolio as Concrete Evidence	A CV is used for initial screening, while a portfolio strengthens the candidate's credibility.	Overall Interview Results

Danya has a unique recruitment experience because she was recommended by her former employer, so she doesn't go through a regular selection process. Although he still submitted his CV, the main factor that influenced his acceptance was his previous experience in the field of product management, especially in the lending sector. He did not receive specific feedback from HR regarding his CV. In compiling a CV, Danya initially adjusted the content of the CV based on research on what the company was looking for. After having work experience, he focuses more on the skills and responsibilities he has assumed without adapting them to a particular company culture. He acknowledges that a CV can provide an overview of a person's professional experience, but it doesn't always determine success in a job. In a job interview, the technical aspects are discussed first, followed by the personal aspects and work culture. Danya assessed that communication with HR tends to be informal, while communication with users is more formal and discusses work details. To build a good impression, he tries to appear professional and confident without pretending or hiding certain aspects of himself.

Other employees, namely Qanitan and Mike, said that CVs and portfolios have a very significant role in the job selection process. Both consider that CVs and portfolios are important elements in the early stages of recruitment, especially in attracting the attention of recruiters. Qanitan, who has an architectural background but later switched to the advertising and fintech industries, mentioned that his CV and portfolio helped him get the attention of the headhunter who eventually connected him with PT Indosat Tbk. Meanwhile, Mike, who has extensive experience in the business and fintech fields, also considers that his CV and portfolio helped him stand out in the selection process. Both also emphasized that CV and portfolio are not the only determining factors in job selection. Mike emphasized that communication during the interview and the suitability of values with the company's culture are also decisive aspects.

Gina as HR explained that the candidate assessment process starts from the CV before considering the portfolio, especially for positions that require visual proof of work. A CV is used as an initial screen, while a portfolio serves as concrete evidence of a candidate's skills. The main criteria in assessing a CV include the clarity of the candidate's work experience, responsibilities, and achievements. Meanwhile, a good portfolio should demonstrate relevance to the position being applied for, the quality of the presentation, and measurable achievements. HR believes that a CV is more important in the early stages of selection, but a portfolio can be a differentiating factor for candidates in a particular position. HR also observed that candidates with excellent portfolios tend to have projects that show real impact and are structured with a clear structure. In contrast, a poor portfolio is often irrelevant to the position being applied for or lacks a candidate's real contribution.

Aria is responsible for screening candidates based on CVs selected by HR. He emphasized that the three main aspects in assessing candidates are hard skills, soft skills, and suitability with team and company culture. Users often receive portfolios as CV companions, especially from junior candidates. In his CV, he expects information about work experience, portfolio, and achievements. Meanwhile, in the portfolio, he looks for concrete evidence of problem-solving, solutions implemented, and impact. Aria assesses that portfolios provide additional information that is not always found in CVs, especially regarding the details of projects that candidates have handled. Portfolios that only list the framework without explaining the concrete impact are considered less attractive. Successful candidates in the selection are those who can explain well the problems faced, the solutions implemented, as well as the results.

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CV and Portfolio as a Representation of Professional Identity (Symbolic Communication Theory – Goffman)

CV and portfolio are symbolic communication mediums that represent the candidate's professional identity. In the perspective of Symbolic Communication Theory put forward by Erving Goffman, CV and portfolio can be understood as a form of *presentation of self*. This can be seen where someone strategically organizes and displays information to create a certain impression in the eyes of recruiters (Rorong, 2018). A CV serves as a summary of professional experience that provides an initial overview of the candidate's competencies. In line with the concept *of front stage performance* in Goffman's theory, CVs can be considered as the primary tool that candidates use to display a self-image that matches industry expectations.

The interview results show that candidates have a diverse approach in compiling their CVs. Danya, for example, sees CVs as a tool to attract attention, but does not consider them as the main factor in determining the success of the selection. These sources rely more on their professional track record rather than tailoring their CV to a specific company culture. This confirms that candidates with work experience tend to have a more stable professional identity, while candidates who are still in the early stages of their careers are more flexible in adapting their professional identity to the company's expectations (Rivera, 2012). Clarity in compiling work experience, responsibilities, and achievements is one of the main considerations assessed by candidates.

Unlike a CV which serves as a summary of experience, a portfolio plays a more role in providing concrete evidence of the candidate's skills and contributions. In job selection dramaturgy, a CV serves as a stage opener, while a portfolio acts as a tool that strengthens a candidate's credibility by showing his or her achievements. The *hiring manager*'s perspective considers portfolios to have greater weight in positions that require a demonstration of skills such as *product management* or design. A good portfolio should be able to demonstrate *a framework* or methodology and reflect concrete problem-solving and measurable impact. Candidates who are able to explain challenges, solutions, and final results are considered more attractive than those who only present theoretical concepts without real implementation. This is in line with the idea of *impression management* in Goffman's theory, which is a technique used by actors to cultivate certain impressions in certain situations to achieve certain goals (Soraya & Alifahmi, 2021). In this case, the candidate regulates how the information is constructed in order to create the desired impression. The candidate plays the role of an actor who builds a self-presentation through a CV and portfolio, while the recruiter acts as an audience that assesses the suitability of the image to the company's needs. Portfolios that are well-structured, have a clear structure, and feature case studies with a strong narrative tend to be more attractive to users than portfolios that only display a list of projects.

Communication Dynamics with HR and Users (Interpersonal Communication Theory - DeVito)

Interpersonal communication has a crucial role in the job selection process to shape the perception of candidates in the eyes of recruiters and becomes a means for companies to assess the candidate's suitability for the position being applied for. Communication functions as a means of exchanging information and as a strategy to build impressions and demonstrate competence (Tiara & Khotimah, 2023). Based on the Interpersonal Communication Theory put forward by Joseph A. DeVito (2013), the effectiveness of communication in interviews is greatly influenced by the context of the interaction, the purpose of communication, and the interpersonal skills possessed by each party.

The results of the interview revealed that communication between candidates, HR, and *users* has different characteristics, depending on the role played in the recruitment process. Employee resource persons described that communication with HR feels more relaxed, informal, and supportive, while interactions with *users* are more evaluative, technical, and professional. This difference reflects the role of HR who serves as a mediator in the selection process and helps candidates understand the company's values and culture, as well as create a more comfortable atmosphere. Instead, *the user* acts as the main evaluator who assesses the candidate's competencies based on technical aspects and suitability with the team.

The communication process in job interviews shows complex dynamics, where the effectiveness of communication depends on the candidate's ability to convey ideas, understand the company's needs, and build good interpersonal relationships. Candidates who are able to display clear, structured, and relevant communication to the context of the interview have a greater chance of being accepted. Aria, as a *hiring manager*, emphasized that candidates who can explain their work experience in detail, provide critical thinking on the questions asked, and show a professional and confident attitude attract *more users*' attention. This is in line with the principle of interpersonal communication in DeVito's theory which states that effective communication depends on the clarity of verbal messages and on non-verbal elements such as facial expressions, tone of voice, and good listening skills (Aswaruddin et al., 2025; Putri & Sawitri, 2018).

The dynamics of communication in interviews also reflect the *dyadic communication* aspect, where the interactions that occur involve active responses from both parties (Solomon et al., 2021). Candidates who are able to establish good communication with HR will better understand the company's expectations, while strong communication with users will help them build credibility as competent professionals. Candidates are required to be able to explain their experience and skills in concrete terms and demonstrate how they solved problems in previous jobs as well as provide a clear picture of the contribution they can make to the company.

In addition to the verbal aspect, job interviews also involve non-verbal communication which plays a role in forming first impressions. In communication with *users*, candidates who are able to align their responses with a more formal and analytical communication style will look more credible. On the other hand, in interactions with HR, the ability to build a good rapport and show a personality that is in accordance with the company's culture is a factor that can provide its own advantages in the selection process. Candidates who can adapt their communication style to different audiences will have a greater advantage in building trust and increasing competitiveness in the selection process.

Strategies in Building Impressions (Dramaturgical Theory - Goffman)

The dramaturgy concept developed by Erving Goffman provides a relevant perspective in understanding how candidates manage impressions during the interview process. In this theory, social interaction is analogous to a theater stage, where individuals perform *front stage performances* or performances that have been prepared to meet the expectations of the audience, in this case the recruiter (Ikhsano & Fauzia, 2020).

Danya, for example, consciously builds a professional image during the interview by displaying confidence and a convincing attitude. Even so, he still tries to maintain authenticity so as not to seem "acting" excessively. This shows that communication strategies in job interviews need to project an impression that matches the company's expectations and balance self-image and personal authenticity. Candidates who are too fixated on the script or give answers that sound too

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idealistic without being supported by concrete evidence can actually create a less convincing impression in the eyes of users.

In line with that, Aria observes that some candidates tend to focus too much on building a flawless image without showing their authentic side. When candidates attempt to display overly engineered performance, recruiters can often catch the mismatch between the narrative being delivered and their non-verbal expression. Candidates who can explain their work experience naturally and relate it to real-life examples and demonstrate an understanding of the field they are applying for make a strong impression compared to those who simply follow a standard answer script.

The concept *of backstage* in Goffman's dramaturgy can also be found in more informal interactions outside of the main interview session, such as conversations with HR before or after the interview takes place. In these situations, candidates have room to be more relaxed and show a more natural side of themselves without the pressure of rigid expectations. Some candidates take advantage of this moment to build an interpersonal relationship with the recruiter that can create a positive impression that can provide added value in the selection process.

In addition to verbal communication, dramaturgical strategies are also reflected in the preparation of CVs and portfolios. Portfolios can serve as a visual representation of a candidate's performance "on stage" and reinforce the narrative conveyed in the interview. Candidates who are able to construct a portfolio with a clear structure, present strong case examples, and present concrete impacts of their work are more likely to capture *the attention of users* than those who only include a *framework* without clear context. For example, Qanitan sources actively adjust the format of their CV and portfolio to the expectations of recruiters to ensure that the message they want to convey can be received optimally. Resource person Mike also demonstrated a more flexible dramaturgical strategy by adapting the communication style based on the company's values and culture by choosing a more listening approach and showing a humble attitude. This confirms that dramaturgy in a job interview is useful for understanding the audience and strategically adjusting the communication approach.

Implications for Candidates in Preparing CVs, Portfolios, and Communication Strategies

Based on interviews with employees, HR, and *users*, it can be identified several strategies that candidates can apply to increase their chances in the job selection process. This strategy includes crafting an engaging CV, creating an informative and narrative portfolio, developing communication skills in interviews, and displaying a balance between professionalism and personal authenticity. Each of these aspects has an important role in building a convincing impression for recruiters so that they can increase the competitiveness of candidates in an increasingly competitive recruitment environment.

CV is the main document that is first checked by the recruiter, so its preparation must be done strategically. One of the most important aspects of CV preparation is to ensure that the format used is clear and professional so that readability remains optimal. Recruiters often receive hundreds to thousands of job applications in a single period, so a CV that has a neat structure with easy-to-scan information will have a greater chance of getting noticed. In addition to the format aspect, the content of the CV should also be focused on measurable achievements rather than simply listing a list of job tasks. Candidates who simply write down a job description without showing the concrete impact of their job are often less attractive to recruiters.

Candidates also need to adapt the content of their CV to the position being applied for without losing their own uniqueness. Each company has its own criteria in finding candidates so that matching your CV with relevant keywords in the job description can increase the chances of passing the initial selection stage. *Personal branding* still needs to be maintained so that the CV does not seem too generic or made only to meet the company's criteria without reflecting the candidate's true identity (Rahmawati & Wijaya, 2024).

Portfolios are an additional element that can provide more value for candidates, especially for those applying in creative, technology, or professional fields with strong project experience. A good portfolio should be able to present information with an engaging narrative approach. One of the effective strategies in compiling a portfolio is to use a case study approach with a clear structure, which explains the problems faced, the solutions implemented, and the impact or results of the solutions. This approach allows recruiters to understand the candidate's mindset in solving problems as well as the real contributions that have been made in previous work. The use of quantitative data in a portfolio can also strengthen claims of project success. Concrete numbers will give a stronger impression than subjective statements that are not supported by evidence.

After passing the document selection stage, the next job interview becomes an important stage where candidates can demonstrate their communication skills and personality in person. One of the main strategies in an interview is to adjust the communication style according to the context and audience. Interviews with HR usually focus more on the administrative and cultural aspects of the company so the candidate needs to demonstrate an understanding of the company's vision and values. Interviews with *users* or potential employers tend to be more technical and competency-based, so candidates need to highlight skills and experience that are relevant to the job being applied for. Storytelling skills are also a factor that can increase the effectiveness of communication in interviews. Candidates who are able to explain work experience and projects in an engaging and structured way will be easier for recruiters to remember. By using a clear narrative approach for example by compiling the answers in a STAR (*Situation, Task, Action, Result*) format, a candidate can provide a more concrete picture of their experience and the impact that has been made in previous work (Bangerter et al., 2014).

The professional image displayed in the interview should remain aligned with the candidate's personality and personal values. In Erving Goffman's theory of dramaturgy, each individual plays a specific role in a variety of social situations. In job interviews, candidates do have to show the best version of themselves, but that doesn't mean they have to lose the essence of their own personality. The balance between professionalism and authenticity will create a more natural impression and increase compatibility with the company's culture (Paulhus et al., 2013).

CONCLUSION

Research highlights that effective job candidate selection hinges on a blend of symbolic communication through CVs and portfolios—acting as self-representation tools of professional identity—and interpersonal communication during interviews, crucial for building strong impressions. Drawing on Goffman's symbolic communication and dramaturgy theories, candidates strategically perform "front stage" impressions, while DeVito's interpersonal communication theory underscores the importance of message content and interactive delivery, with storytelling and adaptable communication styles significantly improving success. Authenticity and consistency are vital, as an overemphasis on an ideal image without genuine backing can undermine credibility. Given the increasing digitalization of recruitment, future research should explore how digital self-

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presentation on platforms like LinkedIn and the use of AI interview tools impact Goffman's dramaturgy and DeVito's interpersonal communication. Key questions include how candidates construct digital "front stage" performances, how AI tools affect communication strategies and perceived authenticity, and how candidates balance professionalism and authenticity across various digital and human-mediated recruitment stages. This timely research, using qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods, will deepen understanding of professional identity communication in a technologically evolving job market.

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