

## The Effect of Social Media Personal Branding and Digital Literacy on The Employability of Management Students at Palangka Raya University in The Gig Economy Era

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### Abstract

The dynamics of the global labour market, which are shifting towards the gig economy era, require university graduates to possess the ability to adapt to technology and to market themselves effectively. This research is motivated by concern over the low job readiness among students, which is attributed to the tendency to use social media solely as a means of entertainment and to a lack of understanding of digital literacy. Departing from this phenomenon, this study was conducted to examine the extent to which personal branding on social media and digital literacy contribute to the job readiness of Management students at the University of Palangka Raya. This study employs a quantitative approach with a causal-associative design. Data were obtained through a questionnaire survey administered to active students who had completed at least four semesters, determined using the purposive sampling method, and were subsequently processed using multiple linear regression analysis. The findings of the study show that personal branding on social media and digital literacy each have a positive and significant impact on job readiness. When considered simultaneously, these two variables exerted a significant positive influence, with a combined contribution of 69.3%. The conclusions of this study emphasise that the combination of technical mastery through digital literacy and the ability to communicate one's competencies through personal branding creates a synergy that is instrumental in shaping the profile of graduates who are ready to compete in the modern labour market.

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### INTRODUCTION

The dynamics of the global labour market are currently undergoing a radical transformation towards the gig economy era, in which traditional fixed, time-based work patterns are shifting towards flexibility, independence, and short-term project-based arrangements (Sofia, 2024). This change presents a dual challenge for university graduates. On one hand, opportunities are becoming more accessible without geographical boundaries; on the other hand, competition is intensifying as graduates must contend not only with local talent but also with a globally distributed digital workforce (Chigbu & Nekhwevha, 2022; Husna, 2021). In this context, job readiness is no longer solely a matter of achieving a high Cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA), but also encompasses adaptability to the digital ecosystem and the ability to market oneself effectively.

For Management students at the University of Palangka Raya, this challenge is particularly relevant. As prospective professionals who will occupy managerial and business roles in Central Kalimantan and at the national level, students are required to develop a distinctive competitive value (Lawton et al., 2025; Widiawati et al., 2025). Field observations indicate that many students still confine their use of social media to recreational purposes and social interaction, even though, according to Kong and Ding (2024), these platforms have now been transformed into digital portfolios closely monitored by recruiters. This underscores the urgency of personal branding on social media. A student's ability to manage their digital self-image professionally can serve as a significant differentiating factor in the job selection process (Bauer et al., 2023). Beyond self-image, digital literacy as a technical competency is a foundational requirement for surviving in the gig economy era (Fiers, 2024). Recent literature in Human Resource Management frequently highlights that the skills gap between the world of education and the industrial world often lies in the mastery of technology (Kovalev et al., 2025).

Unpreparedness in digital literacy and the inability to build personal branding on social media are likely to leave Management graduates of the University of Palangka Raya at a disadvantage in competing for employment opportunities in the current era (Prabowo, 2025; Qamariah et al., 2025). If students possess high digital literacy but fail to communicate it effectively through personal branding on social media, their potential may go unnoticed by job recruiters (Trang et al., 2024). Conversely, according to Audrew and Herdiansyah (2024), strong personal branding on social media without a foundation of qualified digital literacy amounts to nothing more than a fragile and hollow image.

Departing from this phenomenon, a review of prior literature is essential to situate this research within the existing body of knowledge. A number of prior studies — including Aspandi et al. (2025), Dalifa et al. (2025), and Royani et al. (2024) — have explored the role of technical skills (hard skills) and internal motivational factors in relation to job readiness. Nevertheless, research that simultaneously examines digital self-image (personal branding on social media) and digital literacy as combined influences on job readiness remains relatively scarce, particularly within the demographic context of students in the Central Kalimantan region, specifically Management students at the University of Palangka Raya. This gap is evident from several existing studies: Rahayu et al. (2024) treat personal branding only as a mediating variable for career success at Muria Kudus University, Central Java; Rosadi et al. (2023) are limited to qualitative and descriptive methods within a community service framework for Madrasah Aliyah (MA) students; and Kanasan (2024) researched personal branding among graduates without incorporating digital literacy as a variable, and did so in the context of Penang, Malaysia.

The novelty of this research lies in three aspects. First, it empirically tests the simultaneous influence of social media personal branding and digital literacy on job readiness within a single quantitative model — an approach rarely undertaken in prior studies. Second, it focuses on the under-researched population of Management students at the University of Palangka Raya, representing the Central Kalimantan region, thereby addressing a geographical and institutional gap in the literature. Third, it provides empirical evidence from the perspective of the gig economy era, capturing the specific challenges faced by graduates in a developing region where digital transformation is still accelerating. This study offers a unique contribution

by integrating Human Capital Theory with modern digital competencies, moving beyond traditional measures of employability.

Based on the urgency of the identified problems and the gaps in prior research, this study aims to analyse and quantitatively measure the influence of personal branding on social media and digital literacy on the job readiness of Management students at the University of Palangka Raya. The results of this research are expected to make an empirical contribution to the development of a Human Resource Management-based curriculum at the University of Palangka Raya, as well as to provide practical insights for students regarding the importance of managing their digital assets as strategic capital for entering the workforce in the gig economy era.

## RESEARCH METHOD

This study applied a quantitative method through a causal-associative research design, aimed at analysing the causal relationships between the observed variables. This design was selected to empirically measure the influence of two independent variables — Personal Branding on Social Media (X1) and Digital Literacy (X2) — on the dependent variable of Job Readiness (Y) at a specific point in time. The research was conducted within the academic environment of the University of Palangka Raya, with the specific target population being students of the Management Study Programme, who are considered representative of prospective workers in the region. The primary data source in this study consists of primary data collected directly from respondents using a survey method, supplemented by secondary data in the form of a literature review to strengthen the theoretical foundation.

All active students of the Management Study Programme, Faculty of Economics and Business, University of Palangka Raya, constitute the research population. Given the large size of the population, the sampling technique employed was a non-probability sampling approach using the purposive sampling method. The inclusion criteria for the sample were focused on students who had completed at least four semesters, on the assumption that this group possesses a sufficiently developed career orientation. To ensure adequate data representation, the minimum sample size was determined using the Slovin formula with an error tolerance of 10%. The formula for determining the sample size is expressed as follows:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

In the formula,  $n$  represents the required sample size,  $N$  refers to the total student population, and  $e$  is the percentage of the allowable error rate.

The data collection technique was carried out through the dissemination of electronic questionnaires compiled through a 5-point Likert scale questionnaire, ranging from "Strongly Disagree" (1) to "Strongly Agree" (5). Before entering the analysis stage, the instrument is tested first to ensure its quality. The validity of the instrument items was ensured through Pearson's Product Moment correlation, while the consistency of respondents' answers was checked by a reliability test using Cronbach's Alpha method.

Data processing is carried out using statistical applications through several steps. The initial step involves testing classical assumptions so that the regression model meets the criteria of the Best Linear Unbiased Estimator (BLUE). This process includes normality testing with the Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test, detection of multicollinearity through Tolerance and Variance

Inflation Factor (VIF) values, as well as heteroscedasticity testing to guarantee that the residual variance between observations is constant. After the classical assumption was met, the analysis was continued with the Multiple Linear Regression technique to predict the magnitude of the influence of the free variable on the bound variable. The regression equations proposed in this research model are:

$$Y = \alpha + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2$$

The description of the equation is Y as the Work Readiness variable,  $\alpha$  as a constant, and  $\beta_1$   $\beta_2$  as the regression coefficient of each variable, and  $\beta_1$   $\beta_2$  e as the standard of error. Hypothesis testing was carried out through a t-test (partial) to see the influence of each variable partially, and an F test (simultaneous) to measure the influence of these variables when analyzed collectively, with a significance level set at 5% ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ). Furthermore, the Coefficient of Determination test ( $R^2$ ) was applied to measure the extent of the contribution of variations in personal branding and digital literacy variables in explaining changes in the variables of job readiness in this study model.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Research Results

#### a. Test Research Instruments

##### 1. Validity Test

Validity testing was carried out by analyzing Pearson Correlation and Sig. (2-tailed) values. An indicator is declared valid if the calculated r-value is greater than the r-table (0.213) and the Sig. (2-tailed) value is less than 0.05.

**Table 1. Validity Test Results**

Variable	Indicator	Pearson Correlation	Sig. (2-tailed)	Remarks
Personal Branding ( $X_1$ )	1	0,508	0,001	Valid
	2	0,642	0,001	
	3	0,534	0,001	
	4	0,633	0,001	
	5	0,589	0,001	
	6	0,577	0,001	
	7	0,721	0,001	
	8	0,710	0,001	
	9	0,681	0,001	
	10	0,698	0,001	
	11	0,703	0,001	
	12	0,633	0,001	
	13	0,757	0,001	
	14	0,666	0,001	
	15	0,694	0,001	
	16	0,407	0,001	
Digital Literacy ( $X_2$ )	1	0,604	0,001	Valid
	2	0,557	0,001	
	3	0,740	0,001	
	4	0,592	0,001	
	5	0,603	0,001	
	6	0,629	0,001	
	7	0,746	0,001	
	8	0,661	0,001	

	9	0,327	0,002	
	10	0,625	0,001	
	11	0,668	0,001	
	12	0,728	0,001	
	13	0,694	0,001	
Job Readiness (Y)	1	0,527	0,001	Valid
	2	0,629	0,001	
	3	0,627	0,001	
	4	0,682	0,001	
	5	0,716	0,001	
	6	0,745	0,001	
	7	0,501	0,001	
	8	0,569	0,001	
	9	0,572	0,001	
	10	0,683	0,001	
	11	0,683	0,001	
	12	0,764	0,001	
	13	0,594	0,001	
	14	0,536	0,001	
	15	0,508	0,001	

Source: Primary data processed with SPSS, 2025

Referring to Table 1, the variables of personal branding, digital literacy, and job readiness have met the validity test criteria, namely the calculated  $r$  value exceeds the table  $r$  (0.213) and the significance value is below 0.05. Thus, all statements in this study are categorized as valid and feasible to be used in future analysis.

### Reliability Test

Reliability testing is performed by evaluating Cronbach's Alpha values. A variable or indicator is said to be reliable if Cronbach's Alpha value is greater than 0.6.

**Table 2. Reliability Test Results**

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items	Remarks
Personal Branding ( $X_1$ )	0,901	16	Reliable
Digital Literacy ( $X_2$ )	0,862	13	
Job Readiness (Y)	0,881	15	

Source: Primary data processed with SPSS, 2025

Referring to the results of Table 2, the variables of personal branding, digital literacy, and job readiness have met reliability standards with a Cronbach's Alpha score exceeding 0.6. Thus, it can be concluded that the instruments used have been consistent and reliable to measure the research variables.

### Classic Assumption Test

#### Normality Test

The procedure for testing the normality of the data was carried out by paying attention to the value of Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed). The criteria for normally distributed data are met if the statistical results show a value greater than 0.05.

**Table 3. Normality Test Results**

<b>Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)</b>	0,200
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Source: Primary data processed with SPSS, 2025

Based on Table 3, the results show that the research data has met these criteria, so it can be concluded that the data is distributed normally.

**Multicollinearity Test**

To detect the symptoms of multicollinearity, the values of Tolerance and Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) are checked. The research model is declared free from multicollinearity problems if the Tolerance value obtained exceeds 0.1 and the VIF value is below 10.

**Table 4. Multicollinearity Test Results**

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Tolerance</b>	<b>Variance Inflation Factor (VIF)</b>	<b>Remarks</b>
Personal Branding (X <sub>1</sub> )	0,546	1,833	Multicollinearity does not occur
Digital Literacy (X <sub>2</sub> )	0,546	1,833	

Source: Primary data processed with SPSS, 2025

Table 4 shows that all variables have met the threshold of these conditions, which indicates the absence of multicollinearity in the research data model.

**Heteroscedasticity Test**

The test for heteroscedasticity uses the Significance (Sig.) value parameter. A research model is considered not to experience heteroscedasticity problems if the significance results obtained are greater than 0.05.

**Table 5. Heteroscedasticity Test Results**

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Sig.</b>	<b>Remarks</b>
Personal Branding (X <sub>1</sub> )	0,724	Heteroscedasticity does not occur
Digital Literacy (X <sub>2</sub> )	0,100	

Source: Primary data processed with SPSS, 2025

Based on the data in Table 5, the significance value has exceeded 0.05, so it can be concluded that the research model is free of heteroscedasticity symptoms.

**Multiple Linear Regression Analysis**

**Multiple Linear Regression Equations**

The regression equation is carried out by looking at this research model:

$$Y = \alpha + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2$$

The information of the equation is Y as the Work Readiness variable,  $\alpha$  as a constant, and as the regression coefficient of each variable, and  $\beta_1 \beta_2 e$  as the standard of error.

**Table 6. Results of Multiple Linear Regression Equation Analysis**

<b>Models</b>		<b>Unstandardized Coefficients</b>	
		<b>B</b>	<b>Std. Error</b>
1	(Constant)	6,297	3,581
	Personal Branding (X <sub>1</sub> )	0,178	0,064
	Digital Literacy (X <sub>2</sub> )	0,758	0,093

Source: Primary data processed with SPSS, 2025

Based on the results of the analysis listed in Table 6, the following multiple linear regression equation model was obtained:

$$Y = 6,297 + 0,178 + 0,758$$

So it can be concluded that:

- The constant number of 6,297 shows that if the variables of personal branding and digital literacy are assumed to be non-existent or zero, then the level of job readiness will remain at 6,297.
- The regression coefficient for the personal branding variable on social media showed a positive value of 0.178. This indicates that there is a one-way relationship, that is, an increase in personal branding will be followed by an increase in work readiness, and vice versa.
- The digital literacy variable has a positive regression coefficient of 0.758. This means that there is a one-way relationship where the increase in digital literacy will have a positive impact on increasing work readiness, and vice versa.

### Determination Coefficient Test (R<sup>2</sup>)

To determine the magnitude of the influence of independent variables on dependent variables, a determination coefficient test was carried out by referring to the value of Adjusted R Square.

**Table 7. Determination Coefficient Test Results (R<sup>2</sup>)**

Models	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0,837	0,700	0,693	3,92213

Source: Primary data processed with SPSS, 2025

Based on the data in Table 7, the Adjusted R Square value obtained is 0.693. This finding concludes that the variables of personal branding and digital literacy simultaneously contribute 69.3% to the variable of job readiness.

### Hypothesis Test

#### T test (Partial)

Partial hypothesis testing (t-test) is based on a comparison of significance values as well as t-calculations. The variable is considered to have a significant influence if it meets the criteria of a significance value of less than 0.05 and a t-calculation value that is greater than the t-table of 1.989.

**Table 8. Results of the t-test (partial)**

Models		t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	1,758	0,082
	Personal Branding (X <sub>1</sub> )	2,791	0,007
	Digital Literacy (X <sub>2</sub> )	8,192	< 0.001

Source: Primary data processed with SPSS, 2025

Based on Table 8, it can be seen that the Sig. value of personal branding on social media is 0.007 < 0.05 and the Sig. digital literacy is (< 0.001) < 0.05. Then it can also be seen from the t-value of personal branding on social media, which is 2,791 > table (1,989) and the t-value of digital literacy calculation, which is 8,192 > table (1,989). Thus, these results show that both personal branding on social media and digital literacy each have a significant influence on job readiness.

### F Test (Simultaneous)

Simultaneous tests (F tests) are carried out to evaluate the influence of independent variables together, with reference to significance values and F-calculations. The simultaneous effect is declared significant if the significance value is below 0.05 and the F-calculated value exceeds the F-table number by 3.106.

**Table 9. Test F Results (Simultaneous)**

Models	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	2980,738	2	1490,369	96,884	< 0.001
Residual	1276,797	83	15,383		
Total	4257,535	85			

Source: Primary data processed with SPSS, 2025

Based on Table 9, it can be seen that the value of Sig. ( $< 0.001$ )  $< 0.05$  and the F value of  $96.884 > F$  table (3.106). In conclusion, personal branding on social media and digital literacy collectively or simultaneously has a significant influence on job readiness.

#### a. The Influence of Personal Branding on Social Media on Job Readiness

The results of multiple linear regression equations and t-tests (partial) prove that personal branding on social media has a positive and significant influence on the work readiness of Management students of Palangka Raya University. This is evidenced by the significance value of  $0.007 < 0.05$  and t calculation ( $2.791$ )  $> t$  table (1.989). Then a positive regression coefficient of 0.178 shows that the better students manage their personal branding, the higher the level of job readiness.

These findings are in line with the assumptions of Human Capital Theory in the modern context, where human capital is no longer limited to formal diplomas, but instead includes intangible assets such as digital reputation. For Management students of Palangka Raya University, the ability to present a professional digital portfolio on social media is proof of self-awareness of the strength of their competencies. This answers the challenge where social media should not just be a tool of entertainment, but an instrument of bargaining value in recruitment.

These results support previous research from Dini & Nurhasan (2025), which also found that students who are able to build Personal Branding effectively has a higher level of job readiness. So it can be concluded that  $H_1$  is accepted.

#### b. The Effect of Digital Literacy on Job Readiness

Through multiple linear regression analysis and partial t-test, empirical evidence was found that there is a positive and significant influence of digital literacy on the level of job readiness of students of the Management study program at Palangka Raya University. The truth of this hypothesis is supported by statistical data with a significance value of  $< 0.001$  (below 0.05) and t calculation of 8.192 which exceeds the t table of 1.989. In addition, a positive regression coefficient value, which is 0.758, indicates that an increase in digital literacy competence will have a direct impact on strengthening student work readiness.

The high influence of digital literacy is very logical considering the transformation of the labor market towards the Gig Economy era, where geographical boundaries are disappearing and technology-based jobs are commonplace. Digital literacy is no longer just the ability to operate a computer, but a core competency to work productively and efficiently. Management students are required not to stutter with technology so as not to be left behind in global

competition. The results of this study are in line with the study conducted Fuada et al. (2025), where it is stated that digital literacy plays a vital role in facilitating individuals to follow the dynamics of industry trends as well as strengthen competitiveness in the professional world. Therefore, the second hypothesis () is declared accepted.  $H_2$

### **c. The Simultaneous Influence of Personal Branding on Social Media and Digital Literacy on Job Readiness**

Based on the results of the F Test, the F value was obtained as 96.884, greater than the F table (3.106), with a significance level of  $< 0.001$  (less than 0.05). This shows that the variables of personal branding and digital literacy simultaneously have a significant influence on job readiness. Furthermore, the results of the analysis of the Determination Coefficient (Adjusted R Square) produced a number of 0.693. This indicates that 69.3% of the variation in student job readiness can be predicted through a combination of personal branding and digital literacy variables, while the rest (30.7%) is determined by other factors not covered in this study.

Empirically, these findings show that in order to face the challenges in the Gig Economy era, Management students at the University of Palangka Raya are required to combine two main aspects, namely the ability to build a positive self-image in the eyes of the public (personal branding) and the mastery of adequate technical skills (digital literacy). Personal branding without digital literacy will only be an empty image, while high digital literacy without personal branding has the potential to make student talents not looked at by recruiters.

This strong simultaneous influence is in line with the findings Salsaminia & Santosa (2025), which proves that digital skills and Personal Branding are at the same time an essential determining factor for the level of Employability (job readiness) for university graduates. Based on these findings, the third hypothesis () is declared accepted.  $H_3$

## **CONCLUSION**

Personal branding on social media has been shown to have a real and significant partial effect on the job readiness of Management students at the University of Palangka Raya. The results of this study indicate that the intensity and professionalism with which students manage their digital profiles and portfolios on social media is directly proportional to increases in their confidence and readiness to enter the workforce. Furthermore, effective management of one's digital image plays an important role as a form of competitive advantage, positioning students more favourably in the labour market.

Partially, digital literacy has been shown to make a highly significant and dominant contribution to students' level of job readiness. The results of the data analysis confirm that proficiency in operating technology, understanding digital ethics, and the ability to process information critically are key factors that determine students' capacity to enter the industry with stability and confidence. Mastery of technical digital competencies is the primary foundation that prevents students from being left behind in an increasingly automated global competitive landscape.

Simultaneously, personal branding on social media and digital literacy together exert a significant effect on students' job readiness, with a combined contribution of 69.3%. This demonstrates that comprehensive job readiness in the gig economy era cannot rely on a single aspect alone. The combination of the ability to communicate one's competencies to the public through personal branding and qualified technical skills through digital literacy creates a

powerful synergy in shaping the profile of competitive and work-ready graduates. The remaining 30.7% of the variation in job readiness is attributed to factors beyond the scope of this study's model.

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