

# Utilization of LinkedIn for Personal Branding Among Undergraduate Students Preparing for the Workforce

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**Abstract.** This study examines the use of LinkedIn as a personal branding tool in preparing students for the world of work through the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) approach. The results of the study show that students have a positive perception of the benefits and ease of use of LinkedIn. However, the findings also show that their intention and active use of the platform is still not optimal. This indicates a gap between perception and actual implementation. Therefore, institutional support strategies, such as training and technology integration into the curriculum, are needed to encourage more optimal utilization of LinkedIn in supporting students' work readiness and personal branding development.

**Keywords:** LinkedIn, Personal Branding, Job Readiness, Technology Acceptance Model, Undergraduate Students.

## Introduction

The rapid development of digital technology in the modern era has brought significant changes to various aspects of life, including the world of work. The recruitment process is no longer limited to conventional methods, but has shifted to digital platforms that are considered more efficient in terms of time, energy, and cost. One form of adaptation to this change is building an online personal brand, which has become an important aspect in attracting the attention of recruiters and strengthening an individual's professional image. As prospective employees, students are required to be able to utilize digital space optimally, particularly through professional platforms such as LinkedIn. This platform not only serves as a medium for displaying career profiles but also as a tool for building professional networks and increasing visibility in the workplace. According to data from LinkedIn (2021), three users are recruited every minute through this platform, indicating that LinkedIn plays a significant role in expanding career opportunities.

However, based on preliminary research conducted on 17 students from the Faculty of Economics and Business at the Universitas Negeri Jakarta, a gap was found between knowledge and optimal utilization of LinkedIn. Although all respondents were aware that LinkedIn is a professional platform that supports personal branding, most still did not understand its key features, rarely updated their profiles, and had not actively utilized the platform to build professional relationships. Additionally, the lack of education regarding the strategic use of LinkedIn within the campus environment also acts as a barrier. This situation highlights the importance of strengthening digital literacy and awareness of professional branding among students as part of efforts to prepare them for the workforce.

This situation also aligns with the targets of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 4, which promotes the development of relevant skills for future jobs, and SDG 8, which emphasizes the importance of decent work and economic growth. The low utilization of professional platforms like LinkedIn has the potential to widen the digital divide, affecting students' readiness to enter an increasingly competitive job market. Therefore, this study was conducted to

analyze the extent to which students at the Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Negeri Jakarta, utilize LinkedIn as a personal branding tool in preparing for the workforce, with the aim of contributing to the strengthening of digital-based career development strategies for students. In line with Indonesia's transition toward digital recruitment ecosystems, where professional platforms like LinkedIn are increasingly relied upon by employers, strengthening students' digital competencies and professional presence has emerged as a key component of career preparation in higher education.

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## Literatur Review

### LinkedIn

LinkedIn, as a professional platform, provides individuals with the opportunity to build and strengthen their personal branding through clear and structured profiles that can be accessed by many parties, including potential employers and industry colleagues. Davis et al. (2020) state that LinkedIn is a platform designed to facilitate professional networking, allowing individuals to explore career opportunities, register as independent workers, and publish writings or articles.

As a social network, LinkedIn offers a space for professionals to interact with former and current colleagues, expand their business connections, participate in discussions related to their industry, and seek job opportunities or recruit new employees. LinkedIn users utilize the platform to create professional profiles that serve as a digital representation of their background, skills, and experience. These profiles allow other members to learn more about their expertise and the professional organizations or communities they belong to. Additionally, users can expand their network by connecting with other professionals while utilizing the status update feature to inform their network about their current activities or projects.

LinkedIn also provides options for people who are not registered on the platform to view certain parts of a user's profile. For organizations, LinkedIn offers business profiles that can be used for recruitment, marketing, and network development. Additionally, the platform supports various business functions such as finding potential clients, promoting services, and reconnecting with colleagues or former coworkers. Through LinkedIn, individuals can showcase their skills, experience, and achievements, which can enhance their credibility and reputation in the professional world.

According to data from the Waalaxy website on March 13, 2025, 79% of recruiters use LinkedIn to search for candidates. This percentage is higher than that of other social media platforms. Conversely, only 1% of recruiters use Twitter, 0.5% use Facebook, and 0.3% use Instagram to find candidates. Therefore, LinkedIn is a highly effective tool in helping individuals prepare themselves and enhance their competitiveness in an increasingly competitive job market.

### Personal Branding

The term "brand" originates from the Old Norse word "brandr," which means "to burn." In the past, farmers would mark their livestock with a hot iron brand as a way to indicate ownership. Over time, the meaning of "brand" expanded beyond physical marks to also represent the identity of a product or service. According to the American Marketing Association, a brand is a name, symbol, term, or design that serves to distinguish one party's goods or services from another's (Keller, 1998:2). Today, the concept of a brand is no longer limited to products or companies but can also be applied to individuals. This is known as personal branding, where an individual strives to build a strong personal image to be more easily recognized, accepted, and trusted by the public.

According to Silih Agung W (2018:10), personal branding is a way to transform skills into benefits that can be felt by various parties, such as stakeholders and the general public. Meanwhile, according to Montoya & Vandehey (2008:4), personal branding refers to all aspects of an individual that distinguish them and add value, such as how they communicate messages, their attitude, and the marketing strategies they employ. Personal branding reflects personal values, skills, and unique characteristics that make someone stand out from others. Based on the above definitions, personal

branding can be defined as the process of building and managing a unique and authentic self-image that reflects an individual's expertise, values, and characteristics. This process aims to transform someone's competencies into benefits that can be felt by various parties, including stakeholders and the general public. Personal branding involves managing how someone communicates, shaping attitudes, and implementing strategies to introduce themselves, with the aim of distinguishing themselves and providing added value compared to others.

### **Preparation for the World of Work**

Preparation for the world of work includes the process of planning and self-development in order to face challenges in a professional environment. According to Suyono, preparation is a form of providing the necessary resources to support the smooth implementation of an activity, while Dalyono (2010) emphasizes that readiness involves a balance between physical and mental preparedness, such as energy, health, motivation, and interest, in carrying out an activity. In the workplace, preparation involves understanding the industry, strengthening skills, and managing a relevant professional image.

### **Methods**

A quantitative approach was adopted in this research, utilizing a survey method to examine the relationship between variables within the framework of the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) as developed by Davis in 1989. The primary objective was to analyze the use of LinkedIn as a tool for personal branding in preparing students to enter the workforce, with a specific focus on students enrolled in the Faculty of Economics and Business at Universitas Negeri Jakarta.

The research was structured around four key constructs of the TAM model: perceived usefulness, which refers to the belief that LinkedIn is beneficial for career development and personal branding; perceived ease of use, which denotes the perception that LinkedIn is easy to understand and operate; behavioral intention to use, referring to the students' willingness or intention to use LinkedIn actively; and actual use, which represents the extent to which LinkedIn is genuinely utilized by the students.

Data were collected online from April to June 2025 through the distribution of questionnaires via Google Forms. The participants in this study were active undergraduate students from a range of study programs within the Faculty of Economics and Business. Due to the relatively small population size, which comprised fewer than 100 students, a total sampling technique was employed. A total of 56 respondents completed the questionnaire during the main phase of data collection.

The research instrument consisted of a closed-ended questionnaire developed based on the indicators corresponding to each TAM construct. Responses were measured using a five-point Likert scale, with options ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The questionnaire items were carefully formulated to ensure alignment with the variables under study and to support the reliability and validity of the collected data.

Data collection was carried out online using Google Forms, selected for its practicality, efficiency, and ability to reach a sufficient number of respondents within a limited timeframe. The collected data were then processed using SPSS software through three main stages of analysis. The first stage involved testing the validity of each questionnaire item to ensure that it accurately reflected the intended construct. This was assessed using the Corrected Item-Total Correlation method, where a correlation value greater than 0.30 was considered valid, as it indicated a sufficient relationship between the item and the overall score.

Following this, a reliability test was conducted to evaluate the internal consistency of the instrument using Cronbach's Alpha. In this study, a minimum coefficient value of 0.60 was deemed acceptable, particularly in the context of exploratory research (Sekaran, 2006), although a value of 0.70 or higher is generally recommended for confirmatory studies to ensure stronger reliability.

The final stage of analysis consisted of descriptive statistics, aimed at identifying patterns in students' responses across each variable. This included the calculation of the mean, standard deviation, as well as the minimum and maximum values for each indicator. The purpose of this stage was to provide an overview of the level of LinkedIn usage among students and their perceptions regarding its ease of use and usefulness in preparing for entry into the workforce.

## Result and Discussion

### Validity Test

Table 1: Validity Test

Variabel	Kode Pernyataan	Pearson Correlation (r hitung)	r Tabel (df = 54)	Keterangan
Perceived Usefulness	PU1	0.887	0.263	Valid
	PU2	0.810	0.263	Valid
	PU3	0.866	0.263	Valid
	PU4	0.848	0.263	Valid
Perceived Ease of Use	PEOU1	0.512	0.263	Valid
	PEOU2	0.681	0.263	Valid
	PEOU3	0.763	0.263	Valid
	PEOU4	0.622	0.263	Valid
Behavioral Intention	BI1	0.700	0.263	Valid
	BI2	0.510	0.263	Valid
	BI3	0.728	0.263	Valid
Actual Use	AU1	0.708	0.263	Valid
	AU2	0.706	0.263	Valid
	AU3	0.776	0.263	Valid

The table value of  $r$  is 0.263, obtained based on the number of respondents ( $N = 56$ ), so the degrees of freedom ( $df = N - 2 = 54$ ). Referring to the Pearson  $r$  distribution table with a significance level of 5% ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ), the table value of  $r$  is 0.263. Based on the validity test results presented in the table, all items from the variables Perceived Usefulness (PU), Perceived Ease of Use (PEOU), Behavioral Intention to Use (BI), and Actual Use (AU) were found to be valid.

This is indicated by the Pearson Correlation (calculated  $r$ ) values, all of which are greater than the table  $r$  value of 0.263, as well as significance values below 0.05. For example, for the PU variable, the  $r$  calculated values range from 0.810 to 0.887; for the PEOU variable, from 0.512 to 0.763; for the BI variable, from 0.510 to 0.728; and for the AU variable, from 0.706 to 0.776. With the validity criteria met for each item, all statements in this questionnaire can be considered valid and reliable as a measurement tool in this research. This indicates that each item effectively represents the construct being measured, thereby providing an accurate picture of UNJ FEB students' perceptions of LinkedIn utilization in building personal branding and preparing for the workforce.

### Reliability Test

Table 2: Reability Test

#### Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.652	14

The reliability test aims to determine the extent to which items in the questionnaire have internal consistency in measuring research variables. The test was conducted using Cronbach's Alpha, with a minimum limit of 0.60 to declare the instrument reliable (Sugiyono, 2017). The test results showed a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.652 from 14 statement items, indicating adequate internal consistency. Although the value is not particularly high, it meets the minimum threshold acceptable in social research with a limited number of items and samples. Thus, the instrument is deemed sufficiently reliable to measure UNJ FEB students' perceptions of the use of LinkedIn as a personal branding tool.

in preparing to enter the workforce.

### Descriptive Analysis

Table 3: Descriptive Analysis

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Persepsi kegunaan LinkedIn	56	4	20	15.57	2.614
Persepsi kemudahan menggunakan LinkedIn	56	8	18	14.04	1.963
Niat menggunakan LinkedIn ke depan	56	3	14	10.14	2.467
Penggunaan Nyata	56	6	14	10.95	1.381
Valid N (listwise)	56				

The results of the descriptive analysis indicate that UNJ FEB students' perceptions of the use of LinkedIn as a personal branding tool in preparing for the world of work are in the fairly high category. The Perceived Usefulness variable obtained the highest average score of 15.57, indicating that students consider LinkedIn to be a useful platform for career development. This was followed by Perceived Ease of Use with an average of 14.04, reflecting the ease of using LinkedIn in the respondents' eyes. For the Behavioral Intention variable, the average score was 10.14, indicating that students' intentions to use LinkedIn in the future are still at a moderate level.

Despite the generally positive perception of LinkedIn, students still face barriers in translating their profiles into effective personal branding tools. This indicates a need for deeper analysis of the primary challenges students encounter, particularly regarding the practical application of LinkedIn features for career development. Meanwhile, Actual Use had an average score of 10.95, indicating that LinkedIn has been used by most students, although it may not yet be used regularly or strategically. These findings show that although perceptions of the usefulness and ease of use of LinkedIn are already high, there is room to increase intention and actual usage frequency. This highlights the need for additional support, such as LinkedIn utilization training or integration into learning activities, to maximize the platform as a tool for building students' professional image and job readiness.

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### Conclusion

Based on the research results, it can be concluded that students of the Faculty of Economics and Business at the Universitas Negeri Jakarta have a positive perception of the benefits and ease of using LinkedIn as a personal branding medium in preparing for the world of work. Students recognize that LinkedIn plays an important role in building a professional image, expanding networks, and accessing career opportunities. However, the intention to use and the actual utilization of this platform

are still not optimal. This indicates a gap between perception and implementation. Therefore, more structured support from educational institutions is needed, such as integrating professional technology into learning, providing digital training, and strengthening career literacy to maximize the use of LinkedIn as a tool to support students' readiness for the workforce. Integrating LinkedIn activities into coursework represents a practical step toward enhancing students' readiness for the digital job market. Institutions are encouraged to implement strategic interventions to enhance digital literacy and professional platform engagement among students. Strengthening institutional support through structured learning modules and guided mentoring could help bridge the gap between student potential and employer expectations. By embedding digital professionalism into academic learning, institutions can not only improve individual employability but also contribute to narrowing the national digital skill gap in the graduate labor market.

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