

Final Project 1

Code: MGM 496-PMG496

Project Template

Faculty of Management
Midocean University

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Department/ Specialization Management



The Impact of Personal Branding on Career Opportunities Among LinkedIn Users in Saudi Arabia

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Graduation Project – 1

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25/06/2026 – First semester

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1. Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1. Research Background

Personal branding has become an important concept in modern career development, professional communication, and digital self-presentation. In today's competitive labor market, individuals are not evaluated only based on their academic qualifications or work experience, but also based on how they present their professional identity, skills, values, achievements, and expertise. Personal branding refers to the process through which individuals develop and communicate a unique professional image that distinguishes them from others and helps them create a positive impression in the minds of employers, recruiters, and professional networks (Khedher, 2014).

The growth of digital platforms has changed the way individuals build and manage their careers. Online platforms allow individuals to present themselves to a wider audience and communicate their career value beyond traditional resumes. In this context, online personal branding has become a strategic process through which individuals manage their digital identity, professional image, and online visibility (Labrecque et al., 2011). This makes personal branding highly relevant to individuals who seek to improve their career opportunities in a digitally connected labor market.

LinkedIn is one of the most relevant professional networking platforms for personal branding because it allows users to display their education, work experience, skills, certifications, achievements, and professional interests. It also enables users to connect with employers, recruiters, colleagues, and professional communities. Therefore, LinkedIn can be considered a professional space where users can build their personal brand, increase their career visibility, and communicate their professional value to a wider audience (Labrecque et al., 2011).

Previous academic literature has emphasized that personal branding is closely related to employability and career development. Gorbatov, Khapova, and Lysova (2018) explained that personal branding is connected to professional identity, career behavior,

and the way individuals are perceived in the labor market. Their systematic review showed that personal branding is not only a marketing activity, but also a career management strategy that can help individuals improve their professional image and strengthen their position in a competitive environment (Gorbatov et al., 2018).

Personal branding may also influence career opportunities by increasing professional visibility and perceived employability. When individuals clearly present their skills, achievements, and career goals, they may become more noticeable to employers and recruiters. Gorbatov, Khapova, and Lysova (2019) found that personal branding can contribute to career success by improving perceived employability and career satisfaction. This indicates that individuals who actively manage their professional image may have better chances of attracting career-related opportunities (Gorbatov et al., 2019).

In the context of LinkedIn, personal branding can appear through several practices, such as creating a complete and professional profile, writing a clear profile summary, highlighting relevant skills, sharing professional content, building networks, and receiving recommendations or endorsements. These practices may help users communicate their professional value and increase their chances of being noticed by potential employers or professional contacts. As a result, LinkedIn has become an important tool for individuals who want to manage their career identity and improve their access to professional opportunities (Gorbatov et al., 2019; Labrecque et al., 2011).

In Saudi Arabia, the importance of career development and professional visibility has increased due to changes in the labor market and the growing emphasis on skills, employability, and human capability development. Saudi Vision 2030 emphasizes the development of human capabilities and the preparation of individuals for future labor market needs. This national direction makes career readiness, professional self-presentation, and employability important issues for Saudi employees, graduates, and job seekers (Saudi Vision 2030, n.d.).

Despite the growing importance of personal branding, some LinkedIn users may not fully understand how their online professional image can affect their career opportunities. Some users may have strong qualifications and experience, but their LinkedIn profiles may not communicate their strengths clearly. Others may not actively network, share professional content, or present their achievements in a strategic way. This may reduce their professional visibility and limit the career benefits they can gain from LinkedIn (Gorbatov et al., 2018; Labrecque et al., 2011).

Although previous studies have discussed personal branding and career development, there is still a need to examine the impact of personal branding on career opportunities among LinkedIn users in Saudi Arabia. The Saudi labor market is becoming more competitive and digitally connected, and professional platforms are increasingly used by job seekers, employees, recruiters, and organizations. Therefore, studying this topic can provide useful academic and practical insights into how personal branding may support career opportunities in the Saudi context (Gorbatov et al., 2018; Saudi Vision 2030, n.d.).

This research focuses on the impact of personal branding on career opportunities among LinkedIn users in Saudi Arabia. It aims to understand whether personal branding practices, such as presenting a clear professional identity, highlighting skills and achievements, building professional networks, and maintaining professional visibility, can influence users' perceived career opportunities. The study is expected to contribute to the literature on personal branding and career development, while also providing practical insights for LinkedIn users who want to improve their professional image and enhance their career prospects (Gorbatov et al., 2019).

1.2. Research Problem

Personal branding has become an important factor in career development, especially with the increasing use of digital professional platforms such as LinkedIn. Through LinkedIn, individuals can present their skills, experience, achievements, and professional identity to a wide professional audience. However, having a LinkedIn account does not necessarily mean that users are effectively building a strong personal brand or using the platform strategically to improve their career opportunities (Labrecque et al., 2011).

Previous studies have emphasized the importance of personal branding in employability and career success. Personal branding can help individuals manage how they are perceived by others and strengthen their professional identity in the labor market (Gorbatov et al., 2018). It may also contribute to better career outcomes by improving perceived employability and career satisfaction (Gorbatov et al., 2019). However, most existing studies discuss personal branding in general career contexts, while limited attention has been given to how personal branding affects career opportunities among LinkedIn users in Saudi Arabia.

In the Saudi context, the labor market is becoming more competitive and digitally connected. Employees, graduates, and job seekers are increasingly expected to present their skills and professional value clearly. LinkedIn may provide an important opportunity for individuals in Saudi Arabia to improve their professional visibility and connect with employers, recruiters, and professional communities. However, some LinkedIn users may not fully understand how their personal branding practices, such as profile completeness, networking, content sharing, and professional self-presentation, can influence their access to career opportunities.

Therefore, the research problem of this study is represented in the need to understand the impact of personal branding on career opportunities among LinkedIn users in Saudi Arabia. The study seeks to address the gap between the growing importance of LinkedIn as a

professional platform and the limited understanding of how personal branding practices may influence users' career opportunities in the Saudi labor market.

1.2.1. Theoretical Gaps

Although personal branding has been discussed in previous academic literature, there is still a need for more research that examines its relationship with career opportunities in specific digital and cultural contexts. Existing studies have mainly focused on personal branding as a general concept related to employability, career identity, and career success (Gorbatov et al., 2018; Khedher, 2014). However, fewer studies have focused specifically on LinkedIn as a professional networking platform where individuals actively create and communicate their personal brand.

In addition, the relationship between personal branding and career opportunities has not been sufficiently examined within the Saudi Arabian context. The Saudi labor market has its own social, cultural, and economic characteristics, especially with the growing emphasis on employability, skills development, and digital professional visibility. Therefore, this study addresses a theoretical gap by examining the impact of personal branding on career opportunities among LinkedIn users in Saudi Arabia..

1.2.2. Practical Gaps

From a practical perspective, many LinkedIn users in Saudi Arabia may not fully recognize how personal branding practices can influence their career opportunities. Some users may create LinkedIn profiles without strategically presenting their skills, achievements, professional values, or career goals. Others may not regularly update their profiles, build professional networks, share relevant content, or use recommendations and endorsements effectively. As a result, they may not gain the full career benefits that LinkedIn can provide.

This practical gap is important because the Saudi labor market is becoming more competitive, and individuals need to communicate their professional value clearly to employers, recruiters, and professional communities. If LinkedIn users do not understand how to build and manage their personal brand, they may have lower professional visibility and fewer opportunities for career growth. Therefore, this study can help LinkedIn users understand the practical role of personal branding in improving access to job opportunities, interviews, professional connections, and career development.

The study may also provide useful insights for graduates, job seekers, employees, and professionals who want to improve their LinkedIn presence. By examining the impact of personal branding on career opportunities, the research can help individuals identify which personal branding practices may support their professional visibility and employability. This makes the study practically relevant to users who want to use LinkedIn more effectively in the Saudi labor market.

Based on the theoretical and practical gaps, this study seeks to answer the following main research question:

How does personal branding affect career opportunities among LinkedIn users in Saudi Arabia?

1.3. Research Significance

This study is significant because it examines a modern topic that connects personal branding, digital professional networking, and career development. In the current labor market, individuals need to present their skills, achievements, and professional identity clearly in order to improve their visibility and access to career opportunities. Since LinkedIn is widely used as a professional networking platform, understanding the role of personal branding on LinkedIn can provide valuable insights into how individuals may improve their career prospects.

The significance of this study can be discussed at two main levels: the theoretical level and the practical level.

1.3.1. At the theoretical level

At the theoretical level, this study contributes to the literature on personal branding, employability, and career development. Previous studies have discussed personal branding as a tool that helps individuals manage their professional image and improve how they are perceived in the labor market (Gorbatov et al., 2018; Khedher, 2014). However, there is still a need for more research that examines the impact of personal branding on career opportunities in specific digital and national contexts.

This study adds academic value by focusing on LinkedIn users in Saudi Arabia. It connects the concept of personal branding with career opportunities in a digital professional networking environment. By examining this relationship, the study may support future research related to online personal branding, digital employability, professional visibility, and career development in Saudi Arabia and similar labor market contexts.

1.3.2. At the practical level

At the practical level, this study may provide useful insights for LinkedIn users, job seekers, graduates, employees, and professionals in Saudi Arabia. The findings may help individuals understand the importance of building a clear and professional personal brand on LinkedIn. This includes presenting skills and achievements effectively, maintaining an updated profile, building professional networks, and sharing relevant professional content.

The study may also help LinkedIn users recognize that career opportunities are not influenced only by qualifications and work experience, but also by how professionally they present themselves to employers, recruiters, and professional communities. Therefore, this research may provide practical guidance for individuals who want to improve their professional visibility, attract career opportunities, and use LinkedIn more effectively in the Saudi labor market.

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