

Final Project 1

Code: MGM 496-PMG496

Project Template

Faculty of Management
Midocean University

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Faculty of Management

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.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

The previous chapter introduced the research problem, research objectives, research questions, hypotheses, and the significance of the study. It also explained the importance of examining the impact of personal branding on career opportunities among LinkedIn users in Saudi Arabia. Building on this foundation, this chapter reviews the existing literature related to the research variables and establishes the theoretical foundation of the study.

A literature review is an essential component of academic research because it provides a comprehensive understanding of previous studies, theoretical perspectives, and empirical findings related to the research topic. It enables researchers to identify similarities and differences among previous studies, recognize research gaps, and justify the need for further research. In addition, reviewing the literature helps develop an appropriate conceptual framework that explains the relationship between the variables under investigation.

This chapter focuses on the two main variables of the study: personal branding as the independent variable and career opportunities as the dependent variable. The first section reviews the concept of personal branding by discussing its background, definitions, historical development, dimensions, relevant theories, and previous empirical studies. The second section examines the concept of career opportunities following the same structure. The chapter then discusses the relationship between personal branding and career opportunities based on previous literature and identifies the theoretical and practical gaps that justify conducting this study within the Saudi Arabian context.

The review is based on academic journal articles, books, and professional reports that examine personal branding, digital professional networking, employability, career development, and LinkedIn. Particular attention is given to studies that explain how professional self-presentation, networking, and professional visibility influence career opportunities in today's digital labor market.

Finally, this chapter concludes by summarizing the key findings from the reviewed literature and demonstrating how the current study extends existing knowledge by examining the impact of personal branding on career opportunities among LinkedIn users in Saudi Arabia.

2.2 Personal Branding

2.2.1 Background of Personal Branding

Personal branding has become one of the most influential concepts in career development and professional communication over the past two decades (**Gorbatov et al., 2018; Khedher, 2014**). As labor markets have become increasingly competitive and digitally connected, individuals are expected not only to possess strong educational qualifications and professional experience but also to communicate their value effectively to employers and professional communities. Consequently, personal branding has evolved into a strategic process that enables individuals to establish a distinctive professional identity, differentiate themselves from others, and enhance their visibility within the labor market (**Gorbatov et al., 2018; Rampersad, 2008**).

The increasing use of digital platforms has transformed traditional career management practices. Previously, individuals primarily relied on resumes, interviews, and professional references to present their qualifications. Today, digital platforms such as LinkedIn enable professionals to continuously communicate their expertise, achievements, values, and career aspirations to a global audience. This transformation has significantly increased the importance of strategically

managing one's professional image through personal branding (**Labrecque et al., 2011; Gorbatov et al., 2019**).

LinkedIn has become the leading professional networking platform for supporting personal branding. Through LinkedIn, users can showcase their educational background, work experience, certifications, skills, recommendations, and professional achievements while simultaneously building relationships with recruiters, employers, colleagues, and industry experts. These features have made LinkedIn an important platform for developing a professional identity, enhancing professional visibility, and expanding career-related networks (**Labrecque et al., 2011; Gorbatov et al., 2019**).

The growing importance of personal branding has also been reinforced by changes in organizational recruitment practices. Employers increasingly review candidates' online professional profiles before making recruitment decisions. Consequently, individuals who effectively communicate their professional competencies and maintain a credible online presence are more likely to gain access to employment opportunities, professional networking, and long-term career advancement (**Gorbatov et al., 2019**).

Furthermore, Saudi Arabia's ongoing digital transformation and the objectives of Saudi Vision 2030 have increased the importance of employability, professional development, and digital competency (**Saudi Vision 2030, n.d.**). As organizations increasingly adopt digital recruitment practices, professionals in Saudi Arabia are expected to actively manage their professional identities through digital platforms such as LinkedIn. Therefore, examining personal branding among LinkedIn users in Saudi Arabia is both timely and relevant, as it provides valuable insights into how digital professional identity may influence career opportunities within the evolving Saudi labor market.

2.2.2 Definitions of Personal Branding

The concept of personal branding has been defined from different academic perspectives depending on the discipline in which it is studied, including marketing, communication, psychology, and career management. Although these definitions vary slightly, they all emphasize that personal branding is a strategic process through which individuals deliberately create, communicate, and maintain a distinctive professional identity that differentiates them from others.

One of the earliest and most frequently cited definitions was provided by **Khedher (2014)**, who described personal branding as a continuous strategic process through which individuals identify, develop, and communicate their unique value proposition to achieve personal and professional goals. According to this perspective, personal branding enables individuals to distinguish themselves in competitive labor markets by presenting their competencies, values, and expertise consistently.

Similarly, **Labrecque et al. (2011)** defined online personal branding as the process of intentionally managing one's online identity through digital platforms. They argued that personal branding is not limited to self-promotion but also involves authenticity, credibility, consistency, and continuous interaction with professional audiences. Their study emphasized that digital environments have significantly expanded individuals' ability to shape how they are perceived by employers and professional communities.

From a broader career perspective, **Gorbatov et al. (2018)** described personal branding as a multidisciplinary concept that integrates marketing, communication, psychology, and career development. Their systematic review suggested that personal branding is closely associated with professional identity, reputation management, employability, and career success. The authors emphasized that effective personal branding requires individuals to communicate a coherent and authentic professional image while continuously adapting to changing labor market expectations.

In addition, **Gorbatov et al. (2019)** highlighted that personal branding represents an important career management strategy that contributes to professional visibility, perceived employability,

and career advancement. According to their findings, individuals who actively manage their professional image are more likely to attract career opportunities and achieve higher levels of career satisfaction.

Despite slight differences among these definitions, previous studies consistently agree that personal branding involves four common elements. First, it requires individuals to identify their unique professional strengths and competencies. Second, it involves communicating these strengths consistently to professional audiences. Third, it emphasizes authenticity and credibility rather than simple self-promotion. Finally, it aims to enhance professional visibility, employability, and long-term career success **(Gorbatov et al., 2018; Gorbatov et al., 2019; Khedher, 2014).**

Therefore, for the purpose of this study, personal branding is defined as the strategic process through which LinkedIn users intentionally develop, communicate, and maintain a distinctive professional identity by presenting their skills, achievements, expertise, and professional values in order to improve their visibility and increase their career opportunities within the Saudi labor market.

2.2.3 Evolution of Personal Branding

The concept of personal branding has evolved considerably over time. Initially, branding was primarily associated with products and organizations, where companies developed distinctive identities to differentiate their products from competitors. However, as labor markets became increasingly competitive and knowledge-based, branding principles gradually expanded beyond organizations to include individuals **(Khedher, 2014; Gorbatov et al., 2018).**

The emergence of the knowledge economy shifted attention toward individuals' professional competencies, expertise, and reputation. Professionals increasingly recognized that career success depended not only on technical qualifications but also on how effectively they communicated their professional value. Consequently, personal branding developed into an important component of career management **(Gorbatov et al., 2018).**

The rapid expansion of the internet and social media further accelerated this evolution. Digital platforms enabled professionals to communicate directly with employers, colleagues, and broader professional communities. Rather than relying solely on traditional recruitment methods, individuals began using online platforms to demonstrate their expertise, publish professional content, and establish industry credibility **(Labrecque et al., 2011)**.

The introduction of LinkedIn represented another major milestone in the evolution of personal branding. Unlike general social networking platforms, LinkedIn was specifically designed to support professional networking, career development, and digital recruitment. It provided individuals with opportunities to build comprehensive professional profiles, display certifications and accomplishments, receive recommendations, and engage with industry-related content. Consequently, LinkedIn transformed personal branding from an optional activity into an increasingly essential career management strategy **(Labrecque et al., 2011; Gorbatov et al., 2019)**.

More recently, organizations have integrated digital recruitment practices into their hiring processes. Recruiters frequently examine candidates' online professional profiles before conducting interviews, making digital professional identity an important factor in employment decisions. At the same time, governments, including Saudi Arabia through Vision 2030, have emphasized digital transformation, human capability development, and employability, increasing the relevance of personal branding within contemporary labor markets **(Saudi Vision 2030, n.d.)**.

Accordingly, personal branding has evolved from a marketing concept into a comprehensive career development strategy that supports professional visibility, employability, networking, and long-term career success in both traditional and digital work environments **(Gorbatov et al., 2018; Gorbatov et al., 2019)**.

2.2.4 Dimensions of Personal Branding

Personal branding is widely recognized as a multidimensional concept that extends beyond simple self-promotion. It involves several interconnected dimensions that collectively influence

how individuals are perceived within professional environments. Previous studies have suggested that successful personal branding depends on individuals' ability to communicate their professional identity consistently, establish meaningful professional relationships, and maintain visibility within their professional communities (**Gorbatov et al., 2018; Labrecque et al., 2011**).

The first dimension is **professional self-presentation**. This dimension refers to how individuals intentionally communicate their professional identity, qualifications, competencies, achievements, and career aspirations to others. Effective self-presentation enables professionals to create positive first impressions and communicate their unique value proposition (**Goffman, 1959; Gorbatov et al., 2018**). On LinkedIn, professional self-presentation is reflected through profile completeness, professional summaries, work experience, educational background, certifications, and accomplishments. A well-developed professional profile enhances credibility and helps recruiters evaluate candidates more effectively (**Labrecque et al., 2011**).

The second dimension is **professional networking**. Networking refers to developing and maintaining professional relationships that facilitate knowledge exchange, collaboration, mentoring, and career advancement. Previous research suggests that professional networks provide access to valuable career information, employment opportunities, and industry insights (**Petriglieri et al., 2018**). LinkedIn supports professional networking by allowing users to connect with colleagues, employers, recruiters, and professionals from different industries. Building strong professional networks increases professional visibility and expands access to career opportunities (**Labrecque et al., 2011; Gorbatov et al., 2019**).

The third dimension is **professional visibility and engagement**. Professional visibility refers to the extent to which individuals are recognized within their professional communities. Visibility can be enhanced by sharing professional content, participating in discussions, publishing industry-related insights, receiving recommendations, and demonstrating expertise through continuous engagement. Active participation on LinkedIn enables individuals to strengthen their professional reputation and remain visible to recruiters and potential employers. Consequently, higher visibility may increase the likelihood of receiving employment offers, professional

recommendations, and career advancement opportunities (**Gorbatov et al., 2019; Labrecque et al., 2011**).

These three dimensions collectively represent the independent variable of the current study. Together, they explain how LinkedIn users strategically communicate their professional identity, establish professional relationships, and increase their visibility within digital professional networks. Consequently, they provide an appropriate framework for examining how personal branding may influence career opportunities among LinkedIn users in Saudi Arabia.

2.2.5 Theories Related to Personal Branding

Several theoretical perspectives provide a foundation for understanding personal branding and explain **how individuals** create, communicate, and maintain their professional identity.

One of the most relevant theories is **Self-Presentation Theory**, proposed by **Goffman (1959)**. This theory suggests that individuals consciously manage the impressions others form about them through their behavior, appearance, and communication. Within digital professional environments, individuals strategically present information about their education, experience, competencies, and achievements to influence how employers and professional communities perceive them. LinkedIn provides an ideal environment in which professionals manage these impressions through profile design, content sharing, and professional interaction (**Goffman, 1959; Labrecque et al., 2011**).

Another important theoretical perspective is **Signaling Theory**. According to this theory, individuals communicate observable signals that reduce uncertainty for employers and recruiters during recruitment decisions. Educational qualifications, professional certifications, work experience, recommendations, endorsements, and professional achievements act as signals of competence and credibility. Since employers often possess incomplete information about applicants, these signals assist them in evaluating candidates' potential capabilities and professional suitability (**Gorbatov et al., 2019**).

Social Capital Theory also provides an important explanation for personal branding. This theory argues that professional relationships represent valuable social resources that facilitate access to information, support, recommendations, and employment opportunities. Individuals who actively develop professional networks often gain greater access to career opportunities than those with limited professional connections. LinkedIn supports the development of social capital by enabling professionals to establish and maintain relationships across different industries and geographical locations (**Petriglieri et al., 2018; Labrecque et al., 2011**).

Collectively, these theories explain personal branding from complementary perspectives. **Self-Presentation Theory** explains how professionals intentionally construct their professional identity. **Signaling Theory** explains how employers interpret professional information when evaluating candidates. **Social Capital Theory** explains how networking creates career-related advantages through professional relationships. Together, these theoretical perspectives provide a comprehensive foundation for understanding the relationship between personal branding and career opportunities examined in the current study (**Goffman, 1959; Gorbatov et al., 2018; Petriglieri et al., 2018**).

2.2.6 Previous Studies on Personal Branding

Personal branding has become an increasingly important research topic because of its influence on professional identity, employability, and career development. Researchers from various disciplines, including marketing, human resource management, communication, and career studies, have investigated how personal branding contributes to professional success in modern labor markets (**Gorbatov et al., 2018**).

One of the earliest studies examining personal branding was conducted by **Khedher (2014)**, who proposed that personal branding should be viewed as a strategic and continuous process rather than a short-term marketing activity. The study explained that individuals build their personal brands by identifying their strengths, competencies, values, and unique characteristics before communicating them consistently to professional audiences. Khedher concluded that effective

personal branding enhances professional differentiation and improves individuals' ability to compete within increasingly competitive labor markets.

Similarly, **Labrecque et al. (2011)** examined personal branding in online environments and highlighted the growing importance of digital identity management. Their study argued that online personal branding requires authenticity, credibility, consistency, and continuous engagement with professional communities. The researchers emphasized that digital platforms have fundamentally changed how individuals communicate their professional value and suggested that successful online branding depends on maintaining a balance between professional promotion and authentic self-presentation.

A significant contribution to personal branding literature was provided by **Gorbatov et al. (2018)** through their interdisciplinary systematic literature review. The authors analyzed previous research across several academic disciplines and concluded that personal branding is a multidisciplinary concept integrating marketing, psychology, communication, and career management. Their review identified personal branding as an important career strategy that supports professional identity development, employability, and career advancement while also emphasizing the need for greater conceptual consistency within future research.

Building on their earlier work, **Gorbatov et al. (2019)** investigated the relationship between personal branding and career success. Their empirical findings indicated that professionals who actively manage their personal brands experience higher perceived employability, stronger professional reputations, and greater career satisfaction. The researchers concluded that personal branding contributes positively to career outcomes by increasing individuals' professional visibility and improving how employers evaluate their capabilities.

Recent studies have also emphasized the importance of LinkedIn as one of the primary platforms supporting personal branding. Researchers generally agree that LinkedIn enables professionals to present their qualifications, demonstrate expertise, establish professional relationships, and communicate career achievements more effectively than traditional recruitment methods. Active profile management, professional networking, content sharing, and participation in professional

discussions have all been associated with stronger professional visibility and improved career prospects (**Labrecque et al., 2011; Gorbatov et al., 2019**).

Collectively, these studies demonstrate that personal branding has become an essential component of modern career management. Despite differences in research objectives and methodologies, previous studies consistently suggest that individuals who actively develop and maintain strong personal brands are more likely to improve their employability, professional recognition, and long-term career success (**Gorbatov et al., 2018; Gorbatov et al., 2019; Khedher, 2014**).

Table 2.1

Summary of Previous Studies on Personal Branding:

Author(s)	Country	Variables	Method	Main Findings
Labrecque et al. (2011)	USA	Online Personal Branding	Conceptual Study	Personal branding on digital platforms helps individuals manage their professional identity and online visibility.
Khedher (2014)	Tunisia	Personal Branding	Conceptual Study	Personal branding is a strategic process that differentiates individuals and enhances their professional image.
Gorbatov et al. (2018)	Netherlands	Personal Branding	Systematic Literature Review	Personal branding supports employability, career identity, and professional visibility.
Gorbatov et al. (2019)	Netherlands	Personal Branding & Career Success	Quantitative Study	Personal branding positively influences employability, career satisfaction, and career success.

Note. *Prepared by the researcher based on the reviewed literature.*

2.2.7 Critical Analysis of Previous Studies

Although previous studies consistently support the importance of personal branding, several observations emerge from the literature.

First, researchers have adopted different conceptual perspectives when defining personal branding. While **Khedher (2014)** primarily viewed personal branding as a strategic marketing process, **Gorbatov et al. (2018)** approached it as a multidisciplinary concept that integrates marketing, psychology, communication, and career management. These differences demonstrate the complexity of the concept but also indicate the absence of a universally accepted definition.

Second, previous studies differ in their methodological approaches. Systematic literature reviews have provided comprehensive theoretical understanding, whereas empirical studies have mainly relied on quantitative survey methods to investigate relationships between personal branding and career outcomes. Although these studies provide valuable evidence, many have been conducted within Western labor markets, limiting the generalizability of their findings to other cultural environments (**Gorbatov et al., 2018; Gorbatov et al., 2019**).

Third, many existing studies investigate personal branding in general employment contexts rather than focusing specifically on LinkedIn as a professional networking platform. Although LinkedIn is frequently recognized as an important tool for personal branding, relatively few empirical studies have examined how specific LinkedIn branding practices influence career opportunities among professionals in Saudi Arabia (**Labrecque et al., 2011; Gorbatov et al., 2019**).

Finally, despite the substantial body of literature supporting positive relationships between personal branding and employability, career success, and professional visibility, limited research has examined this relationship within the Saudi labor market. Saudi Arabia has experienced significant digital transformation under Vision 2030, accompanied by increasing reliance on professional networking platforms during recruitment and career development (**Saudi Vision 2030, n.d.**). Consequently, there remains a need to investigate whether personal branding practices influence career opportunities among LinkedIn users within this unique national context.

Therefore, the present study addresses this research gap by examining the impact of personal branding on career opportunities among LinkedIn users in Saudi Arabia. The study extends previous literature by focusing on a rapidly evolving labor market characterized by digital

transformation, increased professional networking, and growing employer reliance on online professional profiles (**Saudi Vision 2030, n.d.; Gorbatov et al., 2019**).

2.3 Career Opportunities

2.3.1 Background of Career Opportunities

Career opportunities have become one of the most important factors influencing individuals' professional success in today's dynamic labor market. Advances in technology, globalization, and digital transformation have significantly changed the way organizations recruit employees and the way professionals manage their careers. As a result, career opportunities are no longer limited to securing employment but also include career advancement, professional development, networking opportunities, and long-term employability (**Hall, 2004; De Vos et al., 2020**).

Traditionally, career opportunities were associated mainly with obtaining permanent employment and progressing within a single organization through promotions and increased responsibilities. However, the nature of careers has evolved considerably. Modern professionals are expected to continuously develop their knowledge, acquire new competencies, and maintain professional networks to remain competitive in rapidly changing labor markets (**Arthur & Rousseau, 1996; Hall et al., 2018**).

The emergence of digital recruitment platforms has further transformed career opportunities. Organizations increasingly rely on online recruitment systems to identify qualified candidates, while professionals use digital platforms to present their qualifications, experience, and professional achievements. Consequently, career opportunities are now strongly influenced by an individual's ability to establish a credible and visible professional identity (**Labrecque et al., 2011; Gorbatov et al., 2019**).

LinkedIn has become one of the leading professional networking platforms supporting career development worldwide. It enables users to communicate directly with recruiters, employers, colleagues, and industry experts while simultaneously showcasing their education, work experience, certifications, and professional accomplishments. Therefore, LinkedIn has become an important tool for improving professional visibility and increasing access to employment opportunities (**Labrecque et al., 2011**).

In Saudi Arabia, Vision 2030 has accelerated digital transformation across both public and private sectors. Organizations increasingly encourage innovation, continuous learning, and digital competencies while adopting modern recruitment practices. Consequently, understanding the factors that influence career opportunities has become increasingly important for graduates, professionals, and job seekers within the Saudi labor market **(Saudi Vision 2030, n.d.)**.

2.3.2 Definitions of Career Opportunities

Career opportunities have been defined differently across the career development literature. Although definitions vary according to different theoretical perspectives, they generally describe the range of employment and professional growth opportunities available to individuals throughout their careers **(Hall, 2004; Super, 1990)**.

Career opportunities may be defined as the availability of employment, promotion, professional development, and networking opportunities that enable individuals to achieve their long-term career objectives. These opportunities are influenced by personal competencies, educational qualifications, work experience, labor market conditions, and professional reputation **(Ng et al., 2005; De Vos et al., 2020)**.

From a career management perspective, career opportunities extend beyond obtaining a job. They also include opportunities for career advancement, leadership development, professional mobility, continuous learning, and participation in professional networks that facilitate long-term career success **(Hall, 2004; Hall et al., 2018)**.

Within digital labor markets, career opportunities are increasingly associated with online professional visibility. Employers frequently evaluate candidates' digital profiles before making recruitment decisions, making online professional identity an important determinant of career success. Consequently, professionals who effectively communicate their qualifications and competencies through platforms such as LinkedIn may gain greater access to employment and career advancement opportunities **(Labrecque et al., 2011; Gorbatov et al., 2019)**.

For the purpose of this study, career opportunities are defined as the employment, promotion, networking, and professional development opportunities available to LinkedIn users in Saudi Arabia that may be enhanced through effective personal branding practices.

2.3.3 Evolution of Career Opportunities

The concept of career opportunities has evolved considerably over recent decades. Historically, career success was measured primarily by obtaining stable employment and progressing through hierarchical organizational structures. Individuals generally remained within one organization for extended periods, and promotions depended largely on seniority and organizational experience **(Super, 1990; Arthur & Rousseau, 1996)**.

However, globalization and technological innovation have reshaped labor markets. Organizations increasingly value adaptability, digital literacy, continuous learning, and professional networking. Consequently, career opportunities now extend beyond organizational promotion to include career mobility, international employment, entrepreneurship, freelance work, and lifelong learning **(Hall, 2004; Hall et al., 2018)**.

The development of digital technologies has further transformed recruitment practices. Traditional recruitment methods have gradually been supplemented by online recruitment platforms, enabling organizations to identify qualified candidates more efficiently while allowing professionals to promote themselves to wider professional audiences **(De Vos et al., 2020)**.

LinkedIn has significantly contributed to this transformation by providing professionals with opportunities to establish comprehensive online profiles, share professional achievements, obtain recommendations, and interact with industry experts. Consequently, career opportunities have become increasingly influenced by digital professional identity and online visibility **(Labrecque et al., 2011; Gorbatov et al., 2019)**.

Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 has reinforced these changes by promoting workforce development, innovation, entrepreneurship, and digital transformation. These national initiatives have

increased the importance of digital competencies and professional networking in improving career opportunities for Saudi professionals (**Saudi Vision 2030, n.d.**).

2.3.4 Dimensions of Career Opportunities

Previous literature suggests that career opportunities consist of several interconnected dimensions that collectively influence individuals' long-term career success.

The first dimension is **employment opportunities**, referring to the availability of suitable job positions that match individuals' education, skills, and professional experience. Increased professional visibility often improves access to these opportunities.

The second dimension is **career advancement**, which includes promotion, leadership opportunities, salary progression, and increased organizational responsibilities. Career advancement reflects long-term professional growth rather than initial employment alone.

The third dimension is **professional development**, referring to opportunities for continuous learning, training, professional certifications, mentoring, and skill development. Continuous professional development enables individuals to remain competitive in changing labor markets.

The fourth dimension is **professional networking opportunities**. Professional relationships provide access to information, referrals, mentoring, and hidden employment opportunities. Strong professional networks therefore contribute significantly to long-term career development.

Collectively, these dimensions provide a comprehensive understanding of career opportunities and represent the major professional outcomes that may be influenced by effective personal branding.

2.3.5 Theories Related to Career Opportunities

Several theories have been developed to explain how individuals obtain, develop, and sustain career opportunities throughout their professional lives. These theories emphasize that career success is influenced by a combination of individual capabilities, continuous learning, career planning, and professional relationships (**Becker, 1964; Hall, 2004**). Among the most relevant theories to the current study are **Human Capital Theory, Career Development Theory, and Social Capital Theory**.

The first theory is **Human Capital Theory**, introduced by **Becker (1964)**. This theory argues that individuals improve their value in the labor market by investing in education, professional

training, work experience, and skill development. According to Becker, employees who continuously enhance their knowledge and competencies are more likely to obtain employment, achieve promotion, and enjoy long-term career success. Therefore, Human Capital Theory suggests that career opportunities increase as individuals accumulate valuable knowledge, experience, and professional skills.

The second theory is **Career Development Theory**, proposed by **Super (1990)**. This theory explains that career development is a lifelong process in which individuals continuously develop their interests, competencies, values, and professional identities. Super emphasized that career success is not achieved through a single employment opportunity but through continuous growth across different stages of life. Consequently, individuals who actively manage their careers, set professional goals, and continuously improve their capabilities are more likely to access greater career opportunities.

The third theory is **Social Capital Theory**, which emphasizes the importance of professional relationships in career development. According to this theory, professional networks represent valuable social resources that provide individuals with access to information, mentoring, referrals, collaboration, and employment opportunities. Individuals with strong professional networks often benefit from greater career mobility and improved employability because social connections facilitate the exchange of information and increase professional visibility. In today's digital environment, platforms such as LinkedIn enable professionals to expand their social capital by connecting with recruiters, employers, colleagues, and industry experts (**Petriglieri et al., 2018; Labrecque et al., 2011**).

Collectively, these theories provide a comprehensive explanation of career opportunities. Human Capital Theory emphasizes the importance of education and professional competencies, Career Development Theory focuses on lifelong career growth and self-development, while Social Capital Theory highlights the value of professional networking and relationships. Together, these perspectives support the argument that career opportunities are influenced not only by qualifications and experience but also by individuals' ability to continuously develop themselves and establish strong professional networks (**Becker, 1964; Super, 1990; Petriglieri et al., 2018**).

2.3.6 Previous Studies on Career Opportunities

Career opportunities have been widely examined in the fields of career development, human resource management, and organizational behavior. Previous studies have explored the factors influencing employability, career advancement, professional mobility, and long-term career success in both traditional and digital labor markets (**Hall et al., 2018; De Vos et al., 2020**).

Arthur and Rousseau (1996) introduced the concept of the boundaryless career, arguing that careers are no longer confined to a single organization. Instead, modern professionals increasingly move across organizations, industries, and geographical locations while relying on transferable skills and professional networks. Their study concluded that career opportunities are strongly associated with adaptability, lifelong learning, and professional mobility.

Similarly, **Hall (2004)** proposed the protean career concept, suggesting that individuals have become primarily responsible for managing their own careers. Rather than depending solely on organizational promotion systems, professionals are expected to continuously develop their competencies, adapt to changing labor market conditions, and actively seek new opportunities. Hall emphasized that career success depends on self-directed learning, flexibility, and continuous professional development.

More recent studies have highlighted the growing influence of digital technologies on career opportunities. Researchers have found that professional networking platforms enable individuals to increase their visibility, communicate their qualifications, and establish relationships with recruiters and employers. Digital professional profiles have become important recruitment tools that complement traditional résumés and interviews, allowing organizations to identify qualified candidates more efficiently (**Labrecque et al., 2011; Gorbatov et al., 2019**).

Research focusing specifically on LinkedIn has demonstrated that professionals who maintain complete profiles, actively engage with professional communities, and continuously update their achievements are more likely to attract recruiters and access employment opportunities. These studies suggest that professional visibility, networking activities, and online engagement

contribute positively to employability and career advancement (**Labrecque et al., 2011; Gorbatov et al., 2019**).

Overall, previous studies consistently indicate that career opportunities are influenced by multiple factors, including education, professional competencies, networking, continuous learning, and digital professional visibility. These findings suggest that career success increasingly depends on individuals' ability to combine technical expertise with effective professional networking and career management strategies (**Arthur & Rousseau, 1996; Hall, 2004; De Vos et al., 2020**).

Table 2.2

Summary of Previous Studies on Career Opportunities:

Author(s)	Country	Variables	Method	Main Findings
Gorbatov et al. (2019)	Netherlands	Personal Branding & Career Opportunities	Quantitative Study	Strong personal branding positively influences employability, career satisfaction, and perceived career opportunities.
Labrecque et al. (2011)	USA	Online Identity & Career Visibility	Conceptual Study	A professional online presence enhances visibility, credibility, and networking opportunities, which contribute to career development.
De Vos et al. (2021)	Belgium	Employability & Career Development	Literature Review	Continuous professional development and employability improve long-term career opportunities in dynamic labor markets.
Ng et al. (2005)	Canada	Career Success	Meta-analysis	Human capital, organizational support, and proactive career behaviors significantly influence career success and advancement.

Note. Prepared by the researcher based on the reviewed literature.

2.3.7 Critical Analysis of Previous Studies

Previous studies have made significant contributions to understanding the factors influencing career opportunities. However, several important observations emerge from the existing literature. Although researchers generally agree that education, professional competencies, networking, and continuous learning positively influence career outcomes, they differ in terms of conceptual focus, research context, and methodological approaches (Ng et al., 2005; Hall et al., 2018; De Vos et al., 2020).

First, previous studies have adopted different definitions of career opportunities. Some researchers primarily focused on employment opportunities and promotion, whereas others expanded the concept to include employability, career mobility, professional development, and long-term career success. While these perspectives complement one another, they also demonstrate the absence of a universally accepted conceptual framework for career opportunities (Hall, 2004; Super, 1990).

Second, the majority of empirical studies have employed quantitative survey methods to investigate career-related outcomes. Although these studies have identified statistically significant relationships between career opportunities and various personal and organizational factors, relatively few studies have adopted qualitative or mixed-method approaches to explore individuals' experiences and perceptions in greater depth. Therefore, future research could benefit from greater methodological diversity to provide a more comprehensive understanding of career development (Ng et al., 2005; De Vos et al., 2020).

Third, many previous studies were conducted in developed countries where labor market conditions, recruitment systems, and organizational cultures differ from those in Saudi Arabia. Consequently, the findings of these studies cannot be fully generalized to the Saudi context, particularly considering the country's rapid digital transformation, economic diversification, and workforce development initiatives under Saudi Vision 2030 (Saudi Vision 2030, n.d.).

Furthermore, while previous research has examined factors such as education, professional competencies, networking, and employability independently, limited attention has been given to

examining personal branding as a strategic factor influencing career opportunities through professional networking platforms. Although LinkedIn has become one of the world's leading professional networking platforms, relatively few empirical studies have specifically investigated how personal branding practices on LinkedIn influence career opportunities among professionals in Saudi Arabia (**Labrecque et al., 2011; Gorbatov et al., 2019**).

Overall, the reviewed literature confirms that career opportunities are influenced by multiple personal, professional, and organizational factors. However, an important research gap remains regarding the relationship between personal branding and career opportunities within the Saudi labor market. Therefore, the present study addresses this gap by examining the influence of personal branding on career opportunities among LinkedIn users in Saudi Arabia, thereby extending the existing body of knowledge and providing valuable theoretical and practical implications for professionals, employers, career development practitioners, and future researchers.

2.4 Relationship Between Personal Branding and Career Opportunities

The relationship between personal branding and career opportunities has attracted increasing attention in recent years due to the rapid growth of digital professional networking and online recruitment practices. As organizations increasingly rely on digital platforms to identify, evaluate, and recruit potential candidates, personal branding has emerged as a strategic career management tool that enhances professional visibility, employability, and access to career opportunities (**Gorbatov et al., 2019; Labrecque et al., 2011**).

Previous studies consistently indicate that individuals who actively develop and maintain strong personal brands are more likely to achieve positive career outcomes. Effective personal branding enables professionals to communicate their knowledge, competencies, achievements, and professional values in a clear, consistent, and credible manner, thereby establishing a positive professional image. This enhanced professional image increases employers' confidence in candidates and strengthens their competitiveness within the labor market (**Gorbatov et al., 2019; Khedher, 2014**).

Professional self-presentation represents one of the primary mechanisms through which personal branding influences career opportunities. Individuals who present complete, accurate, and well-structured professional profiles are more likely to attract recruiters and potential employers. Professional networking platforms such as LinkedIn enable users to showcase their educational background, work experience, certifications, skills, and professional achievements, allowing organizations to evaluate candidates more efficiently before formal recruitment processes begin **(Goffman, 1959; Labrecque et al., 2011)**.

Professional networking also plays a significant role in strengthening the relationship between personal branding and career opportunities. Previous research suggests that individuals with broader professional networks have greater access to employment information, referrals, mentoring, and career advice. LinkedIn facilitates the development of these professional relationships by connecting users with recruiters, employers, colleagues, and industry experts. Consequently, stronger professional networks increase individuals' exposure to career opportunities that may not be publicly advertised **(Petriglieri et al., 2018; Labrecque et al., 2011)**.

Another important factor influencing this relationship is professional visibility and engagement. Active participation in professional discussions, sharing industry-related content, obtaining recommendations, and regularly updating professional achievements contribute to greater professional visibility. Individuals who maintain an active and credible professional presence are more likely to be recognized by recruiters and employers, thereby improving their employability and long-term career advancement prospects **(Gorbatov et al., 2019; Labrecque et al., 2011)**.

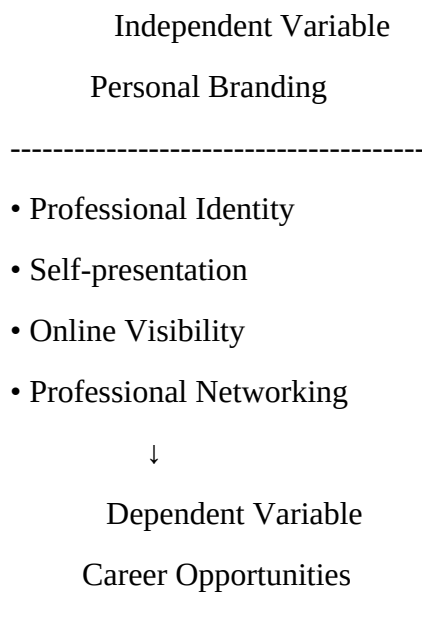
Although previous studies generally support a positive relationship between personal branding and career opportunities, several research gaps remain. Most empirical studies have been conducted in Western countries, with relatively limited attention given to developing economies such as Saudi Arabia. Furthermore, while LinkedIn has become one of the world's leading professional networking platforms, relatively few studies have specifically examined how personal branding practices on LinkedIn influence career opportunities among professionals in the Saudi labor market **(Labrecque et al., 2011; Gorbatov et al., 2019)**.

The rapid digital transformation associated with Saudi Vision 2030 has accelerated the adoption of digital recruitment practices and professional networking platforms across both the public and private sectors. Consequently, understanding how personal branding contributes to career opportunities has become increasingly important within the Saudi context. Investigating this relationship can provide valuable insights for professionals seeking to enhance their employability and career development, as well as for organizations aiming to attract and recruit highly qualified talent **(Saudi Vision 2030, n.d.)**.

Based on the reviewed literature, it can be concluded that personal branding positively contributes to career opportunities by strengthening professional self-presentation, expanding professional networks, and increasing professional visibility. However, empirical evidence examining this relationship among LinkedIn users in Saudi Arabia remains limited. Therefore, the present study seeks to investigate the influence of personal branding on career opportunities among LinkedIn users in Saudi Arabia, thereby addressing an important gap in the existing literature and contributing to both academic knowledge and professional practice **(Gorbatov et al., 2019; Saudi Vision 2030, n.d.)**.

Figure 2.1

Conceptual Framework of the Study:



- Employability
- Job Opportunities
- Career Advancement
- Professional Recognition

Note. Adapted by the researcher from Labrecque et al. (2011), Gorbatov et al. (2018), and Gorbatov et al. (2019).

2.5 Chapter Summary

This chapter reviewed the existing literature related to the two main variables of the study: personal branding and career opportunities. The discussion began by examining personal branding, including its background, definitions, evolution, dimensions, theoretical foundations, previous studies, and critical analysis. The review demonstrated that personal branding has evolved into an essential career management strategy that enables individuals to communicate their professional identity, strengthen their professional reputation, and enhance their visibility in increasingly competitive labor markets.

The chapter then examined career opportunities by discussing their background, definitions, evolution, dimensions, theoretical foundations, previous empirical studies, and critical analysis. The reviewed literature indicated that career opportunities are influenced by multiple factors, including professional competencies, continuous learning, career management, networking, and digital professional visibility. It also highlighted the growing importance of digital recruitment platforms in shaping contemporary career development.

Furthermore, this chapter examined the relationship between personal branding and career opportunities. Previous studies consistently suggested that effective personal branding contributes positively to career outcomes by improving professional self-presentation, expanding professional networks, and increasing professional visibility. However, the literature also

revealed limited empirical evidence investigating this relationship within the Saudi Arabian context, particularly among LinkedIn users.

The critical analysis of previous studies identified several research gaps, including conceptual differences in defining personal branding and career opportunities, methodological limitations, and the limited availability of research conducted in Saudi Arabia. These findings provide a strong justification for conducting the current study, which seeks to examine the impact of personal branding on career opportunities among LinkedIn users in Saudi Arabia.

Overall, the reviewed literature provides a solid theoretical and empirical foundation for the current study and supports the proposed conceptual framework presented in this chapter. The findings also justify the need to investigate the relationship between personal branding and career opportunities within the Saudi context. **The next chapter presents the research methodology, including the research philosophy, research approach, research strategy, research design, sampling techniques, data collection methods, and data analysis procedures used to achieve the objectives of the study.**

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