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The Influence of English Communication Proficiency on Personal Branding and Career Pathways of English Department Alumni in National Companies

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ABSTRACT

This systematic literature review examines the effectiveness of Problem-Based Learning (PBL) e-modules in developing students' 21st-century skills by synthesizing ten Scopus-indexed empirical studies published between 2015 and 2025. Motivated by the growing demand for student-centered and technology-integrated learning, this review aims to consolidate evidence on how PBL-oriented digital modules support key competencies. Following the PRISMA guidelines, the study employed a transparent selection process and combined thematic synthesis with bibliometric analysis (VOSviewer) to identify research trends, dominant themes, and learning outcomes. The findings indicate that PBL e-modules consistently enhance critical thinking, collaboration, communication, and creativity, with the strongest effects reported in critical thinking and collaborative performance. Student motivation and autonomy emerged as important mediating factors, while variations in instructional design and digital platform quality influenced effectiveness across contexts. These results imply that well-structured PBL design and purposeful digital integration are critical for maximizing the impact of e-modules on 21st-century skills, while also highlighting methodological gaps for future research.

ARTICLE INFORMATION

Keywords:
alumni; career pathways; english communication proficiency; personal branding; national companies

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INTRODUCTION

In Indonesia, English is now one of the most widely used foreign languages. The ability to communicate in English is a crucial skill in today's connected environment, particularly for those employed by national firms. Millions of people use English as a global language (Mandasari, 2017) and as a crucial means of communication and information exchange worldwide (Dina et al., 2022; Novanti & Suprayogi, 2021). English is used in many facets of life because people learn it to stay current with advancements in education, research, and technology worldwide (Aminatun et al., 2023; Mardiah et al., 2025; Septiyana & Aminatun, 2021; Simanjuntak, 2019). In Indonesia, English is a mandatory subject from primary school through college and is part of the national curriculum, underscoring its significance (Amin & Wahyudin, 2022; Awaliyah & Malihah, 2021; Ayu & Inderawati, 2019; Simamora et al., 2022). Additionally, learning English can help students improve their communication, negotiation, and career preparation (Oktaviani & Mandasari, 2020). A person's command of English might help them advance in their career by enabling them to perform in more senior positions in the workplace and to develop other professional competencies (Dwihartanti & Faizah, 2018). For graduates of English Language and Culture programs, fluency in English is essential, as many

employers and graduation requirements require an English exam. Furthermore, strong English skills are essential for securing employment opportunities in national corporations and for interacting with foreign customers (Tedjo & Hartani, 2022). Alumni may also perform their jobs more effectively by regularly using English in professional settings (Asfah et al., 2024). Through talent, recognition, and trust, a profession aids society by providing a specialized, knowledge-based, and rule-regulated employment (Abadi et al., 2020). This study provides new insights by analyzing the influence of English communication proficiency and personal branding on the career trajectories of graduates from the Department of English Language and Culture who are primarily employed in Indonesian national enterprises.

Language skills are becoming more important as they help students stand out in both local and global job markets. Because of this, De Costa et al. (2016, 2019) proposed the concept of "linguistic entrepreneurship," which involves using language skills effectively to enhance one's value and opportunities across many different careers. As education changes rapidly, educators, researchers, and teachers need to think differently and develop new ways to teach (Cajkler, 2016; Vila, 2016). To help students deal with the challenges of the digital world, it is important to focus on four important skills—critical thinking, working with others, being creative, and communicating well—which are necessary at every level of education (Walag et al., 2022; Irawan et al., 2022). Haerazi and Kazemian (2021) say that learning should not just be about understanding ideas but also about applying them in real life. Dondo et al. (2025) agree, saying that learning English should be fun, exciting, and challenging, giving students a chance to be creative and take charge of their own learning (p. 70). Fajri et al. (2025) also found that improving students' communication skills helps them think more critically, work better with others, and be more creative. Additionally, self-esteem is a major factor that affects how well students perform in language and how proficient they are in English (Utami & Wahyudin, 2022). In this context, mastering English communication is vital for graduates, especially those from English Language and Culture programs, who aim to land jobs in both national and international companies. However, it is important to remember that having technical skills alone is not enough for career success; strong interpersonal skills and effective communication are equally important for professional growth.

Because it affects how people perceive, trust, and ultimately select candidates for employment and professional networks, personal branding is just as important. Quantitative research on how a graduate's employment performance is affected by their personal branding and English communication skills remains scarce, despite its significance. Therefore, it is essential to investigate how these two factors affect alumni achievements, particularly in international settings. It is imperative to enhance students' English Language Proficiency (ELP) to equip them with the skills necessary to compete for jobs in both domestic and international markets (Aizawa & Rose, 2019; Galloway & Ruegg, 2020; Galloway et al., 2017; Rahman & Singh, 2020). The term personal brand was first coined and used by Tom Peters in a 1997 article. The author claims that, no matter our age, job, or industry, we all need to recognize the importance of branding. As CEOs, we manage our own companies, Me Inc. In today's industry, our most important job is to be the top marketer for the You brand (Peters, 1997). Personal branding first appeared in 1982 with Dale Carnegie's book How to Win Friends and Influence People, according to Lair et al. (2005). According to Joseph (2013), personal branding begins at birth. Kheder (2014) offers a more recent definition of personal branding as the process of building a distinctive personal identity, creating an active communication style for one's brand identity with a targeted audience, and assessing how it affects one's image and reputation to achieve personal and professional goals.

Self-promotion has grown commonplace in people's daily lives over time. Many users, especially teens and young adults aged 18 to 25, tend to mimic celebrities' methods of self-

presentation and self-promotion. To improve their exposure, popularity, and sense of social connection, they begin creating online personas (Van Dijck, 2013). Creating and maintaining social media profiles, personal websites, and blogs, and using SEO (Search Engine Optimization) strategies to boost the exposure of shared content are all part of building a personal brand in today's digital world (Labrecque et al., 2011). According to Labrecque et al. (2011), virtual spaces offer people a variety of Web 2.0 platforms that enable them to actively create, develop, and market their own brand identities. Even though everyone agrees that being good at English and building a strong personal brand are important,

Many studies focus only on how English skills help with getting a job or how personal branding helps with career growth. Few studies examine both together in the same way. Also, a few studies look specifically at graduates from English departments who work in national companies, not just big international ones. This study fills those gaps by examining both English communication skills and personal branding together to see how they affect the career pathways of these graduates in national companies. This gives a clear and specific contribution to the existing research. This study examines alumni of the English Department at Universitas Darma Persada who are now working at national companies. Due to time and access limitations, the research is based on a sample of 50 respondents who had graduated within the past ten years. While the findings might not apply to all alumni or different contexts, they do offer valuable insights into the patterns and relationships among the variables being studied.

METHOD

This study took a quantitative approach, utilizing a multiple regression design (as shown in Figure 1). It focused on one dependent variable, which is career pathways (Y), and two independent variables: communication proficiency (X1) and personal branding (X2). The research took place over five months, from April to August 2025, at Universitas Darma Persada in Jakarta. The study involved 50 alumni from the English Language and Culture Study Program, chosen through a simple purposive sampling method. This sample size was in line with the guidelines for multiple regression analysis, which suggest a minimum of participants when the number of independent variables is three or fewer (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2019).

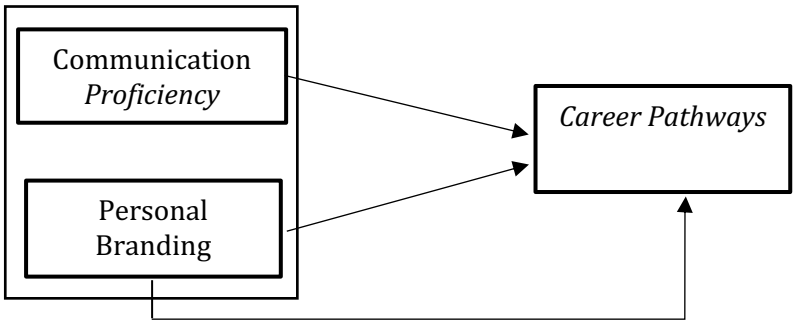


Figure 1. Research Design

Although the current sample is slightly below some classical thresholds, the recent methodological literature emphasizes that the required sample size depends on multiple factors, such as expected effect size, model complexity, and statistical power (Hair, 2009; Keith, 2019). Since this study employs a relatively simple regression model with only two predictors, a sample of 50 is considered adequate to detect medium to large effect sizes with adequate statistical power. Several scholars also note that regression models with small predictor sets (fewer than three) may still yield

stable estimates when the sample size exceeds a 20:1 ratio of cases per predictor (Knofczynski & Mundfrom, 2008). With 50 respondents and two predictors, this study meets that requirement.

To gather data on all variables, a Likert-scale questionnaire was used, offering five response options: strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree. The questionnaires were sent online via Google Forms to alumni of the English Language and Culture Study Program currently working at multinational companies. This approach enabled the researcher to collect primary data on communication proficiency, personal branding, and career pathways from a relevant group (Creswell, 2014). To ensure the validity of the instruments, the Pearson Product-Moment correlation was used, and reliability was measured using Cronbach's Alpha. Each research instrument included 20 valid statement items, with reliability coefficients of 0.92 for career pathways, 0.97 for communication proficiency, and 0.87 for personal branding. The items were crafted based on the theoretical foundations of interpersonal communication, personal branding (Montoya & Vandehey, 2009), and career development (Greenhaus et al., 2019). For data analysis, techniques such as descriptive analysis, prerequisite tests (normality, linearity, multicollinearity, and heteroscedasticity), and hypothesis testing through multiple regression analysis were employed. All data were processed using the SPSS 27.00 statistical software package.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this study are presented in an organized manner to accomplish the research objectives and evaluate the theoretical hypotheses supporting the influence of English language proficiency and personal branding on alumni career pathways. Starting with descriptive data, this section shows the overall patterns and variations in respondents' perspectives on the three measured criteria. The following requirement tests, including normality, linearity, multicollinearity, and heteroscedasticity, indicate that the dataset meets the classical assumptions of multiple regression, ensuring the model's reliability and validity. The findings have practical implications for higher education and companies, as they align with these theoretical perspectives and emphasize the importance of strengthening personal branding and English communication instruction as essential components of career preparation programs. The findings emphasize the strategic importance of these abilities for graduates seeking upward mobility across national companies. The findings are presented sequentially to guarantee analytical correctness, beginning with descriptive statistics, followed by prerequisite tests to validate the model's assumptions, and finally, the results of multivariate regression analyses that quantify the impact of each variable. The distribution of the descriptive data is shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Results of Descriptive Data Analysis

		Communication Proficiency	Personal Branding	Career Pathways
N	Valid	50	50	50
	Missing	0	0	0
Mean		87.08	88.32	87.68
Median		87.50	88.00	88.00
Mode		88	89	88
Std. Deviation		1.338	1.186	1.856
Variance		1.789	1.406	3.447
Range		5	5	7
Minimum		84	85	84
Maximum		89	90	91
Sum		4354	4416	4384

The career pathways variable (Y) had an average score of 87.68, with respondents giving an average response of 4.38 on a scale from 1 to 5. This suggests that most respondents feel their career pathways are generally in a good place (above 4). The standard deviation was 1.856, which is about 2.12% of the mean, indicating that the responses were pretty consistent. For the communication proficiency variable (X1), the mean score was 87.08, with an average response of 4.35 on the same 1–5 scale. With a standard deviation of 1.338, which is around 1.53% of the mean, this indicates that the data is not excessively dispersed and that the respondents generally have excellent communication skills, with an average score of over 4. The average value of the personal branding variable (X2) is 88. 32, with respondents scoring an average of 4. 42 on a scale of 1 to 5. Their personal brand is also in the good category, with a score above 4. The responses are relatively uniform, as evidenced by the standard deviation of 1.186, which is 1.34% of the mean. Furthermore, the average and median values are 88. 32 and 88. 00, respectively, indicating that the personal branding data in this study is fairly representative. Additionally, the prerequisite data analysis tests in this investigation included checks for normality of estimation error, linearity, multicollinearity, and heteroscedasticity. A summary of these prerequisite tests is provided in Table 2.

Table 2. One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test

			Unstandardized Residual	**Unstandardized Residual**
N			50	50
Normal Parameters[a,b]	Mean		.0000000	.0000000
	Std. Deviation		1.35359836	1.38038442
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute		.385	.152
	Positive		.385	.152
	Negative		-.229	-.095
Test Statistic			.385	.152
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)			.006[c]	.005[c]
Monte Carlo Sig. (2-tailed)	Sig.		.178	.174[d]
	99% Confidence Interval	Lower Bound	.168	.164
		Upper Bound	.187	.183

a. Test distribution is Normal.
b. Calculated from data.
c. Lilliefors Significance Correction.
d. Based on 10000 sampled tables with starting seed 957002199.

The normality test was performed using the single-sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov test. The Sig value must be greater than 0.05 for the data to be deemed normally distributed according to the test standards. The research indicates that the Sig value for Y over X1 is 0.187, while it is 0.183 for Y over X2. Since both Sig values are greater than 0.05, we can conclude that the data are normally distributed.

Table 3. Linearity Test

				Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Career Pathways * Communication Proficiency	Between Groups	(Combined)		93.205	5	18.641	10.839	.000
		Linearity		79.101	1	79.101	45.992	.000
		Deviation from Linearity		14.104	4	3.526	2.050	.104
	Within Groups			75.675	44	1.720		
	Total			168.880	49			

Table 4. ANOVA Test

			Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Career Pathways * Personal Branding	Between Groups	(Combined)	77.291	5	15.458	7.426	.000
		Linearity	75.512	1	75.512	36.277	.000
		Deviation from Linearity	1.778	4	.445	.214	.930
	Within Groups		91.589	44	2.082		
	Total		168.880	49			

The linearity test was conducted using the Test for Linearity. According to the testing standards, data is considered linear if the Sig value in the "Deviation from Linearity" row is greater than 0.05. According to the findings, the Sig value for Y over X1 is 0.104, and for Y over X2, it is 0.930. We can confidently assert that the data display a linear trend, since both Sig values are greater than 0.05. An acceptable regression model should not show complete correlation between the independent variables. Multicollinearity can be detected using the Tolerance or Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values. When Tolerance exceeds 0. 1 or VIF is under 10, there is no multicollinearity. According to the results of this research, the tolerance value was 0.467, and the VIF value was 2.140, indicating that there was no multicollinearity in the regression model.

Table 5. Multicollinearity Test

Coefficients[a]								
Model		**Unstandardized Coefficients**		**Standardized Coefficients**	**t**	**Sig.**	**Collinearity Statistics**	
		B	**Std. Error**	**Beta**			**Tolerance**	**VIF**
1	(Constant)	-13.163	14.140		-.931	.357		
	Communication Proficiency	.583	.203	.420	2.871	.006	.467	2.140
	Personal Branding	.567	.229	.362	2.474	.017	.467	2.140

One way to identify heteroscedasticity is by plotting the Standardized Residuals (ZRESID) against the Standardized Predicted Values (Ŷ). The absence of heteroscedasticity is evidenced by the lack of a consistent pattern in the residuals as a function of the projected values. The scatter plot shows

that the data points are distributed randomly on both sides of the Y-axis zero line. The regression model is appropriate for use because it does not exhibit heteroscedasticity, as shown in Figure 2.

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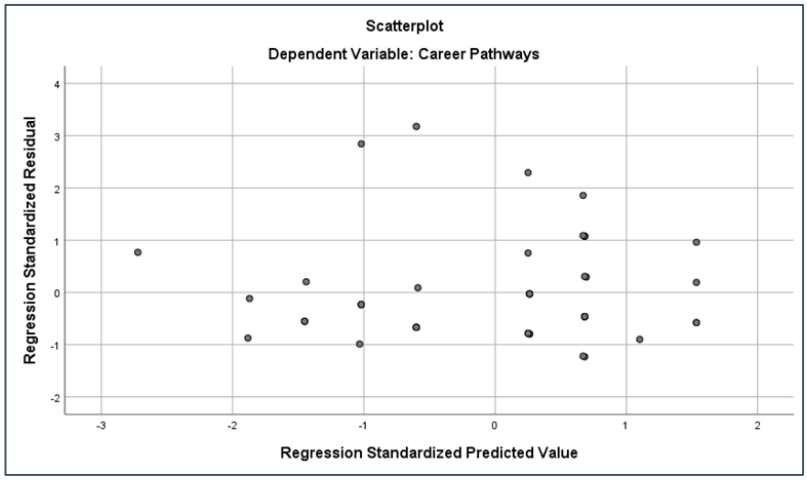


Figure 2. Results of the Heteroscedasticity Test

Based on the tests above, all the data analysis prerequisites have been met. Therefore, hypothesis testing in this study was conducted using parametric statistical tests, as described in Table 6.

Table 6. Model Summary

Model Summary[b]				
Model	**R**	**R Square**	**Adjusted R-Square**	**Std. Error of the Estimate**
1	.728[a]	.530	.510	1.300

a. Predictors: (Constant), Personal Branding, Communication Proficiency

b. Dependent Variable: Career Pathways

The multiple correlation coefficient for the combined effect of the independent variables communication competence (X1) and personal branding (X2) on career routes (Y) is 0. 728, as shown in Table 6, indicating a strong relationship between communication proficiency and personal branding with career pathways. The coefficient of determination, also known as R-square, is 53%, indicating that the combined impact of communication skills (X1) and personal branding (X2) on career routes (Y) accounts for 53%, with the remaining 47% due to other factors. According to Table 7, the F critical value (Ftabel) is 3. 19, while the Sig value is 0. 000, and the calculated F value is 26. 461. H0 is rejected because Sig < 0.05 and Fhitung> Ftabel, indicating that the regression coefficients are significant. As a result, it may be deduced that having strong communication skills (X1) and a strong personal brand (X2) has a big, positive, and simultaneous impact on career paths (Y).

Table 7. Multiple Regression Analysis

ANOVA[a]					
Model	**Sum of Squares**	**df**	**Mean Square**	**F**	**Sig.**
1 Regression	89.444	2	44.722	26.461	.000[b]
Residual	79.436	47	1.690		
Total	168.880	49			

a. Dependent Variable: Career Pathways

b. Predictors: (Constant), Personal Branding, Communication Proficiency

Table 8. Results of Partial Test of Independent Variables on the Dependent Variable

Coefficients[a]					
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	
Model		B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.
1	(Constant)	-13.163	14.140		-.931	.357
	Communication Proficiency	.583	.203	.420	2.871	.006
	Personal Branding	.567	.229	.362	2.474	.017

a. Dependent Variable: Career Pathways

The regression equation explaining how communication competence (X1) and personal branding (X2) affect career trajectories (Y) is $\hat{y}$ = -13. 163 + 0. 583X_1 + 0. 567X_2. This demonstrates that a person's career route improves with their communication proficiency and personal branding, with both variables contributing positively and nearly equally to the improvement. The partial test findings demonstrate that communication competence has a t-computed value of 2.871, which is greater than the t critical value of 2.01, and a Sig value of 0.006. This suggests that a person's communication skills have a big impact on their career prospects. In a similar vein, personal branding has a Sig value of 0. 017 and a t calculated value of 2. 474, both of which are higher than the t critical value of 2. 01, suggesting a significant impact of personal branding on career pathways.

The results of this research emphasize the importance of English communication skills and personal branding in shaping alumni's career pathways from the Department of English Language and Culture. The importance of each predictor aligns with already established theoretical frameworks that stress personal identity management and communication competence as essential components of employability and professional success. From a theoretical standpoint, the powerful influence of communication competence underscores the relevance of language skills within human capital theory, which holds that talents such as language, communication, and interpersonal skills enhance one's value in the workplace. The findings also lend support to De Costa's conceptual framework for linguistic entrepreneurship (2016; 2019), which emphasizes purposeful language use to enhance employment and social mobility. Alumni with higher levels of communication ability can clearly convey ideas, navigate cross-cultural workplaces, and make collaborative decisions, which are highly valued in both nationally and internationally targeted companies.

Similarly, Peters (1997) states that people must actively establish and communicate a distinct professional brand, underscoring the significant influence of personal branding. Personal branding in the modern digital age includes internet presence, reputation management, and the ability to differentiate oneself in competitive employment opportunities beyond self-presentation. The positive impacts of personal branding demonstrated in this study support the notion that persons who exhibit a consistent and authentic professional identity are more likely to be identified, build trust, and gain access to more job opportunities. From a practical standpoint, the findings emphasize the critical necessity for higher education institutions, particularly language and communication programs, to integrate useful skill development in branding and communication into their academic programs. Public speaking practice, digital communication classes, personal branding seminars, and training in improved English proficiency would help students build the skills needed for career success. In addition, institutions might improve alumni career outcomes by offering networking opportunities, mentoring programs, and business-related activities that help to develop professional identity and communication skills. The investigation's results also provide practical recommendations to companies. Companies could benefit from launching employee-focused professional development programs to enhance communication skills and personal brand awareness. Such projects encourage

better teamwork, improve workplace communication, and build stronger leadership pathways. Finally, the discussion supports the claim that English communication skills and personal branding work together to promote professional development. Better communication enhances the clarity, credibility, and persuasiveness of one's personal brand; in professional settings, a strong personal brand enhances the influence of communicative performance. Together, these skills provide a strategic foundation for continued professional development and competitiveness in response to the evolving needs of national companies.

CONCLUSION

The results of this research show that being good at communication and having a strong personal brand work together to boost career pathways significantly. Each of these skills also plays an important role on its own in helping alumni develop their careers. This finding emphasizes how these two abilities complement each other. Communication skills help people share their ideas clearly, work well with others in various situations, and build professional networks, while personal branding helps them create a unique professional image, gain trust, and stand out in their industry. Together, these qualities create a robust foundation that enhances job prospects and career growth. These insights highlight just how vital both communication skills and personal branding are for alumni aiming for career success, especially in complex work environments that require flexibility and effective self-presentation. Therefore, colleges and universities should broaden their focus beyond just academic and technical training. They should also weave in the development of soft skills, such as communication and personal branding, into their courses and extracurricular activities. By incorporating these skills through workshops, internships, mentoring, and hands-on projects, students can gain real-world experience applying them in professional settings. Universities can develop graduates who are not just proficient in language but also confident, adaptable, and able to strategically position themselves for both national and global career opportunities by actively encouraging students' interpersonal skills and understanding of personal branding. In conclusion, this comprehensive approach enhances graduates' job prospects, competitiveness, and readiness to achieve in dynamic, networked job environments. Finally, although this work offers valuable insights, it is limited by the number of participants and its focus on alumni from a single university. Future studies could involve larger responder groups, comparative institutional studies, or additional elements such as organizational culture, workplace flexibility, or digital literacy to increase generalizability. In general, the study emphasizes the importance of skills such as developing a strong personal brand and becoming proficient in English communication for improving graduates' job prospects, competitiveness, and long-term professional success in Indonesia's evolving economic climate.

DECLARATION OF GENERATIVE AI

The authors declare that no generative AI or AI-assisted technologies were used in the writing process of this manuscript.

CONFLICTING INTEREST STATEMENT

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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