

The Influence of Digital Social Capital, Self-Efficacy, and Human Capital on Career Success in Fresh Graduate Students in Surabaya

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Abstract

This study seeks to examine the effects of Digital Social Capital, Self-Efficacy, and Human Capital on Career Success among fresh graduates in Surabaya. The research is motivated by the high level of educated unemployment and the intense competition within the urban labor market in the digital era. Employing a quantitative explanatory research approach, the study involved 60 respondents who were graduates of the Bachelor of Management and Bachelor of Digital Business programs at Universitas Negeri Surabaya. Data were collected through an online questionnaire and analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling–Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS). The findings reveal that all three independent variables exert a positive and significant influence on Career Success. Among them, Human Capital shows the strongest effect ($\beta = 0.403$; $p < 0.001$), followed by Self-Efficacy ($\beta = 0.285$; $p = 0.011$) and Digital Social Capital ($\beta = 0.216$; $p = 0.048$). These results indicate that the integration of human capital, psychological resources, and digital social capital plays a crucial role in determining career success among young individuals in the era of digital transformation. Furthermore, this study contributes to theoretical development by integrating Social Cognitive Career Theory and Human Capital Theory, while also providing practical implications for higher education institutions to enhance students' career readiness through the development of digital competencies, self-efficacy, and professional experience.

Keywords: *Digital Social Capital, Self-Efficacy, Human Capital, Career Success, Fresh Graduate, Surabaya.*

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is currently entering a demographic bonus period that requires the optimization of human resource quality, particularly within the productive-age population. Nevertheless, this condition reveals a paradox in the national labor market. According to data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) in February 2024, the Open Unemployment Rate (TPT) among university graduates remains relatively high at approximately 5.25%, exceeding the rate recorded for Diploma I/II/III graduates, which stands at 4.83% (BPS, 2024). This condition indicates that a bachelor's degree is no longer the sole guarantee of quickly obtaining employment. This high rate of educated unemployment reflects the existence of mismatch between the availability of college graduates and industrial absorption capacity, as well as the unpreparedness of graduates in facing increasingly competitive job competition.

Regionally, East Java Province, as one of Indonesia's major economic hubs, faces similar labor market challenges. Although the Open Unemployment Rate (TPT) in East Java declined to 4.19% in August 2024 (BPS, 2024), the province continues to produce a large number of university graduates each year. The concentration of numerous public and private universities in East Java has resulted in an oversupply of educated labor, particularly in urban areas. Consequently, fresh graduates encounter increasingly intense competition when seeking strategic positions in the job market.

More specifically, Surabaya, as the provincial capital, plays a central role in the East Java economy, contributing the largest share of GDP. Unlike buffer cities like Sidoarjo and Gresik, whose economies are dominated by the manufacturing sector (48.25% and 51.40%, respectively), Surabaya has transformed into a service- and trade-based city, contributing over 65% of its

economy (Disdukcapil, 2025). This economic structure creates a highly sought-after corporate career ecosystem for graduates.

In addition, Surabaya's status as a melting pot is confirmed by demographic data showing a high rate of urbanization. Lifetime migration data shows that 40.56% of Surabaya's population are migrants, a figure significantly higher than the average for other regions in East Java (BPS, 2023). This indicates that students fresh graduate in Surabaya, graduates not only compete with fellow local graduates, but also face a wave of the best talents from all corners of the province concentrated in one point, resulting in job acceptance qualification standards becoming much more competitive.

The ultimate goal of every graduate in facing this competition is to achieve Career Success that reflects the accumulation of objective achievements (such as salary and position) and subjective ones, such as career satisfaction (Tung & Huong, 2023). However, in the dynamics of a modern job market like Surabaya, these achievements are influenced by a number of evolving determinants.

The first factor is Digital Social Capital, which refers to social resources that can be accessed and utilized through digital platforms, such as LinkedIn, to obtain information and access to hidden career opportunities. Recent research has demonstrated that digital networks play a vital role in achieving career success, particularly among the digital workforce generation (Kistyanto, Rahman, & Budiono, 2025). However, other research emphasizes that the quality of interactions and trust within digital networks is more important than simply the number of connections. (Rozsa, Minčić, Krajčik, & Vránová, 2022)

The second factor is Self-Efficacy, especially in the context of Job Search Self-Efficacy (JSSE), namely, an individual's belief in their ability to succeed in the job search process. A recent systematic review found that self-efficacy acts as an important mediator between digital skills and job search outcomes, but its effect may vary depending on labor market conditions. (Zheng, Mohd Puad, & Ab. Jalil, 2025). Other longitudinal findings suggest that self-efficacy can enhance resilience and adaptive strategies for new graduates entering the workforce. (Anderson, 2021)

The third factor is Human Capital, which includes education, training, and work experience as the main capital to increase career competitiveness. Recent research highlights that although Human Capital remains important, the main differentiating value now lies in the combination of human capital and digital skills, not just academic achievement alone (Lasisi, Lazareva, Abramyan, Gavrilova, & Murzin, 2023). In addition, the increased employability capital such as career identity, interview self-efficacy, and cultural capital also influence career success in the context of the digital economy (PetruzzIELLO, Mariani, Chiesa, & Guglielmi, 2021).

The inconsistency in findings from previous studies regarding the effects of these three variables highlights the urgency of conducting this research. to simultaneously re-analyze how Digital Social Capital, Self-Efficacy, and Human Capital influence Career Success in the specific context of students fresh graduate in Surabaya. Based on the description, this study is unique in examining the influence of Digital Social Capital, Self-Efficacy, and Human Capital on Career Success in the context of fresh graduates in Surabaya, a city with service economy characteristics and a high level of job competition. Unlike previous studies that generally highlight single factors such as social capital or self-efficacy, this study offers an integrative approach through the "Triple Capital Framework" model that combines three main capitals: digital, psychological, and human. To understand the determinants of career success of the younger generation in the digital era. In addition, this study also expands theoretical understanding by operationalizing Digital Social Capital specifically on online professional platforms (LinkedIn), making it more relevant to modern job search behavior. Therefore, this study is expected not only to address the empirical gap arising from inconsistencies in prior research, but also to provide clearer evidence regarding the relative importance of digital social capital, self-efficacy, and human capital in early career

success. While digital social capital has been shown to enhance access to career opportunities through high-quality online networks (Rozsa et al., 2022), other research highlights human capital as the primary determinant of career outcomes in the digital economy (Lasisi et al., 2023). Additionally, self-efficacy has been identified as a crucial psychological mechanism enabling individuals to leverage their competencies effectively (Petruzzello et al., 2021). However, these factors are rarely examined simultaneously, particularly within competitive, service-based urban labor markets such as Surabaya, where fresh graduates increasingly rely on digital platforms for career entry. but also provide practical contributions for universities and career institutions in improving graduate competitiveness by strengthening digital, psychological, and human capital in an increasingly competitive urban job market.

RESEARCH METHODS

Research Design

This study adopts a quantitative approach with an explanatory research design. This approach is employed to test and explain the causal relationships among variables, specifically the effects of Digital Social Capital, Self-Efficacy, and Human Capital on Career Success. Based on the time dimension, the study uses a cross-sectional design, in which data are collected from respondents at a single point in time to describe phenomena occurring within the population of fresh graduates in Surabaya.

Population and Sample

The population of this study consists of newly graduated university students (fresh graduates) who are domiciled in or seeking employment in the city of Surabaya. Given that the exact size of the population is unknown (infinite population), a non-probability sampling technique was applied using a purposive sampling method. The criteria for respondent inclusion are as follows: Graduate of Digital Business and Management Bachelor's Degree Class of 2021 from Surabaya State University.

1. Domiciled or actively looking for/working in Surabaya City.
2. Have a professional social media account (LinkedIn).

The sample size was determined following the guidelines proposed by Hair, Risher, Sarstedt, and Ringle (2019), which recommend a minimum of five to ten observations per indicator. Given that this study employs a total of 12 indicators, the minimum required sample size was set at 60 respondents to ensure adequate statistical power.

Data Collection Techniques

Data were collected through an online survey using Google Forms, which was distributed via various digital channels, including Digital Business alumni groups. The research instrument consisted of a structured questionnaire developed based on empirical indicators derived from prior studies. Each item was measured using a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The data collection process was carried out between December 2025 and January 2026.

Data Analysis Techniques

The data were analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with a Partial Least Squares (PLS) approach through SmartPLS 3.0 software. This method was employed because PLS-SEM emphasizes predictive and exploratory analysis and is well suited for examining complex models involving non-normal data and relatively small sample sizes.

The adequacy of the sample size was carefully considered in relation to the analytical approach and model structure. The structural model consists of three exogenous constructs—Digital Social Capital, Self-Efficacy, and Human Capital—predicting one endogenous construct, namely Career Success. Following established PLS-SEM guidelines, According to the ten-times

rule, the minimum sample size should be no less than ten times the largest number of structural paths pointing to an endogenous construct. In this study, the endogenous variable is influenced by three direct paths, resulting in a minimum sample requirement of 30 observations. Thus, the final sample of 60 respondents exceeds this criterion. Moreover, the measurement model exhibits strong psychometric quality, as reflected by indicator loadings above 0.70, Composite Reliability values exceeding 0.90, and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values greater than 0.50. The structural model also demonstrates satisfactory explanatory and predictive capability, indicated by R^2 and Q^2 values above zero. Collectively, these results confirm that the sample size is sufficient to ensure robust estimation and reliable prediction using PLS-SEM, consistent with the guidelines proposed by Hair et al. (2019).

The analysis was carried out in two primary stages. The first stage involved assessing the outer (measurement) model to evaluate convergent validity, indicated by factor loadings greater than 0.70 and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values above 0.50, as well as discriminant validity using the Fornell–Larcker criterion. Reliability was also examined through Composite Reliability and Cronbach’s Alpha, with threshold values exceeding 0.70. The second stage focused on evaluating the inner (structural) model to determine the model’s predictive capability, which was assessed using the coefficient of determination (R^2) and predictive relevance (Q^2).

Measurement of Variables

This study employed a structured questionnaire to measure all research constructs, with measurement items adapted from established empirical studies and contextualized for fresh graduates in the digital labor market. All constructs were modeled as reflective constructs and measured using a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). Digital Social Capital was measured using six indicators capturing respondents’ ability to build and utilize professional networks, access career-related information, and gain tangible career benefits through digital platforms such as LinkedIn and other professional social media.

Self-Efficacy was measured using six indicators adapted from self-efficacy theory, reflecting individuals’ confidence in completing work-related tasks, overcoming career challenges, learning new skills, and making appropriate career decisions.

Human Capital was measured using six indicators representing education relevance, skill possession, competence level, and continuous skill development that support career advancement.

Career Success (Subjective) was measured using six indicators reflecting respondents’ subjective evaluation of career satisfaction, perceived career progress, personal achievement, and meaningfulness of their career experiences.

The validity and reliability of all measurement items were examined through the evaluation of the measurement (outer) model within the SEM-PLS framework.

Table 1. Digital Social Capital

Code	Item
DSC1	I have a broad professional network through digital platforms (e.g., LinkedIn, WhatsApp, Instagram).
DSC2	Digital platforms help me access information related to job or career opportunities.
DSC3	My digital network frequently shares information beneficial to my career development.
DSC4	I can easily build professional relationships through digital platforms.
DSC5	My digital relationships increase my career opportunities.
DSC6	My digital interactions provide tangible benefits for my career development.

Table 2. Self-Efficacy

Code	Item
SE1	I am confident in completing tasks related to my work.

SE2	I am confident in facing career-related challenges.
SE3	I believe I can achieve my career goals.
SE4	I am able to overcome difficulties in my career journey.
SE5	I am confident in learning new skills required in the workplace.
SE6	I am confident in making appropriate career decisions.

Table 3. Human Capital

Code	Item
HC1	My education has provided knowledge relevant to the labor market.
HC2	I possess skills that support my career development.
HC3	I feel competent in my field of expertise.
HC4	I am able to apply my knowledge effectively in my work.
HC5	I continuously develop my skills to enhance my career prospects.
HC6	My competencies contribute to my career success.

Table 4. Career Success (Subjective)

Code	Item
CS1	I am satisfied with my current career development.
CS2	My career has progressed positively since graduation.
CS3	I feel successful in my career journey so far.
CS4	My career activities are meaningful to me.
CS5	I feel valued for my contributions in my career.
CS6	Overall, I consider my career to be going well.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Respondent Characteristics

Table 5. Respondent Characteristics

n = 60			
		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Man	28	46,7%
	Woman	32	53,3%
Study program	Bachelor of Management	34	56,7%
	Bachelor of Digital Business	26	43,3%

Source: Data processed by the author (2025)

Based on the respondent characteristics presented in Table 1, this study involved 60 participants who met the established inclusion criteria, namely graduates of the Bachelor of Management and Bachelor of Digital Business programs from the 2021 cohort at Universitas Negeri Surabaya, who were domiciled in, actively seeking employment in, or currently working in Surabaya, and who possessed a professional social media account (LinkedIn). In terms of gender distribution, female respondents constituted the majority with 32 individuals (53.3%), while male respondents accounted for 28 individuals (46.7%). Regarding academic background, most participants were graduates of the Bachelor of Management program (34 respondents; 56.7%), followed by graduates of the Bachelor of Digital Business program (26 respondents;

43.3%). Overall, this distribution suggests a relatively balanced gender composition and adequate representation of the two academic programs, both of which are relevant to the study's focus on the utilization of digital capital and career readiness within the urban context of Surabaya.

Outer Model

Convergent Validity Test

Table 6. Convergent Validity Test

Construct	Item	Loading	AVE
Digital Social Capital	DCS 1	0.859	0,766
	DCS 2	0.839	
	DCS 3	0.898	
	DCS 4	0.918	
	DCS 5	0.919	
	DCS 6	0,810	
Self-Efficacy	SE 1	0.882	0,769
	SE 2	0.858	
	SE 3	0.899	
	SE 4	0.861	
	SE 5	0.895	
	SE 6	0,867	
Human Capital	HC 1	0.812	0,730
	HC 2	0.890	
	HC 3	0.885	
	HC 4	0.880	
	HC 5	0.863	
	HC 6	0, 793	
Career Success	CS 1	0,843	0,717
	CS 2	0,843	
	CS 3	0,846	
	CS 4	0,817	
	CS 5	0,868	
	CS 6	0,863	

Source: Data processed by the author (2025)

Based on Table 2, Convergent Validity Test, all indicators in the Digital Social Capital, Self-Efficacy, Human Capital, and Career Success constructs show factor loading values above 0.70, which means that each item has met the convergent validity criteria as suggested by (Hair et al., 2019). The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value for each construct is also above the minimum threshold of 0.50, with the following details: *Digital Social Capital* of 0.766, *Self-Efficacy* of 0.769, *Human Capital* of 0.730, and *Career Success* 0.717. These results indicate that each construct has a good ability to explain the variance of its indicators, so that all items are declared valid and suitable for use in testing the research model. Thus, it can be concluded that the four constructs in this study have met the requirements for convergent validity, indicating the consistency of the relationship between the indicators and the latent variables being measured.

Discriminant Validity Test

Table 7. Discriminant Validity Test

	X1	X2	X3	Y
X1	0,875			
X2	0,542	0,877		

X3	0,429	0,492	0,855	
Y	0,543	0,600	0,636	0,847

Source: Data processed by the author (2025)

Based on Table 3, the Discriminant Validity Test results show that the square root of the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for each construct is higher than the correlation between the other constructs. This test was conducted using the Fornell-Larcker Criterion method.(Fornell & Larcker, 1981), which is used to ensure that each construct in the model has adequate discriminant validity. The AVE values of each construct are: X1 (Digital Social Capital) = 0.875, X2 (Self-Efficacy) = 0.877, X3 (Human Capital) = 0.855, and Y (Career Success) = 0.847. All diagonal values are greater than the correlation values between other variables, which range from 0.429 to 0.636. This indicates that each construct has the ability to differentiate itself from other constructs, so that there is no conceptual overlap between variables. Thus, the results of the Fornell-Larcker Criterion test confirm that all constructs in this study have met discriminant validity, demonstrating the clarity and uniqueness of each latent variable in the research model.

Reliability Test

Table 8. Reliability Test

	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability
X1	0,938	0,951
X2	0,940	0,952
X3	0,936	0,942
Y	0,921	0,938

Source: Data processed by the author (2025)

Based on Table 3, Reliability Test, the test results show that all research constructs have Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability (CR) values above 0.70, which means that each variable is declared reliable and consistent in measuring its construct. The Cronbach's Alpha values for each construct are X1 (Digital Social Capital) = 0.938, X2 (Self-Efficacy) = 0.940, X3 (Human Capital) = 0.936, and Y (Career Success) = 0.921. Meanwhile, the Composite Reliability values are 0.951, 0.952, 0.942, and 0.938, respectively. These results indicate that the research instrument has an excellent level of internal consistency because all values are well above the minimum threshold of 0.70 as suggested by Hair et al. (2019). Thus, all indicators used in this study have been proven to be reliable, so they can be trusted for use in the next stage of structural model analysis.

Inner Model

Determinant Coefficient (R²) & Q²

Table 8. Goodness of Fit Model

	R ²	Q ²
Y	0,544	0,370

Source: Data processed by the author (2025)

An R² value of 0.544 shows that the model explains about 54.4% of the variance in variable Y. This indicates a moderate level of explanatory power, suggesting that the model is reasonably appropriate for research purposes. Meanwhile, the Q² value of 0.370, which is greater than zero, demonstrates that the model has adequate predictive relevance, meaning it is capable of predicting the data effectively and exhibits a fairly good level of goodness of fit.

Hypothesis Testing

Table 9. Hypothesis Testing

	Relationship between variables	Path Coefficient (β)	t-Statistic	p-Value	Information
H1	Digital Social Capital → Career Success	0.216	1.980	0.048	Significant

	Relationship between variables	Path Coefficient (β)	t-Statistic	p-Value	Information
H ₂	Self Efficacy → Career Success	0.285	2.532	0.011	Significant
H ₃	Human Capital → Career Success	0.403	4.441	0.000	Significant

Source: Data processed by the author (2025)

H1: Digital Social Capital → Career Success

The hypothesis testing results reveal that Digital Social Capital exerts a positive and statistically significant influence on Career Success. ($\beta = 0.216$; $p = 0.048$), thus supporting H1. This finding suggests that fresh graduates who are able to build and utilize professional networks through digital platforms are more likely to access job information, professional support, and career opportunities that enhance their career success.

This result is consistent with social capital theory (Coleman, 1990; Putnam, 2000), which emphasizes that social networks function as resources facilitating access to information and opportunities. In the digital context, The importance of online professional networks has been strongly supported by findings from previous studies.. For instance, Ellison et al. (2007) and Rozsa et al. (2022) found that online social networks contribute positively to social capital formation and job search behavior. More specifically, Kistyanto et al. (2025) demonstrated that digital social capital significantly influences career success among digital natives and digital immigrant employees. The results of this study build upon earlier research by demonstrating that digital social capital significantly contributes to career success among fresh graduates within an urban Indonesian setting.

H2: Self-Efficacy → Career Success

The findings further indicate that Self-Efficacy has a positive and statistically significant influence on Career Success ($\beta = 0.285$; $p = 0.011$), thereby supporting H2. This suggests that fresh graduates who possess stronger confidence in their capabilities are more likely to demonstrate persistence when facing career-related challenges, show greater proactiveness in career development activities, and maintain a more optimistic outlook toward achieving their career objectives. This result is consistent with Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT), which positions self-efficacy as a core psychological factor influencing career behavior and outcomes (Lent et al., 1994; Lent et al., 2000). Empirical evidence from previous studies supports this relationship. Petruzzello et al. (2021) found that self-efficacy significantly improves job search success among new graduates, while Andersson (2021) showed that self-efficacy plays a critical role in youth entry into the labor market. In addition, Tung and Huong (2023) reported that self-efficacy positively affects subjective career success among IT graduates. The present findings reinforce these studies by confirming the importance of self-efficacy during the transition from higher education to employment.

H3: Human Capital → Career Success

The hypothesis testing results indicate that Human Capital has the strongest positive effect on Career Success ($\beta = 0.403$; $p < 0.001$), supporting H3. This finding suggests that education relevance, skills, competencies, and continuous skill development are the most dominant factors influencing career success among fresh graduates.

This finding aligns with Human Capital Theory (Schultz, 1961; Becker, 1964), which posits that investments in education and skill development enhance individual productivity and lead to improved career outcomes. Previous empirical studies have confirmed this relationship. Ng et al. (2005) and De Vos et al. (2011) showed that human capital significantly influences career success, particularly in early career stages. More recent studies, such as Lasisi et al. (2023) and Jackson et al. (2024), further emphasize the importance of skills and competencies in shaping

subjective career success among graduates. The dominance of human capital in this study highlights that, despite the growing importance of digital networks and psychological resources, education and skill development remain the primary foundation of career success in the digital economy.

Overall, the findings indicate that career success among fresh graduates is influenced by the combined effects of human capital, self-efficacy, and digital social capital. Human capital provides the foundational competencies required in the labor market, self-efficacy enables individuals to utilize these competencies effectively, and digital social capital facilitates access to career opportunities through online professional networks. This integrated finding supports and extends previous research by demonstrating that early career success in the digital era requires not only strong skills and education, but also psychological readiness and the ability to leverage digital social resources.

CONCLUSION

The research results prove that *Digital Social Capital, Self-Efficacy, And Human Capital* has a positive and significant effect on *Career Success* student *fresh graduate in Surabaya*. These findings highlight the importance of synergy between the ability to build online professional networks, self-confidence in career abilities, and the quality of education and job skills in determining early career success. Of the three factors tested, *Human Capital* shown to have the most dominant influence, indicating that investment in education, apprenticeships, and mastery *hard-soft skills* remains the main foundation of career success. However, in the context of the digital economy, this success is further strengthened by the role of *Self-Efficacy And Digital Social Capital* which expands access to job opportunities and builds professional reputation. Therefore, educational institutions need to adopt a career development strategy based on *Triple Capital Frame work* with a focus on digital skills integration, strengthening self-efficacy, and improving quality *Human Capital* so that graduates are better prepared to compete in the modern job market.

This study has several limitations that need to be considered. First, the cross-sectional research design limits the ability to establish causal relationships among Digital Social Capital, Self-Efficacy, Human Capital, and Career Success. Second, the relatively small sample size, which is confined to graduates from the Management and Digital Business programs at Universitas Negeri Surabaya, may restrict the generalizability of the findings to a wider population of fresh graduates. Furthermore, the reliance on self-reported quantitative questionnaires may lead to subjective bias. The focus on the urban context of Surabaya also means that the results may not fully reflect conditions in other regions with different economic and social characteristics. Accordingly, future studies are encouraged to adopt longitudinal or mixed-method approaches, involve broader samples across various regions and academic fields, and utilize more objective data sources to improve the robustness, validity, and reliability of the findings.

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