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Utilizing Digital Portfolios as a Self-Promotion Tool: Perceptions of Cosmetology Students in Preparing for Careers as Makeup Artists"

'Vellani Septiana Putri[1,]
Departement Of Beauty And Cosmetology, Faculty Of Tourism And Hospitality, Universitas Negeri Padang.
Indra Saputra[2]
Departement Of Beauty And Cosmetology, Faculty Of Tourism And Hospitality, Universitas Negeri Padang.
Merita Yanita[3]
Departement Of Beauty And Cosmetology, Faculty Of Tourism And Hospitality, Universitas Negeri Padang.
Vici Syahril Chairani[4]
Departement Of Beauty And Cosmetology, Faculty Of Tourism And Hospitality, Universitas Negeri Padang.

Corresponding Author: indrasaputra@fpp.unp.ac.id

Abstract

The development of digital technology has changed the way students present competencies and build professional identities. Digital portfolios can serve as a medium for documenting works, communicating competencies, and supporting professional preparation. This study aims to analyze the perceptions of students in the Beauty and Makeup Study Program at Universitas Negeri Padang regarding the importance of digital portfolios in supporting career readiness as prospective Makeup Artists (MUAs). The study employed a quantitative approach with a descriptive design. The population consisted of 55 students of the Beauty and Makeup Study Program, cohort 2022. Although total sampling was initially planned, 55 complete responses were available and analyzed as valid data. Data were collected using a closed-ended questionnaire with a five-point Likert scale. The instrument measured nine indicators, namely exposure, attention, organization, interpretation, information understanding (Pemahaman Informasi; PI), knowledge, cognitive attitude (Sikap Kognitif; SK), affective attitude (Sikap Afektif; SA), and behavioral attitude (Sikap Perilaku; SP), in accordance with the operational definitions of the research instrument. Data were

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analyzed using descriptive statistics and respondent achievement level (TCR). The results showed that all indicators were in the high category. The mean scores ranged from 8.85 to 17.85, with the highest mean found on SP (17.85) and the lowest on SK (8.85), according to their respective score ranges. These findings indicate that students generally have positive perceptions of digital portfolios and recognize their relevance to documenting competencies, professional identity, self-promotion, and career preparation. However, a high perception does not necessarily demonstrate optimal implementation. Therefore, practice-oriented learning is needed to help students transform positive perceptions into the ability to develop, manage, and present digital portfolios professionally.

Keywords: digital portfolio, career readiness, Makeup Artist, students' perceptions, personal branding.

INTRODUCTION

The rapid development of digital technology has transformed the ways individuals communicate, present competencies, and establish professional identities. Social media has increasingly become part of students' learning and professional environments by providing opportunities to access information, interact with professional communities, and develop digital visibility. Bruguera, Guitert, and Romeu (2022) explain that social media can become part of students' learning ecologies and support connections between formal education, informal learning, and professional development. Therefore, digital competence and the ability to present professional competencies through digital media have become increasingly important for students preparing to enter the labor market.

One form of digital media that can support students in presenting their competencies is the digital portfolio or e-portfolio. Digital portfolios provide a space for documenting learning outcomes, practical experiences, achievements, and competencies through digital artifacts. Mogas, Cea Álvarez, and Pazos-Justo (2023) found that digital portfolios can contribute to students' autonomy and digital competence in higher education. Similarly, Torres and McKinley (2023) explain that e-portfolios provide opportunities for students to collect digital artifacts and develop professional identity. Gauthier (2009) also discusses the use of digital portfolios as a means of constructing professional digital identity and communicating competencies, while Mgarbi, Chkouri, and Tahiri (2022) highlight the potential of e-portfolios in supporting students' professional insertion.

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The importance of digital portfolios is particularly relevant to students in Beauty and Makeup education. Makeup competencies are strongly visual and can be demonstrated through photographs, videos, and documentation of completed works. A digital portfolio can therefore provide prospective Makeup Artists (MUAs) with a structured medium for presenting their technical skills, creativity, experiences, and professional development. In this context, the portfolio can function not only as academic documentation but also as a medium for professional self-presentation.

Digital portfolios are also related to career development because they allow students to communicate competencies beyond conventional academic qualifications. Choate et al. (2019) demonstrated that an assessed ePortfolio can support students' career knowledge, confidence, awareness of career options, and engagement with career development activities. Fitriani, Setiawan, and Hamdi (2024) similarly explain that e-portfolios can document students' works, achievements, educational backgrounds, experiences, and competencies for career development. These findings suggest that digital portfolios can serve as a bridge between students' learning experiences and their professional presentation.

The professional function of digital self-presentation is closely related to personal branding. Gorbatov, Khapova, and Lysova (2019) found that personal branding is associated with career success, while Gorbatov, Oostrom, and Khapova (2024) demonstrated that personal branding provides additional value in explaining employability. Among university students, Yusanda, Darmastuti, and Huwae (2021) found that Instagram can be used to construct personal branding through the presentation of achievements, appearance, and captions. Similarly, Aztari, Wirman, and Yozani (2024) and Suryatmaja and Astawa (2022) discuss the use of social media as a medium for developing personal branding. Thus, digital portfolios and social media can provide complementary spaces for students to communicate their professional identity before entering the labor market.

Although previous studies have examined digital portfolios, social media, personal branding, and employability, research specifically focusing on students in Beauty and Makeup education remains limited. Girard and Pinar (2021) examined students' perceptions of personal-branding efforts in relation to social-media use and demographic characteristics, while Trang et al. (2024) investigated Generation Z students' personal brands on social media in the context of job seeking. Vázquez Ibarra, Valiente García, and López Espinosa (2026) further showed the relevance of personal branding as an employability strategy among university students. However, these studies do not specifically focus on students in Beauty and Makeup education and their

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perceptions of digital portfolios as a medium for professional self-presentation and career preparation.

Another important issue is the distinction between students' perceptions and their actual implementation of digital portfolios. A high perception indicates that students recognize the importance of digital portfolios, but it does not necessarily demonstrate that students are already able to develop, organize, manage, and present professional-quality portfolios. Therefore, examining students' perceptions provides an important initial basis for understanding their awareness of digital portfolios, while further practical learning is needed to transform such perceptions into actual competencies.

Based on this background, this study aims to analyze the perceptions of students in the Beauty and Makeup Study Program at Universitas Negeri Padang regarding the importance of digital portfolios in supporting professional self-presentation and career readiness as prospective Makeup Artists. The study is expected to provide empirical information for strengthening learning activities related to digital competence, professional identity, personal branding, and career preparation. The findings may also provide a basis for developing practice-oriented learning activities that enable students to transform positive perceptions of digital portfolios into practical professional competencies.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed a quantitative approach with a descriptive design. The design was selected because the study aimed to describe students' perceptions of the importance of digital portfolios without testing causal or correlational relationships. The research focused on one main variable, namely students' perceptions of digital portfolios as a medium for professional self-presentation and career preparation. The questionnaire indicators were retained according to the research instrument and consisted of exposure, attention, organization, interpretation, information understanding (Pemahaman Informasi; PI), knowledge, cognitive attitude (Sikap Kognitif; SK), affective attitude (Sikap Afektif; SA), and behavioral attitude (Sikap Perilaku; SP).

The population consisted of 55 students enrolled in the D4 Beauty and Makeup Education Study Program, Universitas Negeri Padang, cohort 2022. Total sampling was used by inviting all members of the population to participate, and all 55 students provided complete responses that were included in the statistical analysis.

The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation, variance, skewness, and kurtosis. Respondent Achievement Level (TCR)

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was also used to classify the achievement of each indicator. Descriptive analysis was used to identify the tendency of students' perceptions rather than to infer a causal effect of digital portfolios on career readiness. The interpretation of each indicator follows the operational definitions established in the research instrument.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Data were obtained from 55 valid respondents from the Beauty and Makeup Study Program at Universitas Negeri Padang. The respondents completed a closed-ended questionnaire using a five-point Likert scale. The questionnaire measured students' perceptions of the importance of digital portfolios through nine indicators: exposure, attention, organization, interpretation, information understanding (PI), knowledge, cognitive attitude (SK), affective attitude (SA), and behavioral attitude (SP). The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and Respondent Achievement Level (TCR).

The descriptive statistics showed that all indicators had relatively high mean scores within their respective score ranges. The mean score for exposure was 17.58, attention 17.65, organization 17.51, interpretation 17.65, information understanding (PI) 17.65, knowledge 17.69, cognitive attitude (SK) 8.85, affective attitude (SA) 8.95, and behavioral attitude (SP) 17.85.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive Statistics												
	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean		Std. Deviation	Variance	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	tatistic	td. Error
exposure	55	7	13	20	17.58	.240	1.781	3.174	-.109	.322	-.672	.634
attention	55	8	12	20	17.65	.257	1.907	3.638	-.579	.322	.111	.634
Organization	55	7	13	20	17.51	.270	1.999	3.995	-.267	.322	-.954	.634
Interpretation	55	8	12	20	17.65	.241	1.787	3.193	-.364	.322	.165	.634
PI	55	6	14	20	17.65	.227	1.680	2.823	.159	.322	-1.192	.634
pengetahuan	55	8	12	20	17.69	.254	1.884	3.551	-.430	.322	-.145	.634
SK	55	4	6	10	8.85	.138	1.026	1.053	-.339	.322	-.639	.634
SA	55	5	5	10	8.95	.148	1.096	1.201	-1.116	.322	1.982	.634
SP	55	6	14	20	17.85	.249	1.850	3.423	-.325	.322	-1.090	.634
Valid N (listwise)	55											

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The highest mean score was found on the behavioral attitude (SP) indicator at 17.85, followed by knowledge at 17.69. The lowest mean score was found on the cognitive attitude (SK) indicator at 8.85. However, the mean scores cannot be directly compared across all indicators because SK and SA have a maximum score of 10, whereas the other indicators have a maximum score of 20. Therefore, the interpretation of achievement levels is more appropriately based on the TCR classification.

The standard deviation values ranged from 1.026 to 1.999, indicating that the respondents' answers were relatively concentrated around their respective means. Most indicators showed negative skewness, indicating a tendency for responses to be concentrated toward the higher end of the score distribution. The PI indicator showed a slightly positive skewness value of 0.159. These descriptive statistics indicate a generally positive tendency in students' responses.

The TCR analysis showed that all nine indicators were categorized as high. This finding indicates that students generally provided positive assessments of all aspects measured in the research instrument. The high results on exposure, attention, organization, and interpretation suggest that students have encountered information about digital portfolios and tend to pay attention to, organize, and interpret information related to their usefulness.

The information understanding (PI) and knowledge indicators were also categorized as high. This indicates that students demonstrated favorable responses toward understanding and knowledge related to digital portfolios. The findings are relevant to previous research suggesting that digital portfolios can support students' autonomy and digital competence by encouraging them to collect, organize, and reflect on evidence of learning (Mogas et al., 2023).

The cognitive attitude (SK), affective attitude (SA), and behavioral attitude (SP) indicators also reached the high category. These findings indicate that respondents generally demonstrated favorable cognitive, affective, and behavioral perceptions toward digital portfolios. Nevertheless, the results should be interpreted as evidence of students' perceptions rather than direct evidence of actual digital portfolio implementation or improved employment outcomes. The descriptive research design does not test causal relationships between digital portfolios and career readiness.

Thus, Table 1 supports the conclusion that respondents' perceptions tended toward the upper part of the available score ranges. The TCR classification in Table 2 is used as the primary basis for determining the achievement category of each indicator.

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Table 2 Respondent Achievement Level (TCR) for Perception Indicators



Based on the TCR calculation presented in Table 2, all research indicators were categorized as high. This result indicates that respondents generally provided positive assessments of the aspects measured in the questionnaire. The exposure indicator reflects students' access to information, while attention, organization, and interpretation describe how information is processed. The remaining indicators reflect the dimensions represented by PI, knowledge, SK, SA, and SP in the research instrument.

The high achievement across exposure, attention, organization, and interpretation suggests that students not only encounter information about digital portfolios but also attend to, organize, and assign meaning to that information. This is consistent with the view that digital environments can become part of students' learning ecologies and professional development (Bruguera et al., 2022).

The PI and knowledge indicators were also categorized as high. This indicates that respondents demonstrated favorable responses on the aspects represented by these indicators. Digital portfolios can support the documentation of learning outcomes and digital competence, making them relevant to students' preparation for professional contexts (Mogas et al., 2023).

Overall, the TCR results indicate that none of the measured indicators fell into the low or moderate categories. Nevertheless, the result should be interpreted as a perception level rather than proof of actual portfolio implementation or improved employment outcomes. This distinction is important in a descriptive study because perception and behavior are related but

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not identical constructs.

DISCUSSION

The findings indicate that students in the Beauty and Makeup Study Program at Universitas Negeri Padang have generally high perceptions of the importance of digital portfolios for professional self-presentation and career preparation. All nine indicators reached the high category based on the TCR analysis. This finding is consistent with Jaidamrong and Mahapoonyanont (2024), who reported that e-portfolios can support the documentation of achievements, competency presentation, and professional development among higher education students. The findings therefore indicate that students recognize digital portfolios as relevant tools for documenting and presenting competencies.

The high achievement on the exposure indicator suggests that students have encountered information related to digital portfolios. Exposure is an important initial component of perception because students need to encounter information before they can pay attention to, organize, and interpret it. Bruguera, Guitert, and Romeu (2022) explain that social media can form part of students' learning ecologies and provide opportunities for accessing information and observing professional practices in digital environments. In the context of Beauty and Makeup education, exposure to digital portfolios and professional makeup content may help students recognize how their competencies can be presented in digital environments.

The high results for attention, organization, and interpretation indicate that students do not merely encounter information about digital portfolios but also process the information before developing their perceptions. This finding is consistent with Nisa, Hasna, and Yarni (2023), who explain perception as a process involving the selection, organization, and interpretation of information. Bruguera, Guitert, and Romeu (2019) also highlight the role of social media in professional development and learning contexts. Therefore, students' positive perceptions may reflect their growing awareness of the professional value of digital media.

The high level of information understanding (PI) and knowledge indicates that students have favorable responses toward the informational and knowledge dimensions measured in the study. Mogas, Cea Álvarez, and Pazos-Justo (2023) found that digital portfolios can contribute to students' autonomy and digital competence. Digital portfolios encourage students to collect, organize, and reflect on evidence of learning. For Beauty and Makeup students, this function is particularly relevant because practical competencies can be documented through photographs, videos, and other digital artifacts.

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The cognitive attitude, affective attitude, and behavioral attitude indicators were also categorized as high. These results indicate that students generally have favorable beliefs, feelings, and behavioral tendencies toward digital portfolios. However, the high scores should be interpreted carefully because the study measures perceptions rather than actual portfolio quality or frequency of use. A student may recognize the importance of a digital portfolio without necessarily having the skills to develop and manage one professionally.

The role of digital portfolios in professional identity development is supported by Torres and McKinley (2023), who explain that e-portfolios provide a space for students to assemble digital artifacts and develop professional identity. Mgarbi, Chkouri, and Tahiri (2022) also discuss e-portfolio approaches as a means of supporting students' professional insertion. These findings are particularly relevant to prospective Makeup Artists because their professional competencies are strongly visual and need to be demonstrated through concrete examples of work.

For prospective Makeup Artists, digital documentation can provide evidence of makeup techniques, finished looks, styling, creativity, and professional development. Photographs and videos can help students communicate the range and quality of their work to potential clients, collaborators, and employers. In this respect, digital portfolios can function as more than academic documentation; they can become part of students' professional self-presentation. This interpretation is also consistent with research on social media personal branding, including Aztari, Wirman, and Yozani (2024) and Suryatmaja and Astawa (2022).

The findings are further related to personal branding. Gorbatov, Khapova, and Lysova (2019) found that personal branding is associated with career success, while Yusanda, Darmastuti, and Huwae (2021) showed that Instagram can be used by university students to construct personal branding through the presentation of achievements, appearance, and captions. Nandira and Yanti (2024) similarly found that Instagram Stories can support students' personal branding when the content reflects personality and values. In addition, Gorbatov, Khapova, Oostrom, and Lysova (2021) emphasize the importance of structured personal brand equity in professional contexts, while Salma, Nursanti, and Utamidewi (2024) highlight the use of LinkedIn personal branding for students' career development.

These findings suggest that a digital portfolio can become one component of a broader professional self-presentation strategy. However, the presence of a positive perception does not automatically indicate that students have implemented effective personal branding strategies. Professional self-presentation requires not only attractive visual content but also the ability to select relevant evidence, organize information, communicate competencies clearly, and maintain

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consistency across digital platforms.

An important finding that requires careful interpretation is that the highest mean score was found on behavioral attitude (SP), while the lowest mean score was found on cognitive attitude (SK). Nevertheless, the difference should not be interpreted simply because the indicators have different maximum scores. The SK and SA indicators have a maximum score of 10, while the other indicators have a maximum score of 20. Therefore, the TCR categories provide a more appropriate basis for comparison. Although SK and SA remain in the high category, their results can be considered an area for further instructional attention, particularly in strengthening students' understanding of the strategic value of digital portfolios.

The findings should also not be interpreted as evidence that digital portfolios directly increase career readiness. The present study uses a descriptive design and focuses on students' perceptions rather than causal relationships. Gorbatov, Oostrom, and Khapova (2024) indicate that personal branding is associated with employability, but employability can also be influenced by other factors. Räty et al. (2020) similarly discuss perceived employability in relation to students' perceptions of their capabilities. García-Aracil, Monteiro, and Almeida (2021) emphasize that students' perceptions of their preparedness for transition to work are an important component of understanding career preparation.

Therefore, the practical implication of the findings is not simply to encourage students to create digital portfolios, but to provide opportunities for students to practice developing and managing them. Lecturers can integrate digital portfolio development into practice-oriented assignments by requiring students to document makeup works, select appropriate photographs or videos, organize portfolio sections, write descriptions of competencies, and present their work through appropriate digital platforms. Through repeated practice, students may be able to transform their positive perceptions into practical digital and professional competencies.

Overall, the findings strengthen the argument that digital portfolios are relevant to Beauty and Makeup education, particularly as a medium for documenting competencies, developing professional identity, and supporting self-presentation. However, the main contribution of this study is evidence of students' positive perceptions rather than evidence of a direct effect on career readiness. Future studies should therefore examine actual digital portfolio implementation, the quality of portfolios produced by students, digital competency, and the relationship between portfolio use and career-related outcomes.

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CONCLUSION

` This study demonstrates that students in the Beauty and Makeup Study Program at Universitas Negeri Padang have high perceptions of the importance of digital portfolios in supporting professional self-presentation and career preparation as prospective Makeup Artists. The TCR results show high achievement across exposure, attention, organization, interpretation, information understanding (PI), knowledge, cognitive attitude (SK), affective attitude (SA), and behavioral attitude (SP). The descriptive statistics also show that responses tend to concentrate toward the upper part of the respective score ranges.

The findings indicate that students recognize the relevance of digital portfolios for documenting competencies, presenting professional identity, and supporting self-promotion. However, high perception should not be equated with optimal implementation or actual career outcomes. Therefore, learning activities should provide more practice in developing, organizing, managing, and presenting digital portfolios so that students can translate positive perceptions into practical digital and professional competencies.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the research findings, the following recommendations are proposed:

- **For the Study Program:**

The Beauty and Makeup Study Program is encouraged to strengthen learning activities related to digital portfolios, particularly in developing, organizing, managing, and presenting students' work through digital platforms. This can help students transform their positive perceptions of digital portfolios into practical competencies that support self-promotion and professional identity development as prospective *Make Up Artists*.

- **For Lecturers:**

Lecturers are encouraged to integrate digital portfolio development into relevant learning activities through practice-oriented assignments. Students can be guided to document their makeup work, organize their portfolios systematically, and present their competencies through appropriate digital platforms so that portfolios can function not only as academic documentation but also as professional promotional media.

- **For Students:**

Students are encouraged to actively develop and manage their digital portfolios by consistently documenting their makeup works, improving the quality of digital presentations, and utilizing social media and other digital platforms to showcase their

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competencies. This effort is expected to strengthen students' personal branding, self-promotion, and career readiness as prospective *Make Up Artists*.

- **For Future Researchers:** Future research is recommended to examine factors that influence students' perceptions and utilization of digital portfolios. Further studies may also employ different research designs, larger populations, or additional variables to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of the role of digital portfolios in students' professional development and career readiness.

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