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Digital Leadership, Learning Agility, And Employability Skills: The Role Of Self-Efficacy Among Stie Aprin Students

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Abstract

This study examines the relationships among digital leadership, learning agility, self-efficacy, and employability skills among students at STIE APRIN. The study focuses on self-efficacy as a psychological factor that may strengthen students' ability to respond to digital transformation and changing workplace demands. A quantitative approach was employed using a survey of STIE APRIN students. Data were collected through structured questionnaires measuring digital leadership, learning agility, self-efficacy, and employability skills. The data were analyzed using statistical procedures to examine the relationships among the variables and the role of self-efficacy. The findings are expected to provide empirical evidence regarding how leadership exposure and students' learning adaptability contribute to employability skills, particularly through self-efficacy. The study contributes to the development of student competencies relevant to increasingly dynamic and technology-driven work environments.

Keywords: *Digital Leadership; Learning Agility; Self-Efficacy; Employability Skills.*

INTRODUCTION

The rapid development of digital technology has transformed the nature of work, organizational practices, and the competencies required of university graduates. Digitalization has created new opportunities for organizations while simultaneously increasing the complexity of professional environments. Students are therefore expected not only to possess disciplinary knowledge but also to demonstrate adaptability, confidence, continuous learning capacity, and the ability to utilize digital technologies effectively. In this context, employability skills have become increasingly important because graduates must be prepared to respond to changing organizational expectations and dynamic labor-market conditions. The increasing integration of digital technologies into organizational activities also requires educational institutions to reconsider how students develop competencies that connect academic learning with workplace demands.

The transformation toward digitally oriented organizations has also changed the meaning of leadership. Digital leadership emphasizes the capacity to utilize digital technologies, encourage innovation, facilitate collaboration, and respond to

technological change. Although digital leadership is commonly discussed within organizational settings, its implications are also relevant to higher education because students are increasingly exposed to digital learning environments, collaborative technologies, and technology-mediated communication. The digital transformation of business activities demonstrates how technology can influence consumer behavior, organizational processes, and strategic decision-making (Dasmadi & Hartono, 2026). Consequently, students need to develop competencies that enable them to operate effectively within environments characterized by technological change and digital interaction.

In addition to digital leadership, learning agility represents an important competency for students facing uncertain and rapidly changing environments. Learning agility refers to an individual's capacity to learn from experience, adapt to new situations, acquire new knowledge, and apply learning to unfamiliar problems. In higher education, students with greater learning agility may be better prepared to adjust to changes in technology, learning methods, and professional requirements. The transition toward Management 5.0 further emphasizes the importance of innovation, sustainability, and adaptive capabilities in responding to environmental and social changes (Nawawi et al., 2024). Thus, the development of learning agility is increasingly relevant for preparing students for workplaces in which continuous learning and adaptation are required.

The importance of digital competence is also reflected in the increasing role of technology in financial and economic decision-making. Djamin et al. (2026) examined financial technology literacy and behavioral bias in relation to Generation Z investment decisions in the digital economy era. Their study highlights the relevance of digital-era competencies in shaping individual decision-making. Similarly, Djamin (2024) discussed the transformation of human resource management through artificial intelligence, illustrating how technological developments are influencing contemporary HRM practices. These developments suggest that students entering the workforce need competencies that extend beyond technical knowledge, including adaptability, confidence in dealing with technology, and readiness to acquire new skills.

One psychological factor that may connect students' learning experiences and their ability to develop employability skills is self-efficacy. Self-efficacy refers to an individual's belief in their capability to organize and execute actions required to achieve particular goals. Students with stronger self-efficacy may be more willing to engage in challenging learning activities, persist when facing difficulties, and apply acquired knowledge to unfamiliar situations. In the context of employability, such beliefs may influence students' willingness to develop competencies, communicate effectively, solve problems, and adapt to changing workplace requirements. The relevance of psychological and organizational factors in contemporary human resource management is also reflected in research examining employee well-being, sustainable performance, organizational commitment, and job satisfaction (Hadi et al., 2026; Nawawi et al., 2025).

The relationship between digital leadership, learning agility, self-efficacy, and employability skills can also be understood within the broader transformation of human resource management. The emergence of artificial intelligence and digital HRM has

increased the need for organizations and individuals to adapt to technology-driven work processes. Dasmadi (2023) discussed the application of machine learning to trends in digital HRM, while Djamin (2024) highlighted AI-based transformation in human resource management. These developments indicate that future graduates will enter professional environments in which technological literacy and adaptive learning are increasingly intertwined with conventional professional competencies. Therefore, higher education needs to facilitate not only knowledge acquisition but also students' confidence and capacity to learn continuously.

Previous studies have examined digital transformation, technology adoption, human resource management, sustainability, and individual decision-making from different perspectives. For example, Dasmadi et al. (2024) examined maqasid shariah and organizational performance through a systematic literature review, while Nawawi et al. (2024) discussed innovation strategies for environmental and social sustainability in the Management 5.0 era. Other studies have addressed technology-mediated business practices (Dasmadi & Hartono, 2026), sustainable human resource management (Nawawi et al., 2025), and digital HRM transformation (Djamin, 2024). However, these studies primarily focus on organizations, employees, consumers, or specific decision-making contexts. There remains a need for empirical research that integrates digital leadership, learning agility, self-efficacy, and employability skills within the higher-education context, particularly among students preparing to enter the labor market.

This gap is particularly relevant for students at STIE APRIN, who are preparing for careers in an increasingly digital and competitive business environment. Understanding how students' perceptions of digital leadership and their learning agility relate to employability skills may provide useful evidence for strengthening higher-education strategies. Furthermore, examining the role of self-efficacy can provide a more comprehensive explanation of how students transform learning experiences and adaptive capabilities into competencies relevant to employment.

Therefore, this study examines the relationships among digital leadership, learning agility, self-efficacy, and employability skills among STIE APRIN students. Specifically, the study investigates whether digital leadership and learning agility are associated with students' employability skills and examines the role of self-efficacy within these relationships. By integrating technological, behavioral, and psychological perspectives, this study seeks to contribute empirical evidence to the discussion of graduate employability in the digital era. The findings are expected to provide implications for higher-education institutions in designing learning experiences, leadership practices, and competency-development programs that strengthen students' readiness for increasingly dynamic and technology-driven workplaces.

METHODS

This study employed a quantitative research approach using a cross-sectional survey design. The design was selected because the study aimed to examine the relationships among digital leadership, learning agility, self-efficacy, and employability skills among students at STIE APRIN. A quantitative design enables the relationships

among latent constructs to be examined objectively through standardized measurement and statistical analysis. Recent studies investigating employability among university students have similarly employed quantitative survey designs and structural equation modeling to examine the relationships among digital competencies, self-efficacy, and employability (Zhan et al., 2024). In addition, recent research on Indonesian university students has emphasized the relevance of digital leadership competencies within higher education (Suryana et al., 2026).

The population of this study comprised active undergraduate students enrolled at STIE APRIN. The respondents were selected based on the following criteria: (1) being an active STIE APRIN student, (2) having participated in learning activities involving digital technologies, and (3) being willing to complete the research questionnaire voluntarily. A purposive sampling technique was employed because respondents needed to meet specific characteristics relevant to the research objectives.

The sample size was determined by considering the requirements of the structural model and the number of indicators used to measure the constructs. This approach is consistent with recent empirical studies employing PLS-SEM to investigate employability and digital competencies among students and graduates (Imjai et al., 2025). The final number of valid respondents was determined after screening the completed questionnaires for completeness and consistency.

Primary data were collected using a structured online questionnaire. All constructs were measured using multiple indicators adapted from established theoretical and empirical literature and adjusted to the higher-education context. The questionnaire employed a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. Before the main survey, the questionnaire was reviewed to ensure clarity, relevance, and suitability of the items for the target respondents.

Digital leadership was measured through indicators reflecting students' exposure to and perception of digital-oriented leadership practices, including digital communication, technology utilization, innovation, collaboration, and adaptability. Learning agility was measured through indicators representing students' ability to learn from experience, adapt to new situations, seek new knowledge, and apply learning to unfamiliar conditions. Self-efficacy was assessed through students' perceived confidence in performing academic and work-related tasks, overcoming challenges, and achieving expected outcomes. Employability skills were measured through indicators related to communication, teamwork, problem-solving, adaptability, digital competence, and readiness to perform effectively in professional environments.

The selection of these constructs is supported by recent research showing that digital leadership capability and self-efficacy are relevant to employability among university students. Zhan et al. (2024), for example, examined 206 working undergraduates in Indonesia using questionnaires and structural equation modeling and specifically incorporated self-efficacy and digital leadership capability into an employability model.

The collected data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). PLS-SEM was selected because the research model

involves several latent constructs and examines both direct and indirect relationships among variables. Recent methodological literature continues to demonstrate the application of PLS-SEM for complex business and management models, including advanced analyses using SmartPLS (Sarstedt et al., 2024).

The analysis consisted of two main stages: evaluation of the measurement model and evaluation of the structural model. The measurement model was assessed through indicator reliability, internal consistency reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity. Indicator loadings of ≥ 0.70 were considered acceptable, while Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values of ≥ 0.50 were used to establish convergent validity. Internal consistency was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha and Composite Reliability, with values of ≥ 0.70 considered acceptable. Discriminant validity was assessed using the Heterotrait–Monotrait (HTMT) ratio.

The structural model was subsequently evaluated by examining the coefficient of determination (R^2), effect size (f^2), predictive relevance (Q^2), and path coefficients. Hypothesis testing was conducted using bootstrapping with 5,000 resamples. The significance of the hypothesized relationships was determined based on the resulting t-statistics and p-values, with a significance level of 5% ($p < 0.05$). Direct effects of digital leadership and learning agility on self-efficacy and employability skills were examined, while the indirect effect through self-efficacy was evaluated to determine its potential mediating role.

This analytical procedure is consistent with recent PLS-SEM applications examining employability and digital competencies. For example, contemporary research on digital competence and learning agility has used PLS-SEM to examine their predictive relationships with self-perceived employability, while recent research on digital work readiness has similarly applied PLS-SEM to investigate the mediating role of digital self-efficacy (Imjai et al., 2025; Riyadho, 2026).

Participation in the study was voluntary. Respondents were informed about the general purpose of the research before completing the questionnaire and were not required to provide personally identifying information beyond what was necessary for research administration. The collected data were used exclusively for academic purposes, and respondents were allowed to discontinue their participation at any time. Data confidentiality and responsible handling of participant information were maintained throughout the research process.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Respondent Characteristics and Descriptive Results

The illustrative analysis involved 186 valid responses from students of STIE APRIN. The respondents consisted of 104 female students (55.91%) and 82 male students (44.09%). In terms of academic level, 58 respondents (31.18%) were first-year students, 49 (26.34%) were second-year students, 43 (23.12%) were third-year students, and 36 (19.36%) were final-year students. The average respondent age was approximately 21.4 years, indicating that the sample predominantly represented students who were approaching the transition from higher education to employment.

The descriptive analysis indicated relatively favorable perceptions across all constructs. Digital leadership obtained a mean score of 3.86, learning agility 3.91, self-efficacy 3.88, and employability skills 3.94 on a five-point Likert scale. These descriptive results suggest that respondents generally perceived themselves as capable of adapting to digital environments, learning from new experiences, and performing tasks associated with future employment. Similar patterns have been observed among undergraduate students, where learning agility and self-efficacy have been associated with students' ability to adapt to academic challenges and maintain positive educational outcomes (Huang & Kou, 2025).

The relatively high learning-agility score is also consistent with recent evidence that university students' learning agility can be influenced by self-efficacy and self-leadership. Li and Chalermvongsavej (2025) reported that self-efficacy was a significant direct predictor of learning agility among undergraduate students. Therefore, the descriptive pattern observed in the present study provides an initial indication that students' confidence and adaptability may constitute important resources for developing employment-related competencies.

Measurement Model Evaluation

The measurement model was evaluated before testing the structural relationships. In the illustrative model, the standardized outer loadings ranged from 0.724 to 0.891, indicating that the indicators adequately represented their respective latent constructs. Cronbach's alpha values ranged from 0.842 to 0.918, while Composite Reliability values ranged from 0.883 to 0.936. All constructs therefore exceeded the commonly accepted threshold of 0.70.

The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values were 0.612 for digital leadership, 0.647 for learning agility, 0.671 for self-efficacy, and 0.638 for employability skills. These values indicate satisfactory convergent validity because each construct explained more than half of the variance of its indicators. The HTMT values in the illustrative analysis ranged from 0.421 to 0.823, remaining below the conservative threshold of 0.90.

These results indicate that the measurement instruments demonstrated acceptable reliability and validity. The findings are particularly relevant because recent research among Indonesian students has demonstrated the usefulness of PLS-SEM for examining relationships involving self-efficacy, digital competence, and career-related outcomes. For example, Fitria et al. (2025), using 402 Indonesian university students, found a positive and significant relationship between self-efficacy and digital competence. This supports the conceptual distinction between students' confidence in performing tasks and their ability to translate that confidence into digital competencies.

Structural Model and Hypothesis Testing

The illustrative structural model produced an R^2 value of 0.472 for self-efficacy and 0.681 for employability skills. This indicates that digital leadership and learning agility jointly explained approximately 47.2% of the variance in self-efficacy, while digital leadership, learning agility, and self-efficacy collectively explained approximately 68.1%

of the variance in employability skills. The model therefore provides a substantial explanatory basis for understanding the proposed relationships among the variables.

The first hypothesis examined the relationship between digital leadership and self-efficacy. The illustrative results indicated a positive and significant path ($\beta = 0.286$, $t = 3.742$, $p < 0.001$). This suggests that students who perceive stronger digital leadership practices tend to report greater confidence in their ability to deal with academic and technology-related challenges. The finding is consistent with the broader argument that digital leadership competencies are increasingly relevant to Indonesian university students in the Fourth Industrial Revolution. Suryana et al. (2026) specifically identified digital leadership competencies as an emerging area of importance within Indonesian higher education.

The second hypothesis tested the effect of learning agility on self-efficacy. The illustrative analysis showed a positive and significant relationship ($\beta = 0.418$, $t = 5.816$, $p < 0.001$). This was the strongest predictor of self-efficacy in the proposed model. The result is theoretically reasonable because students who are capable of learning from experience and adapting to unfamiliar situations may develop stronger beliefs in their ability to successfully manage subsequent challenges. Li and Chalermvongsavej (2025) similarly found that self-efficacy significantly predicted learning agility among undergraduate students, suggesting a potentially reciprocal relationship between these constructs.

The third hypothesis concerned the direct relationship between digital leadership and employability skills. The illustrative results showed a positive and significant coefficient ($\beta = 0.231$, $t = 2.984$, $p = 0.003$). This indicates that digital leadership may contribute to employability by exposing students to behaviors involving digital communication, collaboration, innovation, and adaptation. A recent study of Indonesian university students also reported that digital leadership orientation was positively associated with digital work readiness, particularly through communication, collaboration, and technology-related capabilities.

Learning Agility, Self-Efficacy, and Employability Skills

The fourth hypothesis examined the direct effect of learning agility on employability skills. The illustrative result was positive and significant ($\beta = 0.327$, $t = 4.291$, $p < 0.001$). Students who can learn quickly, reflect on previous experiences, and adapt to new situations may therefore possess stronger competencies for dealing with workplace requirements. This finding is consistent with Rahmawati and Muchsini (2024), who found that learning agility significantly affected work readiness and that its dimensions, including people agility, result agility, mental agility, and change agility, contributed to readiness for employment.

The fifth hypothesis tested the relationship between self-efficacy and employability skills. The illustrative results indicated the strongest direct relationship in the model ($\beta = 0.452$, $t = 6.973$, $p < 0.001$). This suggests that students' confidence in their ability to perform tasks may play an important role in transforming knowledge and adaptive learning capabilities into employment-related competencies. The result is

compatible with recent evidence from Indonesian vocational education, where self-efficacy significantly influenced career choice and mediated the relationship between digital competence and career-related outcomes (2025).

The mediating analysis further produced an illustrative indirect effect of digital leadership on employability skills through self-efficacy of $\beta = 0.129$ ($t = 2.874$, $p = 0.004$). The indirect effect of learning agility on employability skills through self-efficacy was $\beta = 0.189$ ($t = 4.102$, $p < 0.001$). These results indicate a potential mediating mechanism in which digital leadership and learning agility strengthen students' self-efficacy, which subsequently contributes to employability skills. This interpretation is consistent with recent research demonstrating that psychological confidence can function as an important mechanism connecting digital competencies with career-related outcomes.

Discussion and Theoretical Implications

Overall, the illustrative findings suggest that employability should not be understood exclusively as a collection of technical skills. Rather, employability may emerge from the interaction between environmental exposure, adaptive learning capabilities, and psychological resources. Digital leadership provides a contextual dimension, learning agility represents an adaptive capability, while self-efficacy represents an internal psychological mechanism. Their integration offers a more comprehensive explanation of how students prepare for employment in digitally transformed workplaces (Ahmad et al., 2026; Khoiruman et al., 2026).

The importance of this integrated perspective is reinforced by recent research on digital employability. Kholifah et al. (2025), for example, found that digital communication and collaboration played an important mediating role in the development of digital employability skills among Indonesian vocational graduates. Their findings emphasize that employability in a digital labor market involves more than isolated technical abilities and requires interaction, collaboration, communication, and problem-solving capabilities (Khoiruman & Irawan., 2026).

Similarly, Musa et al. (2025) found that internships were associated with perceived development in graduate employability, soft skills, communication, adaptability, collaboration, and digital competence among Indonesian undergraduate students. This suggests that employability development is likely to be strengthened when students are provided with opportunities to apply adaptive and digital competencies in authentic settings.

The present model also has implications for higher education. Rather than treating employability as an outcome that develops automatically at the end of a degree program, institutions may consider integrating digital leadership experiences, adaptive learning activities, collaborative projects, and self-efficacy-building activities throughout the curriculum. This approach is particularly relevant because research among technical and vocational undergraduates has shown that students can demonstrate relatively advanced digital competence, while institutions still need to connect such competence with graduate employability. Malek et al. (2025) reported generally advanced digital

competence among 344 Malaysian technical and vocational undergraduates and highlighted its relevance to graduate employability.

Taken together, the illustrative findings support a model in which digital leadership and learning agility are associated with employability skills both directly and indirectly through self-efficacy. However, these numerical findings should be treated only as a model for presentation, not as empirical evidence from STIE APRIN until they are replaced with the actual SmartPLS output. The final manuscript should report the actual respondent number, outer loadings, Cronbach's alpha, Composite Reliability, AVE, HTMT, R^2, f^2, Q^2, path coefficients, t-statistics, p-values, confidence intervals, and indirect effects obtained from the real dataset.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that digital leadership, learning agility, and self-efficacy constitute interconnected factors in understanding the development of employability skills among STIE APRIN students. Digital leadership provides a supportive context for developing students' digital awareness and adaptability, while learning agility strengthens their capacity to acquire knowledge and respond to changing situations. Self-efficacy plays an important role in connecting these capabilities with students' perceived readiness to perform academic and work-related tasks. The proposed model therefore highlights the importance of integrating digital leadership experiences, adaptive learning activities, and self-efficacy development within higher education. These findings provide practical implications for STIE APRIN in designing learning strategies and competency-development programs that prepare students for increasingly dynamic and technology-driven workplaces. However, the numerical results presented in this manuscript should be replaced with the actual empirical findings before publication.

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