

Employee Advocacy in The Digital Era: The Roles of Employer Branding and EVP in Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

This study examined whether employer branding (EB) and employee value proposition (EVP) increase employee advocacy (EA) among teaching and non-teaching staff in an Indonesian education network, and whether digital literacy (DL) strengthens these relationships in a work context where communication and advocacy are increasingly mediated by digital platforms. A cross-sectional survey was administered to 320 employees and analyzed using PLS-SEM with SmartPLS 4.1.1.6, including measurement model evaluation (reliability and validity) and structural model testing with interaction terms to assess moderation effects. EB and EVP showed positive and significant effects on EA, indicating that a compelling employer image and a strong employment value offering are associated with stronger employee willingness to advocate for the organization. In contrast, DL did not significantly moderate the EB–EA and EVP–EA relationships, suggesting that advocacy in this setting is shaped more by motivational and relational factors than by employees’ perceived digital capability. The study extends the employee advocacy literature by empirically positioning EA as an outward-facing behavioral outcome of EB and EVP in an emerging-economy education context, while also providing evidence that digital literacy despite high levels among respondents may not function as a meaningful boundary condition for these relationships.

Keywords: employer branding; employee value proposition; employee advocacy; digital literacy; PLS-SEM

INTRODUCTION

Organizations increasingly compete not only in product and service markets but also in talent markets, where skill shortages, higher mobility, and rising expectations push employers to differentiate themselves beyond pay and benefits (Bussin & Mouton, 2019; Azhar et al., 2024). This competition is now more evident in digitally saturated environments in which organizational reputations are shaped by information flows that employees and job seekers can quickly access, share, and contest. As a result, the “employer brand” is no longer controlled solely by corporate communications; it is continuously (re)constructed through employee narratives, peer-to-peer exchanges, and social media conversations (Cervellon & Lirio, 2017).

This shift creates a practical tension: organizations invest heavily in employer branding messages to project an attractive workplace identity, yet employees’ online and offline narratives can either amplify or undermine that identity. When employees perceive a mismatch between communicated promises and lived experience, credibility erodes—making it harder for organizations to attract and retain talent and, critically, to secure employees’ voluntary support in public-facing spaces. In other words, in the current environment, employer branding effectiveness is increasingly tested not only by recruitment outcomes but

also by whether employees are willing to “stand behind” the organization in ways that are visible to external audiences.

Employer branding refers to the set of functional, economic, and psychological benefits associated with employment and identified with the employing organization. Conceptually, employer branding operates as an external promise to potential applicants and an internal mechanism shaping employees’ identification and attachment. However, employer branding is not merely promotional; its influence depends on internal consistency whether employees experience a coherent reality behind the brand promise. When the promise lacks credibility, employees may withhold support, remain silent, or even express dissatisfaction through digital channels, thereby weakening the organization’s reputational capital.

Closely linked to employer branding is the employee value proposition (EVP) the bundle of rewards and experiences offered in exchange for employees’ contribution. EVP typically includes compensation and benefits, development opportunities, career prospects, work-life support, leadership quality, and the social or meaningful aspects of work (Bronlet et al., 2024). From a social exchange perspective, employees assess whether the organization delivers valued resources and fair treatment; favourable exchanges encourage reciprocal responses in attitudes and behaviours. Hence, EVP functions not only as an attraction tool but also as an internal signal of organizational commitment that shapes employees’ motivation to contribute beyond formal role requirements.

In the digital era, a key outward-facing behavioural outcome of these perceptions is employee advocacy. Employee advocacy refers to employees’ voluntary actions in recommending, defending, or positively representing their organization to external audiences, including through social and professional networking platforms. Such advocacy can be perceived as more authentic than formal corporate messaging because it is attached to employees’ personal credibility and social networks (Thelen & Formanchuk, 2022). Industry reports also suggest that organizations increasingly view advocacy programs as a way to extend brand reach and trust via employee-driven content (Apostle Social, 2024; DSMN8, 2025). Yet the same digital transparency that enables advocacy also raises the stakes: employees can disengage, stay silent, or become critical when employer promises are perceived as overstated or disconnected from daily experience (Cervellon & Lirio, 2017). This is particularly consequential in-service sectors where trust and reputation depend heavily on human capital and interpersonal credibility.

These dynamics are further intensified by workforce changes and shifting expectations. Contemporary insights indicate that younger and digitally immersed cohorts often emphasize authenticity, growth, and alignment between personal values and organizational practices (Deloitte, 2025). Under such conditions, employer branding and EVP are filtered through employees’ expectations and then communicated sometimes rapidly through digital channels. This raises a practical question: when do positive internal perceptions translate into visible external advocacy?

A theoretically plausible boundary condition is digital literacy, conceptualized here as employees’ capability to use digital technologies effectively and responsibly for accessing information, evaluating credibility, and communicating or creating content in digital spaces. While employer branding and EVP may shape how employees evaluate the organization, digital literacy may shape whether and how those evaluations are expressed as advocacy.

Employees with higher digital literacy may be more active in online environments where advocacy is visible, more capable of producing persuasive content, and better able to navigate platform norms and professional identity management. Conversely, employees with lower digital literacy may feel less confident in digital expression and therefore less likely to advocate, even when perceptions are positive. At the same time, digitally capable employees may also be more discerning and cautious, advocating only when brand claims align with lived experience. These competing mechanisms make the moderating role of digital literacy empirically important rather than assumed.

Despite the maturity of employer branding and EVP research, empirical work has often emphasized outcomes such as attraction, engagement, performance, and retention (Bussin & Mouton, 2019), while employee advocacy—an outward-facing behavior with direct reputational implications—has received comparatively less integrated attention. Studies discuss transparency, ethical culture, and communication in relation to advocacy (Thelen & Formanchuk, 2022), but fewer investigations examine advocacy as a downstream outcome of employer branding and EVP simultaneously, particularly in emerging economies and sector-specific contexts where labour market dynamics, institutional norms, and digital communication patterns may differ. Moreover, the role of individual capability specifically digital literacy remains underexplored as a potential boundary condition linking employer branding and EVP to employee advocacy, even though advocacy increasingly occurs in digitally mediated spaces.

The urgency of this research is underscored by several converging factors. First, organizations increasingly recognize employees as critical brand ambassadors, yet lack evidence-based guidance on fostering advocacy. Second, the digital transformation of work has made employee voices more visible and consequential, raising the stakes for understanding what drives positive advocacy. Third, the war for talent in emerging economies like Indonesia requires organizations to optimize all aspects of employee value to attract and retain skilled workers. Fourth, generational shifts in workforce composition mean that younger employees, who are digital natives, have different expectations and communication patterns that organizations must understand. Without systematic research on these dynamics, organizations risk investing in employer branding and EVP without understanding how they translate into advocacy, or assuming digital capability automatically amplifies advocacy when other factors may be more critical.

Accordingly, this study investigates the effects of employer branding (X1) and employee value proposition (X2) on employee advocacy (Y) and tests digital literacy (Z) as a moderator of these relationships. The empirical setting is a large private education network in Indonesia (anonymized to prevent institutional traceability). This context is relevant because education services depend heavily on human capital and relational trust, and employees' narratives can influence stakeholder perceptions and institutional credibility. In addition, education employees routinely engage in digital communication with colleagues, communities, and professional networks, making digital literacy a meaningful capability for understanding how organizational experiences are translated into external advocacy.

METHOD

Research design and data sources

This study employed a quantitative, cross-sectional research design using primary survey data collected from teaching and non-teaching staff in a large private education network in Indonesia (institution name anonymized). Primary data were gathered through an online questionnaire administered to employees who met the study's eligibility requirements. Institutional records were used as secondary data to define the study population: as of 15 January 2026, the organization had 1,588 employees who satisfied the purposive sampling criteria, namely (1) having a tenure of more than one year and (2) using the internet in performing work tasks. Accordingly, the figure of 1,588 represents the effective population (sampling frame) after applying the inclusion criteria, rather than the organization's total headcount.

Population, sampling technique, and sample size

The target population comprised teaching and non-teaching employees within the education network distributed across six Indonesian cities. A purposive sampling approach was applied to ensure respondents were sufficiently exposed to the organizational context and had relevant experience with digitally mediated work practices. Thus, only employees who (1) had worked for more than one year and (2) used the internet in performing work tasks were considered eligible. Based on institutional data, the number of employees meeting these criteria (i.e., the sampling frame) was $N = 1,588$.

To determine the minimum required sample size, the Slovin formula was applied:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + Ne^2}$$

where n is the required sample size, N is the population size, and e is the acceptable error tolerance. Using $N = 1,588$ and $e = 0.05$, the minimum sample size was approximately 320 respondents. This target is also consistent with PLS-SEM guidelines suggesting that adequate samples commonly fall in the 200–400 range and should meet indicator-based heuristics (e.g., 5–10 observations per indicator), depending on model complexity (Hair et al., 2021). Therefore, the final target sample for analysis was set at 320.

Because employees were distributed across six cities with different workforce sizes, the study applied proportional allocation to ensure geographic representation. Specifically, the sample was distributed across cities in proportion to each city's share of the eligible population ($N = 1,588$), so that cities with larger eligible employee counts contributed a larger number of respondents, while smaller populated cities contributed fewer respondents. This approach helps maintain the sample's representativeness with respect to the organizational population structure and reduces the risk that results are disproportionately influenced by any single location.

Measurement instrument and scale

Data were collected using a structured online questionnaire (Google Form) using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree).

The questionnaire items were adapted and selectively modified from prior studies to ensure they remained conceptually equivalent while fitting the realities of the Indonesian private education context and the focal institution. Specifically, the wording and content were contextualized to (1) keep the questionnaire length reasonable without losing the core

meaning of the original dimensions, (2) strengthen discriminant validity between constructs with overlapping facets by refining emphasis and phrasing (e.g., Employer Branding as external reputation/image versus EVP as experienced, received benefits), and (3) align indicators with the study setting (education sector), respondent characteristics, and current digital/social media practices, which may differ from when the original scales were developed (Bussin & Mouton, 2019; Bronlet et al., 2024; Thelen & Formanchuk, 2022).

Employer Branding (EB) was measured using five items adapted from prior work (e.g., external reputation and perceived employer image). Employee Value Proposition (EVP) was measured using seven items reflecting perceived rewards and work-related benefits received by employees. Employee Advocacy (EA) was measured using four items capturing recommendation and supportive behaviors, including voluntary positive sharing on social media. Digital Literacy (DL) was operationalized as a moderator and measured using a multi-item scale capturing employees' perceived ability to use digital tools, evaluate digital information, and communicate effectively in digital environments

Data analysis technique

Hypotheses were tested using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) in SmartPLS version 4.1.1.6. PLS-SEM was selected because it is appropriate for prediction-oriented models with multiple constructs and interaction effects (Hair et al., 2021). The analysis followed standard evaluation stages: (1) assessment of the measurement (outer) model and (2) assessment of the structural (inner) model.

Measurement model assessment (Outer Model)

The reflective measurement model was evaluated through validity and reliability testing:

a. Indicator reliability (outer loadings)

Outer loadings expected to be ≥ 0.70 .

b. Convergent validity:

Average Variance Extracted (AVE) expected to be ≥ 0.50 , indicating that constructs explain more than half of the variance of their indicators (Hair et al., 2021).

c. Internal consistency reliability:

Cronbach's Alpha (CA) and Composite Reliability (CR) expected to be ≥ 0.70 (Hair et al., 2021).

d. Discriminant validity:

Assessed using the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio of Correlations 2 (HTMT2) ratio (recommended threshold < 0.85 or < 0.90 , depending on construct similarity) and supported by cross-loadings review. HTMT2 is a refined version of HTMT that provides a more accurate and typically more conservative assessment of discriminant validity, because it better accounts for measurement error and potential bias in the original HTMT ratio (Roemer et al., 2021; Vuorikari et al., 2022). As a result, HTMT2 is often preferred when researchers want stronger control against false conclusions about discriminant validity—especially in PLS-SEM settings with reflective measures—therefore it was used in this study.

Structural model assessment (Inner Model)

The structural model was evaluated to determine the predictive power of employer branding (X1), EVP (X2), and the moderation of digital literacy (Z) on employee advocacy (Y). The following criteria were applied (Hair et al., 2021):

a. Coefficient of determination (R^2):

R² values were interpreted using common benchmarks (0.75 strong; 0.50 moderate; 0.25 weak) (Hair et al., 2021).

b. Effect size (f^2)

Effect size (f^2) was used to estimate the substantive contribution of each exogenous construct (EB and EVP) and interaction effects (EB×DL, EVP×DL) to EA. As a rule of thumb, f^2 values of 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35 indicate small, medium, and large effects, respectively (Hair et al., 2021).

c. Predictive relevance (Q^2):

Q^2 was assessed to examine whether the model provides predictive relevance for the endogenous construct. $Q^2 > 0$ indicates that the model has predictive relevance for the endogenous construct (Hair et al., 2021).

d. Model fit

SRMR was reviewed as a descriptive model fit index, where values < 0.08 are commonly interpreted as indicating good fit, while values up to 0.10 may still be considered acceptable (Hair et al., 2021).

e. Variance Inflation Factor (VIF)

Collinearity was assessed using VIF values for the predictor constructs (and interaction terms). As a rule of thumb, $VIF < 5.0$ indicates that collinearity is not a critical issue, and $VIF < 3.0$ – 3.3 reflects a more conservative (preferred) threshold for minimizing collinearity concerns in PLS-SEM (Hair et al., 2021).

Hypothesis testing

Hypotheses were tested using bootstrapping procedures in SmartPLS to estimate the significance of path relationships. Statistical inference relied on:

- Path coefficients (β) to indicate direction and strength of effects,
- t-statistics (critical value > 1.645 for 5% significance, one-tailed), and
- p-values (< 0.05) for hypothesis support.

The moderation hypotheses were examined using interaction terms (EB×DL and EVP×DL) predicting EA, with significance evaluated through the same bootstrapping criteria.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Demographic Information of the Data

Table 1 summarizes the demographic profile of the 320 respondents (teachers and non-teaching staff). The sample was dominated by female respondents (75%), with males (25%). Most respondents were located in Jakarta (57.81%), followed by Tangerang (12.19%), Makassar (8.44%), Bekasi (7.50%), Balikpapan (7.50%), and Palembang (6.56%).

In terms of age, the largest group was 30–45 years (55.31%), followed by 20–29 years (22.50%) and 46–60 years (22.19%). Most respondents had worked for the institution for >1 to 10 years (60.94%), followed by 11–20 years (28.75%), and ≥ 21 years (10.31%).

Regarding roles, the sample consisted of teachers (72.19%) and non-teaching staff (27.81%). Educational background was primarily Bachelor's degree (76.25%), followed by Master's degree (23.44%), with Diploma/Associate degree (0.31%).

Table 1. Demographic information on survey participants

Aspect	Description	Frequency	Ratio (%)
Gender	Male	80	25.00%
	Female	240	75.00%
City	Jakarta	185	57.81%
	Tangerang	39	12.19%
	Bekasi	24	7.50%
	Palembang	21	6.56%
	Balikpapan	24	7.50%
	Makassar	27	8.44%
Age	20 - 29 years	72	22.50%
	30 - 45 years	177	55.31%
	46 - 60 years	71	22.19%
Duration of Employment	> 1 year to 10 years	195	60.94%
	11 - 20 years	92	28.75%
	≥ 21 years	33	10.31%
Role	Teachers	231	72.19%
	Non-Teaching Staff	89	27.81%
Education	Diploma/Associate Degree	1	0.31%
	Bachelor's Degree	244	76.25%
	Master's Degree	75	23.44%
	Doctoral Degree	0	0.00%

Descriptive analytics of variables and indicators

Table 2 presents the descriptive statistics for each indicator and construct. Overall, the results indicate high perceptions across the four study constructs, with construct means above 4.30 (on a 5-point Likert scale), suggesting generally favourable attitudes among employees toward employer branding, EVP, digital literacy, and employee advocacy.

- Employer Branding (EB) showed the highest construct mean (M = 4.495; SD = 0.607). Item means ranged from 4.344 (EB3) to 4.612 (EB2), indicating consistently strong agreement with employer branding statements.
- Employee Value Proposition (EVP) had a construct mean of M = 4.408 (SD = 0.650), with item means ranging from 4.228 (EVP1) to 4.547 (EVP5).
- Digital Literacy (DL) recorded a construct mean of M = 4.381 (SD = 0.643). The lowest item mean across all indicators was DL3 (M = 4.128; SD = 0.782), though it still indicates positive agreement overall.
- Employee Advocacy (EA) also showed a high construct mean (M = 4.475; SD = 0.697). The highest item mean in the entire instrument was EA1 (M = 4.619; SD = 0.569), reflecting strong willingness to advocate.

These patterns suggest that respondents tend to perceive the institution as offering a positive employment image and value proposition, while also reporting high levels of advocacy behaviour and relatively strong digital literacy.

Table 2. Descriptive analytics of variables and indicators

Variables	Item Code	Min	Max	Mean	Standard deviation
Employer Branding	EB1	3	5	4.481	0.607

Variables	Item Code	Min	Max	Mean	Standard deviation
	EB2	2	5	4.612	0.564
	EB3	2	5	4.344	0.681
	EB4	3	5	4.578	0.559
	EB5	3	5	4.459	0.626
	Mean			4.495	0.607
Employee Value Proposition	EVP1	1	5	4.228	0.787
	EVP2	2	5	4.312	0.695
	EVP3	2	5	4.331	0.691
	EVP4	2	5	4.491	0.592
	EVP5	3	5	4.547	0.546
	EVP6	2	5	4.469	0.651
	EVP7	3	5	4.478	0.586
Mean			4.408	0.650	
Digital Literacy	DL1	3	5	4.459	0.595
	DL2	3	5	4.513	0.542
	DL3	1	5	4.128	0.782
	DL4	2	5	4.422	0.652
Mean			4.381	0.643	
Employee Advocacy	EA1	3	5	4.619	0.569
	EA2	1	5	4.572	0.623
	EA3	1	5	4.312	0.86
	EA4	1	5	4.397	0.734
Mean			4.475	0.697	

Outer model assessment

Convergent validity

Convergent validity was assessed using indicator loadings and AVE (Hair Jr. et al., 2021). Based on Table 3, all items met validity requirements (≥ 0.70).

Tabel 3. Outer loadings

Item Code	DL	EA	EVP	EB	Conclusion
DL1	0.844				Valid
DL2	0.878				Valid
DL3	0.702				Valid
DL4	0.760				Valid
EA1		0.885			Valid
EA2		0.915			Valid
EA3		0.830			Valid
EA4		0.840			Valid
EVP1			0.724		Valid
EVP2			0.812		Valid
EVP3			0.794		Valid
EVP4			0.801		Valid
EVP5			0.705		Valid
EVP6			0.706		Valid
EVP7			0.836		Valid
EB1				0.857	Valid

Item Code	DL	EA	EVP	EB	Conclusion
EB2				0.827	Valid
EB3				0.708	Valid
EB4				0.771	Valid
EB5				0.870	Valid

Table 4 further confirms convergent validity because all AVE values exceeded 0.50, indicating that each construct explains more than half of the variance of its indicators.

Table 4. Average Variance Extracted (AVE)

	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability (rho_a)	Composite reliability (rho_c)	Average variance extracted (AVE)	Validity Results
Digital Literacy	0.811	0.835	0.875	0.638	Valid
Employee Advocacy	0.891	0.898	0.924	0.754	Valid
Employee Value Proposition	0.885	0.889	0.910	0.593	Valid
Employer Branding	0.867	0.880	0.904	0.654	Valid

Discriminant validity

Discriminant validity was evaluated using the HTMT2 criterion. As shown in Table 5, all HTMT2 values were well below 0.85, indicating that discriminant validity is established (Roemer et al., 2021). For example, the highest HTMT2 value was between Employer Branding and EVP (0.399), while other inter-construct values were also low (e.g., DL–EA = 0.146).

Table 5. Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio of Correlations (HTMT2)

	EB	EVP	DL
EVP	0.399		
DL	0.228	0.222	
EA	0.280	0.221	0.146

Reliability

Table 5 indicates strong internal consistency. Cronbach’s Alpha values ranged from 0.811 to 0.891, while composite reliability (rho_c) ranged from 0.875 to 0.924, exceeding common thresholds (≥ 0.70) and confirming reliability for all constructs (Hair Jr. et al., 2021).

Inner Model Assessment

Coefficient of determination (R-Square)

Table 6 shows that Employee Advocacy (EA) achieved $R^2 = 0.609$ (R^2 adjusted = 0.603), suggesting a moderate-to-strong explanatory power of the exogenous constructs (Employer Branding, EVP, Digital Literacy, and the interaction) in explaining variance in Employee Advocacy.

Table 6. Coefficient of Determination (R-Square)

	R-square	R-square adjusted
Employee Advocacy	0.609	0.603

Predictive relevance (Q-Square predict)

Predictive relevance was assessed using Q²predict. Table 7 reports Q²predict = 0.583 for Employee Advocacy, which is > 0, indicating predictive relevance (Shmueli, et al., 2019)

Table 7. Predictive relevance (Q-Square)

	Q ² predict	RMSE	MAE
Employee Advocacy	0.583	0.652	0.457

Effect size (f²)

Table 8 reports effect sizes on Employee Advocacy. The results show small effects from Employer Branding (f² = 0.141), EVP (f² = 0.074), and Digital Literacy (f² = 0.027). The moderation effects were very small, with DL × EB (f² = 0.000) and DL × EVP (f² = 0.006). This indicates that while the direct predictors contribute meaningfully, the interaction terms add limited incremental explanatory power.

Table 8. f-square

	DL	EA	EVP	EB	Effect
Digital Literacy		0.027			Small
Employee Advocacy					
Employee Value Proposition		0.074			Small
Employer Branding		0.141			Small to Medium
Digital Literacy x Employer Branding		0.000			Very small
Digital Literacy x Employee Value Proposition		0.006			Very small

Model Fit

Model fit was assessed using the standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) and the normed fit index (NFI), as reported for both the saturated and estimated models in Table 9. The Square Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) = 0.061 for both saturated and estimated models, suggesting an acceptable model fit (commonly SRMR < 0.08).

Table 9. Model Fit

	Saturated model	Estimated model
SRMR	0.061	0.061
NFI	0.847	0.846

The NFI values (0.847–0.846) indicate moderate fit. While some guidelines suggest NFI ≥ 0.90 as a conventional benchmark for “good” fit, PLS-SEM studies often treat values around 0.80–0.90 as acceptable in exploratory or prediction-oriented contexts. Overall, the model

demonstrates acceptable fit based on SRMR and NFI suggesting a reasonable—though not “excellent”—level of global fit.

Variance Inflation Factor (VIF)

Table 10 presents the multicollinearity assessed by examining the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values. Based on the analysis results, all predictor constructs and interactions had VIF values below 5.0, with the highest VIF recorded at 3.097. According to Hair et al. (2017, 2022), VIF values below 5.0 indicate that there are no serious multicollinearity issues in a PLS-SEM model. Therefore, it can be concluded that this research model is free from collinearity problems that could bias the parameter estimates.

Table 10. Variance Inflation Factor (VIF)

	VIF
Digital Literacy -> Employee Advocacy	1.658
Digital Literacy x Employee Value Proposition -> Employee Advocacy	2.493
Digital Literacy x Employer Branding -> Employee Advocacy	2.719
Employee Value Proposition -> Employee Advocacy	3.097
Employer Branding -> Employee Advocacy	3.082

Hypotheses testing

Table 11 presents the structural path results. Two hypotheses were supported:

- H1: Employer Branding → Employee Advocacy was supported ($\beta = 0.413$; $t = 6.034$; $p < 0.001$).
- H2: EVP → Employee Advocacy was supported ($\beta = 0.299$; $t = 4.212$; $p < 0.001$).

However, both moderation hypotheses were not supported:

- H3: Digital Literacy × Employer Branding → Employee Advocacy was not supported ($\beta = -0.013$; $t = 0.175$; $p = 0.431$).
- H4: Digital Literacy × EVP → Employee Advocacy was not supported ($\beta = -0.086$; $t = 1.158$; $p = 0.123$).

Tabel 11. Direct effect

Hypotheses	Original sample (O)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P values	Conclusion
H1: Employer Branding → Employee Advocacy	0.413	6.034	0.000	Supported
H2: Employee Value Proposition → Employee Advocacy	0.299	4.212	0.000	Supported
H3: Digital Literacy x Employer Branding → Employee Advocacy	-0.013	0.175	0.431	Not Supported
H4: Digital Literacy x Employee Value Proposition → Employee Advocacy	-0.086	1.158	0.123	Not Supported

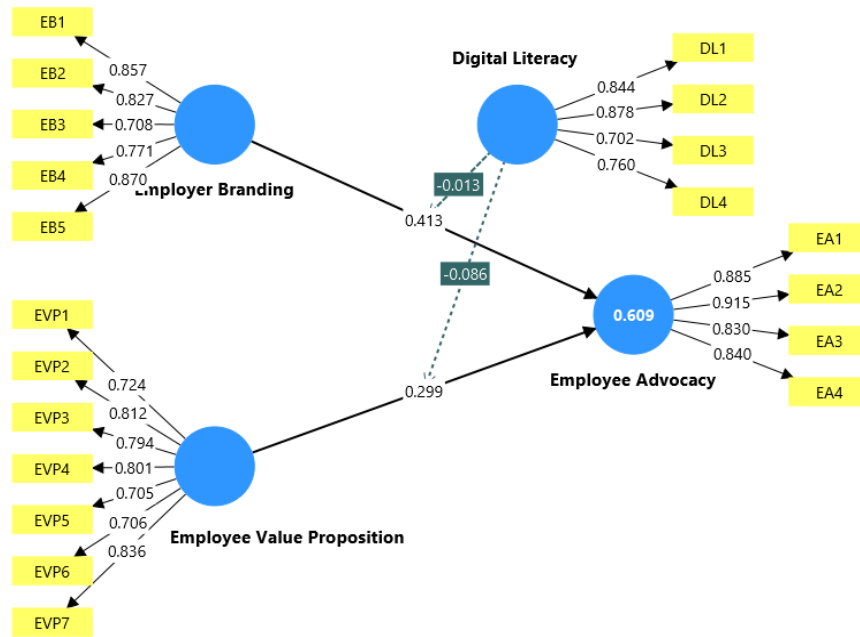


Figure 2. Hypotheses Test Model

Employer Branding and Employee Advocacy (H1 supported)

The finding that Employer Branding has a positive and significant effect on Employee Advocacy reinforces the idea that employees are more willing to promote and recommend their organization when they perceive a strong, credible employer image. Employer branding is not merely an external attraction tool; it also shapes employees’ internal identification and pride in the organization. When employees perceive that the institution is respected, values-driven, and provides a meaningful workplace, advocacy behavior becomes more likely because employees feel confident associating their personal reputation with the organization’s reputation. This aligns with the logic that employees act as authentic “storytellers” of the employer brand—especially in digital spaces where peer-to-peer credibility is influential (Apostle Social, 2024; DSMN8, 2025).

In the educational sector context, employer branding may function as a strong psychological signal that the institution is stable, professional, and aligned with employee expectations. Such signals can shape employees’ willingness to speak positively about the institution and recommend it to others, including potential teacher candidates and community stakeholders.

Employee Value Proposition and Employee Advocacy (H2 supported)

The significant positive relationship between EVP and Employee Advocacy suggests that employees are more likely to advocate when they perceive tangible and intangible employment benefits as meaningful and fairly delivered. EVP reflects employees perceived “deal” with the organization covering rewards, development opportunities, supportive culture, and the overall employment experience (Universum Communications Sweden AB, 2025). From a psychological contract lens, when employees perceive that organizational promises are fulfilled, they are more motivated to reciprocate with extra-role behaviours, including advocacy. In this study, EVP’s effect size was smaller than employer branding but still meaningful, indicating that EVP may serve as a practical foundation that enables employees

to advocate with confidence because their positive messages are backed by lived experience rather than branding claims alone.

This is important given prior concerns that when EVP is overly idealized and not supported by daily realities, employees may refrain from advocacy due to perceived inauthenticity (Mercer, 2024). The high mean levels in EVP indicators suggest that employees generally view the institution's value proposition positively, which likely supports advocacy behaviours.

Digital Literacy as a moderator (H3 and H4 not supported)

Contrary to the proposed moderation hypotheses, Digital Literacy did not significantly strengthen the effects of Employer Branding or EVP on Employee Advocacy. The interaction coefficients were negative and very small, and effect sizes were negligible (f^2 close to zero). A plausible explanation is that digital literacy may already be relatively high and homogeneous in the sample (DL construct mean > 4.38), limiting variability and reducing its ability to function as a differentiating moderator. In practical terms, when most employees already feel digitally capable, digital literacy no longer separates "high" versus "low" groups in a way that changes how branding and EVP translate into advocacy.

Another explanation is that advocacy is driven more by identity, trust, and perceived authenticity than by digital capability alone. Digital literacy may enable the mechanics of posting, sharing, and engaging online, but it does not automatically create motivation to advocate. Employees may still choose not to publicly advocate if they perceive reputational risk, prefer privacy, or believe advocacy is not expected in their professional role—especially in education settings where professional boundaries in social media can be sensitive. This echoes earlier observations that even younger employees may show low brand engagement on social media despite organizational expectations (Cervellon & Lirio, 2017).

Overall, the results suggest that strengthening employer branding and EVP remains central for increasing employee advocacy, while digital literacy—although important as a capability—may operate more as a baseline condition rather than a factor that amplifies motivational relationships in this context.

CONCLUSION

Based on these conclusions and research limitations, several directions for future research emerge. First, longitudinal studies tracking how employer branding and EVP perceptions evolve and influence advocacy over time would establish causal precedence and reveal dynamic patterns. Second, multi-source research incorporating objective advocacy measures (e.g., social media analytics, peer nominations) would complement self-report data and reduce common method bias concerns. Third, comparative studies across sectors and cultural contexts would examine whether the pattern of direct effects and non-moderation generalizes or varies systematically. Fourth, research examining alternative moderators such as organizational culture, leadership style, professional identification, and perceived authenticity would identify boundary conditions beyond individual capability. Fifth, studies distinguishing between online and offline advocacy dimensions would test whether digital literacy moderates purely digital advocacy more strongly than general advocacy. Sixth, experimental or quasi-experimental designs testing interventions to strengthen employer branding and EVP would provide causal evidence and practical guidance for organizations.

Seventh, qualitative research exploring employees' lived experiences of advocacy, including motivations, concerns, and contextual influences, would enrich quantitative findings with deeper understanding of advocacy as a social phenomenon. Such research would further advance both theoretical understanding of employee advocacy and practical strategies for fostering authentic employee voices in increasingly digital work environments.

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