

Perceptions of Social Media and Networking: Job Search and Employability Enhancements among Postgraduate Women Students

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the role of general social media platforms in job searching and employability enhancement among postgraduate women students. As social media increasingly influences career development, this research addresses the gap in understanding how platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram contribute to the job search process, particularly for women pursuing advanced degrees. Utilizing a descriptive research design, data were collected from 100 postgraduate women through a structured questionnaire that seeks to evaluate their perceptions of social media's effectiveness in job seeking and career advancement. The findings reveal that most respondents perceive social media as a valuable tool for accessing job opportunities and enhancing their employability. Notably, participants reported high levels of satisfaction with the convenience and speed of information retrieval on these platforms compared to traditional job search methods. However, challenges remain, particularly concerning direct communication with potential employers. Statistical analyses, including the Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Kruskal-Wallis H tests, indicate significant differences in the perceptions based on academic course selection. Overall, this research underscores the importance of leveraging general social media for career development while highlighting the need for targeted strategies to maximize its effectiveness in enhancing employability among postgraduate women students.

Keywords: postgraduate, job, high, collected.

INTRODUCTION

In the digital era, social media and networking platforms have significantly changed many aspects of everyday life, particularly how individuals conduct job searches and develop their careers. For postgraduate women students, these platforms present both new opportunities and challenges in navigating the job market and improving their employability. The incorporation of social media into professional environments has established a dynamic landscape where online presence and networking are crucial for career advancement. According to a recent article published in Forbes, "social media is not just for personal interactions but is equally vital for professional advancement" (Forbes Coaches Council, 2023). When you think of social media, you might envision a platform for sharing opinions, enjoying light-hearted moments with friends, and staying connected with loved ones. However, social media serves a far greater purpose than just personal interactions. Surprisingly, it plays an equally crucial role in your professional life. In today's job market, leveraging social media effectively can significantly enhance your job search and career development.

Graduate employability is a crucial factor that significantly impacts employment prospects, starting salaries, career success, self-efficacy, job satisfaction, and job security. Employability refers to an individual's abilities and competencies that enable them to secure employment and achieve professional development. Academic activities, student club involvement, social practices, and internships positively contribute to the development of employability skills.

Social media and networking platforms play a vital role in enhancing employability.

Information related to job opportunities, vacancies, and recruitment can be easily shared and accessed through these platforms. Social media and networking sites help students stay informed about job prospects and facilitate the building of new career connections. Moreover, social media can contribute to improved academic performance and increased knowledge acquisition through efficient data and information gathering.

Job seekers can effectively use social media platforms to search for job opportunities and receive unsolicited offers from recruiters. A study of Finnish social media users reveals that while the success rate of applying for jobs through these platforms is consistent across socio-economic groups, recruitment rates are higher among individuals from higher socio-economic backgrounds. LinkedIn users tend to have better recruitment outcomes, and engaging in strategic networking and sharing professional content enhances the likelihood of both applying successfully and being recruited. Overall, online behaviour significantly influences job leads and career opportunities in the social media-driven job market.

Despite growing interest in the impact of social media on job searching and career advancement, most research has focused on specialized professional networks like LinkedIn. There's a noticeable gap in understanding how postgraduate women students use more general social media platforms, such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, for their career development. These platforms offer unique opportunities for networking and showcasing skills, but their effectiveness compared to professional networks is not well-studied.

Furthermore, existing research often overlooks the specific challenges and needs of postgraduate women students, typically addressing broader populations or undergraduate students instead. This study aims to fill this gap by exploring how postgraduate women utilize general social media for job searching and enhancing their employability.

This study examines the perceptions of postgraduate women students regarding the influence of general social media and networking platforms—excluding specialized professional networks like LinkedIn—on job searching and enhancing employability. Although LinkedIn is widely acknowledged as an essential tool for professional networking, this analysis aims to explore how postgraduate women leverage mainstream social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram in their career endeavours. These conventional social media platforms provide distinct opportunities for showcasing skills, connecting with potential employers, and uncovering job prospects, although their effectiveness and perception in the realm of professional development may vary compared to more focused networks. The potential employer may get to know the contestants actual personality and traits from this. (Back M, Stopfer J, Vazire S, et al. 2010)By investigating how postgraduate women students interact with these general social media platforms, the study seeks to offer insights into their strategies for job searching and career progression. The findings will shed light on the role of mainstream social media in influencing employability and provide recommendations for effectively utilizing these tools in a competitive job market.

Statement of the Problem and Objectives

The advent of the internet has fundamentally transformed media consumption by offering a wide range of formats, enhancing personal connectivity, and preserving information in ways traditional media cannot. One of the internet's unique attributes is its interactivity, which creates new communication opportunities and possibilities previously unattainable. Social media and social networks, in particular, have emerged as influential tools in shaping perceptions, especially concerning graduate employability. With a growing number of employers utilizing social media, these platforms have proven effective in making a positive impression on potential recruiters. Research by Yong Chen (2017) highlights that social network diversity is conducive to graduate employability, demonstrating a positive relationship between network heterogeneity and learning opportunities.

In today's digital landscape, students can use various social media platforms to connect with peers, share opinions, and build new identities regardless of their geographical locations. This study seeks to explore the patterns of social media and social network usage among female postgraduate students, aiming to understand how these platforms impact their job search and employability. Specifically, the research objectives are to examine how postgraduate women use social networks for job searching, assess their perceptions of these networks in enhancing employability, and evaluate their overall satisfaction with these platforms in relation to their career development. By addressing these objectives, the study aims to provide valuable insights into the role of social media in shaping postgraduate women's career strategies and outcomes.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employs a descriptive research design, integrating both primary and secondary data to examine the influence of social media and social networks on employability among postgraduate women students. The research is descriptive, aiming to elucidate how these platforms affect job search strategies and employability enhancement. The primary data collection is carried out through a survey, while secondary data provides additional context and background to enrich the study's findings.

Primary data is obtained via a meticulously crafted questionnaire designed to capture the perceptions of postgraduate women regarding their use of social media and social networks. The questionnaire, developed with careful consideration of the study's objectives, utilizes a Likert's 5-Point Scale ranging from 'Strongly Disagree' (coded as 1) to 'Strongly Agree' (coded as 5). This scale facilitates a nuanced measurement of respondents' attitudes toward social media's impact on their career prospects. The reliability of the questionnaire was validated using Cronbach's Alpha, yielding a high value of 0.975, which indicates excellent internal consistency and reliability of the instrument.

The study utilizes a convenience sampling method to select participants, resulting in a sample size of 100 active internet users aged between 20 to 30 years. This approach effectively targets postgraduate women students engaged with social media platforms. The data analysis incorporates several statistical tools: mean to determine average perceptions, standard deviation to assess variability, Chi-Square Test to explore relationships between variables, Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test to evaluate the normality of distribution, and Kruskal-Wallis H Test to identify significant differences between dependent and independent variables. The independent variables include course, marital status, and year of study.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This research explores the impact of social media recruitment (SMR) on job candidates' perceptions in Bangladesh. Utilizing a systematic review based on the PRISMA method, the study identifies perceived advantages and ease of use as independent variables, and perceived privacy, fairness, and ethics as dependent variables. Analyzing data from 877 recent graduates, the findings reveal positive correlations between SMR and candidates' perceptions, particularly regarding advantages and ease of use. The research highlights social media's effectiveness in recruitment, offering insights for HR practitioners and encouraging further exploration in this evolving field.

Chawla (2014) examined social networking site usage among 200 college students in Karnal district, finding urban students more adept than rural peers. Students spend 1-3 hours online, favouring Facebook, Orkut, Twitter, and LinkedIn. The study revealed no significant differences in habits between government-aided and self-financing college students. Additionally, the study found differences in social networking habits between undergraduate and postgraduate students, reflecting varying levels of engagement and familiarity with these platforms.

Manjunatha (2013) examined the usage patterns of Social Networking Sites (SNS) among Indian college students, surveying 500 participants across various colleges. The study found that 80% of students regularly use SNS, with males using them more than females. Most students (62.6%) spend 1-10 hours weekly on these platforms, primarily to maintain existing relationships. Over 95% of respondents viewed SNS positively for reconnecting with friends and sharing ideas. The findings highlight the significant role of SNS in enhancing interpersonal relationships among college students in India.

Hosain and Liu (2020) conducted a study in Bangladesh to identify the impact of social media recruitment (SMR) on job candidates' overall perception (OP). They employed two independent variables: perceived advantage (PA) and perceived ease of use (PEU), and three dependent variables: perceived privacy (PP), perceived fairness (PF), and perceived ethics (PE). The study surveyed 877 recent graduates looking for jobs. Linear regression analysis revealed that PA and PEU positively correlate with PP, PF, and PE, although the relationship is weak for PE. Further, PA and PEU are positively related to OP. The findings provide valuable insights for academics to explore this understudied area and HR practitioners to understand job seekers' perceptions of social media recruitment in Bangladesh.

Hosain, Md & LIU, Ping. (2020) States that social networking platforms have become essential tools for job seekers, offering advantages over traditional methods like paper resumes. This study explores job seekers' perceptions of the benefits of using social media in their job search. Through qualitative research involving in-depth interviews, it was found that job seekers appreciate the increased effectiveness, globalization, easier networking, enhanced personal visibility, and access to niche platforms tailored to specific professions. While the job-seeking process remains similar, social media has made it more efficient, reflecting a significant shift in how individuals approach employment in the digital age.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. Descriptive statistics on the demographic of respondents

Basis	Classifications	No. of Respondents	Percentage
AGE	Below 20	6	6
	20-22	68	68
	22-24	26	26
	Total	100	100
COURSE	M.COM	53	53
	MSW	21	21
	MBA	24	24
	MA	2	2
	Total	100	100
Marital Status	Married	13	13
	Unmarried	87	87
	Total	100	100
Year of Study	1st Year	45	45
	2nd Year	55	55
	Total	100	100

Source: Primary data

The demographic data collected from the respondents provides valuable insights into the characteristics of the sample population in the study. The majority of respondents (68%) fall within the age group of 20-22, with the largest group enrolled in the M.COM program (53%). A significant majority of the respondents (87%) are unmarried, and the distribution of respondents by year of study is relatively balanced, with 55% in their second year and 45% in their first year. This demographic profile is essential for understanding how social media influences the job search and employability enhancement strategies of younger, unmarried postgraduate women students, particularly those from commerce-related

Table 2. Classification of Respondents based on tools used for job-seeking

Particulars	Used	Not Used	Total	Rank
Newspaper Ads	43	57	100	1
Company Websites	23	77	100	4
Employment & Economic development office	3	97	100	8
Job fairs	37	63	100	2
Recruiting Agencies	15	85	100	6
Online Job Ads (Sponsored Links)	20	80	100	5
Personal Networks/ friends/ Words of mouth	33	67	100	3
Social Media (Social networks, blogs,wikis)	33	67	100	3
Mobile Websites (Mobile Apps)	13	87	100	7

Source: Primary data

Table 2 presents the classification of respondents based on the tools used for job-seeking. The most utilized method is newspaper ads, with 43 respondents (43%) using this resource, making it the highest-ranked tool. Job fairs follow closely in second place, with 37 respondents (37%) utilizing them. Personal networks and social media both rank third, with 33 respondents (33%) using these tools. Company websites and online job ads are less popular, with 23 (ranked fourth) and 20 respondents (ranked fifth) respectively. The least utilized methods are employment offices and mobile websites, with only 3 and 13 respondents using them, respectively.

Table 3. PG Women Student's Perception Level on Job Searching

Perception level on Job searching	Mean	Std. Deviation
Social media is simple to use in job search	4.22	0.73278
I prefer traditional recruiting channels over a job seeking in social media	4.19	0.58075
I consider using social media for job seeking ; if there were more job opportunities posted on its	4.2	0.8528
Social media allows for me to find & share information about companies and job opportunities faster than traditional recruiting channels	4.51	0.67412
Social media is more convenient than Traditional method to job search	4.35	0.60927
Social media is easy for job searching	3.59	1.11096

Source: Primary data

Table 3 reveals that postgraduate women students have a positive perception of social media for job searching, particularly regarding its effectiveness and convenience compared to traditional methods. The highest mean score of 4.51 indicates that students believe social media allows for quicker access to information about job opportunities. Additionally, a mean score of 4.35 highlights its convenience. While respondents find social media simple to use (mean of 4.22), they still prefer traditional recruiting channels (mean of 4.19), indicating familiarity with these methods. A lower mean score of 3.59 suggests challenges in navigating social media, reflecting a balanced view of its advantages and limitations

Table 4. PG Women Students Perception Level on Employability Enhancement

Perception Level	Mean	Std. Deviation
Social media quickly provide information about company / industry	4.38	0.59933
Social media helps to get tips for job hunting	4.26	0.50493
Social media more faster than traditional method to provide job notifications	4.14	0.89916
Social media is helps to creating ,updating & sending applications and CVs directly in the application	4.15	0.82112
Social media is helps to directly communicating the recruiter / prospective supervisor	3.95	0.80873
Social media conducting more online job interviews than traditional interviews	4.01	0.88186

Source: Primary data

Table 4 illustrates the perception levels of postgraduate women students regarding the enhancement of employability through social media. The data reveals that respondents believe social media is highly effective in providing timely information about companies and industries, with a mean score of 4.38. This indicates a strong recognition of social media as a valuable resource for staying informed in a competitive job market.

Additionally, the mean score of 4.26 for obtaining job hunting tips underscores the platform's role in offering guidance and resources that can aid students in their job search efforts. Respondents also perceive social media as a faster alternative to traditional methods for receiving job notifications, with a mean score of 4.14, further highlighting its efficiency.

The ability to create, update, and send applications and CVs directly through social media platforms is rated positively (mean of 4.15), reflecting the convenience these tools provide. However, the perception of social media facilitating direct communication with recruiters and prospective supervisors received a lower mean score of 3.95, indicating potential challenges in this area. Overall, the findings suggest that postgraduate women students view social media as a significant asset for enhancing employability, particularly in terms of information access and application processes.

Hypothesis testing Perception level of Post Graduate Women students on Job Searching

Hypothesis 1

H₀ =the variables related to various aspects of Perception is normal

H₁ = The variables related to various aspects of Perception is not normal

Table 5. Checking the Normality of Distribution Related to Perception of Post-Graduate Women Students on Job Searching

Perception Level	Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z	P value
Social media is simple to use in job search	2.56	.000
I prefer traditional recruiting channels over a job seeking in social media	3.48	.000
I consider using social media for job seeking ; if there were more job opportunities posted on its	2.67	.000
Social media allows for me to find & share information about companies and job opportunities faster than traditional recruiting channels	3.76	.000
Social media is more convenient than Traditional method to job search	2.97	.000
Social media is easy for job searching	1.74	.000

Source: Primary data

Table 5 presents the results of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, which assesses the normality of distribution related to postgraduate women students' perceptions of job searching through social media. The test reveals that all perception levels have a p-value of 0.000, which is less than the significance level of 0.05. This indicates that the data is not normally distributed for any of the perception levels. The highest Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z value of 3.76 is observed for the perception that social media allows for faster access to information about companies and job opportunities compared to traditional channels. The lowest value of 1.74 is found for the perception that social media is easy for job searching. These findings suggest that the data is skewed and does not follow a normal distribution, necessitating the use of non-parametric tests for further analysis.

Hypothesis 2

H0 = There is no significant difference between PG Women students Perception on job searching with respect to Course they have selected or are studying

H1 = There is significant difference between PG Women students Perception on job searching with respect to Course they have selected or are studying

Table 6. Course-wise Analysis Kruskal- Wallis H Test

Perception Level	Chi-Square	DF	P value
Social media is simple to use in job search	13.55	2	.001
I prefer traditional recruiting channels over a job seeking in social media	13.12	2	.001
I consider using social media for job seeking ; if there were more job opportunities posted on its	8.93	2	.012
Social media allows for me to find & share information about companies and job opportunities faster than traditional recruiting channels	13.54	2	.001
Social media is more convenient than Traditional method to job search	1.21	2	.546
Social media is easy for job searching	.15	2	.926

Source: Primary data

Table 6 presents the results of the Kruskal-Wallis H Test for various perception levels. The findings indicate significant differences for several perception levels, with p-values of 0.001 for "social media is simple to use in job search," "I prefer traditional recruiting channels over job seeking in social media," and "social media allows me to find and share information about companies and job opportunities faster than traditional channels." Additionally, the perception regarding the use of social media for job seeking, contingent on more job opportunities being posted, also shows significance with a p-value of 0.012.

Conversely, the perceptions regarding the convenience of social media compared to traditional methods (p = 0.546) and the ease of job searching through social media (p = 0.926) do not demonstrate significant differences.

Hypothesis 2

H0 = There is no significant difference between PG Women student's Perception on job searching with respect to Year of Study

H1 = There is significant difference between PG Women students Perception on job searching with respect to Year of Study

Table 7. Year-wise Analysis Kruskal- Wallis H Test

Perception Level	Chi-Square	DF	P value
Social media is simple to use in job search	.697	1	.404
I prefer traditional recruiting channels over a job seeking in social media	2.33	1	.127
I consider using social media for job seeking ; if there were more job opportunities posted on its	.004	1	.952
Social media allows for me to find & share information about companies and job opportunities faster than traditional recruiting channels	.290	1	.590
Social media is more convenient than Traditional method to job search	2.01	1	.156
Social media is easy for job searching	3.10	1	.678

Source: Primary data

Table 7 presents the results of the Kruskal-Wallis H Test analyzing the perceptions of postgraduate women students regarding job searching based on their year of study. The test evaluates whether there are significant differences in perceptions between first-year and second-year students.

The findings indicate that none of the perception levels show statistically significant differences, as all p-values exceed the conventional threshold of 0.05. Specifically, the perception that "social media is simple to use in job search" has a Chi-Square value of 0.697 with a p-value of 0.404. Similarly, the preference for traditional recruiting channels ($p = 0.127$) and the consideration of social media for job seeking based on job opportunities ($p = 0.952$) also do not demonstrate significant differences.

Other perceptions, such as the speed of finding and sharing information ($p = 0.590$), the convenience of social media ($p = 0.156$), and the ease of job searching ($p = 0.678$), further confirm the lack of significant differences. Overall, these results suggest that postgraduate women students' perceptions regarding job searching through social media are consistent across different years of study, indicating a uniformity in their views regardless of their academic progression.

Hypothesis 3**Hypothesis testing Perception level of Post Graduate Women students on Employability Enhancement**

H0 = the variables related to various aspects of Perception is normal

H1 = the variables related to various aspects of Perception is not normal

Table 8. Checking the Normality of Distribution related to Perception of Post Graduate Women Students on Employability Enhancement

Perception Level	Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z	P value
Social media quickly provide information about company / industry	2.970	.000
Social media helps to get tips for job hunting	4.067	.000
Social media more faster than traditional method to provide job notifications	2.981	.000
Social media is helps to creating, updating & sending applications and CVs directly in the application	2.975	.000
Social media is helps to directly communicating the recruiter / prospective supervisor	3.146	.000
Social media conducting more online job interviews than traditional interviews	2.355	.000

Source: Primary data

Table 8 presents the results of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, which assesses the normality of distribution related to postgraduate women students' perceptions of employability enhancement through social media. The test reveals that all perception levels have a p-value of 0.000, which is less than the significance level of 0.05. This indicates that the data is not normally distributed for any of the perception levels. The highest Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z value of 4.067 is observed for the perception that social media helps to get tips for job hunting. The lowest value of 2.355 is found for the perception that social media conducts more online job interviews than traditional interviews. These findings suggest that the data is skewed and does not follow a normal distribution, necessitating the use of non-parametric tests for further analysis.

Hypothesis 4

H0 = There is no significant difference between PG Women student's Perception on Employability Enhancement with respect to Course

H1 = There is significant difference between PG Women students Perception of Employability Enhancement with respect to Course

Table 9. Course-wise Analysis Kruskal- Wallis H Test

Perception level	Chi-Square	DF	P value
Social media quickly provide information about company / industry	16.785	2	.000
Social media helps to get tips for job hunting	1.743	2	.418
Social media more faster than traditional method to provide job notifications	.322	2	.851
Social media is helps to creating, updating & sending applications and CVs directly in the application	3.093	2	.273
Social media is helps to directly communicating the recruiter / prospective supervisor	2.069	2	.355
Social media conducting more online job interviews than traditional interviews	5.313	2	.070

Source: Primary data

Table 9 examines the differences in perceptions regarding employability enhancement through social media among postgraduate women students from various courses. The Kruskal-Wallis H Test reveals a significant difference in the perception that "social media quickly provides information about companies and industries" ($p < 0.001$). This suggests that students' course of study influences their views on social media's effectiveness in delivering timely industry information. However, other perceptions, such as the usefulness of social media for job hunting tips, faster job notifications, application management, communicating with recruiters, and the prevalence of online interviews, do not show significant differences across courses. These findings indicate that while course selection impacts perceptions of social media's informational role, it does not significantly influence other aspects of employability enhancement.

Hypothesis 5

H0 = There is no significant difference between PG Women students Perception Employability Enhancement with respect to Year of Study

H1 = There is significant difference between PG Women students Perception Employability Enhancement with respect to Year of Study

Table 10. Year -wise Analysis Kruskal- Wallis H Test

Perception level	Chi-Square	DF	P value
Social media quickly provide information about company / industry	.897	1	.344
Social media helps to get tips for job hunting	6.372	1	.012
Social media more faster than traditional method to provide job notifications	14.383	1	.000
Social media is helps to creating, updating & sending applications and CVs directly in the application	11.970	1	.001
Social media is helps to directly communicating the recruiter /	1.478	1	.224

prospective supervisor			
Social media conducting more online job interviews than traditional interviews	.071	1	.789

Source: Primary data

Table 10 presents the results of the Kruskal-Wallis H Test. The findings indicate significant differences in perceptions for several statements. Notably, the perception that "social media helps to get tips for job hunting" has a Chi-Square value of 6.372 with a p-value of 0.012, indicating significance. Additionally, the perceptions that "social media is faster than traditional methods to provide job notifications" ($p = 0.000$) and "social media helps in creating, updating, and sending applications and CVs" ($p = 0.001$) also show significant differences.

Conversely, perceptions regarding the speed of communication with recruiters ($p = 0.224$) and the frequency of online job interviews compared to traditional ones ($p = 0.789$) do not demonstrate significant differences. Overall, these results support the rejection of the null hypothesis for specific perceptions, indicating that the year of study influences postgraduate women students' views on the employability enhancement capabilities of social media.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study offer important insights into how postgraduate women students perceive the use of social media for job searching and enhancing employability. The analysis shows a strong belief in the effectiveness of social media for quickly accessing information about companies and job opportunities, aligning with the study's objective of examining perceptions of social networks in job searches. Notably, significant differences in perceptions based on students' course and year of study reveal varying levels of comfort and reliance on social media for job hunting.

Moreover, the study highlights that while students acknowledge the benefits of using social media in their job search, they still tend to prefer traditional recruitment methods. This suggests a need for targeted training to improve digital job-search skills, ensuring that postgraduate women students are better equipped to effectively utilize social media. The results emphasize the importance of incorporating social media training into higher education curricula to bridge skill gaps and enhance employability outcomes.

In summary, the findings support the study's objectives of analyzing perceptions of social media's role in job searching and employability enhancement, while also highlighting the opportunities and challenges postgraduate women students face in the evolving job market. These insights can guide career services and educational programs in better preparing students for successful job searches in the digital era.

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