Usage of social media in employability and career advancement; A correlational study

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Abstract

This research study sought to examine the connection between social media usage and career advancement for university students. In recent years, frequent use of platforms including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn has become a regular part of students' daily lives. Recent studies suggest a positive correlation between social media usage and career advancement among young individuals. Social media provides networking opportunities increased access to job opportunities improved professional branding and enhanced skill development. However it is crucial for students to use social media platforms appropriately and strategically to improve their career prospects. In this research study a questionnaire was used as the primary research instrument for data collection. To establish the validity of the questionnaire expert who have expertise in social media use and career development was consulted. The reliability of the questionnaire was calculated using spss. In this case cronbach 's alpha coefficients of 0.821 and 0.826 suggest that the scale used in the study demonstrates good internal consistency. The study found a significant positive correlation between students who strategically used social media for networking job search professional branding and skill development and their career

advancement. The research findings suggest that there is a strong positive relationship between career advancement and social media use. Understanding this relationship can provide valuable insight for individuals looking to expand their career prospects and for organizations looking to leverage social media platforms for talent acquisition and professional development.

Key words: *Social media usage, career advancement, professional branding*

Introduction

The frequent use of SM (social media) has advanced the way of people interaction, communication, and sharing of information all over the world. Social media platform and applications such as FB, LinkedIn, Twitter, Instagram, and others where students work as a bloggers and content creators have become a fundamental part of everyone's life (Carr & Hayes 2015). The young ones, who studied in the colleges or universities, particularly has been heavily influenced by social media, they spend most of their time on these platforms. However, recent studies have given the evidence that social media usage may have a positive correlation with career advancement and goal setting among young individuals at university level. (Kapoor et al., 2018)

The key benefits of SM is its capability to provide networking and searching opportunities. Young individuals can use social media platforms to connect with professionals, industry leaders and entrepreneurs in their field of interest. Research findings suggest that Facebook can serve as an effective platform for job search, particularly through networking with prospective employer. Networking emerged as the most preferred method among online jobs and offline jobs search method. Engaging in networking activities and spending time making connections can significantly increase job opportunities. (Alim & AlShourbaji, 2020). Social media platforms and applications like LinkedIn has become a powerful network for job seekers, allowing them to connect with potential employers, hiring managers, and professionals. According to a study conducted by LinkedIn, 85% of all jobs are availed or hired through networking, and social media is the most easy and effective way to expand your network and create new professional relationships. (Davis et al., 2020)

Social media can also help in providing young individuals with increased exposure to job opportunities. Job postings are most of the time shared on social media platforms, and many companies have dedicated social media accounts especially for posting of jobs (Nawazkhan et al., 2022). This ultimately results in saying that young individuals can stay up-to-date with new job opportunities in their field of interest by following relevant and appropriate social media accounts.

Improved Professional Branding:

Social media can also help young individuals to create and improve their professional branding. Social media platforms allow individuals to show their talents and skills, experience, and accomplishments, achievements and creating an online existence with a brand that can be shared with potential employers. Moreover, social media platforms like LinkedIn allows individuals to receive supplements and suggestions from other professionals in their network, which can help to improvement their credibility and enhancing their chances of landing a job. (Johnson 2017). Social media platforms also provide young ones with access to a great supply of resources for skill development. Many industry owners and professionals share their knowledge and experiences on social media, offering valuable insights into the latest information, trends and developments in their fields. Additionally, social media platforms like YouTube offers tutorials, videos and training courses on a wide range of topics, from software development to marketing and many more (Massarat et al., 2022).

Usage of social media has a positive correlation with career advancement in between younger individuals. The networking opportunities, increased access to job opportunities, well known professional branding, and enhanced skill development provided by social media platforms make it valuable and reliable resource for young professionals. While social media can be a distraction, it is important for young individuals to know how to use these platforms appropriately to improve their career perspectives. By using and admiring the power of social media, young individuals can create a robust professional network, stay up-to-date on job opportunities, enhance their online existence, and to develop and learn new skills that will help to advanced their careers (Massarat et al., 2022).

The main aim of conducting this research study was to investigate the correlation between career advancement and social media use. Understanding this relationship is valuable for several reasons, such as by understanding how social media use relates to career success, individuals can strategically leverage these platforms to enhance their professional development. Organizations are increasingly using social media platforms to identify and recruit potential candidates. Social media provides organizations with a powerful tool for branding, communication and engagement. By understanding the relationship between social media use and career development, organizations can develop effective strategies to engage with their target audience, build their brand, and attract talent. Exploring the correlations between SM use and career advancement contributes to our understanding of the impact of digital platforms on career trajectory. This research can shed light on broader societal trends and implications related to the interrelationship of technology and career development. In conducting this research, we aim to contribute to the existing knowledge base and provide insights that can benefit individuals, organizations and society as a whole. Understanding how social media use and career advancement are intertwined can help individuals effectively navigate their career paths, assist organizations in talent acquisition and branding efforts, and improve professional success. It can help inform discussions about the role of technology in shaping.

Research Objectives:

1. To investigate the usage of SM among young individuals in relation to their career advancement.

2. To explore the role of social media in professional branding and self-promotion for career advancement.

Research Questions:

1. There is a positive Correlation between the frequency of social media usage and career advancement among university students.

2. University students perceive SM as an effective tool for personal branding and self-promotion, which positively impacts their career advancement.

Significance of Study

A study finding a positive correlation between the SM usage and career development among graduate students at the university level has several implications. The research article investigated the relatively unexplored relation between social media use and career development among university students. Examining this correlation adds to the existing body of knowledge and increases our understanding of how social media can influence students' professional development. Understanding the positive correlation between social media use and career development can provide valuable insight for students. The research findings propose that strategic and thoughtful use of social media platforms can enhance their professional networking opportunities, improve their personal branding, and potentially their career success. This study can provide guidance for educational institutions, including universities and colleges, on how to leverage social media platforms to support students' career development. Institutions can develop guidelines and provide training programs to help students improve their social media presence for professional purposes, build networks and showcase their talents. The findings of the research article may inform career services departments in educational institutions of the importance of integrating social media strategies into their offerings. They can include social media workshops, provide resources for leveraging social media for job hunting and professional networking, and advise students on creating effective online profiles. This study emphasizes the need for students to develop digital literacy skills, particularly regarding the social media usage for career advancement. It highlights the importance of understanding how to use SM (social media) platforms effectively, responsibly, and ethically in a professional context, equipping students with the skills necessary for the digital age.

Findings from this research can inform educators, career counselors, and policy makers about the role of social media in supporting students' career development, ultimately helping to design effective strategies and interventions. Overall, the importance of the study lies in its

contribution to understanding how social media use can positively affect students' career development, to students, academic institutions, and career services departments. Provides insight into harnessing the prospective of SM for professional growth and development.

Review of Literature

The usage of SM as a formal communication channel is increasingly common among organizations, leading to changes in their operations and interactions with customers and providers. In the European Union, a significant proportion of companies, specifically 75% of those with over 250 employees, utilized social media in 2019. The primary purposes of its adoption were to enhance brand image, support marketing of products, build customer relationship, and facilitate recruitment efforts. Recent literature also highlights the growing significance of social media content, including that generated by organizational members, in influencing customer decision-making and relationship formation (Pekkala et al., 2022).

In recent times, social media has emerged as a highly effective and widely used tool for those who want to establish and promote personal brands. It provides a platform where people can shape their public image and impression. Studies show that the college students actively involved in personal social media branding as they prepare to switch from academia to the professional world (Edmiston 2014, 2016). Additionally, it is very important for students to take several useful steps toward digital footprints on social media, such as creating an online individuality, observing and evaluating their online branding network, and involve with their audience to engage by presenting themselves positively on various social media platforms, students can effectively demonstrate their personality and values to potential employers and make a favorable first impression. Consequently, it is important to establish and implement comprehensive programs at the institutional level to equip University students with the necessary Skills, professional experience, and understanding to engage in effective personal online branding through social media (Park, Williams & Son, 2020). The day by day increase in online and digital technologies is restructuring educational connections, communication, and collaboration with diverse stakeholders. Social media platforms have increasingly emerged as key facilitators of these interactions, including social networking sites, video and online photograph sharing platforms, bookmarking online sites, digital discussion media, wikis etc.

Social media is revolutionizing academia by providing ways for scholars to publish their research work and involve with a wider audience, such as students, practitioners and scholars from different disciplines (Chugh & Ruhi, 2019).. With over and above about 3800 million people actively use social media globally, teachers at various educational levels use these platforms to find the research content, share valuable information, communication, networking and develop their skills. Researchers in higher education level use SM platforms to promote the social learning, make their research work more reachable, contribute to wide-ranging conversations, and enable active public participation in knowledge creation. However, despite these benefits, some educators avoid using social media due to uncertainty about its use, concerns about distraction from academic duties, institutional resistance, cultural barriers, and other practical and pedagogical reasons (Chugh et al., 2020).

Methodology of the Study

A correlational research design was chosen for this research study to examine the correlation between social media usage and career development among the university students. This design is suitable for investigating the relationship between variables without manipulating or controlling for them. In the perspective of this research study, the two variables of interest are social media use and career development (Junco, Heiberger, & Loken, 2011). Correlational research designs allow for the estimation of the strength and direction of the relationship between variables, providing valuable insight into their relationship. By measuring social media use and career development independently, this research aims to find whether there is a positive correlation between these variables among university students (Seeram, 2019).

The design chosen is particularly relevant to our research topic because it allows the natural relationship between social media use and career development to be examined without intervention. It enables the exploration of real-world scenarios and the identification of potential patterns or trends in the data. Using a correlational design, this study aims to provide valuable insight into the potential positive correlation between social media use and career development among university students. We used the survey method for our research. We developed a questionnaire as instrument for data collection. Our questions has been written according to the information needed for the research and had been appropriate to the knowledge and level of the

concerned population. We used this method to get accurate data and to minimize the expected errors in the required information.

Sampling of the Study

For sampling we selected 120 higher education students as our sample of research. We took data 40 students from each universities like Punjab University, University of Education and BZU Multan. Students were from even number semesters and they were from Arts, Social Sciences and Science departments.

Instrumentation

In this research study, a questionnaire was used as the primary research instrument for data collection. The instrument includes the following factors: frequency of SM use, types of SM platforms used, purpose of social media use, engagement with professional content, personal branding efforts, networking and relationship building, self-promotion strategies and perceived impact about career advancement. By examining these factors, the questionnaire aims to collect comprehensive data on the correlation between SM usage and career advancement, providing valuable insight into the impact of SM (social media) on young people's career paths.

The questionnaire was carefully developed to ensure validity and reliability, with input from experts in the field. Validity of a questionnaire refers to the degree to which it dealings what it reasons to measure, on the other hand reliability is consistency and stability of the results of the survey questionnaire. To examine the validity of the questionnaire, expert in the area of social media use and career development was consulted. They reviewed the questionnaire and provided feedback to ensure that the items accurately captured relevant aspects of the research topic. The reliability of the questionnaire was calculated using SPSS, a statistical software commonly used for data analysis. The specific method used to assess reliability may vary, but common methods include Cronbach's alpha, which calculate the internal consistency, or test-retest reliability, which measures responses over time

Table. 01 Reliability Statistics of Tool

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items
.821	.826

Generally, a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of .70 or higher is considered acceptable for research purposes. In this case, the Cronbach's Alpha coefficients of .821 and .826 suggest that the scale used in the study demonstrates good internal consistency in items which indicating that the items of questioner within the scale are measuring the same construct consistently.

The questionnaire consisted of 25 items, each rated from "strongly agree (SA)" (5) to "strongly disagree (SD)" (1). As intermediate options. Respondents were instructed to select the answer option that best represented their opinion or agreement, marking it with confidence. Overall, the questionnaire was carefully designed to explore the positive relationship between social media usage and career development at the university level students. Factors considered in developing the questionnaire typically include a thorough review of existing literature, consultation with experts, and consideration of relevant concepts and variables related to social media use and career development.

Analysis

Data analysis techniques used in this research article include descriptive statistics and Pearson correlation will be used to summarize participants' levels of the social media usage and career development, providing a complete overview of the data. Pearson's correlation (PC) coefficient will assess the strong point vs weak points and direction of the correlation between the social media usage and career advancement, with the goal of determining whether a positive correlation exists. This quantitative technique will enable a thorough exploration of the correlation between the social media usage and career development among university students.

Table.02: *To investigate the usage of social media among young individuals in relation to their career advancement.*

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Career Advancement	126	40.5714	6.63377
Social Media Usage	126	59.8333	7.66994

"Career Advancement," with a mean of 40.5714 and a standard deviation of 6.63377, it suggests that the data points are relatively close to the mean, indicating a more concentrated distribution. On the other hand, for "Social Media Usage," with a mean of 59.8333 and a standard deviation of

7.66994, the data points are still centered around the mean but with a slightly larger dispersion compared to the "Career Advancement" data.

Table. 03: *To explore the role of social media in professional branding and self-promotion for career advancement.*

Correlations		Career Advancement	Social Media Usage
Career Advancement	Pearson Correlation	1	.703[**]
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	126	126
Social Media Usage	Pearson Correlation	.703[**]	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	126	126

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The correlation coefficient between Career Advancement and Social Media Usage is 0.703, which indicates a strong positive correlation between these two variables. The correlation is statistically significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed), meaning that it is highly unlikely to have occurred by chance.

Findings and Discussion

Data analysis revealed interesting findings regarding the variables "Career Advancement" and "Social Media Use". The mean value for "career advancement" was found to be 40.5714, indicating that, on average, individuals reported a medium level of career advancement. A relatively small standard deviation of 6.63377 suggests that the data points are closely distributed around the mean, indicating a concentrated distribution. This means that most of the individuals in the sample had similar levels of career development.

In contrast, the mean value for "social media use" was 59.8333, indicating that, on average, participants reported a relatively high level of social media use. The slightly larger standard deviation of 7.66994 compared to "career advancement" suggests that the data points are still concentrated around the mean but with a slightly larger spread. This means that there is greater variability in the reported levels of social media use among participants.

A strong positive correlation coefficient of 0.703 between "Career Advancement" and "Social Media Use" indicates a significant relationship between these two variables. This finding suggests that as individuals reported higher levels of career development, they also tended to report higher levels of social media use. The correlation is statistically significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed), indicating that the observed association is unlikely to have occurred by chance.

The positive relationship between career development and social media use raises interesting questions for further exploration. It can be hypothesized that individuals who are more successful in their careers have greater access to resources and opportunities, leading to increased social media use. Alternatively, it is possible that individuals who are more active on social media platforms have larger networks and are exposed to more career opportunities, thus experiencing greater career growth.

Further research could investigate the underlying mechanisms driving this relationship. Longitudinal studies could help determine whether increased social media use leads to greater career advancement or if career advancement leads individuals to use social media more frequently. Additionally, qualitative studies can explore the specific ways in which social media use can contribute to career development, such as networking, job hunting, or personal branding. Overall, the results suggest that there is a strong positive relationship between career development and social media use. Understanding this relationship can provide valuable insight for individuals looking to expand their career prospects and for organizations looking to leverage social media platforms for talent acquisition and professional development.

Conclusion

In conclusion, data analysis revealed that there is a strong positive relationship between career development and social media use. Results showed that individuals who reported higher levels of career development also reported higher levels of social media use. This correlation was found to

be statistically significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed), indicating that the association is unlikely to have arisen by chance.

The mean value and standard deviation for both variables provided insight into the distribution of data points. The "career advancement" variable exhibited a concentrated distribution, with data points clustered around the mean. On the other hand, the "use of social media" variable showed a slightly larger spread, indicating greater variability in reported levels of social media use. These findings have implications for individuals seeking to enhance their career prospects and organizations seeking to use social media platforms for talent acquisition and professional development. The positive correlation suggests that social media use can play a role in career development, potentially providing opportunities for networking, job hunting, and personal branding.

To gain deeper understanding of the positive correlation between career development and social media use, further research is recommended. Longitudinal studies can explore the direction of relationships, while qualitative research can investigate the specific mechanisms through which social media use supports career development.

Overall, this study highlights the significance of considering the social media as a potential factor in career development. Understanding and harnessing the power of social media platforms can be beneficial to individuals and organizations alike, opening new avenues for professional growth   and   development.

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