

Effectiveness of Social Media Recruitment Platforms – Applicants Perception

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Abstract

The recruitment landscape has transformed particularly for Generation Z due to the growing reliance on social networking platforms. This study examines how job applicant's perceptions on the overall effectiveness of social media recruiting platforms are influenced by perceived advantages, perceived ease of use and perceived effectiveness, the factors that stems from the Technology Adoption Model. The data were collected using the questionnaire and statistically analysed using the SmartPLS to examine the impact of these constructs on the effectiveness of social media recruitment outcomes. The findings demonstrate how initiatives to improve platform features and increased transparency is essential to meet the growing demand of the job seekers. This study offers information specific to the Indian market along with useful suggestions for social media recruitment platforms optimisation.

Keywords: Overall Effectiveness of Social Media Platform, Generation Z, Perceived Effectiveness, Perceived Advantage, Perceived Ease of Use, Social Media Recruitment.

1. Introduction

Different generational groups have distinct usage patterns of social media platforms which reflects their value systems, technical expertise and norms for social communication. Baby Boomers who were born between 1946 and 1964 were late adopters of technology and use Facebook to access information and maintain connections (Smith & Watkins., 2023). Gen X who was born between 1965 and 1980 were leveraging social media platforms like LinkedIn for professional networking integrating traditional and digital communication (Bolton et al., 2013). Millennials who were born between 1981 and 1996 were extensively using the social media platforms like Instagram, Twitter for personal branding and career advancement (Kaplan & Haenlein., 2010). Generation Z who are born between 1997 and 2012 approach their career and development with the help of social media platforms, as they were the first generation to be born and grew up with technology integrated live. Their technical and digital adoption have enabled them to use distinctive technologies to explore the career opportunities (Seemiller & Grace, 2016) for learning and identity expression (Twenge, 2017). LinkedIn has been used as a key resource for both job opportunities exploration and for professional interactions (Wheeler et. al., 2022). Gen Z values transparency and uses digital tools to play a vital role in their job search. Unlike other generations, Gen Z job seekers actively evaluate potential employers through social media platforms, using them to gain insights into company culture, values, and career prospects (Nikolaou, 2014). It is indispensable for the organisations to understand the Gen Z workplace preferences and behaviours as they constitute 25% of the global workforce understand (Racolța-Paina & Irini, 2021). Gen Z is significantly advantaged by social media transformation as it creates time-based news transmission while making company interaction easier through interactive channels and providing visually appealing genuine media content. According to the study, Gen Z applicants create perceptions of employers based on these factors since the factors benefit them while choosing future profession pathways (Davis, 1989). With sites like Glassdoor and LinkedIn Gen Z confirms peer reviews supported by employee testimonials in order to secure their career choices (Bondarouk et al., 2014). By using social media tools

in hiring companies can reinforce their employer brand and interact better with significant applicants. The current study tries to examine the social media effectiveness and its alignment with Gen Z's job applicant mindset during their job and career search. The research describes the factors that influence job searcher's selection of social media to perform different career analysis and rate employers. It tries to answer the following research questions

- Does perceived advantage of social media platform by the job applicant affect the overall effectiveness of the social media platforms in the job search?
- Does perceived ease of use of social media platform by the job applicant affect the overall effectiveness of the social media platforms in the job search?
- Does perceived effectiveness of social media platform by the job applicant affect the overall effectiveness of the social media platforms in the job search?

2. Literature Review

Organizations are using their online presence and activity on social networking websites to shape and attract prospective talent (Nikolaou, 2014). Social media sites not only provide entertainment but have become strategic means in shaping attitudes and engaging with certain job-seeking populations, like Generation Z.

Social media hiring allows companies to target a larger pool of people, both active job hunters and passive candidates who are not searching for new positions but are receptive to them. Social media sites have the capability to contact a wide variety of talent, thus improving the recruitment process more than conventional practice (Hosain, 2020). Embracing social media can help boost the performance of SMEs in the construction sector, identifying its cost savings as a recruitment mechanism. Social media is an inexpensive means of recruitment in comparison to traditional means of recruitment, which is specifically beneficial to small and medium enterprises with a restricted recruitment budget (Oyewobi, 2023). Workers' social media behavior, such as posting behind-the-scenes images and participating in interactive posts, helps increase the visibility and attractiveness of an organization to prospective employees. In the contemporary world participative content is essential in highlighting employer branding by presenting company values and culture in an engaging form (Alamsyah & Syawiluna, 2021). The employers use social media screenings to test applicants beyond résumés, to examine their personalities and behaviors. However, employers need to be cautious and create standardized guidelines when using social media as a screening tool during recruitment (Van Iddekinge, 2016).

2.1 Perceived Advantage and Overall Effectiveness

The degree to which job seekers think that social media platforms provide benefits than the conventional job seeking techniques is termed as perceived advantage (Rogers, 2003). By offering up to date details on employment opportunities, corporate culture and career pathways, social media recruitment has revolutionised the way job searchers engage with possible employers (Hosain & Liu, 2020). Job seekers are empowered to make well informed career decisions by having access to such information from a single readily available source in the job search process. Further, job seekers exposure in competitive job markets is increased by the interactive elements provided by these platforms, including virtual networking events, and ability endorsements. Candidates can show their competence and establish credibility in their professional network through interactive suggestion and feedback systems. Empirical evidence suggests that these features significantly increase candidate's chances of being contacted by the recruiters as they allow job seekers competencies to be matched with the role requirements (Bondarouk et al., 2014). Websites offer personalised recommendations based on AI to match people with positions that fit their qualifications and experience. According to Melanthiou et al. (2015), a high level of personalisation and applicability not only improves job applicant overall satisfaction but also aligns with the growing demand for effective solutions in the labour market.

H1: Perceived Advantage of the social media platform by the job applicants Influences Overall Effectiveness of social media platforms in job search.

2.2. Perceived Ease of Use and Overall Effectiveness

According to Davis (1989), perceived ease of use is the degree to which job seekers believe that using social media sites for job search is convenient. One of the main reasons that encourages job seekers to utilize social media is their convenience of use, that involves simple navigation and intuitive interfaces. Job seekers save time and effort by reducing the complexity of job searches and applications through services like personalised filters, unambiguous job classification and guided application processes (Hosain & Liu, 2020). Mobility makes these platforms more convenient by allowing candidates to look for and apply for jobs at any time and from any location, a feature that is becoming more crucial in the current world. Applicants are kept informed about new employment by notifications which reduces the possibility of missing out on opportunities. Research studies indicates that job applicants satisfaction and loyalty have significantly increased with by social media platforms with intuitive navigation (Dineen & Allen, 2016). Perceived ease of use is also applied to features that make it easier for applicants to monitor the progress of their applications without requiring additional work. Job searchers are more likely to consistently engage with platforms that reduce cognitive load and streamline complex procedures, as it enhances the overall user experience (Melanthiou et al., 2015). The platforms user friendly design guarantees that job searchers can successfully achieve their goals, making it relevant and useful in the cutthroat job market.

H2: Perceived Ease of Use of the social media platform by the job applicants Influences Overall Effectiveness of social media platforms in the job search

2.3. Perceived Effectiveness and Overall Effectiveness

Perceived effectiveness refers to the degree to which job searchers believe social media platforms are useful in meeting their needs for professional networking and job searches. By facilitating interactions with peers, mentors, and professionals in one's area, these platforms help foster a feeling of community that promote career advancement beyond direct job searches (Bondarouk et al., 2014). It is influenced by several components, like the accessibility of employment opportunities, the availability of appropriate resources and the degree to which platforms enable productive relationships with employers. Job seeker who perceives platforms are useful are more inclined to use them often, as they see a clear return on their time and effort (Zhitomirsky et al., 2015). Additionally, professional branding, skill evaluations, and resume building tools help job searchers gain confidence so they can effectively market themselves to potential employers (Hosain, 2020). Perceived effectiveness influences the degree to which job seekers utilise and depend on social media for career advancement, thereby establishing it as a critical component of their overall experience (Davis, 1989).

H3: Perceived Effectiveness of the social media platform by the job applicants Influences Overall Effectiveness of social media platforms in the job search.

3. Conceptual Model

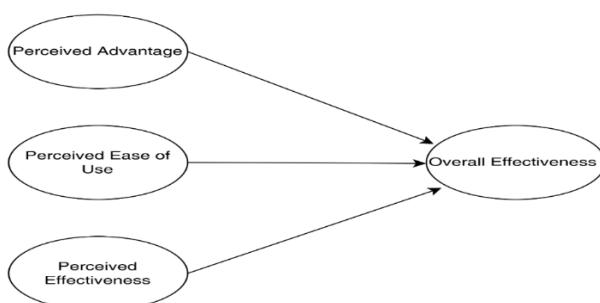


Figure 1 Conceptual Framework of the Research

4. Methodology

The current research examines the impact of perceived advantage, perceived ease of use, and perceived effectiveness on the overall effectiveness of social media recruitment platforms among job seekers in Karnataka. A descriptive research design was adopted to systematically investigate these relationships and gain meaningful insights. This design is well-suited for analysing real-world data and testing hypothesized relationships in the research model.

4.1 Sample Design

The research was conducted based on job applicants located in Karnataka. The sampling unit was individual job seekers who are actively using platforms like LinkedIn and Indeed for job search. Respondents were new graduates seeking their initial employment, skilled professionals seeking career change, and individuals applying for work. Through a convenience sampling method, 150 responses were collected. Missing values were handled after processing, and outliers within the dataset were removed, resulting in 127 valid observations for further statistical analysis.

Table 1		
DEMOGRAPHICS OF THE RESPONDENTS		
Variables	Categories	Percentages
Gender	Male	50%
	Female	50%
Age	18-20	4%
	21-23	37%
	24-26	35%
	27 and above	24%
Educational Level	Undergraduate	35%
	Postgraduate	65%
Usage of the Social Media recruitment platform	Often	2%
	Regularly	38%
	Occasionally	27%
	Rarely	3%
	Never	30%

4.2 Data Collection and Analytical Tool

This study used a structured questionnaire to collect data. The questionnaire on the constructs perceived advantage, perceived ease of use and perceived effectiveness and overall effectiveness were constructed based

on the pertinent literatures (Hosain, 2020). Each construct was measured using five items using Likert scale from 1 to 5 level of agreement. The questionnaire underwent validation and reliability test. Two items from the construct perceived effectiveness ie PE 3 and PE 4 were dropped as it failed to meet the threshold level in the validation test. The research data underwent analysis through SMART PLS which implements Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling techniques. Quasi-structural equation modelling by SMART PLS enables researchers to examine intricate linkages occurring between latent and observed variables in robust fashion.

4.3 Contextual Distinction

The current research uses concepts from Technology Adoption theories notably the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) developed by (Davis, 1989). Technology Adoption Model reveals the basic principles about how perceived usefulness as well as ease of use determine people's acceptance of technology tools including social media recruitment methods. The work of (Hosain, 2020) demonstrates how LinkedIn platform features continue to enhance job search success because of their user-friendly interface as well as their information sharing capabilities. This research integrates specific Indian contextual elements about how usability and transparency features of recruitment platforms affect job seekers' perceptions during their platform experience.

5. Data Analysis

The analysis of collected data contributes to the confirmation process of theoretical structures and investigation assumptions used in this study. The examined data undergoes assessment to verify its suitability for construct relationship tests and its reliability and validity characteristics. Statistical methods help trace the relationship intensity of variable associations while assessing how solid the model remains. Researchers tested data to establish the way job applicants perceive social media platform effectiveness via analysis of perceived advantage, perceived ease of use and perceived effectiveness. This is established by descriptive statistics and inferential statistics to investigate impacts and undertake systematic hypothesis testing.

Measurement Model

Factor loadings were taken from each measurement item to validate the reliability and validity of the Overall Effectiveness (OE), Perceived Advantages (PA) and Perceived Effectiveness (PE) and Perceived Ease of Use (PEU).

Table 2
FACTOR LOADING

	Overall Effectiveness	Perceived Advantages	Perceived Ease of Use	Perceived Effectiveness
OE1	0.874			
OE2	0.82			
OE3	0.888			
OE4	0.885			
OE5	0.619			
PA1		0.74		
PA2		0.792		

PA3		0.757			
PA4		0.795			
PA5		0.6			
PE1				0.773	
PE2				0.618	
PE5				0.815	
PEU1			0.736		
PEU2			0.824		
PEU3			0.754		
PEU4			0.69		
PEU5			0.812		

Factor loading is the correlation coefficient for the variable and the latent construct. It describes how strongly each observed variable-questionnaire item is related to its corresponding latent construct. The higher the factor loading, the more significant the association between the item and the construct. It is therefore crucial in ascertaining the validity of the measurement model. Hair et al. (2017) point out that, ideally, factor loading values above 0.7 are considered acceptable. However, in exploratory research, sometimes between 0.6 and 0.7 can be accepted. Items that load below 0.6 are often discarded as they weakly represent the construct.

Table 2 presents the factor loadings for all the questionnaire items across the constructs: Overall Effectiveness (OE), Perceived Advantage (PA), Perceived Effectiveness (PE), and Perceived Ease of Use (PEU). For Overall Effectiveness (OE), items OE1, OE2, OE3, OE4 and OE5 demonstrate strong factor loadings, ranging from 0.62 to 0.88, indicating their strong association with the construct. For Perceived Advantage (PA), the items PA1, PA2, PA3, PA4 and PA5 exhibit factor loadings between 0.6 and 0.79, reflecting their strong association with the construct. For Perceived Effectiveness (PE), items PE1, PE2 and PE5 show robust factor loadings of 0.77, 0.62 and 0.82, respectively. In Perceived Ease of Use (PEU), items PEU1, PEU2, PEU3, PE4 and PEU5 demonstrate satisfactory loadings between 0.69 and 0.82, confirming their good fit with the construct.

All the items have satisfactory factor loadings, thus confirming that these scales are reliable and valid measures of those constructs. The overall fit of the analysis indicates that all these items are meaningfully contributing to their respective constructs, with a strong overall model fit. The Partial Least Squares-Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) method was employed for data analysis, which suits the models for latent variables very well. Therefore, it becomes possible to check the hypothesized relationships between constructs.

Table 3
Measurement Model

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Overall Effectiveness	0.877	0.912	0.678
Perceived Advantages	0.790	0.857	0.548

Perceived Ease of Use	0.821	0.875	0.585
Perceived Effectiveness	0.581	0.782	0.547

Reliability and validity of constructs are represented in Table 3 (Measurement model) and their values for Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability, and AVE were satisfactory. All the constructs have good reliability and validity as shown in the results analysis. Although the value for Perceived Effectiveness is 0.58, this construct can still be regarded as reliable and valid. Taber (2018) stated that Cronbach's Alpha values below the conventional threshold of 0.7 or even 0.6 have been accepted. Van Griethuijsen et al., (2014) justified using constructs with Cronbach's Alpha as low as 0.502 and 0.446. Taber (2018) found that slightly increasing the number of items would reach acceptable values for Cronbach's Alpha. In this study, further support for the inclusion of the construct in the model is supported through its Composite Reliability and AVE. The Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability values above 0.7 indicate sufficient internal consistency (Bagozzi and Yi, 1988), while lower values suggest a lack of reliability. In our study, the Cronbach's alpha for most constructs exceeded this threshold, demonstrating strong internal consistency. Although Perceived Effectiveness exhibited a slightly lower Cronbach's alpha, its composite reliability surpassed 0.7, confirming adequate reliability. Composite reliability, being a superior measure as it accounts for item loadings, further supported the robustness of the constructs.

Average Variance Extracted, in determining convergent validity, makes sure that every construct has explained a considerable proportion of the variance within its indicators. According to Fornell and Larcker (1981), an AVE greater than 0.5 is satisfactory. The results were found to be at least above the threshold for all constructs, meaning convergent validity was quite good and there was a high relationship between the constructs and their respective indicators. This therefore confirms that the measurement model is robust, where constructs have adequate internal consistency, high significant convergent validity, and good discriminant validity. These results therefore give assurance to the ability of the measurement model to capture the intended relationships and thus lend credence to the rigor and credibility of the study's conclusions.

Table 4				
Discriminant Validity Using Fornell and Larcker Method				
	Overall Effectiveness	Perceived Advantages	Perceived Ease of Use	Perceived Effectiveness
Overall Effectiveness	0.824			
Perceived Advantages	0.772	0.74		
Perceived Ease of Use	0.693	0.694	0.765	
Perceived Effectiveness	0.677	0.619	0.596	0.74

Discriminant validity (table 4) was tested using the Fornell-Larcker criterion that proves that all constructs in this study are differentiated and measure unique elements of the model (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). The square root of each construct's Average Variance Extracted was greater than its correlations with other constructs that proved strong evidence of discriminant validity (Hair et al., 2017). This finding indicates that the constructs capture not only the intended dimensions but also remain unique and non-redundant within the model.

Structural Model

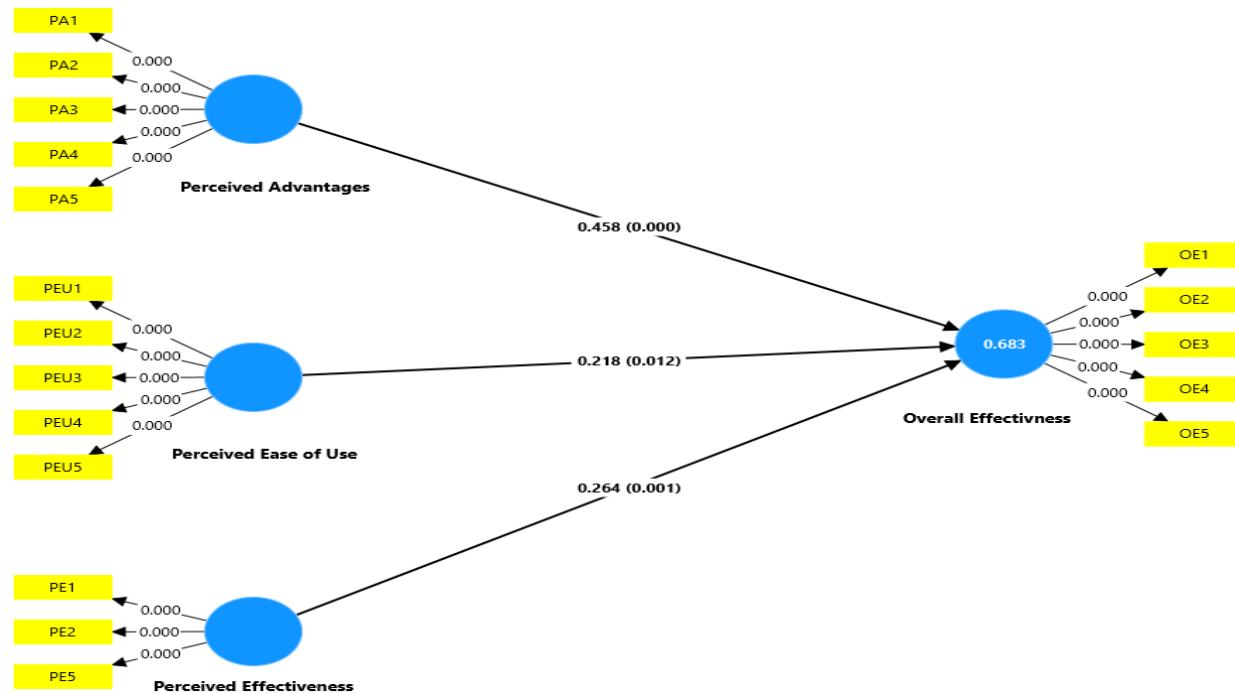


Figure 2 Structural Model

Table 5

Path Coefficient

Path	Hypotheses	Coefficient (β)	P-Value	T-Statistic	Result
PA - OE	H1	0.458	0.000 (<0.05)	6.59	Supported
PE - OE	H2	0.218	0.012 (<0.05)	2.499	Supported
PE - OE	H3	0.264	0.001 (<0.05)	3.454	Supported

The analysis of the structural model (Table 5) indicates that perceived advantages, perceived ease of use, and perceived effectiveness have significant impact on overall effectiveness in social media recruitment. More specifically, the relationship from perceived advantage to overall effectiveness is significant at $p < 0.05$ with a beta coefficient $\beta = 0.458$ and a t-value of 6.59, showing that, indeed, a positive and relatively strong association. When job applicants perceive some direct benefits in utilizing social media to find employment, then the experience will be considerably better and their feelings toward the entire recruitment process highly satisfactory. Besides, the effect of perceived ease of use on overall effectiveness is highly significant with a beta coefficient of 0.218 and t-value of 2.499 at a significance level of $p = 0.012$. This is a positive influence that suggests that if social media is easy to use and accessible, candidates will have a more positive perception of the effectiveness of the recruitment tool. Finally, the path from perceived effectiveness to overall effectiveness also shows significance, with a beta coefficient of 0.264 and a t-value of 3.454 at a significance level of $P = 0.001$. Suggesting that candidates who believe in the effectiveness of social media recruitment strategies are more likely to view these platforms as beneficial in their job search efforts.

With one percent increase in perceived Advantage, Overall effectiveness of the social media platform increases by 45.8%. People tend to use the social media platform for job searching when the platform allows the users to learn in detail about employers through real time data, helps them to find jobs that match the candidate's skills and interests. Moreover, the platform's advantage is determined by allowing the job candidate to see endorsements and recommendations from their professional network. With one percent increase in Perceived Ease of Use, Overall effectiveness of the social media platform increases by 21.8%. This tells us that when the search functionality of the platform is easy and User Interface of the job search platform is easy to use people tend to use those platforms more for a seamless job search experience.

These findings show the significance of perceptions in determining the general efficacy of social media recruitment strategies, underscoring how perceptions can have a significant impact on applicants experiences and results. Social media has evolved to be a critical part of contemporary recruitment tactics, giving businesses the chance to interact with passive prospects, boost cost effectiveness, and improve employer branding. Employers can also shape candidates' thoughts by highlighting company culture, values and mission through interactive materials like staff endorsements and glimpses of day-to-day operations. Sivertzen (2013) observed that social media recruitment enhances the company's reputation and increases prospective employee's inclination to apply for a job. According to Nazeer et al. (2024), by carefully integrating social media into HR practices, businesses can improve their employer brand, increase employee engagement and streamline the hiring process. Recruiters can enhance the candidate's experience by having direct conversations with applicants regarding their jobs and application status. This directness not only speeds up the hiring process but also gives prospective employees a favourable picture of the company. It is reported that a high rate of job seekers uses social media as a principal job search mechanism, with websites like LinkedIn, and Indeed being an essential method of reaching active and passive candidates. The research findings further strengthen the above findings by illustrating how perceived advantage, ease of use and effectiveness contributes to the overall effectiveness of social media recruitment underscoring the significance of carefully crafting the digital recruitment platform.

6. Discussion

The perceived advantage of social media recruitment platforms like LinkedIn, Indeed, and others plays an important role in their overall effectiveness. This is a principle, as postulated by the Diffusion of Innovations theory, that people will accept a new technology if they think it is better than the options available. In recruitment, the perceived benefits are cost-effectiveness, time saving, and availability of a wider pool of possible recruits. LinkedIn enables recruiters to target passive and active recruits, widening the pool of potential recruits (Sivertzen et al., 2013). Being able to send direct messages to possible recruits and view their professional profiles in full makes recruitment effective, hence time-saving and decreasing the cost of traditional recruitment practice. Social media websites also provide advanced analytics and algorithms that enable matching of candidates with job opportunities better, hence boosting the chances of successful recruit (Kaur, 2015). The benefits create high adoption among recruiters, and social media becomes entrenched in contemporary recruitment practice. The use of social media in recruitment practice also enables organizations to construct and manage their employer brand, which is important in best-fit candidate recruitment (Parry & Tyson, 2008). Thus, the perceived Advantage of using social media websites in recruitment increases their effectiveness by making the recruitment process cost-saving, time-effective, and comprehensive.

Perceived ease of use is a vital determinant that affects the overall success of social media recruitment websites. As proposed by the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) by (Davis, 1989), perceived ease of use will motivate an individual's intention to use and adopt new technology. If recruiters can easily use and comprehend sites such as LinkedIn and Indeed, then they will easily incorporate these tools into their recruitment. Easy-to-use interfaces, simple navigation, and explicit instructions on how to utilize the sites make them easy to use. LinkedIn's website enables recruiters to post vacancies, search for applicants, and interact with them without

requiring high technical skills (Sivertzen et al., 2013). Additionally, the availability of tutorials and customer support also makes it easy to use, and therefore, more recruiters adopt these sites (Kaur, 2015). When recruitment websites are easy to use, they minimize the cognitive burden for users, enabling them to concentrate more on thinking about the strategic implications of recruitment rather than the operational complexity. Not only does such convenience improve user experience but also the efficiency of the recruitment process, resulting in quicker and quality hiring decisions. The perceived ease of use is therefore a key driver of success for social media recruitment websites.

Perceived effectiveness is the degree to which users believe that a particular technology will improve their performance at work. For social media recruitment, perceived effectiveness is one of the determining factors driving the overall contribution of platforms such as LinkedIn and Indeed. If recruiters feel that the platforms will deliver them better hiring outcomes like high-quality applicants or faster time-to-hire, then they will use them and continue to use them on a regular basis. Platforms with quantifiable results, better recruitment metrics, enhance users' perception of being effective (Parry & Tyson, 2008). LinkedIn's suggestion algorithms and advanced search filters, for instance, enable recruiters to effectively identify and target appropriate candidates that fit their criteria (Sivertzen et al., 2013). Moreover, being able to quantify and monitor recruitment performance metrics enables recruiters to tailor their strategy and constantly improve the hiring results (Kaur, 2015). As recruiters become aware of the measurable advantages by the platforms, perceived effectiveness rises, thus driving them to utilize social media more to facilitate the recruitment process.

7. Managerial Implications

1. Managers need to capitalise hiring platforms like LinkedIn and Indeed to give candidates clear and comprehensive information. This may include providing timely information on employer, salary, and thorough job descriptions. Employer branding can be enhanced by asking current employees for recommendations and endorsements.
2. Organisation must give top priority to simplicity and ease of access to make the social media recruitment platforms more user friendly. One click application, resume auto fill capabilities and job search filters may enhance the platform usage and job applicants experience. Platform adoption hurdles can also be lowered by investments in AI driven job recommendation, notification systems as well as professional networks integration.
3. Investment in technology that enhance job recommendations and matching algorithms is necessary to effectively connect job searchers with the organisation. Keeping job postings updated and following up on applicants reaffirm the value of the platforms. Having access to rich candidate profiles and sharing industry trends and expansion opportunities can enhance recruiter and candidate engagement and decision-making.
4. Social media job search platforms should be integrated with overall recruitment plans. User feedback and regular updating of platform capabilities can enhance job searching experience. Creating awareness about advantages of such platforms and training HR personnel in how to use it effectively can increase recruitment success. Encouraging knowledge-sharing culture through the employment of collaborative software and AI chatbots can reduce communication and decision-making complexities. Personality profiling with the help of application of tools such as Traitify or Crystal can enable identification of best job-fit, team harmony, and increase job satisfaction.

8. Limitations and Future Research

This study is primarily concerned with workers in the IT industry employed in Karnataka, which has limitations in terms of generalizing its results to other industries or regions. The IT industry's specific dynamics, including high digital uptake and widespread remote working, might not be representative of the conditions in industries

such as healthcare, manufacturing, or education. Therefore, future studies should investigate the use of social media recruitment platforms in different industries and nations to provide a more complete picture of their implications.

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