Relevance of Social Media for Employability of Graduating Students: Lessons from Literature Review

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ABSTRACT

Social media has influenced almost each area of human life and employability is no exception. The purpose of this paper is to conduct a literature review to investigate as to how do employability of graduating students affected by their engagement on social media. For this research study more than fifty sources of published research work, articles and chapters have been referred to develop detailed understanding about the key objective of this research paper. Research papers were obtained from trustworthy sources. A list of diverse areas of employability is developed. These are the areas that assumed to be affected by social media. Furthermore, the papers were grouped into three broad categories. Research papers were studied to search implication of social media on different aspect of employability. One of the limitation of this research study is that majority of the research papers used in this research were about a specific professional networking social media platform. The key lessons developed in this research paper justify the value contribution.

Key Words

Social Media Platform, Employability, Professional Engagement and Students

Introduction

Students learn about social media well before they join their graduation or higher studies. It is not that academic campus made them aware about the existence of social media. Social media has been utilized for social interactions for a long but in the process of social media evolution some platforms have become popular for specific kind of networking and interaction(Archer &

Davison, 2008). It has been a common observation that audience specifically students stay engaged with diverse social media platforms but their reactions and posts seldom shows enough maturity that help them to get any advantage in future(Kaputa, 2005). Social media platforms are also used for content search so anyone have presence on any social media may appear in different search results(Wigan, 2020). This is important because unknowingly specific keywords can become a tag for people and careless postings and content sharing may generate challenging consequences.

A research study conducted in United Kingdom found that more than 50% of the students showed interest to remove various reactions, postings, comments and other material that they had posted. This indicated low degree of seriousness of students as far as social media communication is concerned.(Wigan, 2020). Planned and effective online presence of students can help them in their career particularly in various aspect of their employability. This research paper aims to explore possible role of social media in employability so that some lessons can be drawn as an outcome of this research that may guide students about how to harness value from careful use of social media(Finch, Hamilton, Baldwin, & Zehner, 2013). In recent past social media presence of people impacting their job applications because good numbers of employers have started to ask for web-links of social media accounts of applicant. Quick reviews of applicant's social media interactions provide much better understanding about the maturity and behavior of applicant.

Objectives of Study

It is becoming difficult to get a dream job even if students are with the demanded skill sets because the competitive job market has more supply of to-be employed applicants than its actual demand(Ozygen & Baron, 2007). The current situation of job market points toward the need of getting effectively networked with employers, employment agencies and working professionals. Social media platforms play important role in such networking that directly or indirectly contribute in employability of people. Study of various published work related to social media and employability has shown the need of another publication that focuses on developing effective lessons to convey students about how employers use social media during recruitment, how interactions on social media help and hinder chances of getting employed and how students can improve their social media presence for better employability. The purpose of this paper is to

conduct a literature review to investigate as to how do employability of graduating students affected by their engagement on social media.

Research Methodology

Areas of employability that were found to be influenced by social media were explored and listed separately. Various key words were used to collect the appropriate research papers. Most of the research papers were obtained from PROQUEST and some has been downloaded from online sources such as Research Gate and Google Scholar. The papers were grouped into three broad categories namely, "Contribution of social media in employability"-category, "social media engagement and employability"–category and "students, employer and social media"-category. Research papers were examined to explore impactful contribution of social media on explored areas of employability.

Literature Review

Social Media Platforms and Students

Students have been in touch with social media platforms since their childhood. Social media sites have affected the way students used to interact on regular basis as well as stayed connected. Culture and norm of social media evolved gradually over almost a decade(Ainin, Naqshbandi, Moghavvemi, & Jaafar, 2015). Use of emoticons in expression as well as reactions to social media post has its own grammar and expectations. Students feel ease in communicating with friends and relatives via social media platforms. Research on student engagement on social media found that students feel uncomfortable when it comes to official or formal usage of social media. In the research on online community membership the representation of students found least as compared to those who are employed or entrepreneurs(Ara, 2015). One of the important causes for such behavior is that students' perception towards social media sites is that these platforms have been developed for social engagements. Additionally, it was also found that students received less guidance about how to use social media as a resource for employability and for career management(Archer & Davison, 2008). In an interesting observation it was found that career management cell of management colleges does not take any concrete step to make students confident about how to use social media. In an exploratory survey among management students, it was found that no formal training on social media etiquettes given to students. Only a

few management colleges were found where a complete value added course on effective use of social media in career and employability designed and delivered.

Research studies conducted in the area of social media and employability reported that various job postings for beginners have been circulated through professional network sites as well as online communities of alumni and working professionals(Bennett, Dunne, & Carre, 1999). Recruiting agencies and employers were also found to give more preferences for the posting of fresh vacancies directly on professional sites because these social sites provide enough number of targeted audiences for their job postings. Dedicated human resource personnel have been allowed by the employer to place job descriptions and to monitor the inquiry related to the same. These research studies have shown the increased importance of social sites in employability as well as growing interest of employers in the utilization of social media platforms(Finch, Hamilton, Baldwin, & Zehner, 2013).

Employability and social media

Social Capital Theory (SCT) has explained how planned use of social media can unlock the possibilities for fresher as well as experienced employees. Various important and helpful career and employability related resource become easy to access provided people give careful thought to use social media for the purpose of employability(Kempster & Cope, 2010). In a recent research study, it has been concluded that current situation of COVID-19 pandemic has affected the way people work and employers recruit people. Work from home and online reporting of employees is now a truth and this may be the part of upcoming new normal of employability. It was found that use of social media for job search has increased as compared to past five years' trends. Adoption of social media as a part of job at present is a new reality. It has been observed in some of the research studies that employees especially fresher celebrate all kind of appreciations, early promotions, reward like employee of month etc. on social media sites and this not only improve their personal brand but also create interest among others in the employer(Mahadevi & Vijaylaxmi, 2012). Postings of revised HR policies to support employees on social media has improved public image of companies accordingly employers have started to explore new ways to use social media in various areas of recruitment process. Various areas of employability such as employability status, job search, references, job preparation, getting recommendations, job performance and promotions etc. have been affected by social media and

problem is that majority of graduating management students are not trained in using social media for career planning, professional development and early employability. Social media platforms that are meant for professionals have brought in the new trends related to various areas of employability as a result organizations have become more demanding but at the same time these social media platforms offer opportunities to graduating students to compare themselves against other fresher to know professional skill gaps(Wigan, 2020). Social media has made it possible to at least take try to get networked with successful professional in the country and abroad. Thus social media has created challenges but it has also enable students to use many valuable resources for their employability interest. Social media platforms have become significant source of updated information as well as a place for learning through experience sharing(Archer & Davison, 2008).

Contribution of Social Media in Job Search

Job search is about exploring new openings or opportunities. In the age of social media job applicant has to think more to display skills and talent. In context of job search resume actually does not do justice in displaying potential of a job applicant. Social media sites contribute positively in job search(Mallia, 2014). Almost every social media platform offer option to send invitation or friend request to join online community or a company's social network or network of professionals. By using appropriate key words applicant can find potential employers and can send them custom invite. This exercise has a low conversion rate but it helps to build connections(Esposito, 2014). Regular planned posting can help to market the job applicant as a bright candidate for job. Social media give better opportunity to organizations to evaluate candidature of a job applicant by the looking at past social media posts, write-ups and connections(Nisar, 2019). Students can display or share their tiny achievements which otherwise cannot find place in resume. Some of the research studies have warned the students and fresher about how social media platform can dent early attempt of job search if they do not show professional approach in their social interactions. Any single poor post or provocation by comment or any inappropriate argument on social media platform can damage image and thus cost high from career point of view.

Significance of Social Media in Recommendations and Referrals

Letter of recommendation have been considered as magical paper that serve as an assurance document about candidate. In present days such recommendation letters have found their place on social media platform(Kluemper, 2009). Recommendations and referrals are considered as indicators of potentially good candidate for job. It's not easy to get recommendations from peers or alumni. These shows how were the past relations of the job applicants. Research studies stressed upon the suggestion that students should try to get as many as possible recommendations and referrals from seniors and alumni(Vroman & Stulz, 2016). All these improve students' probability of selection in early job offerings. In research studies based on focus group of retired professionals it was found that recommendations and referrals influence the short listing of candidate for interview as well as evaluation of candidate during interview.

Social Media and Job Interview Preparation

One of the most challenging stages during recruitment process is qualifying the interview. Job interview may have one to multiple rounds. For student's job interview preparation is no more less than an examination. Research studies found that students approach their job interview preparation with the mindset that they approached their academic examinations(Berkelaar, 2015). Social media engagement can help to make students better prepare for their job interview preparation. Various social media sites are available for free to prepare students for their job. Some of the examples include Ambition box, Interview kick start, LinkedIn premium account, Glassdoor, etc. These online sites provide company specific information that otherwise consume lot of time if students have to explore by their own(Carrigan, 2007). Some of the sites provide tentative questions and answers related to a job. One of the most common issues that students face is that they don't find a partner who can help them in practicing for their job interview. Some of the social media communities help the candidates in their mock interviews. LinkedIn and may other social media platforms facilitate resume drafting.

Conclusion: Key lessons about relevance of Social Media for employability

This research study has utilized research papers and other sources of information to explore the status of social media supporting students for their employment(Labreque, 2011). Many key applications of social media in employability have been observed during review of literature. All

the important findings have been drafted by the researcher as following key lessons for graduating students.

Lesson-1 Use social media to build personal brand and it begin with training. Students should give a serious thought to learn social media functions and content writing Training will significantly reduce risk of backfire and moreover after training students can use it with confidence.

Lesson-2 Browse to create connections with professionals, communities and organizations. Becoming a part of professional network can expose students to so many practical conversations that induce more maturity.

Lesson-3 Prepare and Post work samples regularly. Students should understand that they should find their key area of interest and plan some mini project. Once such project got completed showcase these on social media platform. Additionally, presentations, videos and any tiny reward should be posted effectively. All these help to gain attraction from potential employers who hunt social media for good candidates.

Lesson-4 Competency development among students has various other sources outside the campus classrooms. Students as a fresher learn some of the contemporary competency skills through their physical interaction with alumni and senior friends. Students can devote time for such interactions that are easy to hold on social media sites.

Lesson-5 Stay professional in conversations and behavior on social media. Avoid any inaccurate information or misleading information about qualification and skill sets. Stay honest in showcasing achievements. List down selective few social media platform and sites that have the potential to contribute in employability.

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