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Examining Social Media Recruitment Practices: An Application of the UTAUT Model in Mumbai

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Abstract

The integration of social media into recruitment is a prominent global trend, yet many organizations, particularly in rapidly evolving markets like Mumbai, struggle to fully realize its potential in identifying and persuading ideal candidates. This study addresses the critical gap between HR practitioners' interest in social media recruitment and the persistent challenges in its successful implementation. Leveraging an extension of the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT), the research investigated the factors influencing Behavioural Intention (BI) to adopt social media for recruitment among HR professionals in Mumbai.A survey was conducted with a stratified sample of 100 HR practitioners across diverse industries. The research instrument a modified UTAUT scale examined the influence of Performance Expectancy, Effort Expectancy, Perceived Credibility, and Self-Efficacy on Behavioural Intention. The collected data demonstrated high reliability and validity, and hypotheses were tested using path coefficient analysis.The results revealed a nuanced pattern of adoption determinants: no significant relationship was found between Behavioural Intention and Performance Expectancy, Effort Expectancy, or Perceived Credibility. However, a statistically significant positive relationship emerged between Self-Efficacy and Behavioural Intention (β=0.258, $p<0.05$).

These findings suggest that HR practitioners' intention to use social media for recruitment is not primarily driven by beliefs about improved job outcomes, ease of use, or data security concerns. Instead, the critical barrier to adoption is a perceived lack of self-confidence or skill in effectively utilizing these platforms. The conclusion is that targeted training and skill development programs focused on building practical social media recruitment competencies are the most instrumental intervention for fostering adoption. By addressing this perceived self-efficacy gap, organizations can empower HR professionals and unlock social media's strategic potential in a competitive talent market.

Keywords: Social Media, Recruitment, Self-Efficacy, Path Coefficient, Discriminant Validity, HR Practitioners, Mumbai

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1.0 Introduction

The pervasive integration of digital technologies across all management functions has accelerated in recent years, with social media platforms emerging as a dominant force. These platforms facilitate the widespread sharing of information and ideas, encompassing both textual and visual content, through virtual networks and communities. While a significant proportion of Fortune 500 companies leverage social media for talent acquisition and candidate screening, reports like those from Forbes (Jan, 2023) suggest a critical gap remains. Many organizations are yet to fully realize the potential of social media to enhance recruiting efficacy, specifically in identifying ideal candidates and effectively persuading them to apply for and accept job offers. This challenge is particularly relevant in contexts like Mumbai, where HR practitioners express a strong interest in utilizing social media for recruitment, yet face obstacles in its successful implementation.Human Resource (HR) practitioners in various industries express a strong interest in leveraging social media platforms for talent acquisition, recognizing the potential for enhanced candidate sourcing, employer branding, and faster, cost-effective recruitment processes. Despite this interest, many organizations face significant challenges in successfully implementing social media as a core recruitment strategy. These challenges include a lack of strategic integration, insufficient expertise and resources, and difficulties in effectively engaging and persuading ideal candidates to apply for or accept job offers. In emerging markets like Mumbai, where HR professionals are eager to utilize social media, these obstacles are even more pronounced, leading to missed opportunities in maximizing the platform's full recruitment potential. Consequently, there is a critical need to understand the barriers to effective social media recruitment implementation, as well as best practices that can bridge the gap between intent and successful execution.

The full realization of social media's potential in recruitment is significant because it not only enhances the speed and efficiency of hiring but also provides a more targeted, cost-effective, and engaging way to connect with top talent. In a competitive and fast-changing job market like Mumbai, organizations that leverage social media effectively gain a competitive advantage in attracting, engaging, and persuading the best candidates to join their teams.The significance of organizations fully realizing the potential of social media to enhance recruiting efficacy is multi-dimensional. As competition for top talent intensifies globally, especially in fast-growing and highly competitive markets like Mumbai, the ability to tap into social media's power can provide a substantial advantage in recruitment. Social media platforms such as LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram offer access to a vast and diverse candidate pool that goes far beyond traditional recruitment channels. By effectively using these platforms, organizations can reach both active job seekers and passive candidates (those who are not actively looking but might be open to new opportunities). This broader reach is especially important in markets like Mumbai, which are characterized by rapid urbanization, a growing pool of professionals, and high mobility in the workforce. This research explored various barriers to effective social media recruitment implementation, as well as best practices that can bridge the gap between intent and successful execution.

2.0 Literature Review

The increasing integration of social media into business functions has transformed the way organizations approach recruitment. Social media platforms such as LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram are no longer just networking tools but have emerged as strategic channels for talent acquisition, employer branding, and candidate engagement. Numerous studies have emphasized the advantages of using social media in recruitment, including broader candidate reach, lower costs, faster hiring cycles, and improved employer visibility. For example, Kaur et al. (2015) noted that organizations leveraging social media platforms could effectively attract passive candidates and build long-term talent pipelines. However, despite its potential, the implementation of social media recruitment strategies has been inconsistent, with many organizations struggling to move beyond surface-level usage.

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A key theoretical lens for examining technology adoption in HR is the **Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT)** developed by Venkatesh et al. (2003). This model identifies four key constructs performance expectancy, effort expectancy, social influence, and facilitating conditions as determinants of behavioural intention and technology use. UTAUT has been widely used to assess adoption behaviours across various domains, including information systems, e-governance, and mobile banking. However, its application in the context of **social media recruitment** remains underexplored, especially within emerging markets like India. In the recruitment context, **performance expectancy** refers to the belief that using social media will enhance recruitment outcomes, while **effort expectancy** reflects perceived ease of use. Studies such as those by Davis (1989) and Venkatesh and Davis (2000) suggest that ease of use and perceived usefulness are critical in influencing technology adoption decisions, including within HR practices.Another critical factor in technology adoption, especially relevant to HR professionals, is **self-efficacy** the belief in one's capabilities to use new technologies effectively. Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory (1986) positions self-efficacy as central to behavioural change and technology use. Sherer et al. (1982) expanded on this by developing a generalized self-efficacy scale, which has been applied in various technology acceptance studies. HR professionals with high self-efficacy are more likely to explore and apply innovative recruitment strategies, including social media tools, even when facing resource or skill limitations. In the context of Mumbai, where the workforce is digitally active and recruitment needs are high-paced, the self-confidence of HR professionals in navigating these platforms could determine adoption levels more significantly than perceptions of ease or usefulness alone.

Perceived credibility is another relevant variable in technology-mediated recruitment. As discussed by Newell and Goldsmith (2001), credibility involves the extent to which information or platforms are trusted in terms of accuracy, reliability, and security. In the case of social media, credibility concerns may stem from fears about data privacy, misinformation, or the informal nature of content. Some research suggests that credibility may influence adoption, particularly in regulated or traditional sectors like finance and healthcare. However, its influence may vary by context and user demographics.In the Indian context, while studies have explored digital transformation in HRM, there remains a notable lack of empirical research focused specifically on social media recruitment adoption through the UTAUT framework. Especially in a city like Mumbai, which presents a blend of modern HR practices and traditional business systems, there is a need to empirically examine which factors most strongly influence HR professionals' willingness to adopt social media for recruitment. This literature review highlights a clear gap in understanding the nuanced barriers and enablers of such adoption, providing the foundation for this study's framework and methodology.

3.0 Research Methodology

The study investigated HR practitioners' behavioural intention to adopt social media in recruitment. A stratified sampling technique was used to collect data from 100 HR professionals representing diverse industries. A modified version of the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) scale (Venkatesh et al., 2003) served as the primary instrument, focusing on performance and effort expectancies. This scale was augmented with two items adapted from Sherer et al.'s (1982) self-efficacy scale, grounded in Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory, and three modified items of perceived credibility derived from Newell and Goldsmith (2001). The composite reliability of the scale was confirmed, exceeding the 0.7 threshold. Convergent validity was assessed using the average variance extracted (AVE), while discriminant validity was established via the Fornell-Larcker Criterion and the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT). Multicollinearity was not a significant concern, as evidenced by acceptable Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) scores.

3.1 Objectives of the Study

3.1.1 To study the acceptance and use of social media in recruitment process.
3.1.2 To identify the factors that influence a person's decision to use a social media in recruitment process
3.1.3 To establish relationship among Behavioural Intention to use social media in recruitment process with performance expectancy, effort expectancy, perceived credibility, perceived self- efficacy.

3.2 Hypotheses of the Study

3.2.1: There is no significant relationship between Performance Expectancy and Behavioural Intention.
3.2.2: There is no significant relationship between Effort Expectancy and Behavioural Intention.
3.2.3: There is no significant relationship between Perceived Credibility and Behavioural Intention.
3.2.4: There is no significant relationship between Self-Efficacy and Behavioural Intention.

3.3 Scope and Sampling Framework

The scope of the study was limited to HR practitioners working in Mumbai. A stratified sampling method was employed to collect data from HR Executives and HR Managers across diverse sectors, including IT, Banking & Finance, Education, Manufacturing, Retail, Construction, Healthcare, Hotels, and small and medium private companies. Following initial telephonic contact with 147 HR practitioners, a link to an online questionnaire (via Google Forms) was distributed. The 100 responses were received, comprising 59% male respondents, with the majority of participants below 40 years of age.

3.4 Description of Tool: This study investigated technology adoption by extending the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT). While UTAUT (Venkatesh et al., 2003) posits performance expectancy and effort expectancy as key determinants of technology use, this research also considered perceived credibility (Newell & Goldsmith, 2001), reflecting user trust and belief in the technology's reliability. The self-efficacy was also added which represents user confidence in their ability to use the technology effectively.

A modified UTAUT scale was employed, focusing on performance and effort expectancies items, and incorporating two items from the self-efficacy scale developed by Sherer et al. (1982), grounded in Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory, and three modified items from Newell and Goldsmith's (2001)

3.5 Reliability and Validity of the Scale: The reliability was confirmed by calculating composite reliability (CR) for all constructs, with all values exceeding the 0.70 threshold. Construct validity was assessed using average variance extracted (AVE), and all values met the acceptable criterion of 0.50 or higher.Table No. 1: Reliability

Construct	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability (rho_a)	Composite reliability (rho_c)	Average variance extracted (AVE)
Effort Expectancy	0.809	0.948	0.878	0.709
Perceived Credibility	0.769	0.974	0.852	0.66
Performance Expectancy	0.8	0.8	0.909	0.833
Self-Efficacy	0.7	0.898	0.859	0.755

Discriminant validity was assessed using the Fornell-Larcker Criterion and the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT). The Fornell-Larcker Criterion analysis demonstrated that the square root of each construct's average variance extracted (AVE) exceeded its correlation with other constructs, thus indicating adequate discriminant validity. Furthermore, all Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio values for construct pairs were below the 0.85 threshold, further supporting discriminant validity.

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Fornell-Larcker Criterion

Table No. 2: FLC

Construct	BI	Effort Expectancy	Perceived Credibility	Performance Expectancy	Self-Efficacy
Behavioural Intention (BI)	1				
Effort Expectancy	0.315	0.842			
Perceived Credibility	0.217	0.47	0.812		
Performance Expectancy	0.241	0.585	0.312	0.913	
Self-Efficacy	0.332	0.271	0.177	0.31	0.869

Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)

Table No. 3: HTMT

Construct	BI	Effort Expectancy	Perceived Credibility	Performance Expectancy	Self-Efficacy
Behavioural Intention (BI)					
Effort Expectancy	0.311				
Perceived Credibility	0.215	0.625			
Performance Expectancy	0.269	0.789	0.36		
Self-Efficacy	0.368	0.359	0.212	0.389	

The Multicollinearity among the items within each construct was assessed by calculating the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) for each indicator in the outer model. All VIF values were below the threshold of 5, indicating no significant multicollinearity issues among the measured variables.

Variance Inflation Factor

Table No. 4: VIF

Items	Constructs	VIF OUTER
The recruiters will use social media for Hiring in Future.	Behavioural Intention (BI)	1
I find social media in recruiting useful	Effort Expectancy	1.494
Learning to use social media for recruiting is easy for me	Effort Expectancy	2.269
Becoming skilful at using social media for recruiting is easy for me	Effort Expectancy	2.05
When using social media for recruiting, I believe my information is kept confidential	Perceived Credibility	1.616
When using social media for recruiting, I believe my company's privacy would not be divulged	Perceived Credibility	1.787
When using social media for recruiting, I believe the social media environment is safe	Perceived Credibility	1.446
Using social media for recruiting would improve my work performance	Performance Expectancy	1.799
Using social media for recruiting would save my time	Performance Expectancy	1.799
I could use social media for Hiring, if I had the built-in help guidance for assistance	Self-Efficacy	1.409
I could use social media for recruiting, if I had seen other recruiter using it	Self-Efficacy	1.409

4. Data Analysis

4.1 Hypotheses Testing – Path Coefficient: Hypothesis testing involved computing path coefficients and their significance levels to examine the hypothesized causal relationships between variables. The analysis revealed no significant relationships between behavioral intention and performance expectancy (H1), behavioral intention and effort expectancy (H2), or behavioral intention and perceived credibility (H3). Therefore, these null hypotheses were failed to be rejected.

Table No. 5: Path coefficients

Path	Path coefficients
Effort Expectancy -> BI	**0.199**
Perceived Credibility-> BI	**0.071**
Performance Expectancy -> BI	**0.022**
Self-Efficacy -> BI	**0.258**

Table No. 6: T test and significance value for Path Coefficient

Path	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P values
Effort Expectancy -> BI	0.199	0.203	0.134	1.487	0.137
Perceived Credibility-> BI	0.071	0.089	0.129	0.549	0.583
Performance Expectancy -> BI	0.022	0.041	0.119	0.186	0.853
Self-Efficacy -> BI	0.258	0.248	0.106	2.445	0.015

Table No. 7: Confidence Interval

Path	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	2.50%	97.50%
Effort Expectancy -> BI	0.199	0.203	-0.074	0.463
Perceived Credibility-> BI	0.071	0.089	-0.21	0.319
Performance Expectancy -> BI	0.022	0.041	-0.178	0.295
Self-Efficacy -> BI	0.258	0.248	0.038	0.442

Table No. 8: Model Fit

	Saturated Model	Estimated Model
SRMR	0.093	0.093
d_ULS	0.574	0.574
d_G	0.301	0.301
Chi-square	181.14	181.14
NFI	0.592	0.592

MSW MANAGEMENT -Multidisciplinary, Scientific Work and Management Journal
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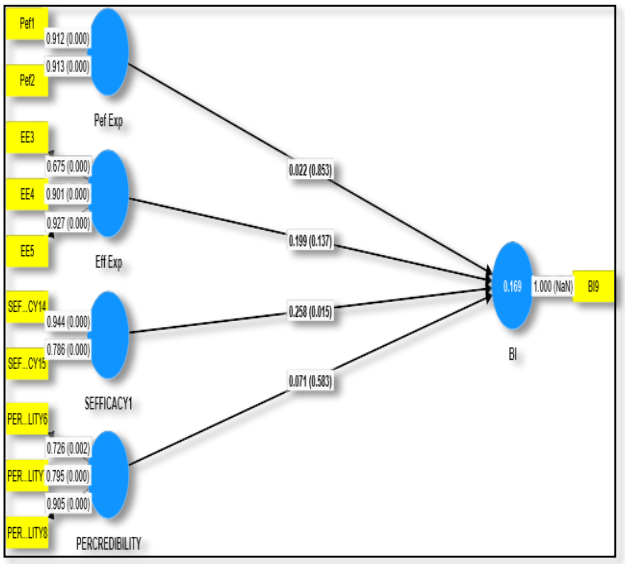
Figure No.1: **Path coefficients, R-Squared values, and outer loadings for the Effort Expectancy; Performance Expectancy and Perceived Credibility**



Source: Primary

While no significant relationships were found between behavioral intention and above examined constructs, a statistically significant ($p < 0.05$) positive relationship emerged between behavioral intention and self-efficacy. A one-unit increase in behavioral intention was associated with a 0.258 unit increase in self-efficacy. The model demonstrated acceptable fit, as indicated by a standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) of 0.09. Consequently, the null hypothesis of no significant relationship between self-efficacy and behavioral intention was rejected.

4.2 Findings of the study: The hypothesis testing, conducted through path coefficient analysis and significance level determination, revealed a nuanced pattern of relationships between the studied variables. While no significant associations were found between behavioural intention and performance expectancy (H1), effort expectancy (H2), or perceived credibility (H3), leading to the non-rejection of these null hypotheses, a statistically significant ($p < 0.05$) positive relationship emerged between behavioural intention and self-efficacy. Specifically, a one-unit increase in behavioural intention corresponded to a 0.258 unit increase in self-efficacy. The model exhibited acceptable fit, evidenced by a standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) of 0.09. This finding led to the rejection of the null hypothesis positing no significant relationship between self-efficacy and behavioural intention.The analysis revealed that behavioral intention to use social media in recruitment was not significantly related to effort expectancy, performance expectancy, or perceived credibility. However, a positive and significant relationship was found between behavioral intention and self-efficacy.

5.0 Discussion of the Study: Self-efficacy, defined as an individual's belief in their capacity to succeed at a given task (Dinev et al., 2009; Schunk, 2000), played a crucial role in this study. The two self-efficacy items, "I could use social media for recruiting if I had seen other recruiters using it" and "I could use social media for hiring if I had built-in help/guidance for assistance," indirectly suggest a perceived need for training to effectively utilize social media in recruitment. This finding implies that HR practitioners' future use of social media for recruitment is not primarily driven by beliefs about improved job performance, ease of use, or concerns regarding data protection and privacy. Rather, the results suggest that access to appropriate training on social media usage in recruitment could significantly influence adoption. In essence, the perceived lack of self-efficacy, addressable through training, appears to be a key barrier to social media adoption in this context. Once equipped with the necessary skills and confidence through training, HR practitioners seem more likely to integrate social media into their recruitment processes, regardless of other perceived benefits or drawbacks.

6.0 Conclusion and Implications: The findings of the study suggested that HR practitioners' adoption of social media for recruitment is not significantly influenced by perceptions of performance enhancement, ease of use, or concerns about data privacy and protection. Instead, the critical factor appears to be self-efficacy, specifically the belief in one's ability to effectively utilize these platforms for recruitment. This implies that targeted training programs focused on developing practical social media recruitment skills could be instrumental in driving adoption. By addressing the perceived lack of self-efficacy through appropriate training interventions, organizations can potentially unlock the potential of social media in their recruitment processes, as HR practitioners, empowered with the necessary skills and confidence, are more likely to integrate these tools regardless of other perceived advantages or disadvantages. A key limitation of this study is its focus on a specific context (e.g., Mumbai), limiting the generalizability of findings to other regions or industries. Future research could explore these relationships across diverse settings and examine the specific content and delivery methods of training programs that are most effective in enhancing self-efficacy and promoting social media adoption in HR.

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