

Chapter 17

Navigating Employer Branding in the Digital Age: Exploring the Impact of Social Media Networking During the COVID–19 Pandemic

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ABSTRACT

The COVID-19 pandemic has transformed the world of work, and social media has emerged as a critical platform for companies to connect with their employees, customers, and stakeholders. As companies navigate the new reality, their ability to adapt to the challenges posed by the pandemic and maintain their employer branding has become more important than ever. Thus, the foremost goal of the study is to examine the impact of social media networking on employer branding during the COVID-19 pandemic. The target audience of the study was HR professionals of private organizations situated in Tri-city (Chandigarh, Panchkula, and Mohali). Findings of the study revealed that social media has a crucial role in employer branding during the COVID-19. Also, the study revealed that performance expectancy (PE), effort expectancy (EE), social influence (SI) significantly influence behavioural intentions (BI); further, facilitating conditions (FC) and BI significantly influence actual use.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic has been a defining moment in society, prompting technological advancements and digitalization along with structural transformation (Bocar et al., 2022; Khan & Magd, 2021; Khan et al., 2022; Yadav et al. 2025). As individuals and businesses modified their way of responding to the threat of getting the infection, millions of people mislaid their work or were assigned to “government assistance programs”. For almost the same circumstances, millions of other people significantly changed their working style, migrating from workplaces to their residences (Bocar et al., 2022; Khatri et al., 2023). Because of their employment conditions, millions of persons were at an elevated threat of getting COVID-19 (Bocar et al., 2022; Khatri et al., 2023, Khan & Naim, 2023; Zareen & Khan, 2023). In the situation of this pandemic social media played an important role in helping all of us stay connected and many companies have started opting for social media for employer branding (Saleem et al., 2022; Saleem et al., 2023; Magd & Khan, 2022; Magd et al., 2023a; Sharma et al., 2024).

The notion of employer brand has been defined by Ambler and Barrow (Ambler & Barrow, 1996). They emphasized the need to adopt brand management strategies in HRM, defining the employer brand as “the package of functional, economic, and psychological benefits supplied by employment, and associated with the employing organization.” There is currently a scarcity of research into employer branding. These few research findings illustrate that various recruitment strategies are leveraged to sell the brand outwardly while also increasing applicant number, excellence, and administrative presentation (Collins & Stevens, 2002; Kamal et al., 2022). Employer branding is a beneficial method for developing a valuable business brand, according to most of the studies (Ambler & Barrow, 1996; Saleem et al., 2022; Khan et al., 2022). As per Berthon et al. (2005), an explanation of what makes an organization appealing to present and probable employees is required. This is a crucial area because if an employer brand is appealing to employees, it can create the necessary results.

With the growth of digital technologies like artificial intelligence (AI), Internet of Things (IoT), Digital Marketing (DM), and Machine Learning (ML), it is expected that social media interactions will become even more prominent and interactive in the future (Naim et al., 2023; Naim et al., 2024a; 2024b; Khan, 2023; Khan et al., 2023; Naim & Khan, 2023; Magd et al., 2023; Karyamsetty, et al., 2023; Magd et al., 2023b; Khan et al., 2024; Masoom et al., 2024). This will inevitably impact employers and individuals alike.

Social media (SM) is “a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of User Generated Content” (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010a; Sharma et al., 2023a; 2023b; Saleem et al., 2023). The furthest protruding in the professional context is LinkedIn. LinkedIn is primarily used as a tool for both companies and job seekers in the hiring process (Chiang & Suen, 2015). User can create public accounts on the platform and make their social connections accessible. It’s a fantastic way to connect with additional connections and their buddies’ stretched networks. For a company, this denotes having contact with a diverse pool of job candidates. Both employers and job seekers benefit from the simplicity and accessibility that social networking sites provide, and these attributes make them a popular source of information throughout the job search (Kissel & Büttgen, 2015). For an employer, this means having access to a diverse pool of active and passive job candidates. SM networks can be a useful medium for promoting and connecting with current and potential employees. As a result, many businesses use their SM sites as a marketing tool, a method of posting job openings on the internet that, according to various studies, has a favorable impact on the organization’s image (Theurer et al., 2018; Ligorì et al., 2022). For various reasons, today’s

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