A Conceptual Examining of the Interplay Between Technical and Conceptual Skills of Social Media Managers as Predictors of Job Performance: The Moderating Influence on Brand Equity

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Abstract

This study explores the impact of social media managers'(SMM) technical and conceptual skills on job performance, with brand equity as a moderating factor. As social media usage grows, firms integrate it into marketing plans, necessitating research on its influence on job performance. Expected positive outcomes include marketing performance, cost effectiveness, operational excellence, and customer satisfaction. The research aims to enhance theoretical understanding of social media managers' roles and guide organizations in leveraging their contributions to boost employee job performance. Empirical testing will further illuminate the link between technical and conceptual skills, job performance, brand equity, and social exchange theory.

Keywords: social media, social media manager, brand equity, job performance

1. Introduction and Background

In industrial management and organisational behavior, job performance is apparently the most important and studied component (Deng et al., 2023). According to Aung et al. (2023), it is characterised as individual behavior that people exhibit to add value to the organization and advance its objectives (Aung et al., 2023). The degree to which an employee satisfies overall organizational performance standards is another way to conceptualize job performance (Itani et al., 2023) as an achievement-related behavior with an evaluation component (Jiang et al., 2023). The definition of job performance has changed significantly over the past few decades, moving from a more traditional perspective concentrating on employment and set duties to a broader understanding of work roles in dynamic organizational contexts (Sørlie et al., 2022). Social networking networks are used professionally by all organizations. Thus, it becomes necessary and appropriate for firms to plan their staff by evolving circumstances (Wu et al., 2022). According to Tandon et al. (2022), workers use social media to build relationships with coworkers, gather helpful information for solving problems at work, get to know their colleagues, and ask inquiries of other employees about work-related matters (Yousaf et al., 2022). Studies on the effects of social media on job performance as a result of interacting with social media managers (SMM) are, nevertheless, scarce (Ali-Hassan et al., 2015; Yen et al., 2020).

A middle manager handles social media on behalf of the company or as a social media manager. Middle managers frequently have more significant ties to external stakeholders than top managers (Galiano-Coronil et al., 2023). Social media managers have a dual responsibility of informing external stakeholders about the company's plan and responding to their demands and criticisms in a way that protects their reputation (Khan, 2022). Social media managers are pioneers in personal branding and provide a distinctive viewpoint for comprehending the personal branding tactics they observe and personally encounter on social media (Chaker et al., 2022).

Brand equity (BE) is one of the concepts that academics studying brand management have paid close attention to in recent decades (Gallart, 2020). This is a crucial marketing subject and a valuable tool for businesses (Gómez-Rico et al., 2023). However, there is still a lack of scholarly agreement over its definition, scope, and measurement (Luffarelli et al., 2023). Concerning the latter, the dispute over the most appropriate way to quantify BE further exacerbates marketing experts' difficulties, especially when determining where to devote time and funds to brand-building initiatives reasonably (Oliveira et al., 2023). The BE idea describes a particular brand's value to a company's offerings (Rios Romero et al., 2023). Because branding acts as a product-differentiation aspect that supports decision-making based on the experiences and credibility connected with the brand, it helps consumers make more choices (Sarpong et al., 2023). Brands with high (BE) are expected to have higher profit margins, communicate more effectively, and significantly impact consumer preferences and buy intentions (Laradi et al., 2023). Consequently, several studies have discovered that BE

has a beneficial impact on future cash flow and profits, customer readiness to pay higher prices, share value, and the results of brand marketing initiatives, among other things (Laradi et al., 2023). It is also known to assist in reducing the risks connected with innovation: businesses with a high BE level will be less negatively impacted by an unsuccessful attempt at innovation than businesses with a low BE level (Cheng & Cheng, 2023). Investigating the underlying relationship mechanisms between SMM technical skills and job performance, as well as SMM conceptual skills and job performance, are, therefore, the main goals of this study. This study also looks into the moderating function of brand equity or how it affects the links between job success and SMM conceptual and technical skills. In conclusion, this study aims to answer what variables affect workers' productivity when using social media in the workplace and presents a novel strategy incorporating social exchange theory (Blau, 2017). In conclusion, the following questions are the focus of this study:

Proposition 1. Does SMM Technical skills have a significant and positive relationship with job performance?

Proposition 2. Does SMM Conceptual skills have a significant and positive relationship with job performance?

Proposition 3. Does brand equity moderate the relationship between SMM technical skills and job performance?

Proposition 4. Does brand equity moderate the relationship between SMM conceptual skills and job performance?

The first section of this article covers a wide range of topics, including technical skills, conceptual use, brand equity, job performance, social media managers, and social media. Secondly, the present study examines the theoretical underpinnings of this research, which are based on the social exchange theory and aid in formulating hypotheses. Third, the research outlines the suggested study approach. Lastly, the debate, its shortcomings, and its prospects for further study and conclusion are examined.

1.1 Research Gap

Despite extensive research on job performance in industrial management and organizational behavior, there is a notable gap in understanding the impact of social media managers' (SMM) technical and conceptual skills on job performance, especially in brand equity. While social media's influence on job performance is recognized, studies on the specific interactions with SMMs are limited. As digital innovators, social media managers play a crucial role in shaping brand equity through their activities on various platforms. Brand equity is a complex concept with ongoing debates over its definition and measurement. The relationship between SMM skills, brand equity, and job performance remains underexplored. This study aims to fill this gap by investigating the mechanisms linking SMM technical and conceptual skills to job performance and examining the moderating role of brand equity. The research seeks to shed

light on the variables influencing worker productivity in the context of social media use, employing a novel strategy that integrates social exchange theory.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Job Performance

One of the main areas of study for organisational behavior is job performance. According to earlier research, job performance is a vast and complicated concept with in-role and creative components (Masias-Fernandez et al., 2023). "Actions stated and required by an employee's job description and so mandated, appraised, and rewarded by the employing company" (Janssen & Yperen, 2004, p. 369) constitute in-role work performance. Because work behavior is predictable thanks to these sets of norms, fundamental organisational tasks can be managed and coordinated to meet organisational objectives (Janssen & Van Yperen, 2004). Additionally, a company must allow its staff to innovate on the fly to respond to novel opportunities, challenging circumstances, and odd circumstances (Al-Kharabsheh et al., 2023). "The intentional generation, promotion, and manifestation of innovative ideas within the organization" defines job performance (Janssen & Van Yperen, 2004, p. 370). An employee's ability to accomplish their job is evaluated by their ability to generate novel and practical ideas and by their discretionary actions beyond their assigned responsibilities (Hilton et al., 2023).

2.2 Brand Equity

Brand equity is predicated on two deeply held assumptions made by Aaker and Keller, which have guided most academics' work to date. Brand equity is defined by Aaker and Moorman (2017) as a brand's assets and liabilities; however, it is not made clear if they are based on customers or consumers. He suggests a new word for brand equity: consumer-based brand equity (CBBE), which comprises four components: perceived quality, brand loyalty, brand association, and brand awareness. According to Keller (2003), the difference in how brand awareness affects how consumers respond to brand marketing is known as the CBBE. Since it unites brand awareness and image, his brand equity concept is the most significant. However, Aaker and Moorman (2017) point out that because different product contexts are unique, brand equity ideas and elements may evolve or alter. However, the researchers must still offer proof of the importance and relevance. In this study, brand equity is a construct that influences prospective students' involvement intentions and comes after SMMA as its antecedent. Engagement describes a prospective student's sentiments toward the higher education institution throughout the initial stages of their decision-making process. It is important because choosing the correct college requires careful thought. According to Aaker and Moorman (2017), brand awareness is the main element affecting consumers' attitudes and perceptions. This is corroborated by Tasci et al. (2016), who assert that to assess the cross-brand validity of the CBBE model, they chose brand familiarity (awareness) and brand image as the launchpad factors that have the most significant impact on the entire model.

2.3 Technical Skills

Technical skills are knowledge, proficiency, or skills pertaining to a worker's field, such as engineering or technical (Medina-Durango & Posso-Suárez, 2010). Technical skills, sometimes known as "hard skills," are frequently linked to the use of tools and equipment needed to perform tasks correctly and efficiently, as well as all things technical. It is more easily known and comprehended because it is readily apparent to the unaided eye (Nasir et al., 2011). Technical skills call for a combination of specialized knowledge and bodily function abilities to accomplish a goal (Das & Chaudhuri, 2020). Technological abilities in the workplace often relate to practical tasks or technical processes that are simple to see, measure, and quantify. The abilities are concrete, measurable, and typically teachable; examples include changing tires or typing 50 words per minute (Adnan et al., 2014). From an alternative perspective, technical skills refer to the capacity to carry out tasks with technical proficiency and to independently and critically monitor them (Sohimi et al., 2019). Both official and informal methods can be used to gain technical skills. Formally speaking, Medina (2010) clarified that the conventional route is via academic channels, specifically through higher education institutions. Moreover, one approach to acquiring technical skills is enrolling in classes and seminars run by international organizations like the International Electrical and Electronic Engineers (IEEE) and earning certification via them. The non-formal approach involves acquiring technical skills through written, electronic, and gradual lessons (Medina, 2010). To ensure that skills are continuously improved, involvement in the field of effort must be consistent to improve technical knowledge.

2.4 Conceptual Skills

Conceptual abilities aid in developing strategies, strategic thinking, and efficient resource allocation in an industry (Elizabeth et al., 2022). Conceptual skills include the capacity to view the business as a whole, to assess and diagnose the circumstances, and to discern between causes and effects (Mullins, 2002). According to Randler and Bogner (2006), conceptual talents help a firm deal with ambiguity. Conceptual abilities allow the business owner to diagnose problems and discern between causes and effects by viewing the company as a whole (He, 2015). Conceptual skills are one of the three skill sets that Abdul et al. (2011) identified as essential to an organization's performance. While there are several entrepreneurial skills sets that are helpful in various contexts, conceptual skills are typically more applicable in higher-order thinking. They are helpful when formulating large strategic scenarios. Thus, conceptual abilities are frequently seen as essential to the success of small and medium-sized businesses. Previous studies have shown that an SME's ability to succeed and maintain its competitiveness depends significantly on the entrepreneur's competencies, with conceptual skills being one of those competencies (Liu & Li, 2014). According to Donnan et al. (2015), conceptual skills include strategic thinking and taking calculated risks.

2.5 Theoretical Underpinning

Behavioral psychology is presented by social exchange theorist Blau (1964) to explain human interactions via the dynamic's observations of rewards and benefits. According to this idea, social exchange interactions are characterized by people volunteering their time in exchange for something in return, which encourages them to do so. According to Zeb et al. (2023), there will be an increase in performance outcomes when upper management supports its staff, based on the social exchange hypothesis. They also proposed that the number of goals management has achieved with staff support is a proxy for management competency. Aji et al. (2020) went on to say that when management is helpful, caring, and supportive, SMM would naturally reciprocate, contribute to job performance, and stay motivated to carry out the management-assigned aim
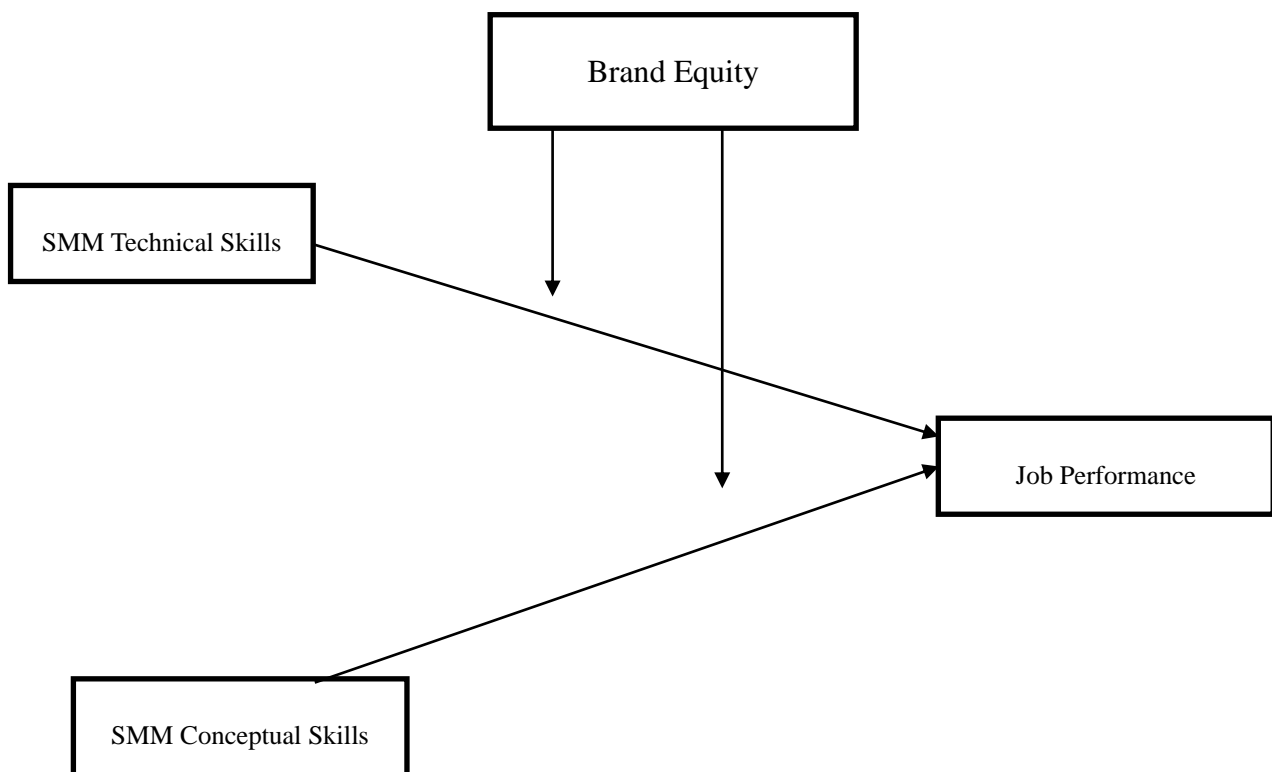

Fig. 1. Conceptual Framework

2.6 Conceptual Framework and Propositions

Figure 1 was developed as a direct result of the outcomes of an extensive literature review on the proposed hypothesis. The framework was created to show the relationships between the research variables based on the discussed discussion of pertinent and prior research. It is essentially derived from social media, social media managers, brand management models, social exchange theory, and job performance. Based on the aforementioned review, the study suggests a research model (Figure 1). According to Itani et al. (2022), using social media

technologies within a company can alter social networks over time, and these changes can positively impact worker performance and productivity, among other significant economic benefits. Furthermore, because of the valuable resources and knowledge exchanged through those social networks, previous study suggests that having social network linkages can be connected with improved job performance (Nguyen, 2022; Yousaf et al., 2022). In addition, the model suggests that brand equity moderates social network ties, which in turn affects job performance.

2.7 The Relationship Between SMM Technical Skills and Job Performance

The manager's technical knowledge relates to understanding how the company operates and the tools, machinery, and systems utilized to keep things running smoothly (Wade & Parent, 2002). Technical expertise is essential for better control and evaluating employee performance. Possessing technological competencies aids managers in overcoming work-related stress and meeting deadlines (Tiraieyari et al., 2009). Furthermore, in earlier research, Capone et al. (2022) pointed out that technical competence and the manager's effectiveness in using those abilities are two factors that can be used to assess organizational performance and project success (Seate et al., 2016). The managers' technical skills enable them to mentor their supervisees when errors and issues arise with installed machinery and systems (such as using artificial intelligence), enabling workers to perform their jobs more effectively (Khan et al., 2015). Employee opinions about the use of managers' technological skills are inconsistent. They feel that managers' technical abilities are less significant than their human and conceptual skills when managing people in the workplace because using technology at work makes people stressed and unhappy. Additionally, personality research has argued that the qualities of interpersonal and communication skills that make good managers, such as those that make good professionals with high technical skills, are opposed to the qualities of high technical skills managers possess. Managers with excellent technical skills also excel in supervising individuals working under their supervision, and these managers are typically rewarded for their "best and brightest" performance due to their technical skills. These managers lose the loyalty of their staff because they become task-oriented rather than people-oriented, placing less value on humans than on machines. However, when managing employee performance in businesses, technology outperforms other talents. Having technical knowledge can be advantageous or a curse when managing staff (Yamoah, 2014). The conflicting evidence encouraged researchers to formulate hypotheses.

Proposition 1: Technical skills have a positive and significant relationship with job performance

2.8 The Relationship between SMM conceptual Skills and Job Performance

People are impacted by the knowledge and suggestions their bosses offer, and conceptual talents give one an advantage in the workplace (Hazman & Mohtar, 2017). Top-level

managers typically employ their conceptual talents, but they also use these skills to influence their subordinates by demonstrating the ability to make timely decisions and manage portfolios for better results for both the organization and the person. It aids in the managers' ability to construct a sound causal chain connecting any choice or action done. The conceptual talents strengthen setting goals and supplying workers with the necessary skills. An organization needs competent workers, and managers with conceptual skills can help staff members function efficiently and in the appropriate direction. Building trust-related work connections between managers and employees is facilitated by a manager's conceptual talents (Mudor & Tooksoon, 2011). Conceptual talents are used in informative positions, which can give an advantage in gaining expert authority to influence and motivate staff to perform better for the company. Better performance from employees is closely tied to this. According to Xiong et al. (2022), managers possessing cognitive skills can create positive organizational values by acquiring and mastering skills and positively affect employee productivity. In addition to fostering relation-based trust, conceptual skills help foster work-based trust. Since the attainment of a competitive edge based on time is closely tied to the efficient application of conceptual abilities, a manager possessing conceptual skills may easily set the path of the business. In contrast, a manager lacking conceptual skills can imperil the entire system (Nwogu & Ebunu, 2019). The hypothesis proposed is based on the arguments presented above;

Proposition 2: The conceptual skills have a positive and significant relationship with job performance.

2.9 Brand Equity as a Moderator

The relevant literature discusses brand equity as a moderator, which denotes the added value of a product or service and consumer views and experiences with a particular brand. This covers pricing, package, quality, market share, and brand profitability (Kotler & L., 2016). Furthermore, according to Aaker & Moorman (2017), a strong brand may be seen through customer brand equity, which includes several crucial aspects like perceived quality, brand awareness, and loyalty (Alwan & Alshurideh, 2022). A brand can achieve high profit, competitive cost, high market shares, premium prices, rigid price sensitivity, and effective expansion into new product categories when it performs exceptionally well, owing to its equity (Masika, 2013). Because organizations profit financially from brand equity, experts observe several methods to quantify the valuable assets of brand equity (Aaker & Moorman, 2017). Comparably, a domestic brand with substantial brand equity will have a better relationship between technical and conceptual talents and perform better on the job. Thus, the theory is put forth:

Proposition 3. Brand equity moderates the relationship between technical skills and job performance.

Proposition 4. Brand equity moderates the relationship between conceptual skills and job performance.

Table 1. Summary of Propositions

No	SMM Technical Skills and Job performance
1.	Technical knowledge crucial for managers; understanding operations and tools (Wade & Parent, 2002). Vital for control, employee evaluation, and stress management (Tiraieyari et al., 2009). Capone et al. (2022) link technical competence to organizational success (Seate et al., 2016). Managers' technical skills aid mentoring, improve job performance (Khan et al., 2015). Employee opinions on managers' technical skills vary; technical abilities deemed less significant, causing stress. High technical skills may lead to task-oriented management, impacting staff loyalty. In managing employee performance, technology often outperforms other talents (Cheng & Cheng, 2023). Technical knowledge can be both advantageous and challenging in staff management.
2.	**SMM Conceptual Skills and Job Performance**
	Managerial technical knowledge, vital for operations and control, enhances employee evaluation and stress management (Wade & Parent, 2002; Tiraieyari et al., 2009). Capone et al. (2022) connect technical competence to organizational success (Seate et al., 2016), facilitating mentoring and job performance improvement (Khan et al., 2015). Employee perceptions vary; technical skills considered less crucial, causing stress and potentially leading to task-oriented management, impacting staff loyalty. In employee performance management, technology often surpasses other talents (Cheng & Cheng, 2023). Technical knowledge presents both advantages and challenges in staff management.
3.	**Brand Equity as a Moderator**
	Brand equity acts as a moderating variable by influencing the strength and direction of the relationship between social media skills and job performance. It can either amplify the positive effects or mitigate potential negative impacts, depending on the proficiency of individuals in managing the brand on social media platforms.

3. Discussion

Firstly, the evolving nature of job performance is underscored, transitioning from a traditional focus on employment duties to a broader understanding within dynamic organizational contexts. The global and highly competitive work environment has necessitated a shift in perspective, emphasizing the need for organizations to be responsive to dynamic and changing conditions. This shift sets the stage for exploring novel approaches to enhancing

worker performance, recognizing work performance not merely as an activity but as a consequential result of labor-related activities. The impact of social media on job performance is a central theme, focusing on the evolving role of social media managers (SMM). As individuals responsible for managing a company's online presence, SMMs operate at the nexus of various stakeholders, including external partners, influencers, users, and consumers. Their dual responsibility of informing external stakeholders and safeguarding the company's reputation places them in a unique position. Moreover, the study identifies a scarcity of research on the effects of social media on job performance resulting from interactions with SMMs, highlighting the need for further investigation in this area. The heightened external stakeholder ties of middle managers compared to top managers emphasize the importance of their role in shaping organizational image and communication strategies. As pioneers in personal branding, social media managers offer valuable insights into the tactics and pressures associated with personal branding on social media, contributing to the broader understanding of digital innovation and online presence management. The concept of brand equity (BE) emerges as a critical factor in the discussion, with scholars emphasizing its importance in recent decades. However, the lack of consensus on its definition and measurement poses a challenge for marketing experts. The study aims to bridge this gap by investigating the interplay between SMM skills, brand equity, and job performance, recognizing the potential impact of social media activities on brand equity. Following the above, a clear outline of the study's goals emphasizing the need to understand the underlying relationship mechanisms between SMM skills and job performance and the moderating function of brand equity. The incorporation of social exchange theory into the study's framework introduces a novel strategy, promising a unique perspective on the variables influencing workers' productivity in the context of social media use. Therefore, the stage is set to comprehensively explore the complex relationships between social media, SMMs, brand equity, and job performance. The identified gaps in the existing literature and the proposed research goals pave the way for valuable insights that can inform both theoretical understanding and practical strategies for organizations navigating the digital landscape. Our research advances knowledge of the part technical and conceptual abilities plays in establishing brand equity and improving job performance. Businesses' social media managers now recognize the value of developing powerful brands, a notion that marketers have accepted for many years. Marketers now need to understand that while having a distinctive logo, a solid website, and dependable products are essential, they are insufficient to establish brand equity. Regretfully, many social media marketing professionals do not know how to bridge the gap between their present methods and moving their brands forward. Due to the limited and fragmented knowledge regarding SMM's efficient application of technical and conceptual abilities within enterprises, more investigation into the selected variables is necessary.

4. Conclusion

Comprehending the entire process with other variables is just as important as knowing the

task when it comes to studying job performance on social media. In order to predict brand equity and improve job performance, it is essential to take into account the critical constructions and elements that this study has highlighted. It seems that the suggested structure will help to make brands more viable and enduring in the eyes of consumers. A model that integrates social media management (SMM) technical and conceptual skills into marketing strategy is essential for keeping up with the current technological advancements and building brand value. In conclusion, this research delves into a critical gap in the existing literature, addressing the intricate interplay between social media managers' (SMM) technical and conceptual skills, brand equity, and job performance. The evolving nature of job performance, shaped by dynamic organizational contexts and the pervasive influence of social media, calls for a nuanced understanding. Social media managers, positioned at the forefront of digital innovation, play a pivotal role in shaping brand equity, impacting job performance. As businesses navigate the complexities of social media engagement, the study seeks to unravel the mechanisms underpinning the relationship between SMM skills and job performance, focusing on the moderating role of brand equity. The research contributes to the broader discourse on industrial management and organizational behavior by shedding light on the scarce but crucial link between social media interactions, facilitated by SMMs, and job performance outcomes. Moreover, it addresses the ongoing debate surrounding defining and measuring brand equity, emphasizing its significance in influencing consumer preferences, innovation risks, and overall brand performance. By integrating social exchange theory into the research framework, this study adopts a novel approach to understanding the variables that impact workers' productivity in the context of social media use. In essence, this research not only seeks to advance theoretical knowledge but also offers practical insights for organizations seeking to optimize the contributions of social media managers to enhance employee job performance. The findings of this study can potentially guide strategic decisions in the ever-evolving landscape of digital marketing, personal branding, and social media management."

5. Limitations and Future Research

This exploratory study looks at how social media marketing (SMM) fits into business branding and investigates the possibility of using conceptual and technical abilities as indicators of job effectiveness. Because it just takes a conceptual look at the variables being studied, this study has certain limitations. One limitation of the study is the potential challenge of generalizing findings across diverse industries or organizational contexts. The focus on social media managers and their impact on job performance may vary in effectiveness depending on the nature of the industry, organizational size, or cultural nuances. The study is anchored in a specific temporal context, reflecting the state of social media and organizational dynamics as of 2022. Rapid changes in technology and organizational practices may render specific findings less applicable in the future, emphasizing the need for ongoing research to capture evolving trends. The study acknowledges the complexity of social media dynamics, but it may not fully capture emerging platforms or shifts in user

behavior. New social media trends or changes in how individuals and organizations engage with these platforms may influence the study's relevance over time. Brand equity measurement remains a debated issue in marketing literature, and the study might encounter challenges in providing a universally accepted metric. Differences in perspectives on brand equity measurement could impact the robustness of the study's findings in this regard.

Future research could employ longitudinal studies to track the impact of social media managers' activities over an extended period. This would provide a more comprehensive understanding of the sustained effects on brand equity and job performance. To enhance the generalizability of findings, researchers could explore industry-specific nuances. Investigating how social media managers influence job performance within distinct industries would offer tailored insights for organizations with unique characteristics. Given the rapid evolution of social media, researchers should continually monitor emerging platforms and changes in user behavior. This includes exploring the impact of new features, algorithms, or shifts in user demographics on social media managers' effectiveness. Future research should contribute to the ongoing discourse on brand equity measurement. Developing standardized metrics or frameworks that better capture the nuances of brand equity in the context of social media could enhance the reliability of research in this domain. Exploring cross-cultural variations in the relationship between social media managers, brand equity, and job performance would provide valuable insights. Cultural factors may influence the effectiveness of social media strategies and the perception of personal branding. While the study proposes incorporating social exchange theory, future research could delve deeper into understanding how this theoretical framework operates in the context of social media interactions. Investigating the nuances of reciprocity, trust, and mutual benefit in online environments would contribute to a more nuanced understanding.

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Data sharing statement

No additional data are available.

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