



The Role of Social Media Engagement and Emotional Intelligence in Successful Employment

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Abstract

Purpose. This paper focuses on demonstrating the role of social media engagement and considering emotional intelligence (hereafter EI) as a critical concept to successful employment, mainly when individuals fail to reach the desired employment despite ‘meeting the role requirements.

Design/methodology/approach. We adopted a qualitative approach through semi-structured in-depth interviews of some randomly selected university students in the UK, young adults aged 19-32. The participants were selected based on different demographics to provide a broader and less biased representation of young adults in the UK.

Findings. Our research suggests that recruitment organisations should introduce the latest requirements and trends of employers to ensure that the expectations of employers and potential candidates are aligned to improve the employment rate in young adults.

Originality/value. This research extends the literature regarding EI in social media engagement and successful employment. It also brings new perspectives on successful employment in young adults by demonstrating the role of social media engagement and EI traits leading to a conceptual framework exploring successful employment based on the role of social media engagement and EI.

Keywords. Career development; employability; Theory of Multiple Intelligences; social media; Trait Activation Theory; young adults.

Introduction

The employment process includes a set of activities to recruit the most talented employees for companies. This process has been called “successful employment”— it refers to the traits contributing to heighten performance, arbitration skills, effective teamwork, building rapport with customers, and, most importantly, generating revenue for the organisation (Dacre Pool and Qualter, 2013). In this regard, a growing body of research is looking into emotional intelligence in the workplace (e.g. Parmentier et al., 2021, Phang et al., 2018) amidst the rise of social media platforms' popularity (Chavarría et al., 2021, Trivelli and Morel, 2021) and potential effects on employees performance in generationally-diverse organisations and societies (Mahmoud et al., 2020a, Mahmoud et al., 2020b, Mahmoud et al., 2021a, Mahmoud et al., 2020d). Emotional intelligence (EI) refers to an individual’s cognitive ability to maximise the emotional perspective of others and themselves (Nelis et al., 2009). EI is a critical concept in successful employment because the traits of EI include the ability to self-access (self-awareness), the drive to achieve a specific goal (motivation), effective and excellent interaction and communication ability (social skills), self-management or self-regulation and the ability to understand the feelings of other (empathy) (Kruse et al., 2018). The main reason for adopting such a perspective originates in the need for creativity and response to technological advancements, including effectively having social media engagement and creating innovative marketing promotions or activities (Mahmoud et al., 2022). For this reason, this research aims to demonstrate the role of social media engagement by considering EI in successful employment since the two concepts are scarce in the literature (Zhoc et al., 2020).

Social media engagement is an activity that requires an online platform where users can share and obtain information depending on the user's motivation (Tuten, 2020). Social media functionality refers to the opportunity to create existence, connections, status, online social/ interest groups, discussions, involvement, and uniqueness (Wolf et al., 2018). Social media

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3 engagement functionality creates a wide range of opportunities for users for various purposes,
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5 like enhancing and elevating one's reputation and popularity within different communities for
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7 multiple purposes, including employment opportunities (Dwivedi et al., 2021).
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11 Employment through social media platforms has been increasingly popular to enhance
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13 the chances of attaining new jobs and careers; platforms such as LinkedIn have been one of the
14
15 most popular social media platforms connecting employers and recruiters directly to potential
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17 candidates and job sites (Mahmoud et al., 2022, Mahmoud et al., 2021b). Therefore, this
18
19 research explores the traits and factors influencing social media engagement and EI, impacting
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21 successful employment in young adults within the educational sector. Thus, this research raises
22
23 the following question: (i) 'to what extent does the motivation for social media engagement
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25 affect the presence of EI in young adults to achieve successful employment?' (ii) Why is EI
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27 important to successful employment in young adults? Moreover, (iii) 'How can young adults
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29 enhance the importance of EI in the presence of social media engagement in successful
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31 employment?'
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36 37 **Literature review and conceptual framework**

38 39 **Social media engagement and motivation types**

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43 Social media is an online platform with different functionalities, which affects young adults'
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45 motivation (Buzeta et al., 2020). Social media functionality allows users to create existence,
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47 connections, status, online social/ interest groups, discussions, involvement and uniqueness
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49 (Belle et al., 2021). In addition, Ngai et al. (2015) highlight social media's purpose as providing
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51 social communication, building status, creating career opportunities, creating income, and
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53 increasing and generating knowledge. Consequently, the number of possibilities for social
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55 media functionality and the expected outcomes and benefits highly depend on the users'
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57 motivation for social media engagement.
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Emotional intelligence

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EI is defined as behavioural attributes that affect management and organisational behaviours in understanding an individual's expected outcome, particularly at the management level (Landry, 2019). The concept of EI is referred to as the individual's cognitive ability to maximise the emotional perspective of others and themselves (Dacre Pool and Qualter, 2013). It is conceptualised as both non-cognitive traits and cognitive abilities, identified as self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy and social skills (Schlegel et al., 2018). EI is highly related to individuals' capabilities to attain specific goals, interpret and understand emotions through signals, and improve team productivity (Tolegenova et al., 2016). This increased the ability to perceive and regulate the emotions of others in achieving the expected outcome of the organisation (Tolegenova et al., 2016).

Theories and models of SME and EI in employability

Various scholars (Farh et al., 2012, Miao et al., 2016) have attempted to apply relevant theories, which were highly related to cognitive traits and analysed to ensure successful employability. These theories and models include Trait Activation Theory (TAT), Emotional Self-Efficacy Theory (ESE), Theory of Multiple Intelligences (MI), and the Big Five Personality Trait Theory (B5PTT)

Trait Activation Theory (TAT)

In the organisation context of successful employability, TAT represents specific traits such as effective abilities and motivational orientation, which is used to predict competencies, behaviour and performance (Zhou, 2021). According to TAT, extroverts are more likely to achieve successful competencies and career adaptability due to the ability to engage in social and interpersonal activities compared to those with introverted personalities (Farh et al., 2012).

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3 In addition, Miao et al. (2016) and Farh et al. (2012) suggest that the theory remains relevant
4 in understanding the psychological traits expressed by an individual. Relevant to the existing
5 research, TAT provided an in-depth understanding of the psychological motivation for social
6 media engagement, as well as providing opportunities to further explore EI traits available in
7 an individual to achieve successful employment (Farh et al., 2012, Miao et al., 2016).
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17 **Emotional Self-Efficacy Theory (ESE)**

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19 ESE, known as the theory of mixed EI, refers to the ability to perceive the emotions of self and
20 others in facilitating cognitive processes of decision-making and leadership attributes (Choi et
21 al., 2013). The characteristics of EI should not be treated as individual traits; instead, due to the
22 similarity in the psychological characteristics of EI, it was suggested that ESE was essential for
23 an individual to achieve better success and achievement (Alegre et al., 2019, Tariq et al., 2013,
24 Yazici et al., 2011). This theory is an extension of EI, focusing on the characteristics of
25 competencies in decision-making and leadership. However, the theory may not be suitable for
26 this study—it may not provide an extensive exploration of understanding the theory behind the
27 motivation of SME.
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42 **Theory of multiple intelligences (MI)**

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44 The Theory of Multiple Intelligences was developed by renowned psychologist Howard
45 Gardner in 1983. This theory states that intelligence is not a single construct but rather is
46 comprised of several different elements. These elements include linguistic, logical-
47 mathematical, spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, musical, interpersonal, intrapersonal, and naturalistic
48 intelligences (Gardner, 2011 [1983]). Through his research, Gardner found that each individual
49 has a unique combination of these intelligences that affects the way they think, act, and learn.
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58 The Theory of Multiple Intelligences has been widely accepted and is used in many educational
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3 settings to help develop a more comprehensive understanding of what it means to be intelligent.

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5 We argue that the theory of multiple intelligences, emotional intelligence and social media
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7 engagement is a powerful combination for understanding how people learn and how to engage
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9 with them most effectively. MI provides the perception of the possibility of mitigating the
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11 impacts of motivation of SME, EI and successful employment, making MI relevant to
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13 conceiving our conceptual framework.
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19 **Big Five Personality Trait Theory (B5PTT)**

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21 B5PTT includes traits such as extraversion, openness, amicability, meticulousness and
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23 neuroticism (Toh et al., 2022, Barlett and Anderson, 2012, Neal et al., 2012, Mark et al., 2014).
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25 There were high similarities in traits of B5PTT to EI. This offers the opportunity to perform a
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27 detailed analysis exploring the relationships between SME, EI and successful employment. The
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29 definition of the characteristics of B5PTT is presented in Table 1 below:
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34 INSERT TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE
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42 **Factors influencing successful employment**

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44 Successful employment requires factors that include the applicant's technical and non-technical
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46 skills (Jackson, 2013, Dacre Pool and Qualter, 2013, Qenani et al., 2014). Technical skills are
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48 referred to academic achievements, practical experiences, critical thinking skills, problem-
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50 solving skills, teamwork skills, leadership and management skills, presentation skills and
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52 knowledge (Jackson, 2013, Dacre Pool and Qualter, 2013, Qenani et al., 2014, Landry, 2019,
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54 Mahmoud et al., 2022). However, despite the solid technical skills requirement, many studies
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56 (e.g. Carroll and Tani, 2015) argue that academic achievements may not be the crucial deciding
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3 factor to successful employment. Carol and Tani (2015) discover that over-educated individuals
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5 face difficulty attaining successful employment due to the perceived expectation of the salary
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7 based on the qualifications attained. Non-technical skills, however, represent a wide range of
8
9 perceived skills. Jackson (2013) did a comprehensive analysis of the perceived non-technical
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11 skills, including oral communication, personal ethics, confidence, self-awareness, self-
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13 discipline, leadership, and ability to work with others. This included traits such as the ability to
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15 work under pressure, openness, adaptability, team-building, solid abilities, motivation, and EI
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17 added into the perceived required traits (Dacre Pool and Qualter, 2013, Qenani et al., 2014).
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24 **The impact of social media engagement and IE on successful employment**

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26 The impact of social media engagement and EI on successful employment affects various
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28 factors such as social skills, psychological well-being, building rapport and trust, prediction of
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30 career adaptability and competencies to achieving success and performance (Coetzee and
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32 Harry, 2014, Landry, 2019, Darliansyah, 2019). In this section, we discuss the aforementioned
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34 factors.
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41 *Social skills*

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44 The functionality of social media engagement promotes a high level of social interaction
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46 amongst individuals globally. Anti-social behaviours are prominent in the real world due to
47
48 physical and social interaction requirements, which young adults fail to acquire through social
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50 media engagement (Mullen, 2018, Mahmoud et al., 2020c). However, the adverse impact of
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52 anti-social behaviours is more likely to be seen amongst individuals with low self-esteem rather
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54 (LSE) than those with high self-esteem (HSE) (Donnellan et al., 2005). Although motivations
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56 for social media engagement amongst those with LSE can improve their social interaction and
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3 engagement, it might not lead to better physical interaction capabilities in the long run (see
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5 Mullen, 2018, Bailey et al., 2020, Steinsbekk et al., 2021).
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8 9 *Psychological Well-being*

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11 It has been argued that activation policies should not only foster employability and swift
12
13 reintegration into the labour market but also enable employees to live their lives and do the
14
15 tasks they value (Miles, 2014). Research (e.g. Cheng and Li, 2014, Cataldo et al., 2021, Karim
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17 et al., 2020) shows that social media engagement develops the psychological disorder, a
18
19 problematical impact, particularly amongst young adults who have been exposed to social
20
21 media engagement in the early stages of growth. Users experience high dependence on social
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23 media to provide them with the esteem boost in their daily activities to compensate for the lack
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25 of ability to achieve the social interaction desired in the real world (Tazghini and Siedlecki,
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27 2013, Andreassen et al., 2017).
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36 37 *Building rapport and trust*

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39 Trust involves building rapport through interactions with an individual or a group; it embeds
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41 confidence, openness, discretion and self-evaluation between parties in understanding the
42
43 various motives and objectives translated. The level of trust is achieved through interactions
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45 between people, where the receiver gains perceived confidence and self-evaluates the
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47 transmitter's message (Mullen, 2018). For example, in a job interview, the perceived
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49 expectation of the candidate is based on the confidence and trust of what has been described in
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51 the resume or work application. Further, trust is then developed through the direct interaction
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53 of the candidate to validate the genuine experience mentioned. However, building rapport and
54
55 trust may be complex through social media engagement due to the lack of physical bonds and
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57 interaction. Furthermore, the reliability of social media engagement connections may be
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3 unreliable based on the perceived image the user portrays, which benefits their self-interests
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5 (Gómez Galán et al., 2021). On the other hand, EI enhances the positive relationship between
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7 the individuals based on the perceived emotions displayed, allowing openness to build rapport
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9 and trust.
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13 *Prediction of employee's career adaptability*

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16 From the perspective of successful employment, employers predict the future of the
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18 individual's career adaptability, expected job satisfaction, productivity and efficiency through
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20 the perceived behaviour of the individual (Coetzee and Harry, 2014). Career adaptability can
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22 be assessed through past experiences and occupational transitions (Coetzee and Harry, 2014).
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24 In addition, individuals desire to develop a need for curiosity and willingness to attain new
25
26 knowledge that enhances the individuals' motivation to adjust willingly to a different
27
28 environment involving firm control of emotions (Rossier et al., 2012). EI enables individuals
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30 to portray a level of emotional confidence to employers in their ability to fully utilise EI on both
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32 career adaptability as well as in achieving successful employment (Coetzee and Harry, 2014,
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34 Mullen, 2018).
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40 *Competencies to achieving success and performance*

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43 The success factors included the ability to embed effective planning, staff directing,
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45 management, effective communication, effective decision-making, and solid interpersonal
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47 relation, which is reflected in the leadership qualities throughout a prosperous professional
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49 career (Azouzi and Jarboui, 2013). Successful individuals or organisations require effective and
50
51 robust communication between individuals to understand the values of achieving success;
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53 therefore, it is not only critical intelligence, but individuals with EI assist organisations (Azouzi
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55 and Jarboui, 2013). Thus, EI is likely to positively predict the factors related to achieving
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57 success and performance.
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3 Additionally, with social media engagement, the ability to enhance the capabilities such
4 as increasing knowledge and sharing ideas through social media engagement enables
5 individuals to self-motivate and increase their self-confidence (Gómez Galán et al., 2021). The
6 image created through social media engagement may result in a higher level of trust through
7 negotiation or teamwork management. However, due to the lack of control over information
8 posted on the platform, there may be a mismatch in the information provided against the
9 individual's actual personality trait, which may fail to obtain successful employment (Lee,
10 2017).
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24 **Proposed Conceptual Framework**

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27 Based on the analysis of scholarly research, there are two main research gaps within the context
28 of this study. First, the current research focuses on the traits to maintain a successful career, but
29 there is a lack of research on strategies to employ EI successfully. Second, existing literature
30 considers conducting quantitative research methodology in testing existing theories. However,
31 there is a lack of research that adopts a qualitative approach. This methodological gap results
32 in a lack of understanding of the experience of individuals related to social media engagement
33 and EI in successful employment.
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44 The proposed conceptual framework is developed based on the similarities in the traits
45 identified in the existing studies. As per the research aim, it explores the relationship between
46 social media engagement, EI and successful employment in young adults. The proposed
47 framework consists of three parts:
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54 **Part 1: Traits of social media engagement and EI**

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56 The traits of social media engagement will focus on the motivations of social media
57 engagement, which include Intrinsic Motivation (IM) and Extrinsic Motivation (EM). As
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3 analysed, the motivation of social media engagement influences individuals' behavioural
4 attributes. For instance, individuals inclined to proclaim their motivation as *intrinsic motivation*
5 (IM) may develop a high level of self-confidence and increased social skills through social
6 media engagement as part of a personal satisfaction desire (Darliansyah, 2019, Ngai et al.,
7 2015). Individuals who proclaim *extrinsic motivation* (EM) for social media engagement may
8 experience the need to achieve external desires such as organisational targets and achievements
9 as part of employment requirements (LaPoe et al., 2017).

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11
12 In this proposed conceptual framework, we explore how young adults perceive the
13 motivation of social media engagement and understand whether IM and EM are relevant to
14 attaining successful employment. This explorative method will allow the research to address
15 RQ 1, thus achieving the aim of the research.

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17
18 Previous research identifies five key traits of EI. These traits include self-awareness,
19 self-regulation, motivation, empathy and social skills (Schlegel et al., 2018, Landry, 2019). The
20 presence of all five key traits will be explored, and data collected from the research will allow
21 the study to further analyse the relevance of the traits. This allows the researchers to bridge
22 existing research gaps between the perceived expectations of employers and potential
23 employees by understanding the importance of EI.

24 25 26 **Part 2— The Big Five Personality Trait Theory (B5PTT)**

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28
29 The five personality traits include extraversion, openness, amicability, meticulousness and
30 neuroticism (Rammstedt and John, 2007). This theory was popular and relevant to exploring
31 and identifying behavioural and personality aspects of individuals. Due to the similarities in
32 traits present to the factors impacting successful employment, the theory was seen as highly
33 relevant to the study. There was a similarity in the traits present through non-technical and
34 technical traits of successful employment, as suggested in the existing literature. This allowed
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3 the researchers to further elaborate and identify the relevance of the traits in young adults. Thus,
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5 the Big Five theory possesses similar functionality in allowing the study to further explore and
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7 analyse the relationships to achieving successful employment, understand the relevance of the
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9 existing academic literature and explore the concept of successful employment in young adults
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12 **Part 3— Factors influencing successful employment**

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15 Considering the independent impacts of social media engagement EI on successful
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17 employment, the proposed conceptual framework aims to explore the relationship between
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19 these impacts. The factors influencing flourishing employment consist of impacts that the
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21 research aims to explore; this includes psychological well-being, ability to build rapport and
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23 trust, prediction of employee's career adaptability and competencies to achieving success and
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25 performance. However, in this component, the definition of the factors influencing successful
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27 employment can overlap with the perceived technical skills required by employers. In order to
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29 address this issue, technical skills will be categorised as the competencies for achieving success
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31 and performance.
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36 Past academic scholars have studied the importance of theories such as the Big Five in
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38 achieving successful employment individually. However, they have yet to combine the
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40 concepts as part of academic research. Thus, we develop this conceptual framework to address
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42 this research gap. To our best knowledge, the proposed conceptual framework has not been
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44 explored before and has not been identified as part of any academic research. The process of
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46 unfolding the relevance of the proposed conceptual framework has been done through the
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48 qualitative research methodology.
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51 52 53 **Methods**

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56 This research adopted the interpretivism paradigm with an inductive approach to provide an in-
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58 depth understanding of the social context because it brings flexibility and the opportunity to
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3 explore a phenomenon from rich data (Saunders et al., 2019, Gregory, 2018). The conceptual
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5 framework was developed based on the five personality traits: extraversion, openness,
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7 amicability, meticulousness and neuroticism (B5PTT). The research method adopted was
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9 qualitative, with ethnography–fieldwork carried out as a research strategy. Since the primary
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11 data source was adopted, we could use interview techniques.
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15 The research procedures received ethics approval from the College of Business, Art and
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17 Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee at Brunel University London (7438-LR-Sep/2017-
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19 8404-1). The research sample was based on simple random sampling from the population of
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21 students at Brunel University London, United Kingdom. The population included a mixture of
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23 female and male students aged between 19 to 32 years old from various disciplines of study.
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25 The total sample size was 20 participants, and the semi-structured in-depth qualitative
26
27 interviews were conducted with individuals who graduated from undergraduate and master's
28
29 programmes. Twenty participants were randomly selected based on the different demographics
30
31 to provide a broader and unbiased perspective to represent young adults in the UK best.
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33 Additionally, with 20 participants, the data provided a broader scope and perspectives to assist
34
35 us in achieving the research aim.
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40 The participants consisted of 11 females and nine males from various disciplines of
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42 study. The detailed demographics of the participants are shown in Table 2.
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INSERT TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE

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53 The main reason for conducting 20 interviews is the data saturation level, which is a
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55 criterion for stopping interviews. In order to diagnose the data saturation level, we adopt initial
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57 and stopping criteria. According to Francis et al. (2010), researchers can set an initial criterion
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59 for how many interviews will be conducted in the first stance. Following the initial criteria,
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3 researchers consider stopping criteria: the three sequential interviews that demonstrate no new
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5 data emerged from the interviews. We created ten interviews for the initial criteria and three
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7 more for the stopping criteria in this research. All interviews were recorded and transcribed
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9 verbatim by the researchers. NVIVO 12 was used as a data categorisation tool to analyse the
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11 transcribed data. According to Flick (2018), one of the critical concerns in qualitative research
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13 is trustworthiness, composed of four fundamental perspectives: credibility, transferability,
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15 dependability and confirmability. We consider these four perspectives to provide
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17 trustworthiness in the present study.
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23 During the research process composed of research design, selection of participants, data
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25 collection and analysis, the researchers avoided certain situations such as ideological/personal
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27 bias and the questions that lead to what participants talk about. The interview questions were
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29 prepared, and three experts reviewed the questions to remove bias-related concerns. Also, we
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31 used direct quotations from the interviewees, and there was no change in the transcribed
32
33 documents. Reaching the data saturation level in this research demonstrates that the themes that
34
35 emerge in this study can transfer into other related contexts, such as social media and emotional
36
37 intelligence studies in other disciplines, including marketing, psychology and sociology. Our
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39 research adopted proper interview protocols and secondary literature data using the NVIVO 12
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41 data categorisation tool. For this reason, we removed the concern of being affected by external
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43 factors that result in bias in our research.
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51 **Results**

52 **Analysis of research questions**

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54 The first research question (RQ 1) was to discover to what extent the motivation of social media
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56 engagement affects EI in young adults to achieve successful employment. Expectation 1 was
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58 to validate the presence of both IM and EM as motivation facets for social media engagement.
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3 However, the actual outcome synthesised that the motivation for social media engagement was
4 generally IM. Users felt that despite the potential EM available, social media engagement was
5 seen as a personal choice to achieve the purpose of communication, building rapport and
6 increasing social network amongst people, specifically family and friends.
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12 Expectation 2 was to validate that all five traits of EI were expected to be relevant to
13 attaining successful employment. The actual outcome derived that all five traits were relevant.
14 However, traits such as self-regulation and empathy were complex to pre-determined to attain
15 successful employment.
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21 Expectation 3—we anticipated participants to add additional traits from other theories
22 which may affect successful employment. The actual outcome established that other traits were
23 relevant to successful employment, such as adaptability, reputation and performance capability,
24 which were already included in the proposed conceptual framework. Therefore, the research
25 question was partially validated (Table 3).
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35 INSERT TABLE 3 ABOUT HERE
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40 Research question 2 (RQ 2) addressed why EI is critical to successful employment in
41 young adults. The expected outcome was to understand the importance of EI concerning
42 successful employment. In reality, most participants were unaware of the concept of EI.
43 Therefore, our definition allowed participants to better understand the concept. The traits
44 mentioned in the concept of EI were perceived as inborn traits expected to be present in every
45 individual. Participants expressed that they were unaware of the importance of EI to attaining
46 successful employment as perceived and expected by organisations. Successful employment
47 was perceived as attaining excellent academic grades and experience to attain successful
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3 employment. Participants also expressed no relation between social media engagement and
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5 successful employment. Therefore, this research question is partially validated (Table 4).
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INSERT TABLE 4 ABOUT HERE

Research question 3 (RQ 3) addressed how young adults could enhance the importance of EI in the presence of social media engagement in achieving successful employment. The expected outcome was first to attain responses on the critical traits perceived by young adults. The outcome was favourable as participants expressed different perceptions of required factors impacting successful employment. Factors highlighted included a combination of technical and non-technical skills supported in the proposed conceptual framework. Additionally, participants are expected to propose delivery methods to introduce and enhance EI awareness in successful employment. This was fully validated as participants expressed different delivery methods, such as using social media, introducing the EI concept to individuals at a younger age in schools, and introducing the importance of EI at the point of employment. Therefore, research question 3 was fully validated (Table 5).

INSERT TABLE 5 ABOUT HERE

Factors impacting successful employability through social media engagement and EI

The research explores the motivation factors concerning social media engagement and EI impacting successful employment in young adults still in the education sector. The findings are almost consistent with the previous studies on motivation for social media engagement, traits of EI and factors influencing successful employment. The data collected three main themes identified through the data collection revealed similar traits perceived by organisations as well as potential employees. The main themes highlighted that effective communication,

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3 adaptability, reputation, and performance were the key factors influencing successful
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5 employment.
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10 *Effective communication*

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12 Effective communication with individuals requires powerful self-confidence and self-
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14 awareness, as suggested in the concept of EI and B5PTT. As suggested by the interpretation of
15
16 the data, effective communication included the ability to understand others, which required
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18 individuals to portray the ability to be empathetic, as found in the traits present in EI. The
19
20 presence of empathy was perceived in achieving the ability to work in teams effectively and
21
22 build relationships. This key trait was present in both B5PTT (influential) and factors
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24 influencing successful employment (ability to build rapport and trust). IM for social media
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26 engagement being undisputed amongst young adults revealed that the desire to maintain and
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28 build rapport on social media might not translate to the individual's ability to attain similar
29
30 satisfaction. It was discovered that even though social media engagement enhances the ability
31
32 to create new social network connections virtually, individuals felt that their ability to translate
33
34 this trait physically might worsen due to the lack of physical interaction exposure. Participants
35
36 (P3, P6, P13, P15 and P17) were of the opinion that effective communication was very
37
38 important and relevant for building team relationships, and it influences successful
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40 employment. To buttress this point, a 21-year-old participant mentions this situation as follows:
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46
47 *“Social media makes me so introvert which means that I don't feel comfortable to talk*
48
49 *other people. Therefore, I don't have that much communication with other people. I*
50
51 *know this is not a good approach but I feel comfortable when I am online and*
52
53 *communicate with friends”*
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56 —P15, Male
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3 The explanation above regarding social media usage demonstrates that some individuals
4
5 tend to become introverted since they have an online life. Also, this situation results in a lack
6
7 of self-confidence, which refers to an individual who cannot express his feelings. However,
8
9 some research (Walker et al., 2018) demonstrates that organisations mostly need to create
10
11 virtual teams since they have highly diverse markets in different countries. There is no need to
12
13 provide face-to-face communication amongst individuals in the organisations. Instead, they can
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15 be a part of virtual organisations and handle some projects that can be completed through online
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17 meetings and work.
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21 For this reason, in today's digitalisation world, individuals tend to be involved in virtual
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23 organisation environments. Even though social media engagement can harm the
24
25 communication of individuals since they mostly spend their time online, they may have better
26
27 communication in virtual teams. A 26-year-old participant mentions this perspective as follows:
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29

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31 *“Communication is the most challenging thing for me. I am not good at it.*
32
33 *Instead, I prefer online chatting or talking because it makes me feel in a safe zone.*
34
35 *I cannot explain the exact reason, but since I work in an online software company,*
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37 *it makes me feel great, and I have excellent communication with customers and*
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39 *the team members”*
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42 —P19, Male
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47 The findings show that individuals mainly consider online communication instead of
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49 face-to-face communication. This situation can cause using skills of EI to be low since
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51 individuals do not have interactions with each other. For this reason, organisations must
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53 consider creating virtual teams and work for successful employment.
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Adaptability

Adaptability suggests the ability to understand and adjust to different environments. Consistent with the existing studies of the factors influencing successful employment and the predictability of employee's career adaptability, B5PTT suggests positive impacts on openness and EI traits of self-awareness were all seen as interrelated traits to adaptability. As viewed by organisations, career adaptability is vital in attaining successful employment. It predicts the level of job satisfaction, productivity and efficiency of the individual (Coetzee and Harry, 2014). Most participants (P6, P8, P10, P12 and P13) support the notion that adaptability is vital to understanding and adjusting to the varied environment. For instance, a 26-year-old participant states this perspective as follows:

“Social media provides a great opportunity to know other cultures. Thus, it is quite easy to adapt a workplace that has different strands of diversity. Also, I feel that it increases my willingness to work and makes me happy.”

—P18, Male

However, in contrast to the concept of adaptability, individuals who were seen to have multiple jobs within a short period of time (less than two years) were portrayed as unstable and faced issues attaining successful employment. The IM for social media engagement entailed discovering knowledge and awareness of the different cultures globally, enhancing the level of understanding and indirectly improving the adaptability concept through social media engagement. This suggested that IM for social media engagement would enhance adaptability by having advanced knowledge of the expectations of familiarising themselves with different environments. For this reason, facing cultural differences and communicating with individuals from different backgrounds provides an inclusionary environment.

Reputation

The motivation for social media suggests that reputation or perceived image can be built through social media engagement as part of the IM for social media engagement, creating the image that enables the user to build a positive and appealing attraction in status building and potentially create career opportunities (Kietzmann et al., 2012, Ngai et al., 2015). Consistent with the data, social media platforms like LinkedIn allow users to embrace this functionality to attain successful employment. Supporting this claim, B5PTT suggests that the traits of extraversion and openness affect individual employment success. It was suggested that through these traits, individuals were able to display their self-awareness (EI) and create the ability to build trust by showcasing their competencies through social media engagement. This, participants such as P1, P4, P5, P11, P17, and P20) agree that reputation through social media engagement is a key motivator. As the 25-year-old participant puts it:

“I always use Professional social media account such as LinkedIn because my goal is to become one of the well-known person in my field. Also, it can show me as a trustful person”

—P5, Female

This research demonstrates that individuals consider social media a tool that can bring reputation. Also, Havakhor et al. (2018) state that social media provides diffusion of knowledge and is a mechanism for creating a reputation for both organisations and individuals.

Performance

Performance is an inevitable key factor of successful employment. The data collected suggested that performance was highly related to individuals' efficiency, motivation, and self-awareness. The IM for social media engagement suggested that social media engagement enabled users to

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3 increase and share knowledge and information to increase competitiveness and increase
4
5 efficiency in obtaining reliable information. Performance was a critical deciding factor in all
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7 organisations. Therefore, the skills that an individual portrays at the point of attaining
8
9 employment are crucial to decision-making. It was also suggested that performance requires
10
11 critical thinking and problem-solving skills, which require all the traits represented in the
12
13 conceptual framework to be combined effectively. A 21-year-old participant states this situation
14
15 as follows:
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19 *“Sometimes our performance can be affected by how we feel and everything and*
20
21 *we have to be able to help other people in everything and that is part of like social*
22
23 *skills I would say. I think emotional intelligence gives us the required skills to be*
24
25 *able to perform better at work”*
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29 —P10, Male.
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34 This research shows that performance has been considered a critical factor in
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36 organisations, and there are four main perspectives to describe how individuals and
37
38 organisations understand performance. The first one is efficiency which focuses on
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40 productivity and an output-oriented perspective. The second is sharing knowledge and
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42 information critical to increasing competition and accessing reliable data. The third one
43
44 is motivation related to reaching goals and having team spirit. The last one is self-
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46 awareness, which consists of understanding the strengths and weaknesses of individuals
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48 or organisations. Social media engagement and emotional intelligence have been
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50 considered tools that shape organisations' performance approaches. It is critical to
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52 describe the performance and set the related tasks for the groups in organisations.
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56 Based on the findings of this study, Table 6 summarises the factors impacting successful
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58 employability through social media engagement and EI.
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INSERT TABLE 6 ABOUT HERE

Discussions

The key findings elaborated on the research aimed to explore traits and factors influencing social media engagement and EI, impacting successful employability from the perspective of young adults within the educational sector. The interpretation of the data we performed provided the need to revisit the conceptualised framework from the literature review. Table 7 highlights the variation of the findings against the initial proposed conceptual framework, which was removed based on the analysis of the findings. It demonstrates conceptual framework validation and analyses the existing conceptual framework.

The traits and factors that were not validated were immediately removed as it was interpreted as irrelevant to achieving the aim of the research-based data collected. It clearly indicated that EM had to be removed as the participants expressed that their primary motivation for social media engagement was personal and, therefore, intrinsic.

Self-regulation, neuroticism and psychological well-being were inconclusive; therefore, it was removed from the conceptual framework due to the potential influences of other external factors that may influence these traits and characteristics. The findings emphasised that all the categories were relevant. Participants argued that the three traits and characteristics might not significantly impact attaining employability despite being crucial in maintaining employment in the future. With our work focused on exploring the impacts of successful employment through social media engagement, EI and successful employment in young adults, the decision to remove self-regulation, neuroticism and psychological well-being were conclusive, as Figure 1 shows.

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INSERT TABLE 7 ABOUT HERE

INSERT FIGURE 1 ABOUT HERE

Conclusions

In today's job market, it is more important than ever to be aware of the role social media engagement and emotional intelligence can play in your success. With so many employers now using social media to screen potential candidates, it is essential to have a strong online presence. Furthermore, effectively managing your emotions and interacting with others is a crucial skill that will help you in any career. Whilst there have been limited studies that focus on the role of social media engagement and the traits of emotional intelligence, the researchers, in an attempt to address the research gap, have found out that individuals mainly consider online communication instead of face-to-face communication. As a result, this situation could lead to low emotional intelligence skills since individuals do not interact. Thus, organisations need to consider creating virtual teams and work for successful employment.

Another finding is that cultural differences and communicating with individuals from different backgrounds provide an inclusionary environment. It has been suggested that intrinsic motivation for social media engagement would enhance adaptability and knowledge based on the expectations of familiarisation with different environments. In addition, the researchers' findings demonstrate that individuals consider social media as a tool that could bring reputation. This correlates to Havakhor et al.'s (2018) assertion that social media provides diffusion of knowledge and is a mechanism for creating a reputation for both organisations and individuals.

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3 The idea of social media engagement cannot be restricted to the actual use of networking
4 and information-sharing technologies (Panagiotopoulos, 2012). Social media engagement and
5 emotional intelligence have been considered tools that shape organisations' performance
6 approaches. Coincidentally, research findings also show that performance is critical for
7 organisational effectiveness. Performance is, however, explained in four primary
8 perspectives— efficiency, which focuses on productivity and output-oriented perspective;
9 sharing of knowledge and information that is critical to increase competition and to access
10 reliable data; motivation concerning achieving goals and having team spirit; and self-awareness
11 consisting of the ability to understand the strengths and weaknesses of individuals or
12 organisations. It is critical to describe the performance and set the related tasks for the groups
13 in organisations.
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28 Addressing the research questions, the functionality of social media included building
29 rapport and maintaining communication amongst individuals, which were relevant in
30 enhancing successful employment. However, the interactions in social media engagement did
31 not provide substantial evidence of young adults' ability to transfer their communication ability
32 on the social media platform in the physical interaction environment, thus, resulting in potential
33 conflicting traits between social media engagement, EI and successful employment in young
34 adults. Additionally, we discovered a mismatch in the perceived expectations of employers and
35 potential candidates in achieving successful employment. The research assumed the relevance
36 of perceived expectations of employing organisations based on the existing academic literature
37 of other researchers. It was discovered that, despite multiple studies on the concept of EI, young
38 adults were unaware of the concept of EI impacting successful employment. We found that
39 young adults identified technical and academic achievement as the main factor in successful
40 employment. However, they failed to understand that employers were expecting a high level of
41 EI to be presented along with technical and academic achievements.
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Practical implications

Despite the extant literature showing that there have been a few studies on the role of social media engagement and emotional intelligence, little emphasis has been on their impact on successful employment. Today, young adults highly adopt social media, and its functionality includes high data sharing capabilities, enabling young adults to increase awareness of critical factors. As a result, employers would need to take advantage of social media exposure to provide added knowledge to increase employability.

Having reviewed and analysed the stakeholders' roles in ICT systems in an e-Government environment and their impacts, we built a conceptual framework. The framework would allow policymakers to understand the crucial role of social media in engagement, including emotional intelligence, to ensure adequate employment. This framework was developed through validation – the credibility of the core elements, which include a theoretical lens and understanding of the traits of social media engagement and EI and their roles in influencing successful employment.

The employment process entails recruiting the most talented employees; this calls for innovation and creativity, especially with technological advancements in which social media engagement is on the pole for marketing and advertisement. Thus, there is a need to engage recruitment organisations that can introduce the latest requirements and trends of employers and manage the expectations of employers and potential candidates, which are essential for improving the employment rate in young adults.

This study has attempted to address the issue with the perspective of successful employment, which arises from the applicant's failure to meet the application requirements like lack of or limited emotional intelligence traits such as self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy social skills. Researchers have also addressed the research gap found in the literature by developing a framework that combines the main traits of social media

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3 engagement and EI, including the factors that influence policy and decision-makers to ensure
4
5 smooth recruitment and selection process achieve successful employment.
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7 *Research limitations and implications*

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10 The research focused on young adults' perception to express their idea of attaining successful
11
12 employment through understanding the relationship between social media engagement and EI.
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14 The research analysis was interpreted heavily based on the researcher's understanding of the
15
16 subjective meanings. Therefore, the possibility of bias should not be disregarded. The time
17
18 constraints and the lack of participants' awareness of the concept of EI may result in a skewed
19
20 perspective based on the researcher's definition at the point of the interview. Additionally, due
21
22 to the limited data sample, the research findings may not represent the number of young adults
23
24 in the UK. It is recommended that future researchers consider sampling a more significant
25
26 number of young adults within different educational environments to provide a comprehensive
27
28 data analysis.
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33 Existing literature and empirical studies indicate that no unified framework and theory
34
35 focuses on the role of social media engagement and emotional intelligence. Thus, researchers
36
37 (Chairunisa et al., 2016, Balta et al., 2015, Gichoya, 2005) have suggested the need to
38
39 amalgamate relevant concepts such as SME and EI with theories such as B5PTT and other
40
41 influencing factors to ensure employment success in social media
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44 Future research should be conducted to extend the conceptual framework. Due to the
45
46 generalisation of the theories and the limited resources and sample size adopted, the association
47
48 of experts in the employment industry could collaborate with the educational industry to further
49
50 verify the research findings in benefiting young adults. Consequently, as the research involves
51
52 three main categories, expert validation of the theories could validate the relationships of the
53
54 impacts to provide a more detailed emphasis on the topic. Additionally, the conceptual
55
56 framework should be extended to the perspective of entrepreneurial success. Unlike
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3 employment in organisations, it would be value-added to the research to identify the
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5 relationship between the factors to entrepreneurship. The perspective of successful
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7 entrepreneurship in young adults should be explored using the conceptual framework as a
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9 guideline to further research. The research was performed based on the perspective of young
10
11 adults to understand the relevance of the concept of social media engagement, EI. Future
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13 research could perform concurrent studies between young adults and employers to ensure an
14
15 unbiased and relevant perspective.
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19 Due to the potential limitation to access negotiation, future researchers could perform a
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21 mixed research methodology to validate the existing conceptual framework and determine its
22
23 relevance. It is highly recommended that the research explores the perspective of young adults
24
25 currently within the organisation as interns to understand the relevance of the conceptual
26
27 framework. This will allow the research to validate and understand potential gaps between
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29 young adults and those in the employment phase. This will provide the research with a more
30
31 comprehensive and balanced exploration of the perspective of young adults in the UK.
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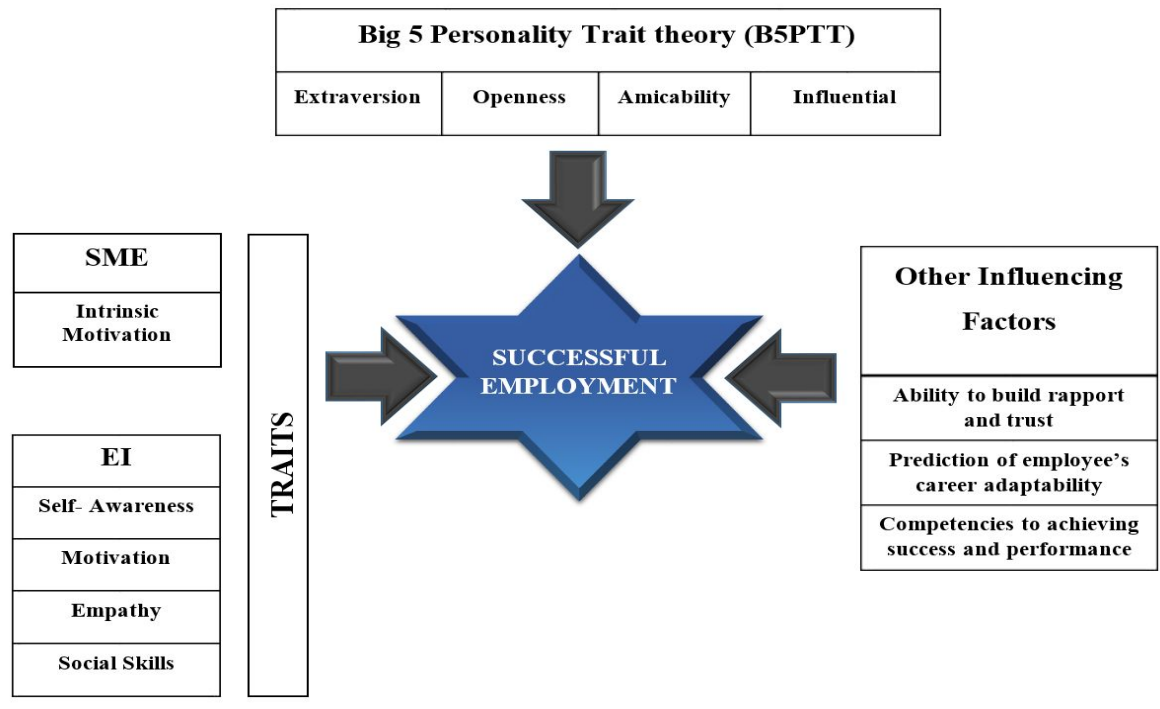
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Figures

Figure 1: Illustration of the results



Source: Researcher's analysis

and Work-Based Learning

Tables

Table 1: Defining characteristics of B5PTT Definition.

Characteristics	Definition	Source
1. Extraversion	Extraversion refers to the outgoing and self-confident traits that emphasise high social and communication skills required in a working environment. Therefore seen as critical in achieving successful employment.	(Toh et al., 2022, Mark et al., 2014)
2. Openness	Openness refers to a creative personality seeking opportunities, innovative ideas, new experiences in a task, or meeting new people. Critical skills required in a workplace environment.	(Toh et al., 2022, Mark et al., 2014)
3. Amicability	Amicability refers to the ability to have an empathetic personality in portraying flexibility in decision-making, acceptance and cooperativeness in managing people and tasks. Critical skills required in a workplace environment.	(Neal et al., 2012, Barlett and Anderson, 2012)
4. Influential	Influential refers to robust and assertive behaviour accompanied by solid self-regulation and the ability to build trust with others. Critical skills required in a workplace environment.	(Neal et al., 2012, Barlett and Anderson, 2012)

Characteristics	Definition	Source
5. Neuroticism	Neuroticism refers to the psychological state of an individual in managing vulnerability to anxiety, depression or insecurity, providing the individual to manage opportunities without exposing their negative traits in managing social interactions. This trait is seen as essential in maintaining psychological stability in a workplace environment.	(Barlett and Anderson, 2012, Toh et al., 2022)

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Higher Education, Skills and Work-Based Learning

Table 2: Demographics of Participants

#	Age	Gender	Programme Course	Country of Origin	University
P1	19	Female	BSc Mechanical Engineering	United Kingdom	Brunel University London
P2	19	Male	BSc Mechanical Engineering	Afghanistan	Brunel University London
P3	25	Male	MSc Management	United Kingdom	Brunel University London
P4	26	Female	MSc Management	Malaysia	Brunel University London
P5	25	Female	MSc Marketing	Pakistan	Brunel University London
P6	26	Female	MSc Management	Iran	Brunel University London
P7	26	Female	MSc Structural Engineering	Jordan	Brunel University London
P8	24	Male	MSc Finance and Investment	Jordan	Brunel University London
P9	21	Female	MSc Human Resource and Employment Relations	Albania	Brunel University London
P10	21	Male	BSc Mechanical Engineering	Uganda	Brunel University London
P11	22	Female	BSc Financial Mathematics	Mauritius	Brunel University London
P12	25	Female	MSc Management	Poland	Brunel University London
P13	20	Female	BSc Business Management and Accounting	United Kingdom	Brunel University London
P14	21	Female	BSc Business Management	India	Brunel University London
P15	21	Male	BSc Accounting	Nigeria	Brunel University London
P16	28	Male	MSc Management	Pakistan	Brunel University London
P17	27	Female	MSc Engineering	Greece	Brunel University London
P18	26	Male	MSc Management	Vietnam	Brunel University London
P19	26	Male	MSc Management	India	Brunel University London
P20	21	Male	BSc Business Management	Columbia	Brunel University London

Table 3: Research Question and Outcomes RQ1

Research Question 1	Expected Outcome	Actual Outcome	Research Question Validation
To what extent does the motivation of social media engagement affect the presence of EI in young adults to achieve successful employment?	Presence of both IM and EM in the motivation for social media engagement	social media engagement was generally IM for communication, building rapport and increasing social network.	EM in social media engagement, self-regulation in EI, Neuroticism in B5PTT and psychological well-being in other factors impacting employability were inconclusive; therefore, RQ 1 was partially validated.
	All five traits of EI were expected to be relevant to attaining successful employment.	All five traits were relevant; however, traits such as self-regulation and empathy were challenging to pre-determined at the point of attaining successful employment.	
	Additional traits from other theories which may affect successful employment	Other traits were relevant to impacting successful employment, such as adaptability, reputation and performance capability of the individual.	

Source. Authors' analysis

Note. IM and EM denote Intrinsic Motivation and Extrinsic Motivation, respectively.

Table 4: Research Questions and Outcomes of RQ2

Research Question 2	Expected Outcome	Actual Outcome	Research Question Validation
Why is emotional intelligence important to successful employability in young adults?	To understand the awareness of the importance of EI concerning successful employment	Most of the participants were unaware of the concept of EI. Participants were unaware of the importance of EI to attaining successful employment as perceived and expected by employing organisations.	Participants were unfamiliar with the term EI, so the data collected was inconclusive. RQ 2 was partially validated.

Source: Researchers' analysis

Table 5: Research Question and Outcome RQ3

Research Question 3	Expected Outcome	Actual Outcome	Research Question Validation
How can young adults enhance the importance of EI in the presence of social media engagement in successful employment?	Attain response on the critical traits perceived by young adults	Factors highlighted included a combination of technical and non-technical skills supported in the proposed conceptual framework.	Validated
	Proposed delivery methods to introduce and enhance the awareness of EI in successful employment.	Participants expressed different delivery methods, such as using social media, introducing the EI concept to individuals at a younger age in schools, and introducing the importance of EI at the point of employment.	

Source: Researchers' analysis

Table 6: Factors impacting successful employability through social media engagement and EI

Main Themes	Sub- Themes	Interpretation
Effective Communication	Sensitivity/ Empathy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Important to be able to understand others • To be able to work in teams effectively and efficiently
	Building relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Skills • Networking • Improve interpersonal skills during interactions (Virtually and physically) • Building relationships
Adaptability	Building Trust	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building rapport with others • Ability to adjust in different situations and environments
	Perspective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to understand others better
Reputation	Self-esteem	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase self-confidence • Increase competitiveness
	Self-regulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discipline may be improved or decreased due to the usage of social media engagement
	Image	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating an ideal identity and presence • Improve likeable traits to increase opportunities
Performance	Efficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase performance and productivity
	Sharing Knowledge and information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase competitiveness • Ability to obtain reliable information effectively and efficiently
	Motivation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase motivation to reach goals • Increase team spirit
	Self-awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to understand the strengths and weaknesses of self and others

Source: Authors' analysis

Table 7: Conceptual framework validation

Conceptual Framework	Conceptual Structure	Empirical Structure	Detailed Explanation	Outcome (After Validation)
Traits	Social Media Engagement Motivation	IM	Intrinsic motivation (IM) in social media engagement was the primary motivation from the data collected. Therefore, the empirical structure remains unchanged and validated.	Validated, No Change
		N/A	During data collection, participants did not discuss extrinsic motivation (EM) in social media engagement. Therefore, the outcome was inconclusive and was removed from the empirical structure.	Inconclusive, Removed
	EI (5 Clusters)	SA	Self-awareness was Critical in achieving successful employment due to the ability to understand others. Therefore, the empirical structure remains unchanged and validated.	Validated, No Change
		N/A	Self-regulation was not discussed as critical to achieving successful employment. However, it is important as part of employment. Therefore, the outcome was inconclusive and was removed from the empirical structure.	Inconclusive, Removed
		MV	Motivation was a critical trait in portraying a positive image in successful employment. Therefore, the empirical structure remains unchanged and validated.	Validated, No Change
		EMP	Empathy was discussed as critical to tolerance and working with others as a team. Therefore, the empirical structure remains unchanged and validated	Validated, No Change,
		SS	Social skills were discussed and analysed as crucial and unavoidable within the working	Validated, No Change,

Conceptual Framework	Conceptual Structure	Empirical Structure	Detailed Explanation	Outcome (After Validation)
			environment. Therefore, the empirical structure remains unchanged and validated.	
B5PTT	Extraversion (EV)	EV	Extraversion was discussed as the ability to express appropriately in a workforce; participants had different views. However, extraversion was seen as part of communication skills which was required. The researchers decided to include this trait in the empirical structure; therefore, it remained unchanged and validated.	Validated, No Change
	Openness (OP)	OP	Openness was discussed as the ability to portray flexibility and adaptability. Therefore, the empirical structure remains unchanged and validated.	Validated, No Change
	Amicability (AM)	AM	Amicability was discussed as inevitable to achieve effective decision-making. Therefore, the empirical structure remains unchanged and validated.	Validated, No Change
	Influential (I)	I	Influential traits were discussed as the most common traits in a leader. Therefore, the empirical structure remains unchanged and validated	Validated, No Change
	Neuroticism (N)	N/A	Neuroticism was not clearly discussed amongst participants due to the immense possibility of external influences. Therefore, the outcome was inconclusive and was removed from the empirical structure.	Inconclusive, Removed
Other Influencing Factors	Psychological Well-being (PWB)	N/A	Psychological well-being can be changed depending on the environment. Therefore, the outcome was inconclusive and was removed from the empirical structure.	Inconclusive, Removed

Conceptual Framework	Conceptual Structure	Empirical Structure	Detailed Explanation	Outcome (After Validation)
	Ability to build rapport and trust (R&T)	R&T	Building rapport and trust were discussed as critical in ensuring successful teamwork, leadership capabilities and successful employment. Therefore, the empirical structure remains unchanged and validated.	Validated, No Change
	Prediction of employee's career adaptability (ECA)	ECA	Employee's Career Adaptability was analysed as critical in ensuring stability in employment and the employee's ability to adapt to changes in a different environment. Therefore, the empirical structure remains unchanged and validated.	Validated, No Change
	Competencies to achieving success and performance (S&P)	S&P	Competencies to achieving success and performance were identified as technical and academic competencies, which are crucial to improving organisational success and performance. Therefore, the empirical structure remains unchanged and validated.	Validated, No Change

Source: Researchers' analysis