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## Effect of Online Job Scams on Trust and Dependence on Digital Platform

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### ABSTRACT

The paper has examined the impacts of internet job (employment) frauds upon the trust and dependence of the population on internet jobs. The data collection technique through a quantitative analysis was a cross-sectional online study that used an online questionnaire to capture the views of online users who had experienced online job adverts. In order to provide a wide inclusion in the poll, it was posted on email mailing lists, professional networks, and social media. The adult internet users of a different demographic profile formed the target audience and 284 were randomly selected to form as a wide sample as possible.

The data gathering involved issues with online employment fraud experience on the part of the participants and their perceived attitudes and reliance upon the online platforms. The research presented used survey data and analyzed it through correlation and descriptive statistics as well as the SPSS analysis software. The results of this paper enabled diversification of the meaning of the influence of online job scams, including the considerations affecting the effect of user trusts and dependability to such online emerging platforms about the similarities of job scams that promoted the knowledge linked with the impacts of the essence of job scams on the job market.

**Keywords:** internet job schemes, user trust, online environments, quantitative exploration, SPSS.

### INTRODUCTION

Computer technology has disrupted the employment market and now online job advertisements allow people to apply to work directly with the companies. The components of the search mix are now flanked by LinkedIn or the entire Indeed network of professional-related services when it comes to networking. Online job

scams have even greater effect as they have psychological and social implications. The victims also feel used, humiliated, and stressed, which may result in their inability to trust the digital systems in the long run (Chen & Wong, 2025). More importantly, these scams affect discriminated audiences, i.e., youths not employed, low-income members of the population, or insufficiently digitally literate individuals, to a disproportionate degree, further inequalities that are present in the job market (Kumar and Sharma, 2024). Besides being affordable and mobile, platforms will effectively increase gig searches on the internet by more than 70 percent of job seekers around the world by 2025 (Smith and Johnson, 2024). At the same time, this change has also introduced a dose of concern that is increasing within recent years cyber job scams. False ones even mimic the legitimate opportunity boasting good income and assuring users that they will receive valuable assets, have their personal information stolen, a miscellaneous load that requires time on lots of cash and does not involve any active work (Brown and Lee, 2023). My research article discusses how these scams will influence trust and reliance to the digital job resources, how the digital job market scammers will influence the perceptions of the users and their behavior towards the use of the digital market. The scams have taken a new level according to the recent statistics.

In 2024, reporting indicates that it happens that a spurious advertisement happens to one out of five job applicants every year and the costs in terms of financial and emotional damages are staggering. Money is not all that is lost to such scams; the trust is lost as well, something that no one can afford in the present digital workplace.

The conclusion is quite simple: web scam is one of those things that might go unnoticed, but can hollow out our confidence in these systems that we use to achieve our everyday needs. The broader such an alternative is the more challenging it is to satisfy an online job search without treading onto the purview of a scam. The participant of the online job searching role is all about trust, which is an opinion, which can be determined as certainty of dependability and honesty towards the online job sites (Kim and Park, 2023). By damaging trust, users may visit fewer of these sites all together in favor of the pre-internet days of job search hunting, or avoid the cure of jobs entirely online. Another broader implication of the digital economy is subsequent development because the less confident help can adversely affect the introduction of new platforms and technologies (Wilson and Gupta, 2025).

Reliance on the digital places is an indicator of how people rely so much on such tools to perform some important activities like jobs search. Such inclination is motivated by the ease of use, the range of opportunities available, and the effectiveness of online systems against the traditional approach (Nguyen & Tran, 2024). Nonetheless, it is possible that some exposure to job scams online might ruin such dependency, causing suspicion and a lack of interest. As an example, a report published in 2023 revealed that the victims of online scam reported that their willingness to use online job boards reduced by 40 percent due to concerns related to security and authenticity of the job (Taylor & Adams, 2023). Such breakdown in

trust and reliance does not only impact individual job seekers but also consumers and employers, as well as providers of platforms, which depend on user activity to maintain the platforms. The ripple effect of scam, therefore, presents the main dilemma to the sustainability of digital work ecosystems (Garcia & Singh, 2024).

### **Objectives of the Study**

This research aims at achieving the following objectives:

1. To examining the role of online job scams on perceived trust of the online platforms.
2. To investigate the dependency on digital job-search platforms is affected by online job frauds.
3. To examine the impact of online job frauds on reliance and trust, with a focus on the significance of difference across demographic segments.
4. To propose measures for enhancing users' security and trust in digital platforms.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Prevalence and Nature of Online Job Scams**

The rise in online markets for work has led to a corresponding uptick in labour market scams, which have taken advantage of not having adequate checks and balances in place to identify vulnerable groups such as new university leavers, rural workers and those lacking digital literacies. Other common forms of cybercrime include email data breaches like phishing for confidential data, advance fee scam as well as bogus job ads that cause identity theft and losses of money. They used advertisements with minimal information to lure the candidates for fictitious positions, for example advertisements on tender sites namely LinkedIn, Indeed as well as recruitment sites as the anonymity provided by these sites was an official reason for scams (Kingsley et al., 2024; Rathudi, 2023).

### **Impacts on Victims**

Many people who fall victim to online job scams suffer threats to their finances, their emotions, and to their reputation. Identity theft and heartache ranging from anxiety and depression to lack of confidence in one's self-esteem are estimated at costs of over US\$220 million in 2024. An instance from a 2023 fraud victim from Gujarat who lost savings due to a data entry scam and a 2024 Philippines victim cheated via Telegram confirms these impacts. With scams eroding people's trust in legitimate opportunities and platforms, there is less overall abstraction in job-seeking - both in terms of inclination to undertake any physical interactions that does lead to work or activity, and also with regard to the willingness to take risks.

### **Influence on Platform Trust**

On the other hand, job scams that don't go away encourage a general absence of trust on online job websites, because users are worried that their data might be compromised and that they could be deceived. This trust, found among all levels of education, leads to a loss of credibility for the platform and makes it punishing to use, especially in emerging economies. A couple of promotional activities are needed to regain the confidence as the prone people are scammed by scam artists whether they

be a novice or an expert (Pavithra & Keerthana, 2024; Rathudi, 2023).

### **Digital Platform Dependency**

Although digital job applications present more inherent hazards, they remain heavily used by would-be job seekers for reasons of access and network effects. Scams, however, caused to remove this dependency, prompting the users for more cautious or offline alternatives. Research shows the availability of improved technological literacy and functionality for fraud detection involving machine learning can help overcome risks in order to maintain platform use safely while maintaining engagement especially for the micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) (Madhan Raj et al, 2023; Haugh et al, 2023).

### **Role of Media**

Social media networks like Facebook and Instagram are places that are not only used for job scams but also used as tools for awareness. Scammers are using these channels to mimic recruiters while media campaigns can inform users to stay protected against victimisation. The power of spreading the Hamburg is one of the biggest forces on the fertile soil of digital behavior and defeating fraud (HR Dive, 2024; Pew Research Center, 2024).

## **METHODOLOGY**

Because the topic was quantitative, the study involved numerical techniques in order to analyze data. Such methods allow the researchers to quantify the variables. As an example, they measured the impact of job scams online by demographics. In general, the analysis produced valid statistics that displayed trends and dynamics among trust and reliance on digital platforms.

### **Research Design of the Study**

The study used the quantitative design methodology. A survey on-line was performed and numerical data were gathered. The structure that was established as the result of the design provided some structured information which could be analyzed using statistical tools. It also assisted in unraveling of the effects of Job scams over internet on trusts and dependencies amongst various demographic groups.

### **Sample Design**

The researcher has employed the non-probability type of sample, in which they have made the convenience sample. They selected convenient subjects, mostly online users. This facilitated the effective collection of data, as well as it allowed the researcher to focus on the influence of job scams on trust and reliance.

### **Data Collection Tool**

The researchers distributed an online questionnaire that sought to measure participants' perceptions on job fraud. The questionnaire consisted of both Likert scale and multiple-choice questions as well as open-ended questions. This mixture allowed the respondents to provide both numeric ratings as well as free text. As a result, both quantitative and qualitative data were obtained from this study. The data provided a complete picture of how job scams impact participants' trust in and reliance on digital platforms and comprised various experiences across different

demographics.

### Study Area

The study was conducted online and was designed to reach users who had viewed online job ads. It sought to capture the lived experiences of active digital-platform users, collecting data on their experience of job scams and the impact they have on their trust in and use of online platforms.

### Population of the study

Participants were males or females aged 18-65, from all occupations and who were active users of digital platforms. The study analyzed their experiences with online job advertisements, analyzing their impact on their trust in and reliance on digital platforms and reflecting a wide range of perspectives.

### Sample Size

Validity and reliability of the study were ensured with a sample size of 284 social-media users taken randomly as the target sample size. The approach developed a representative data set from which robust statistical analyses of users' perceptions of online job scams and their impact on trust and platform use were possible.

### Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics and correlation analysis were used to analyse the survey responses. Through these techniques, key trends and relationships were found that show the relationship and impact of participants' demographic factors and experience with online job scams on their trust and reliance on online platforms.

### Software for Analysis

SPSS software will be used for data analysis.

## RESULTS

Data was analyzed through descriptive and inferential statistical test using SPSS. Graph & table to present & interpret the data.

**Table 1: Impact of Online Job Scams on Users' Faith in Digital Platforms  
(Total Respondents: 284)**

Statement	% Strongly Agree (Above Master's)	% Strongly Agree (Overall)
Online job scams make me doubt digital job platforms	73.0%	65.1%
Trust in digital platform security dropped due to job scams	70.3%	52.1%
Job scams make me question the legitimacy of online job posts	65.2% (Up to Master's)	58.5%
Less likely to trust job ads online after encountering scams	73.0%	58.1%
Job scams make me doubt digital platforms care about user safety	50.0% (Up to Bachelor's)	45.8%

More careful with personal information on digital platforms after job scams	70.0% (Up to Bachelor's)	66.5%
Disappointed in digital platforms for preventing job scams	55.6% (Up to Bachelor's)	46.5%
Trust in digital transactions, like job applications, has gone down due to scams	70.3%	57.0%
Job scams made me think twice about relying only on digital job platforms	67.8% (Up to Bachelor's)	60.6%
Job scams affect overall trust in the credibility of digital platforms	51.4%	46.1%

**Table 1** signifies that overall, between 46.1 and 66.5 % of the respondents stated high levels of agreement on how job scams which occur online put a lot of trust in an online platform at risk, while respondents with higher education showed a high level of distrust.

**Table 2: Impact of Online Job Scams on Trust in Digital Platforms for Job Searching (Total Respondents: 284)**

Statement	% Strongly Agree (Education Level)	% Strongly Agree (Overall)
Job scams make me wary of using only digital platforms for job hunting	69.1% (Up to Matric)	64.8%
Job scams made me use digital platforms less for job searches	69.1% (Up to Matric)	53.2%
Less reliant on digital platforms for jobs after encountering scams	62.9% (Up to Master's)	58.8%
Job scams pushed me to look for jobs outside digital platforms	64.7% (Up to Matric)	59.5%
Trust in digital job ads dropped due to scams	59.5% (Above Master's)	48.2%
Use other job search methods, like networking, more after job scams	66.3% (Up to Master's)	64.8%
Job scams lowered confidence in digital platforms for finding real jobs	51.4% (Above Master's)	43.0%
Income affects how much I use digital platforms for job searches	65.6% (Up to Bachelor's)	60.9%

**Table 2** indicated that on average, there existed a strong consensus that online job scams were an important source of erosion of trust in online platforms used for job search purposes, ranging from 43.0% to 64.8% of the sample with lower education groups more skeptical about these scams than their peers.

**Table 3: Impact of Online Job Frauds on Trust in Digital Platforms by Demographic Background**

(Total Respondents: 284)

Statement	% Strongly Agree (Education Level)	% Strongly Agree (Overall)
Education level makes me more skeptical of job ads online	40.5% (Above Master's)	23.7%
Job status affects trust in online job offers	55.1% (Up to Master's)	45.8%
Location alters perception of online job frauds	61.1% (Up to Bachelor's)	53.5%
Digital literacy helps spot job scams better	60.3% (Up to Matric)	51.8%
Past experience with job scams makes me more cautious online	51.4% (Above Master's)	45.1%
Cultural background affects expectations of job information reliability	56.8% (Above Master's)	44.7%
Trust in authorities impacts feeling secure from job scams	42.2% (Up to Bachelor's)	38.0%

**Table 3** signifies that, collectively 23.7-61.1% of respondents indicated a high degree of agreement that online job scams have significant implications for their trust in, and reliance on, online platforms; demographic factors (like education, employment status, and geographical location) played a strong role in the cynicism of respondents.

**Table 4: Factors Improving User Safety and Confidence in Online Services**

(Total Respondents: 284)

Statement	% Strongly Agree (Education Level)	% Strongly Agree (Overall)
Strong encryption makes me trust online services more	58.9% (Up to Bachelor's)	49.6%
Clear data policy communication makes me feel safer online	50.0% (Up to Bachelor's)	45.8%
Learning about online threats increases trust in digital services	61.8% (Up to Matric)	53.5%
Monitoring suspicious activities boosts confidence in online services	63.3% (Up to Bachelor's)	54.9%
Good customer support for security issues builds trust in platforms	57.8% (Up to Bachelor's)	46.8%

Regular security updates and audits make me feel more confident	67.6% (Above Master's)	58.8%
Transparency in privacy practices affects trust in online services	55.6% (Up to Bachelor's)	48.2%
Two-factor authentication makes me feel more secure online	54.1% (Above Master's)	48.6%
Quick responses to security breaches improve trust in platforms	70.3% (Above Master's)	50.0%
Learning about data protection makes me feel safer online	54.1% (Above Master's)	44.7%

**Table 4** signifies that finally, anywhere from 44.7% to 70.3% of participants strongly agreed that tools such as encryption, transparency, and prompt breaches tend to make online platforms noticeably safer and more useful to using; higher respondents' educational credentials yielded more agreement.

## DISCUSSION

The proposed research is based on the quantitative survey of 284 participants (43.3% of whom are young individuals, and 54.2% are women) to investigate the impact of online job scams on the levels of trust and dependence upon online sources. Results in Tables 1- 4 indicate general loss of trust, altered dependence, demography and prospects of security enhancement to restore trust. The results endorse Trust Theory and Technology Acceptance Model (TAM). They also adopt recent findings of 2024-2025 on distrust due to scams. These results are interpreted in terms of the objectives of the study as discussed below.

### Erosion of Trust Due to Online Job Scams (Objective 1)

Table 1 confirms that 46.1-66.5% of the sampled people strongly agreed that online employment frauds are a major breakdown of trust on the internet. More distrust was voiced by those who were more educated. Table 2 confirms that a 43.0-64.8 percent of the sample considered scams a central source of trust loss, particularly in job search. These results Facebook scandals are corrosive to fundamentals of competence, maleficence, and integrity, which exacerbate perceived risk (Mayer et al., 1995). Learned respondents will be more doubtful related to their greater awareness of information asymmetry and anonymity in the Internet. In the previous research the confidence of user in the platforms, such as LinkedIn, reduces by approximately 3520 percent due to the inclusion of malicious language in posts (Kingsley et al., 2024). Phishing is contributing to the gap in trust in Pakistan, especially among young consumers, where 28 per cent of users state that they have lost trust (Ahmed & Khan, 2025).

### Impact on Dependence and Behavioral Shifts (Objective 2)

According to Table 3, 23.7 to 61.1% of respondents strongly supported the claim that online job scammers will have an impact on how participants trust online platforms, and which has resulted in certain behavioral changes like decreased

dependence. Education level and working status (demographic factors) increase cynicism and stimulate avoidance. The TAM studies reveal that scams reduce perception of usefulness and ease of use, thereby a lowering user engagement (Davis, 1989). Reduced-educated populations, Table 2 above indicates, are even less tolerant (with 64.8 up being the maximum) and may turn to offline options. PMT shows that appraising threat results in platform aversion, which requires scam frustration in up to 43% of users and prompts 22% increase of distress in schammed businesses in upcoming economies (Rogers, 1975; Raghunath et al., 2025).

### **Demographic Variations in Scam Impacts (Objective 3)**

The scam effect of trust and dependence thus strongly depends on the demographic variables as the tabulating tables indicate. Table 3 indicates that 23.761.1% of respondents highly agree that scams have e-plan implications on their platforms as education, employment status, and location impact the level of cynicism. As an example, respondents with lower education (Table 2) are more skeptical (43.0564.8 per cent) probably due to low digital literacy, but those with high education (Table 1) show their distrust in more (up to 66.5 per cent). The risk of scam in South Asia is 25 times higher because of geographic effects caused by 53.55 per cent urban-rural gap aggravated SDG10 inequalities (Vidani, 2025). Gender increase the vulnerability of the gig -workers case also (Nguyen & Tran, 2024).

### **Enhancing Trust Through Security Measures (Objective 4)**

Table 4 reveals that 44.7-70.3%. of respondents strongly agree that platforms may become safer and easier to operate with the help of such tools as encryption, visibility, and quick reaction on breach actions. There is a correlation between higher education and support of these measures. According to these results, proactive security has the potential to decrease the scam associated distrust, a finding corroborated by the TAM external variables that increase the perceived security (Davis, 1989). The author also asserts that PMT explains that these actions can stimulate coping appraisal and self-efficacy and reduce avoidance (Rogers, 1975). In Pakistan, tough policies enhance e-commerce trust by 32 per cent, which indicates that digital-literacy efforts are yet to be implemented (Chawla & Kumar, 2022; Ahmed & Khan, 2025). In general, the optimal solution is security, which would avoid the abandonment rate of the user that may range between 15 20 percent in 2025 (Federal Trade Commission, 2025).

Overall, this study introduces some gaps in the literature on scam effects in Pakistan, which, at its core, is counterproductive to SDG (industry and innovation) as it will discourage the use of platforms (Lee & Thompson, 2023). In order to restore confidence and retain users, platforms should verify more.

## **CONCLUSION**

This paper throws light on the negative effects of online job frauds on confidence and dependence on the digital platforms with a wide sample of 284 Pak Families internet users. Some important insights show that scams have a considerable impact by lowering trust and altering behavior like decrease in

platform use (53.2% less use) and transferring to offline/network channels (64.8%). Demographic nuances- the youth, female and less educated groups are the most susceptible and indicates inequity and the intervention should be particular to these groups. Examples of security (eg. two-factor authentication, encryption) and awareness (eg. threat education) are avenues to recover trust and are consistent with such theoretical approaches as Trust Theory and the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM). These findings answer the research questions by illustrating how the loss of trust in online employment networks has led to the reduction of dependence, how demographic data affect these behaviors and how security and COVID awareness measures may restore this confidence. With the rapidly growing digital employment sector in max Pakistan, the research findings reveal a pressing need to put in place more conciliatory policies tailored to the establishment of safer ecosystems that are engineered to support the development in line with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Finally, scams may hinder the digital inclusion; nevertheless, evidence-based conversations imply that measures could restore reinvention and ensure platforms continue to work as the key to fair employment.

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