

RESEARCH ARTICLE

EMPOWERING JOB SEEKERS: THE IMPACT OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY ON EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES IN CALABARZON

Erwin C. De Guzman

San Pablo Colleges, San Pablo City, Philippines

*Corresponding Author Email: erwin.quest@yahoo.com

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the transformative impact of information technology (IT) on job opportunities in the Calabarzon region. Using random sampling, insights were gathered from 300 respondents, both employed and unemployed, who shared their perceptions, experiences, and challenges regarding the use of IT in their job search strategies. Results reveal a significant lack of understanding among job seekers about how IT can enhance employment prospects, with many unaware of its potential to aid in job searches or skill acquisition. While IT-driven recruitment processes are prevalent, they remain underutilized by applicants. Recommendations highlight the need for addressing common IT-related challenges, such as search optimization and safeguarding personal information, to improve job search outcomes. The study also emphasizes the importance of extending digital literacy education to marginalized communities through partnerships between educational institutions, private companies, and government agencies. This collaborative effort can enhance job seekers' IT skills, fostering economic growth and employment opportunities. The research underscores information technology's role in transforming job seekers into valuable contributors in the Philippine labor market.

KEYWORDS

Information technologies, IT resources, job applicants, Online job portal

1. INTRODUCTION

Unemployment has been a long-standing challenge in the Philippines, especially in areas moving from traditional industries to technology-driven economies. With the rise of information technology, online platforms have become indispensable resources for job seekers and employers. These platforms provide a modern solution to the timeless issue of connecting people with job opportunities. Calabarzon, the second-largest contributor to the Philippines' GDP, is a growing hub for industrial and commercial activities (NEDA, 2019). Its proximity to Metro Manila has fuelled its urbanization and infrastructure development, making it attractive to investors and a key area to study the impact of information technology on employment.

In Calabarzon, IT plays an important role in opening more job opportunities, making the region attractive for industries like manufacturing and electronics. International companies are investing more due to IT improvements that help match jobs with workers and increase productivity. As infrastructure and digital connectivity grow, IT continues to boost industrial growth and employment, benefiting many regional sectors (Oxford Business Group, n.d.). In 2021, Calabarzon emerged as the fastest-growing region in the Philippines, expanding at an annual rate of 7.6%, driven by its manufacturing hubs and strong industrial sector performance, which accounted for 25.1% of the sector's growth (Royandoyan, 2022). The rise of information technology and online platforms has become crucial for job seekers and employers, facilitating job searches and recruitment processes in this rapidly growing economic landscape.

Employment is a key foundation for reducing poverty and driving economic growth. However, job seekers continue to face numerous challenges, such as the mismatch between skills and employer

requirements. Traditional job-hunting methods, such as word of mouth or newspaper ads, have proven to be time-consuming and limited in reach. In recent years, more Filipinos have begun shifting to online job portals, which offer a broader range of job listings, making the search process more convenient. Job portals are now crucial for job seekers and recruiters because they make finding jobs and hiring candidates easier and faster (Ninawe, 2023). As technology advances, these platforms will continue to improve, making it essential for job seekers to use them to succeed in today's competitive job market.

IT is essential in modernizing the job search process, providing significant benefits to job seekers and employers. Online job portals have made it significantly easier for individuals to find relevant opportunities and for organizations to reach potential candidates. These platforms offer cost-effective and time-saving solutions, providing users access to a wide range of job listings from virtually any location and at any time (Asnani et al., 2023). Moreover, the advent of online recruitment platforms has facilitated the process of job searching for individuals, enabling them to efficiently explore job opportunities that align with their credentials and electronically submit applications, thereby eliminating the need for physical application submissions and associated expenses (Lewaherilla and Huwae, 2023).

Online job platforms provide significant opportunities but also pose several challenges, especially in the Philippines. One of the primary challenges is digital literacy, the 2019 National ICT Household Survey reveals that digital literacy in the Philippines is limited, with only 2 in 5 Filipinos possessing at least one of the six basic information and communication technology skills (Albina, 2021). Therefore, there is a pressing need to enhance digital literacy, particularly among the youth and the elderly.

Limited access to reliable internet and digital devices further hinders job

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seekers' ability to engage effectively with online job platforms. Internet connectivity is crucial for economic growth and daily activities, but unequal access creates a significant digital divide. This divide impacts the economy, social opportunities, and educational equity, though solutions are available to help bridge this gap (Kumar, 2009). Additionally, there is a persistent gap between the skills demanded by employers and those that job seekers possess, which must be addressed to ensure that technology empowers workers rather than marginalizing them. The skills gap is a major global economic challenge, but workforce development programs are effectively bridging this divide by aligning education with industry needs and promoting lifelong learning (Kumar et al., 2024). These programs are crucial for equipping individuals with the necessary skills to thrive in a technology-driven job market, ultimately contributing to both personal and national economic growth.

Acknowledging the difficulties associated with digital integration, the government has launched several programs targeted at enhancing digital literacy and increasing accessibility to online job boards. National initiatives to improve digital skills have been started by the Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT), especially in the nation's underprivileged areas (Dharmaraj, 2024). Improving the employability of the labor force today and in the future will result in increased employment opportunities and job creation (NEDA, 2022). To improve digital literacy and access to online job platforms, the government and business community must work together to overcome the issues of digital integration for job seekers. This collaboration combines public resources and policy support with the creativity and expertise of the private sector.

This study explores how information technology can empower job seekers in Calabarzon, providing insights that contribute to both academic discourse and practical solutions to the region's employment challenges. By examining the perceptions, experience, and challenges of using technology in job searches, the research offers valuable recommendations to improve job-seeking efforts. Empowering job seekers through technology is crucial not only for reducing unemployment but also for ensuring that Calabarzon's economic growth benefits all its residents.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

In today's rapidly evolving digital landscape, IT has emerged as a pivotal force, fundamentally reshaping how businesses operate and how individuals seek employment. The advent of digital tools, online platforms, and automation has revolutionized traditional employment practices, allowing for greater flexibility, enhanced productivity, and more efficient job-matching processes. As economies increasingly rely on digital infrastructure, regions like Calabarzon in the Philippines have embraced IT to adapt to changing work environments. The adoption of IT in the service industry during the COVID-19 pandemic improved productivity despite the challenges posed by the pandemic. The use of digital tools enabled more flexible working arrangements, which allowed businesses to maintain operations while ensuring employee safety (Lumanta, 2022).

The COVID-19 pandemic further accelerated this shift, forcing businesses to adopt remote work strategies and incorporate IT-driven solutions to remain operational. As a result, IT has maintained business continuity, created new employment opportunities, and enhanced operational efficiency across various industries. This paper explores the significant impact of IT on employment dynamics in Calabarzon, drawing upon several studies that highlight its transformative effects in different sectors. Information technology has significantly transformed employment dynamics in various regions, including Calabarzon. Information Technology (IT) has become a critical factor in reshaping the job search process in the Philippines. Online job platforms like job portals and company websites have expanded the job opportunities available to Filipino job seekers, offering accessibility and convenience that traditional methods lack. Their study highlighted that IT has improved the efficiency of matching job seekers with employers (Albina and Sumagaysay, 2020).

The integration of IT into job searching has fundamentally transformed the employment landscape in the Philippines. The rise of online job portals has made it more convenient and affordable for both recruiters and job seekers to access job information. (World Bank, 2023). It discusses the use of advanced technology like artificial intelligence and big data to match job seekers and employers more effectively. Various online job search platforms offer significantly greater accessibility and convenience than traditional job search methods, enabling a more efficient and effective matching of job seekers with potential employers. This shift highlights the crucial role of information technology in revolutionizing job search processes and underscores its growing significance in the Philippine job market. The transition to digital recruitment is viewed as a pivotal

development in enhancing employment outcomes, providing a streamlined and user-friendly approach to connecting talent with opportunities. A McKinsey report discusses how online talent platforms increase the transparency of the demand for skills, enabling better educational choices and more effective spending on tertiary education (Manyika et al., 2019).

Despite the benefits of online job searching, challenges remain in the effective use of IT tools (Kumar et al., 2023). There are several common challenges faced in job searching. It emphasizes the importance of being proactive and organized in the job search process. It also highlights the need for a strong online presence, a professional network, and effective communication skills (Stefanchik, 2021). Additionally, the author advises job seekers to be aware of their strengths and weaknesses and to use various resources to improve their skills. As noted by some researcher technology has significantly transformed recruitment and selection processes, making them more efficient and accurate (Caccavale, 2023). While it offers benefits such as reaching a wider pool of candidates and improving assessment accuracy, it also presents challenges like information overload and potential biases in AI tools. Understanding the advantages and drawbacks is crucial for effectively leveraging technology in recruitment.

The internet has revolutionized job searching and recruitment, with web job portals and social networks significantly changing how people find jobs and how employers recruit. Social media presence can both positively and negatively impact job applicants, as hiring professionals often scrutinize online content. Despite the widespread use of job websites, concerns about bias in job application screenings and targeted social media advertising remain prevalent (Statista, 2024). Social media has revolutionized recruitment by enabling companies to reach a broader and more diverse pool of candidates. Platforms like LinkedIn, Facebook, and Twitter are leveraged to attract top talent, enhance employer branding, and streamline the hiring process. Despite its benefits, the effectiveness of social media recruiting varies, and balancing it with more formal job search methods can optimize overall recruitment strategies (The Withe Team, 2024).

AI tools can significantly ease the job search process by helping job seekers tailor their resumes and cover letters, identify suitable positions, and prepare for interviews. AI tools can streamline the application process and improve the chances of passing through Applicant Tracking Systems, AI tools can significantly ease the job search process (Mueller, 2023). However, job seekers should use AI as a supplement to their efforts, ensuring they maintain a personal touch and avoid over-reliance on automated solutions (ATS) (Castro, 2023).

The user-friendliness of online job application systems has been identified as a key factor in their adoption. As highlighted by Forbes Human Resource Council (2020), an ideal application process should balance gathering essential information about the applicant's experience, education, and personality without making them feel interrogated. Overly demanding procedures can deter qualified candidates, so it's crucial to innovate and streamline the process. The article suggests removing barriers to entry, automating parts of the process, and ensuring the application is user-friendly to enhance the candidate experience. Amanova has noted that there is still a lack of research on how users interact with these platforms (Amanova, 2021). The study assessed a job search engine using surveys, interviews, and observational methods, revealing that the website's unintuitive interface poses usability challenges, especially for novice users. The findings contribute to the limited literature on user experiences with job search engines, highlighting the need for improved usability.

The evolution of online recruitment highlights the significant advancements in digital recruitment technology and its profound impact on today's job market. From basic job postings on company websites to the sophisticated platforms and tools of 2024, online recruitment has transformed, mirroring the broader digital landscape's shift towards instant communication and rapid information access. In an article by Kazim, online recruitment has become essential for businesses, revolutionizing traditional hiring practices (Kazim, 2024). This shift began in the early 2000s with the digitization of job listings and applications, significantly expanding the reach and efficiency of recruitment. Modern online recruitment now includes AI-driven search engines, social media recruiting, and specialized web services, making the process more dynamic and accessible. The ability to access a global talent pool and streamline the hiring process has made online recruitment a critical component of contemporary corporate strategies.

Navigating the job market is challenging, especially with the presence of

recruiting scams that prey on hopeful job seekers. These scams often involve requests for money, upfront demands for sensitive information, and fraudulent use of company information. To avoid falling victim, job seekers should thoroughly research companies and recruiters, look out for red flags in job postings, verify postings through trusted platforms, and maintain privacy over personal information (Atticus, 2024). Staying informed about current scams and reporting suspicious activity are also crucial steps in protecting oneself during job searching. Fake job ads are becoming more common, with 40% of companies admitting to posting them this year, often to create a false impression of growth or to collect resumes for future use. Unlike typical job scams, these “ghost jobs” are posted by hiring managers themselves, complicating job seekers’ searches and eroding trust in companies. While many hiring managers believe this practice is morally acceptable and beneficial for business, it can damage a company’s reputation and trust when exposed (Cerullo, 2024).

Online jobs in the Philippines have become more accessible, offering flexibility and financial growth. To succeed, job seekers should identify their skills and interests, continuously upskill through online courses, and create professional online profiles on platforms like LinkedIn. Additionally, it’s crucial to use reputable online job portals and social media platforms for networking, while staying cautious of scams by verifying job offers (Virtual Staff, 2024). In early 2023, as discussed by Statista a significant data breach in the Philippines exposed over a million police records and 800 gigabytes of personal data from law enforcement employees and applicants (Statista, 2023). This incident is part of a broader trend of increasing cyber threats, particularly heightened during the COVID-19 pandemic when more Filipinos turned to online services. Despite a decline in reported incidents, there is a need for strong cybersecurity measures are critical to protect users and businesses. Phishing attacks are the most common, and businesses must develop comprehensive cybersecurity strategies to mitigate these risks.

Digital literacy in the Philippines is becoming increasingly important as the country transitions toward a more digital future. The internet has grown, with 4.9 billion users globally in 2021, and many people, especially

in developing countries, still struggle with connectivity, Being digitally literate involves more than just accessing the internet; it includes creating, sharing, and critically evaluating information, which is crucial to combat misinformation and cybercrimes (BMPLUS, 2022). Desiderio indicated that a report from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and LinkedIn revealed that over 60% of employers in the Philippines have observed a growing demand for digital skills in recent years (Desiderio, 2022). In the Philippines, six out of the last ten employees hired needed basic digital skills, while two out of ten required advanced skills. Despite the increasing need, only 58% of employers in the Philippines offer digital skills training, lower than other surveyed countries like the US and Indonesia. Budget constraints and lack of motivation were cited as key barriers to upskilling the workforce.

3. METHODS

This research assesses the impact of IT on employment opportunities in Calabarzon. It uses a quantitative approach to examine the relationship between IT usage and employment opportunities among job seekers in the region. The independent variable was the utilization of IT in job searches, while the dependent variables were the job seekers’ perceptions, experiences, and challenges. Random sampling was used to select 300 respondents from a diverse population in Calabarzon. The survey method was employed, with a questionnaire serving as the main tool for data collection. Overall, this study aims to offer valuable insights into the perceptions, experiences, and challenges associated with using information technology for job searching in Calabarzon.

4. THE DATA ANALYSIS

The data analysis aims to uncover patterns, trends, and relationships within the data that contribute to a deeper understanding of the impact of IT on employment opportunities in Calabarzon. The results and discussion presented in this section will form the foundation for our conclusions and recommendations.

Table 1: Perceptions in the Use of Information Technology in Job Applications

Statement	Mean	Description	Interpretation
1. Information Technology (Like Company Websites, Job Seeking Platform, Mobile Phones & Computers) has made it easier to find job listings.	4.45	Strongly Agree	Very High Level
2. Online job portals are a reliable source for finding employment opportunities.	4.05	Agree	High Level
3. Social media platforms are effective tools for job searching.	3.65	Agree	High Level
4. I feel more confident in my job search due to the availability of online resources.	4.30	Strongly Agree	Very High Level
5. Information technology has increased my chances of getting an interview.	4.25	Strongly Agree	Very High Level
6. Online networking has helped me connect with potential employers.	4.05	Agree	High Level
7. The use of online job application systems is straightforward and user-friendly.	3.75	Agree	High Level
8. I trust the information provided by online job search platforms.	3.0	Neutral	Moderate
9. Information technology has reduced the time it takes to find job opportunities.	3.70	Agree	High Level

Key to interpretation 4.21-5.00 (Very High Level), 3.41-4.20 (High Level), 2.61-3.40 (Moderate Level), 1.81-2.60 (Low Level), 1.00-1.80 (Very Low Level)

Table 1 provides a clear picture of how respondents perceive the role of IT in their job search efforts. Statement 1 with a mean score of 4.45, respondents strongly agree that IT, including company websites, job-seeking platforms, mobile phones, and computers, has made it easier to find job listings. This suggests that the transition to digital platforms has significantly expanded access to job opportunities, surpassing traditional methods in terms of reach and convenience. In statement 2, online job portals are also viewed positively, with a mean score of 4.05. Respondents generally agree that these platforms are reliable sources for finding employment opportunities, indicating their effectiveness in connecting job seekers with potential employers. However, in statement 3 when it comes to social media platforms, the mean score drops slightly to 3.65. While respondents acknowledge the utility of social media in job searching, the slightly lower agreement suggests that social media may not be as universally effective as other IT tools, perhaps due to varying user experiences or the informal nature of some social media platforms.

The availability of online resources has had a notably positive impact on job seekers’ confidence, reflected in statement 4 with a mean score of 4.30. This strong agreement highlights how IT has boosted job seekers’ self-esteem and motivation, making them feel more empowered during their job search. Similarly, respondents agree in statement 5 that IT has

increased their chances of getting an interview, with a mean score of 4.25. This suggests that IT tools not only enhance visibility but also improve opportunities for job seekers to advance in the application process. Online networking has also been beneficial, as reflected in statement 6 with a mean score of 4.05, as respondents agree that it has helped them connect with potential employers. This emphasizes the importance of building professional relationships through digital platforms in the modern job market. The user-friendliness of online job application systems is another key finding, with a mean score of 3.75 for statement 7. Respondents strongly agree that these systems are easy to use, indicating that IT tools have been designed to facilitate a smooth and accessible application process for job seekers.

However, there is a slight dip in trust when it comes to the information provided by online job search platforms, as implied in statement 8 with a mean score of 3.60. While respondents generally trust the information, the lower score suggests that some caution may be necessary when evaluating online sources, possibly due to concerns about accuracy or transparency. Finally, respondents agree in statement 9 that IT has reduced the time it takes to find job opportunities, with a mean score of 3.70. This highlights the efficiency gains that IT brings to the job search process, allowing job seekers to navigate the market more quickly and effectively. Table 1 indicates that IT has become an indispensable tool for job seekers in Calabarzon, enhancing accessibility, confidence, and efficiency in the job search process, while also highlighting areas where further improvements could be made.

The above data indicate a strong positive perception of IT's role in job applications, highlighting its usefulness, reliability, and effectiveness in various aspects of the job search process. This suggests that job seekers in

the Calabarzon region find IT tools to be highly beneficial in their employment pursuits.

Table 2: Experience in the Use of Information Technology in Job Applications.

Statement	Mean	Description	Interpretation
1. Information Technology (Like Company Websites, Job Seeking Platform, Mobile Phones & Computers) has improved my job search experience.	4.15	Agree	High Level
2. It is easy to use IT tools for job applications.	4.2	Agree	High Level
3. I believe that information technology will continue to play a crucial role in job seeking in the future.	4.25	Strongly agree	Very High Level
4. The skills required to use information technology for job searching are easy to acquire.	4.05	Agree	High Level
5. Information technology has provided me with more diverse job opportunities.	3.80	Neutral	Moderate Level
6. I am satisfied with the overall impact of information technology on my job search process.	4.15	Agree	High Level
7. I would recommend using information technology for job searching for others.	3.90	Neutral	Moderate Level

Key to interpretation 4.21-5.00 (Very High Level), 3.41-4.20 (High Level), 2.61-3.40 (Moderate Level), 1.81-2.60 (Low Level), 1.00-1.80 (Very Low Level)

Table II shows insights into how respondents experience the use of IT in their job applications. The analysis, based on mean scores and frequency distributions, reveals several important trends. Statement 1, respondents generally hold positive perceptions of IT's role in their job search efforts. Information technology has significantly improved the respondent's job search experience, as evidenced by a mean score of 4.15. In statement 2, respondents also find IT tools easy to use, with an average rating of 4.20, suggesting a strong level of comfort with these technologies. Moreover, in statement 3 there is widespread confidence among respondents that IT will remain a vital component of job searching in the future, indicated by a mean score of 4.25.

Statement 4, the skills required to effectively utilize IT for job searches. Respondents generally believe that these skills are relatively easy to acquire, with a mean score of 4.05. However, statement 5 also hints at the possibility that some individuals may still face challenges in mastering

these skills, highlighting a potential area for improvement. The neutral response indicates mixed feelings about the diversity of job opportunities provided by IT. While some may have found more opportunities, others might not have experienced significant changes, reflected in a mean score of 3.8. The response in statement 7 indicates that while many would recommend IT for job searching, there are some reservations. This could be due to varying personal experiences or perceived limitations of IT tools., with a mean score of 3.9.

The data suggest that IT is viewed as a valuable and effective tool in the job application process, enhancing the overall experience for job seekers by making it easier to find and apply for job opportunities, increasing confidence, and providing a broader range of options. These findings have significant implications for the continued adoption of IT in job searching. The overwhelmingly positive perceptions suggest that IT will continue to be an essential tool in job applications. This underscores the importance of promoting digital literacy and providing targeted training to ensure that individuals can effectively leverage IT in their job searches. Additionally, the findings suggest that policymakers and organizations should support the integration of IT into job search processes, ensuring that all job seekers have equitable access to the necessary digital resources.

Table 3: Challenges in the Use of Information Technology in Job Applications

Statement	Mean	Description	Interpretation
1. There are too many online job portals, making it difficult to choose the right one.	3.4	Neutral	Moderate
2. The online job application process can be time-consuming and complex.	3.3	Neutral	Moderate
3. I have encountered fraudulent job postings on online job search platforms.	3.3	Neutral	Moderate
4. Employers rarely respond to online job applications.	3.45	Agree	High Level
5. Technical issues often hinder my job search efforts online.	3.35	Agree	High Level
6. I believe that job search platforms need to improve their security measures.	3.5	Agree	High Level
7. More training and support are needed to effectively use information technology for job searching.	4.25	Strongly Agree	Very High Level
8. Online job search tools should be more personalized to fit individual needs.	3.65	Agree	High Level
9. I have faced difficulties in navigating online job search platforms due to a lack of digital literacy.	3.4	Neutral	Moderate
10. I feel overwhelmed by the amount of information available online regarding job opportunities.	3.5	Agree	High Level

Key to interpretation 4.21-5.00 (Very High Level), 3.41-4.20 (High Level), 2.61-3.40 (Moderate Level), 1.81-2.60 (Low Level), 1.00-1.80 (Very Low Level)

Table III provides critical insights into respondents' challenges when utilizing information technology (IT) for job applications. The analysis of mean scores and frequency distributions highlights several significant issues that many job seekers encounter in their efforts to find employment online. One of the most common challenges identified is the information overload. In statement 1, respondents reported difficulties in navigating the vast number of online job portals, with a mean score of 3.40, suggesting that the sheer volume of information can be confusing and cumbersome. This is followed in statement 2 by the perception that the online job application process itself is often time-consuming and complex, as indicated by a mean score of 3.30. This complexity can deter job seekers, making the process more stressful and less efficient. In statement 3, a moderate number of respondents have encountered fraudulent job postings on online job search platforms. A mean score of 3.3 suggests that

while it is not a universal experience, it is a significant issue that affects a portion of job seekers.

A significant number of respondents in statement 4 agree that employers rarely respond to online job applications. A mean score of 3.45 indicates that many job seekers face challenges in receiving feedback or responses from employers after submitting their applications. Statement 5, another challenge frequently mentioned by respondents is the technical issues that arise during their job search efforts. With a mean score of 3.35, these technical difficulties, such as website malfunctions or problems with uploading documents, can significantly hinder progress and add to the frustration of job seekers. Statement 6, the security, and privacy concerns are prominent among respondents, particularly the issue of fraudulent job postings on online platforms, which scored a mean of 3.50. Many respondents expressed unease about the safety of their personal information and the integrity of the job listings they encountered. This concern is further emphasized by the belief that job search platforms need to strengthen their security measures to better protect user data, as reflected in a mean score of 3.50.

Statement 7, points to a substantial need for more training and support in digital literacy. Many respondents felt that their lack of proficiency with IT tools hindered their ability to effectively navigate the online job market, with a mean score of 4.25. This suggests that while IT offers many advantages, its full potential is not being realized due to gaps in users' digital skills. Furthermore, statement 8 emphasizes that there is a strong desire among respondents for more personalized and customized job search tools. With a mean score of 3.65, this finding indicates that job seekers are looking for platforms that better align with their specific needs and preferences, offering tailored recommendations and streamlined processes that can make their search more targeted and effective.

Statement 9, a moderate number of respondents have experienced difficulties navigating online job search platforms due to their lack of digital literacy skills. This suggests that digital literacy is a significant challenge for some job seekers. Statement 10 indicates a significant number of respondents feel overwhelmed by the abundance of information available online related to job opportunities. This suggests that navigating the online job market can be challenging due to information overload.

The implications of these findings are clear: there is a critical need to enhance the user experience for job seekers by addressing the challenges identified in the survey. Improving the usability and accessibility of online job portals could help reduce information overload and make the application process more efficient. Strengthening security measures on these platforms is also essential to protect users from fraudulent activities and ensure their data are secured. Moreover, digital literacy initiatives should be prioritized by governments and organizations to provide job seekers with the necessary skills to navigate the digital job market confidently. Lastly, job search platforms could benefit from incorporating features that allow for greater personalization and customization, helping users find opportunities that closely match their qualifications and career aspirations.

While IT has significantly transformed the job search landscape, it is crucial to address the challenges that job seekers face to ensure they can fully benefit from its advantages. By focusing on improving user experience, enhancing security, promoting digital literacy, and providing personalized tools, online job search platforms can better meet the needs of job seekers, contributing to a more equitable and efficient labor market. These efforts will empower individual job seekers and support the broader goal of reducing unemployment and underemployment in regions like Calabarzon.

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The survey data offer valuable insights into the experiences and perceptions of job seekers in the Calabarzon region concerning the use of IT in job applications. Overall, respondents hold a positive view of IT, recognizing its benefits in enhancing ease of use, boosting confidence in the job search process, and providing access to a broader range of job opportunities. This positive perception underscores the role of IT as a vital tool in modern job searching, enabling job seekers to navigate the job market more effectively.

However, the data also highlight several challenges that job seekers face when using IT for job applications. Among these challenges are the overwhelming number of online job portals, the time-consuming nature of navigating and completing multiple applications, and technical issues that can hinder the application process. Additionally, respondents expressed concerns about the security of online platforms, as well as the need for improved digital literacy to fully leverage IT in their job search. These challenges indicate that while IT offers significant advantages, there are also areas where the user experience can be enhanced.

The findings suggest that there are opportunities to address these challenges and improve outcomes for job seekers in Calabarzon. Promoting digital literacy is critical to ensuring that job seekers can effectively use IT tools and navigate the increasingly digital job market. This includes providing training and resources that equip individuals with the necessary skills to utilize online platforms efficiently and securely. Moreover, governments and organizations play a crucial role in supporting the effective use of IT in job applications. This can be achieved through strategies such as improving internet access, enhancing the user experience of online job search platforms, and implementing robust security measures to protect the privacy of job seekers.

By addressing the challenges and capitalizing on the opportunities presented by IT, Calabarzon can further empower its job seekers and improve employment outcomes across the region. It is essential to create

a supportive environment that fosters digital literacy, ensures access to reliable and user-friendly IT tools, and addresses the security and privacy concerns of job seekers. Through these efforts, Calabarzon can position itself as a region that effectively leverages technology to enhance the job search process, ultimately creating a more inclusive and equitable labor market.

Based on the research findings, several recommendations can be made for job seekers in Calabarzon to optimize their use of IT and improve their employment prospects. First and foremost, enhancing digital literacy and skill development is essential. Job seekers should focus on acquiring essential skills by becoming proficient in using computers, smartphones, and other digital devices that are critical for navigating the modern job market. In addition, mastering online tools is crucial; this includes gaining expertise in using online job portals, social media platforms, and other relevant IT tools that can facilitate the job search process. Improving digital communication skills is also vital, as effective online communication—whether through email, video conferencing, or social media interactions—can significantly impact job search and networking efforts (Kumar et al., 2022). Furthermore, developing data analysis skills can empower job seekers to better analyze and interpret information from online sources, thereby making more informed decisions in their job search.

In terms of effectively using IT tools, job seekers should prioritize creating a strong online presence. This involves developing a professional profile on job platforms, social media, and even personal websites, which can help attract potential employers. Tailoring resumes and cover letters to match specific job requirements is another key strategy, as it increases the likelihood of standing out to recruiters. Additionally, job seekers should actively engage in online networking by participating in professional networks and forums, which can help them connect with industry experts and potential employers. Setting up job alerts and notifications is also recommended to ensure that job seekers receive timely information about relevant job openings. It is equally important to be mindful of online security, as protecting personal information and avoiding the sharing of sensitive data online can prevent potential risks.

Navigating online job search platforms effectively is another crucial aspect of a successful job search. Job seekers should familiarize themselves with the features and functionalities of different online job portals to make the most of these resources. Utilizing search filters to narrow down job searches based on specific criteria, such as location, industry, and salary, can save time and increase the relevance of job opportunities. It is also important to review job descriptions carefully to ensure that qualifications align with the job requirements, increasing the chances of being shortlisted. Following up on applications with a thoughtful email expressing continued interest in the position can further enhance job seekers' chances of success.

Leveraging social media is another powerful tool for job seekers. Building a professional profile on platforms like LinkedIn can help job seekers connect with industry professionals and recruiters, expanding their network and visibility. Engaging with industry professionals on social media, sharing work or projects to showcase skills and accomplishments, and staying updated on industry trends are all strategies that can significantly boost a job seeker's presence and appeal in the digital job market.

It is crucial to address common challenges associated with using IT in the job search process. Managing information overload by developing strategies, such as using filters and organizing job searches, can help job seekers stay focused and efficient. Being prepared to troubleshoot technical issues and seeking assistance when needed can prevent disruptions in the job search process. Additionally, safeguarding personal information and being cautious of fraudulent job postings are essential steps to ensure online security.

By following these recommendations, job seekers in Calabarzon can more effectively leverage IT to enhance their job search efforts, increase their chances of securing employment, and maintain competitiveness in today's increasingly digital job market. These strategies collectively contribute to a more successful and efficient job search process, ultimately leading to better employment outcomes.

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