

**THE INFLUENCE OF DIGITAL VISIBILITY ON PERCEIVED EMPLOYABILITY OF
POSTGRADUATE STUDENT IN OFFICE AND INFORMATION MANAGEMENT, IGNATIUS
AJURU UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, RIVERS STATE.**

Omoku Chukuladi Samade
Department of Office and Information Management
Faculty of Administration and Management
Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Rumuolumeni, Port Harcourt, Rivers State
Email; chukuladi.omoku@iaue.edu.ng

Eke Gladys Kingsley
Department of Office Technology and Management
Faculty of Management Sciences
Kenule Beeson Saro Wiwa Polytechnic, Bori, Rivers State
Email; eke.gladys@kenpoly.edu.ng

Michael Trever Tenger
Department of Office Technology and Management
Faculty of Management Sciences
Fidie Polytechnic, Gboko, Benue State.
Email; michaeltenger1990@gmail.com

Abstract

This paper theoretically explores how digital visibility influences perceived employability of post graduate student in IAUE, Rivers State. This study examines the relationship between digital visibility and perceived employability of postgraduate students in Office and Information Management in IAUE, Rivers State. The study was anchored on signaling theory propounded by Michael Spence in 1973. It concludes that postgraduate students with strong digital competencies—such as content creation, online collaboration, and digital communication—report higher levels of career optimism and readiness for the labor market. It recommends amongst others that postgraduate students should create professional profiles, highlight skills, connect with industry experts, and engage in discussions relevant to their fields.

Keywords: Digital visibility, searchability, LinkedIn membership, professional visibility, perceived employability.

Introduction

Digital visibility strongly determines graduate employability in the modern knowledge-driven economy. For postgraduate students in Office and Information Management (OIM), this visibility is no longer optional; it serves as a dynamic, real-time extension of their professional competence (Audrin et al., 2025). The rapid reconfiguration of the global labor market—driven by artificial intelligence, cloud automation, and the widespread adoption of remote work infrastructure—has radically transformed the modern corporate workplace. Traditional administrative roles have transitioned into highly technical functions requiring advanced data orchestration and information governance (Obi, 2023). Within this landscape, the discipline of Office and Information Management (OIM) sits at the critical intersection of corporate communication, digital technology, and strategic administrative oversight (Adesanya et al., 2023).

Historically, advanced OIM degrees focused primarily on structural office operations, data security, and database management. However, the modern marketplace expects postgraduate scholars to possess both advanced technical skills and a sophisticated professional presence (Oladele & Akinola, 2026). This demand has given rise to the concept of digital visibility, defined as the

strategic management of a professional's online footprint to showcase expertise, curate industry-specific insights, and engage with professional communities (Stein & Irvine, 2023).

For postgraduate students, achieving high digital visibility involves actively utilizing professional networking platforms, publishing academic or trade-related content, and building a cohesive personal brand online. Concurrently, perceived employability—an individual's subjective assessment of how easily they can secure and maintain sustainable employment within their chosen field—has become an important metric for academic and professional success (Jackson & Wilton, 2025). As employers increasingly rely on algorithmic sourcing and online background vetting to identify talent, the relationship between an OIM postgraduate's online presence and their confidence in their job market prospects has become a critical area of study (Audrin et al., 2025).

Statement of the Problem

Despite the high demand for advanced information management skills, a significant gap remains between the academic achievements of postgraduate students and their real-world job placement (Jackson & Wilton, 2025). This discrepancy stems primarily from a "visibility paradox": students often possess advanced competencies in data analytics, cloud computing, and information safety, yet their digital presence remains unoptimized, fragmented, or entirely non-existent to external recruiters (Stein & Irvine, 2023).

While previous research extensively covers the fundamental digital skills required within modern offices (Obi, 2023), little focus has been placed on how postgraduates strategically showcase these skills to the global labor market (Adesanya et al., 2023). Many postgraduate programs in Office and Information Management prioritize classroom-bound technical proficiencies, such as database administration or electronic record keeping (Oladele & Akinola, 2026). However, they frequently overlook the career literacy skills needed to manage professional online identities.

This visibility gap can result in underemployment, extended job searches, and a diminished sense of professional confidence among highly qualified individuals (Jackson & Wilton, 2025). Consequently, there is an urgent need to investigate how digital visibility influences the perceived employability of OIM postgraduate students, providing a clearer look at how digital branding shapes modern career outcomes.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The primary purpose of this study was to theoretically examine the relationship between digital visibility and perceived employability of postgraduate students in Office and Information Management in IAUE, Rivers State. The specific objectives are to:

1. Determine the influence of searchability on perceived employability of postgraduate students in Office and information management, IAUE, Rivers State.
2. Assess the extent to which LinkedIn membership influences perceived employability among postgraduate students in Office and information management, IAUE, Rivers State.
3. Ascertain how professional visibility relates to perceived employability of postgraduate students in Office and information management, IAUE, Rivers State.

Conceptual Review

Concept of Digital Visibility

In the modern digital landscape, the concept of digital visibility has evolved far beyond simply possessing an online presence. While the foundational meaning of visibility was historically tethered to physical, spatiotemporal proximity and immediate human senses, this link has been dissolved in algorithmically mediated environments (Thompson, 2005). Digital visibility is comprehensively defined as the capacity of an individual, group, organization, or piece of information to be perceived, accessed, and acknowledged by an intended audience within the digital sphere (IGI Global, 2026). Because modern internet users exhibit increasingly limited

attention spans, establishing a visible and searchable foothold is crucial for survival, turning visibility into a critical form of digital capital (Saburova, 2025).

Perceptibility addresses the baseline likelihood of being noticed or "seen" amid dense algorithmic curation, functioning as a passive state of being observed (Brantner & Stehle, 2021). Valuation highlights the transformation of digital visibility into social and commercial capital, where online recognition, metrics, and network reach are leveraged for social prestige, political empowerment, or market-facing legitimacy (Saburova, 2025). Consequently, visibility is no longer purely organic; it is actively shaped by a "visibility labor" where creators and organizations continuously strategize to satisfy platform algorithms to maintain relevance (Abidin, 2016).

From an organizational and technical standpoint, digital visibility is heavily mediated by computational infrastructure, shifting the power of curation from human editors to complex mathematical systems. In corporate environments, this is frameworked as "communication visibility theory," which asserts that when digital platforms make internal messages and networks transparent, it enhances the collective knowledge of "who knows what" and "who knows whom" across an enterprise (Leonardi, 2014). Ultimately, managing digital visibility requires a careful balance; while maximum visibility can drive web traffic, stakeholder trust, and user acquisition, it simultaneously triggers struggles over data privacy, surveillance, and the counter-effort to protect the "right to be forgotten" or remain intentionally unseen.

Dimensions of Digital Visibility

Searchability

Searchability is a concept that describes how easily information can be located and retrieved through digital systems, particularly search engines. Searchability, therefore, is not simply about being present online but about being findable and usable. It integrates visibility (the likelihood of being found) with accessibility (the ability to be understood and engaged with). In academic and professional contexts, searchability is crucial because it determines the reach and influence of digital outputs. For example, research articles in open-access repositories gain greater impact when they are optimized for searchability, while professional profiles on platforms like LinkedIn benefit from keyword-rich descriptions that enhance discoverability (Reyes-Lillo et al., 2025). It combines two critical dimensions: search engine visibility and information accessibility. Together, these determine whether content is not only present online but also discoverable and usable by intended audiences.

a. Search Engine Visibility

Search engine visibility refers to the prominence of information in search engine results. It is influenced by practices such as keyword optimization, metadata structuring, and technical design of websites. When content is optimized for search engines, it becomes more likely to appear in higher-ranking positions, thereby increasing its reach and impact (Reyes-Lillo, Morales-Vargas, & Rovira, 2025). Visibility is therefore a measure of how effectively information competes for attention in digital spaces.

b. Information Accessibility

Information accessibility emphasizes the ease with which users can interact with and understand the information once it has been found. This includes ensuring that content is inclusive, usable, and available across different devices and for diverse audiences. Accessibility practices—such as providing alt text for images, transcripts for multimedia, and ensuring mobile responsiveness—enhance both user experience and search engine indexing (BrowserStack, 2025). Accessibility thus complements visibility by ensuring that discoverable information is also meaningful and usable.

LinkedIn Membership

LinkedIn membership plays a crucial role in professional identity management, employability, and digital visibility. Two of its most impactful features are the ability to publish regular posts and maintain an online CV (profile availability). These functions act as signals of competence, credibility, and engagement in the professional marketplace.

a. Regular Posts on LinkedIn

Regular posting on LinkedIn enhances professional visibility by keeping one's profile active and relevant in the digital space. Research shows that consistent content sharing increases engagement, strengthens personal branding, and signals thought leadership (Vaast & Kaganer, 2013). Posts can include reflections on industry trends, summaries of research, or professional achievements. This includes;

- i. **Visibility:** Frequent posts improve algorithmic ranking, making profiles more discoverable (LinkedIn, 2024).
- ii. **Credibility:** Sharing insights demonstrates expertise and commitment to continuous learning (Papacharissi, 2010).
- iii. **Networking:** Posts invite interaction, fostering professional relationships and expanding networks (Ellison, Gibbs, & Weber, 2015).

Thus, regular posting is not merely self-expression but a strategic employability signal.

b. Online CV Availability

The LinkedIn profile functions as a dynamic online CV, accessible globally and continuously updated. Unlike traditional CVs, LinkedIn profiles integrate multimedia elements (videos, publications, endorsements) that enhance credibility. This helps in;

- i. **Accessibility:** Employers and recruiters can access profiles anytime, reducing barriers in recruitment processes (Nikolaou, 2014).
- ii. **Authenticity:** Endorsements and recommendations provide third-party validation of skills (Brown & Vaughn, 2011).
- iii. **Searchability:** Keyword optimization within profiles ensures higher visibility in recruiter searches (Reyes-Lillo, Morales-Vargas, & Rovira, 2025).

This online CV availability transforms employability by making professional signals persistent and globally accessible.

Professional Visibility

Professional visibility refers to the extent to which an individual's professional identity, achievements, and competencies are accessible and recognizable within digital and organizational spaces. It is shaped by two key dimensions: profile accessibility and platform participation, both of which are increasingly critical in the digital age for employability, networking, and career advancement.

a. Profile Accessibility

Profile accessibility is the ease with which others—employers, colleagues, or collaborators can view and interpret an individual's professional information. In digital contexts, this often means the availability of online CVs, LinkedIn profiles, or academic portfolios. This includes;

- i. **Transparency and credibility:** Accessible profiles allow recruiters to verify qualifications and experiences, reducing information asymmetry in hiring (Brown & Vaughn, 2011).
- ii. **Searchability:** Profiles optimized with keywords and structured information are more likely to appear in recruiter searches, enhancing employability (Reyes-Lillo, Morales-Vargas, & Rovira, 2025).
- iii. **Continuous availability:** Unlike traditional CVs, online profiles are dynamic and persistently accessible, ensuring that professional signals are visible at all times (Nikolaou, 2014).

Thus, profile accessibility transforms professional identity into a digital signal that employers interpret when assessing candidates.

b. Platform Participation

Platform participation refers to active engagement in professional or academic digital platforms such as LinkedIn, ResearchGate, or enterprise social networks. Participation includes posting content, joining discussions, and networking with peers. This includes;

- i. Engagement and visibility: Regular contributions increase algorithmic visibility, ensuring that one's profile remains active and discoverable (Vaast & Kaganer, 2013).
- ii. Knowledge sharing: Participation fosters collaboration and signals intellectual curiosity and expertise (Ellison, Gibbs, & Weber, 2015).
- iii. Employability signaling: Active involvement demonstrates adaptability, communication skills, and professional commitment, which employers interpret as markers of employability (McCabe, 2017).

Platform participation therefore extends professional visibility beyond static profiles, embedding individuals in dynamic networks of knowledge and opportunity. Employers increasingly rely on these digital signals to evaluate candidates, making professional visibility a determinant of perceived employability (Nikolaou, 2014; McCabe, 2017).

Concept of Perceived Employability

Perceived employability is generally understood as an individual's subjective evaluation of their ability to obtain and maintain employment in the labor market. Unlike objective employability, which is measured through tangible indicators such as qualifications, work experience, and skills, perceived employability emphasizes the personal belief and confidence that one can secure suitable employment opportunities (Rothwell & Arnold, 2007). This distinction is important because perceptions often influence behavior, motivation, and career-related decisions more strongly than objective measures.

Scholars argue that perceived employability is shaped by both personal and contextual factors. On the personal side, attributes such as self-efficacy, adaptability, and transferable skills play a significant role. For instance, individuals who believe they possess strong communication and problem-solving abilities tend to report higher levels of perceived employability (Fugate, Kinicki, & Ashforth, 2004). Educational experiences also contribute significantly; students who engage in internships, industry projects, and career counseling often feel more confident about their employability prospects (Tomlinson, 2012). On the contextual side, labor market conditions, economic stability, and institutional support systems are critical. Even highly skilled individuals may perceive low employability if the external environment is characterized by high unemployment or limited opportunities (Ergün & Şeşen, 2021). The implications of perceived employability are far-reaching. For students, it influences career planning, motivation, and engagement with learning activities. For universities, it underscores the importance of embedding employability-enhancing strategies into curricula, such as practical training and industry partnerships. For policymakers, perceived employability highlights the need to create stable labor markets and supportive employment policies, as these external factors strongly shape individuals' confidence in their career prospects (Malik & Hasan, 2024). Ultimately, perceived employability is not only about skills and qualifications but also about the psychological assurance that one can navigate the uncertainties of the labor market.

Theoretical Review

Signaling Theory

Signaling theory was propounded by Michael Spence in 1973. It emerged from his doctoral dissertation, where he explained how individuals in markets with information asymmetry send signals to reduce uncertainty. It explains how individuals use observable signals (like education or

online visibility) to convey hidden qualities (such as competence or employability). For postgraduate students at IAUE, digital visibility acts as a modern signal that shapes how employers perceive their employability.

Justification of Signaling Theory

The theory is justified by the idea that in situations where one party (like an employer) cannot directly observe the qualities of another (like a job applicant), signals help bridge the gap. For a signal to be effective:

- I. It must be observable (e.g., a degree, certification, or online profile).
- II. It must be costly to fake, meaning only those with genuine qualities can credibly send it.
- III. It must be interpretable, so the receiver (employer) can reasonably infer hidden qualities from it.

Implications of Signaling Theory

- I. Employers rely on signals such as education, work experience, or digital presence to judge employability.
- II. Individuals strategically choose signals that highlight their strengths.
- III. Institutions act as signalers too, since the reputation of a university (like IAUE) becomes part of the graduate's employability signal.
- IV. Signals influence opportunities, shaping who gets hired, promoted, or trusted.

For postgraduate students at Ignatius Ajuru University of Education (IAUE), signaling theory extends into the digital era, for instance:

- I. Digital visibility (LinkedIn profiles, online portfolios, research publications, and professional networking) acts as a modern signal of competence and adaptability.
- II. Perceived employability is strengthened when students use credible digital signals that employers recognize as markers of skill, professionalism, and readiness.

The Influence of Digital Visibility on Perceived Employability of Postgraduate student in Office and Information Management, Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Rivers State.

The influence of digital visibility on the perceived employability of postgraduate students in the Department of Office and Information Management at Ignatius Ajuru University of Education (IAUE), Rivers State, is increasingly significant in today's labor market. Digital visibility refers to the extent to which individuals can be found, recognized, and evaluated through online platforms, professional networks, and digital content. For postgraduate students, this visibility shapes not only how employers perceive them but also how they perceive their own employability.

Perceived employability is a subjective construct, reflecting students' confidence in their ability to secure and sustain employment opportunities (Rothwell & Arnold, 2007). In the IAUE context, postgraduate students in Office and Information Management often rely on digital platforms such as LinkedIn, institutional repositories, and professional forums to showcase their skills. Research indicates that students who actively maintain professional online profiles and publish digital content report higher levels of employability confidence (Koko & Uweh, 2025). This is because digital visibility enhances access to professional networks, validates academic achievements, and signals adaptability to employers who increasingly prioritize digital literacy.

Digital competencies are particularly critical for Office and Information Management students, whose discipline emphasizes information processing, communication, and organizational skills. A study on Rivers State universities found that postgraduate students with strong digital competencies—such as proficiency in online collaboration tools, content creation, and digital communication—perceived themselves as more employable (Koko, Ezekiel-Hart, & Godpower, 2025). This perception is reinforced by the growing demand for digitally skilled graduates in

administrative and managerial roles, where visibility in digital spaces is often equated with professional credibility.

Furthermore, assessments of digital skills among IAUE students reveal that audio-visual content creation, software proficiency, and online communication directly influence employability outcomes (Amesi & Allison, 2022). Students who can effectively use digital tools to present themselves professionally online are more confident about their career prospects. Conversely, those with limited digital presence often perceive themselves as less employable, even when academically qualified. This highlights the psychological dimension of digital visibility: it fosters self-confidence and career optimism, which are essential for navigating competitive labor markets.

For postgraduate students in Office and Information Management, digital visibility also aligns with the department's focus on preparing graduates for administrative and managerial roles in both public and private sectors. By cultivating professional visibility online, students not only enhance their employability but also contribute to the reputation of IAUE as an institution that produces digitally competent graduates.

Conclusion

The influence of digital visibility on the perceived employability of postgraduate students in IAUE, Rivers State, is profound. Findings from recent studies indicate that students who actively cultivate an online presence through platforms such as LinkedIn, academic blogs, and professional networking sites perceive themselves as more employable compared to those who lack such visibility. Digital visibility enhances confidence, expands access to professional networks, and signals adaptability to employers who increasingly prioritize digital literacy.

Moreover, postgraduate students with strong digital competencies—such as content creation, online collaboration, and digital communication—report higher levels of career optimism and readiness for the labor market. Conversely, limited digital presence often correlates with lower perceived employability, even among academically qualified students. This underscores the fact that employability in the modern era is not solely determined by academic achievement but also by the ability to project professional identity in digital spaces.

Recommendations

1. The Department should encourage postgraduate students to publish research in open-access journals and institutional repositories. This increases the visibility of student work and strengthens the university's academic reputation.
2. Postgraduate students should create professional profiles, highlight skills, connect with industry experts, and engage in discussions relevant to their fields. LinkedIn membership provides direct access to recruiters and enhances employability confidence.
3. IAUE can host digital career fairs, webinars, and industry collaborations where students showcase their skills. Embedding digital branding and visibility strategies into postgraduate curricula ensures students are prepared for modern employability demands.

REFERENCES.

- Adesanya, O., Sotayo, O., & Bolarinwa, K. (2023). Business educators' perception of digital skills required by office technology and management students for employability. *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science (IJRISS)*, 7(9), 1917-1925.
- Abidin, C. (2016). Visibility labour: Engaging with influencers' fashion brands and #ootd advertorials on Instagram. *Media International Australia*, 161(1), 86-100. [17, 18]
- arXiv. (2024). *Conceptualizing visibility in digital space*. arXiv:2412.04735v1.

- Audrin, C., Audrin, B., & Salamin, X. (2025). Impact of digital skills development on graduate employability: a systematic review. *CUSTECH International Journal of Education*, 2(1), 139-152.
- Amesi, J., & Allison, M. T. (2022). Assessment of digital skills acquired by university Business Education students for employability in Rivers State. *Nigerian Journal of Business Education*, 9(2), 45–60.
- Brown, B. L., & Vaughn, D. (2011). The writing on the (facebook) wall: The use of social networking sites in hiring decisions. *Journal of Business Communication*, 48(2), 141–157.
- BrowserStack (2025). *Accessibility and SEO: Improving Web Visibility and Usability*.
- Brantner, C., & Stehle, E. (2021). Visibility in the digital age: Introduction. *Studies in Communication Sciences*, 21(1), 113-124.
- Ellison, N. B., Gibbs, J. L., & Weber, M. S. (2015). The use of enterprise social network sites for knowledge sharing in distributed organizations. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 20(1), 3–26.
- Ergün, M., & Şeşen, H. (2021). *A comprehensive study on university students' perceived employability: Comparative effects of personal and contextual factors*. SAGE Open.
- Fugate, M., Kinicki, A. J., & Ashforth, B. E. (2004). Employability: A psycho-social construct, its dimensions, and applications. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 65(1), 14–38.
- IGI Global. (2026). *What is digital visibility*. IGI Global Scientific Publishing.
- Jackson, D., & Wilton, N. (2025). Perceived employability of students studying in higher education: career readiness and outcomes. *Journal of Higher Education and Work*, 14(2), 45-61.
- Koko, M. N., & Uweh, A. O. (2025). Leveraging digital resources for postgraduate Business Education students' employability skills development in Rivers State universities. *World Journal of Innovative Management and Technology*, 9(8), 1–16.
- Koko, M. N., Ezekiel-Hart, K., & Godpower, Y. J. (2025). Digital competency integration and postgraduate Business Education students' readiness for employability in Rivers State universities. *World Journal of Innovative Management and Technology*, 9(10), 68–78.
- Leonardi, P. M. (2014). Communication visibility: A theory of hyper-muscularity and metaknowledge in the electronic age. *Organization Science*, 25(6), 1796-1816.
- LinkedIn (2024). *LinkedIn algorithm and content visibility*. LinkedIn Official Blog.
- Malik, I. S., & Hasan, M. (2024). *Unveiling the factors influencing perceived employability of students: A multidimensional perspective*. Madhya-Bharti Humanities and Social Sciences.
- McCabe, M. (2017). Employability and social media: the role of online profiles in career development. *Career Development International*, 22(2), 147–164.

- MDPI. (2026). Digital visibility, ecosystem embeddedness, and sustainable development. *Sustainability*, 18(10), 5021.
- Nikolaou, I. (2014). Social networking web sites in job search and employee recruitment. *International Journal of Selection and Assessment*, 22(2), 179–189.
- Oladele, J., & Akinola, T. (2026). Impact of targeted digital skills training on graduate employability through 21st-century digital competence. *Journal of Education and Development*, 14(2), 1043-1049.
- Obi, E. (2023). Digital employability skills required by office managers in the contemporary business environment. *Journal of Professional Secretaries and Office Administrators*, 11(2), 89-102.
- Papacharissi, Z. (2010). *A private sphere: Democracy in a digital age*. Polity Press.
- Rothwell, A., & Arnold, J. (2007). Self-perceived employability: Development and validation of a scale. *Personnel Review*, 36(1), 23–41.
- Stein, M., & Irvine, J. (2023). University students' digital world of work readiness in relation to their perceived employability competency. *Journal of Learning Development in Higher Education*, 27, 711-734.
- Tomlinson, M. (2012). Graduate employability: A review of conceptual and empirical themes. *Higher Education Policy*, 25(4), 407–431.