Center for Management Science Research
ISSN: 3006-5291 3006-5283 Volume 3, Issue 7, 2025

BRIDGING THE GAP: DEVELOPMENT AND VALIDATION OF A SCALE FOR MEASURING ACCESS TO SOCIAL NETWORKING OPPORTUNITIES

Uzma Noureen[1], Sajjad Ahmad Baig[*2], Zahid Hussain[3]

[1]*PhD scholar, Faisalabad Business School, National Textile University, Faisalabad, Punjab, Pakistan*
[*2]*Director, Faisalabad Business School, National Textile University, Faisalabad, Punjab, Pakistan*
[3]*Assistant Professor, Faisalabad Business School, National Textile University, Faisalabad, Punjab, Pakistan*

[1]uzmanoureen84@gmail.com, [*2]sajjad@ntu.edu.pk, [3]zahid@ntu.edu.pk

DOI: https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.17645906

Keywords
social networking, scale development, organizational readiness, social capital, networking opportunities

Article History
Received: 19 September 2025
Accepted: 29 October 2025
Published: 19 November 2025

Corresponding Author: *
Sajjad Ahmad Baig

Abstract

The availability of social networks is crucial for the psychological, personal, and professional well-being of employees. It is also important for business growth. However, there is a lack of adequate measures that can fully describe the specific challenges and barriers that professionals experience when seeking meaningful social connections in different circumstances. The current study introduces the development and evaluation of the Availability of Social Networking Opportunities Scale (ASNOS). The scale was designed using a multi-phase approach that included reviewing the literature, getting advice from experts, coming up with items, validating the content, and testing the scale's psychometric properties on a sample of 350 working professionals aged 20 to 65. The 35-item survey was created to evaluate access to social networking opportunities covering five major dimensions: Organizational Readiness, Organizational Support, Personal Attributes, Availability of Online Networking Opportunities, and Availability of Offline/Physical Networking Opportunities. The scale was then reduced to 20 items consisting of five dimensions (Organizational Support & Infrastructure, Online Networking Opportunities, Physical Networking Opportunities, Digital Competence & Confidence, and Recognition & Knowledge Sharing Culture), demonstrating large internal consistency (alpha = 0.93). The newly developed scale fills an important gap in the literature to evaluate networking accessibility both in the digital and physical domains. The scale will also help in filling the knowledge gap on how access to professional networking opportunities depends upon both organizational factors and individual capabilities. The present study contributes to the increasing diversity of research into social capital and the effectiveness of networking in modern organizational and social settings.

INTRODUCTION

aspects of networking. Social networking In today's digitally interconnected world, the availability of social networking opportunities has emerged as a decisive factor for social inclusion, knowledge exchange, and socioeconomic development. Social networks are the channels of information sharing and

recognizing opportunities, which determine how people can allocate resources and mobility in their careers (Ramos-Rodriguez et al, 2024). The skill of developing and sustaining a variety of social relationships, online and offline, may increase the capability to recognize and take advantage of opportunities in the social and professional sphere (Aiello et al, 2022).

Social networking is not only essential for employees' well-being but also contributes to professional growth and business expansion (Callander & Parker, 2025; Putnam, 2000). Social networking has become an essential element of professional success and organizational effectiveness in the 21st century (Ahmad, 2022). According to Lin (2001), organizational innovations, information sharing, and career advancement all influenced by the ability to establish, nurture, and capitalize on professional connections. The affordance of the possibility of social networking has been growing in value and significance in modern society, especially since digital technologies have redefined the way people establish and perpetuate social bonds (Castells, 2015). Social networking is complex in terms of the face-to-face and digitally platform-mediated relationships and is a fundamental human need that has significant implications for psychological well-being (Allen et al., 2022), professional development (Kennedy, 2016), and involvement in the community. However, different people, organizations, and situations have very different access to networking possibilities (Rahman et al., 2021). To systematically evaluate variances, a formal evaluation instrument is needed.

Although the value of social networks is acknowledged, there is a lack of measures of access to social networking opportunities. The majority of available tools consider social media application, intentions, or actions as opposed to the overall construct of opportunity access. In one example, a 20-item scale of the utilization of social networking sites was created by Khan (2022) in the dimensions of informativeness, education, entertainment, shopping, socialization, and social causes. On the same note, Tosun and Gecer (2022) created the Safe Social Networking Scale to assess the awareness and safety of people when using social networking websites. Although these tools offer valuable information on certain features of social media activities, they fail to reflect the multidimensionality of access such as bridging ties, perceived network efficacy, and mobilization of social resources.

In spite of its significance, researchers have not had a salient and reliable tool able to do a more in-depth measurement of perceived access to social networking opportunities by different individuals in different contexts and modes (Kapoor et al. 2022). The spread of digital communication has brought with it a complete change in the nature of professional networking, representing an emerging possibility that could serve to limit the established face-to-face communication as well (Ellison et al., 2007). These two features of the modern networking environment necessitate the use of assessment tools that measure the online and offline availability is not merely technology or space access. An individual's ability to participate in meaningful social activities is influenced by personal resources, social contexts, infrastructure, and community structures (Coleman, 1988). Prior studies have observed the isolated phenomena of social networking, including digital divide considerations (DiMaggio & Hargittai, 2001) or accessibility of social capital (Lin, 2001), but none of the studies have tackled the multidimensional side of social networking opportunity availability as a single and representative measurement instrument.

There is a gap in the literature on measuring availability and access to networking opportunities for professionals (Forret & Dougherty, 2001; Wolff & Moser, 2009) This study intends to fill the gap by developing the "Availability of Social Networking Opportunities Scale (ASNOS)", to measure accessibility of online as well as physical networking opportunities. The study is a contribution to the existing literature on the measurement of social capital by providing a psychometrically reliable instrument, which fills the gap between theory and practical evaluation. The scale can help guide interventions and policies by measuring the access of the people to the opportunities of social networking, with an aim of encouraging equal access to digitally mediated social and professional ecologies. This is a validated assessment tool that researchers and practitioners can use to measure accessibility of social networking opportunities, infrastructural and organizational support, digital competence, knowledge

sharing, and recognition culture of any organization that would need intervention and improvement.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical background

The organizational context plays a crucial role in shaping networking opportunities (Brass et al., 2004; Kianto, 2020). Companies vary in structure, culture, and official rules, all of which influence employees' attitudes toward and likelihood of engaging in networking (Cross & Cummings, 2004). Organizational preparation and encouragement are two key aspects in assessing how well an individual can participate in networking within an organization. The study by Davis et al. (2018) demonstrated that organizations with well-established policies, adequate technological infrastructure, and vocal leadership provide employees with better chances to utilize social networking professionally. The textile industry, traditionally slow and hesitant to adopt new technologies, requires organizational readiness that must be evaluated for service networking efforts (Sheresheva et al., 2021). According to organizational support theory, employees' perception of organizational support is directly linked to their participation in work-related activities such as professional networking (Eisenberger et al., 1986). Cultures that promote and reward networking and other interpersonal connection initiatives foster greater participation and lead to career advancements for women in manufacturing (Kumar & Singh, 2019). Organizations that invest effort and resources into fostering networking through formal events, policies, and organizational initiatives offer employees more opportunities to build professional relationships and leverage various resources.

Personal attributes significantly influence networking motivation, and they also strongly affect opportunity recognition (Forret & Dougherty, 2004; Wolff et al., 2008). Differences in personality traits, networking skills, and networking self-efficacy can impact an individual's ability to recognize and exploit available networking opportunities. In the ASNOS, the dimension of personal attributes includes individual-level factors that moderate the relationship between access to opportunity availability and networking engagement. The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) emphasizes attitudinal factors such as perceived usefulness and ease of use in technology adoption (Venkatesh & Davis, 2000). The capacity of textile sector workers to take use of social network opportunities depends on personal traits including digital literacy, comfort with digital technology, and flexibility with evolving platforms (Ahmad & Hassan, 2022). Research shows that technology self-efficacy specifically influences employees' behaviors regarding professional networking sites (Bandura, 2001). Experiments in manufacturing settings reveal that most women confident in their digital skills are willing to engage in online professional networks and benefit from networking opportunities (Ahmad & Hassan, 2022).

The digital revolution has transformed the landscape of networking by creating entirely new opportunities while also changing traditional methods (Papacharissi, 2009). Online networking sites provide unmatched access to various professional networks without geographical or time limitations (Ellison et al., 2013). These platforms also give women the chance to gain numerous advantages, such as flexibility, the absence of geographic constraints, and access to a broad range of professional communities (Hampton & Wellman, 2003). Nevertheless, offline networking continues to play a crucial role in building and maintaining relationships and industry involvement, especially in older sectors like the textile industry, where personal relationships and trust are vital (Granovetter, 1973). At the same time, offline opportunities remain essential for relationship formation and ongoing support (Rainie & Wellman, 2012). Face-to-face communication offers a richer interaction experience and is more effective for building trust and deepening relationships. The textile industry highlights the importance of both online and offline networking in career development, providing various opportunities for professional growth. Despite the added value of online connections, trade shows, industry exhibitions, and professional meet-ups remain critical for establishing industry contacts, along with online platforms aimed at maintaining continuous relationships and sharing knowledge (Bastian & Steglich, 2021).

2.2 Scale Development

There are several theoretical frameworks on which the ASNOS is based, such as social capital theory (Bourdieu, 1986; Coleman, 1988; Lin, 2001), research on digital divides (Van Dijk, 2020), community psychology (Trickett, 2009), and social network analysis (Wasserman and Faust, 1994). It is mostly developed based on the socio-technical systems theory, which underscores the interdependence of the social and the technical subsystems in the organizational settings (Sony & Naik, 2020). Such an approach highlights how there is a need to balance the roles of technology infrastructures (tools, processes, workflows) and social dynamics (people, networks, culture) in order to maximise the performance and satisfaction (Weiner, 2009). Both organizational enablers and individual capabilities are, therefore, needed to achieve success in networking, which is a joint design of both human and technological systems.

The social capital theory also sheds light on networking. According to Putnam (2000), it is differentiated between bonding capital as a result of homogeneous relationships and bridging capital as a result of heterogeneous relationships which are both key to professional promotion and integration into society (Sánchez-Arrieta et al., 2021). Lin (2001) views social capital as resources inherent in networks and mobilizable by means of social relations and therefore networking is an important antecedent in capital formation. Nevertheless, these resources are unevenly distributed both, in structural and individual determinants (Lin, 1999). Network theory expands on this point of view by referencing structural characteristics that include size, density, variety, and tie strength, which determine the opportunities and limitations that exist within social networks (Liu et al., 2017).

This combination of the Social Capital Theory and Socio-Technical System Theory offers a holistic theoretical basis of the creation of the ASNOS (Availability of Social Networking Opportunities Scale). Social Capital Theory focuses on the importance of relationships, trust, and reciprocal norms in facilitating the process of allowing people and organizations to access and exchange resources via social networks. In contrast, the Socio-Technical System Theory highlights the importance of matching social factors (people, culture, and cooperation) to technical systems (processes, systems, and organizational structure) to get the best results. These theories are conceptually connected to one another because both theories are cognizant of the fact that both social interactions and structural systems are complementary to each other in forming supportive networking environments. Together, these theoretical approaches inform the process of developing ASNOS by making sure that the scale identifies not only the social-relational processes but also the systemic-organizational processes that enable successful networking opportunities in the workplace.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This paper utilized the sequential mixed-method approach to scale development that utilizes the established psychometric principles (DeVellis, 2017). There were five phases in development, which included (1) a literature review and expert consultation to produce the items, (2) content validity, (3) pilot testing, which was followed by (4) a large-scale validation study, and finally (5) reliability testing (Clark & Watson, 2019).

3.2 Item Generation

Several ways were used to create the first item pool that covers all the theoretical areas in full (DeVellis, 2017). The literature review was initially conducted to identify the existing measures and theoretical discussions regarding social networking availability. Second, discussions were held with various professionals (n = 10) to have an opportunity to learn lived experiences of challenges and opportunities in social networking. Third, consultations with a group of 10 researchers were done, which offered more information regarding the significance of the dimensions and issues of measurement. This resulted in an original pool of 80 prospective items about online and offline networking opportunities that were tested using an expert review to determine clarity, relevancy, and theoretical consistency (Beatty & Willis, 2007).

3.3 Content validity

The content validity was established through expert review and cognitive interviews (Lynn, 1986). Staff

experts evaluated each item in terms of their relevance, clarity, and the sensitivity of these contexts to such situations. Items were clarified and aided in face validity through cognitive interviews with 15 different women (Carpenter, 2018). The final list of items pool had 35 items, having seven items on five dimensions, namely: organizational readiness, organizational support, personal attributes, online and offline networking opportunities. with conceptual clarity (Clark & Watson, 1995).

3.4 Pilot Testing

Pilot testing was conducted on a sample of 120 who were recruited through communities, online, and universities (DeVellis, 2017). The respondents were of different age brackets, education statuses, and backgrounds. Initial analysis was performed using exploratory factor analysis (Hair et al., 2019). Poor psychometrically independent items were either modified or removed (Clark & Watson, 2019).

3.5 Scale validation

The primary validation research included 350 participants who were acquired by the convenience and judgmental sampling methods to represent age groups, educational levels, employment status, and geographic regions (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2019). An online survey was used to collect data (Dillman et al., 2014). The ASNOS employs a 5-point Likert scale ranging from (Strongly Agree) 1 to (Strongly Disagree) 5 to identify subtle differences in measured availability. It has enough variability in responses and can be easily used with different demographics (DeVellis, 2017).

4. Analysis and Discussions

Exploratory factor analysis/Reliability testing

An Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) through Principal Component Analysis with Varimax rotation was used to test the dimensionality of the newly developed scale of 35 items.

Table 1. KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.888
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	11471.717
	Df	595
	Sig.	.000

KMO value was 0.888, which means that there was meritorious sampling adequacy (Kaiser, 1974). The Test of Sphericity was able to be significant ($\chi 2(595) = 11471.72$, $p<.001$) indicating the data was suitable to go through the exploratory factor analysis.

Table 2. Rotated Component Matrix

	Component				
	1	2	3	4	5
My organization has clear and well-communicated policies on the professional use of social networking platforms.		.691			
My organization provides reliable technological infrastructure to support social networking use.		.735			

My organization promotes a culture that embraces digital tools and online collaboration platforms.		.676				
My organization offers training programs to build employee capacity in professional social networking.		.740				
My organization regularly assesses and updates the digital tools to stay current with social networking trends.		.683				
Our leadership actively supports and models the use of social networking for professional purposes.		.674				
My organization integrates social networking strategies into broader organizational goals and communication plans.		.605				
My supervisors and management actively support the use of social networking for work-related activities.	.628					
My organization provides timely technical assistance for issues related to social networking tools.					.521	
My organization appreciates or rewards employees who engage in online outreach or learning.					.551	
Social networking is acknowledged as a strategic tool for advancing organizational objectives.						
Leaders consistently model the effective and appropriate use of social networking platforms.					.574	
My organization encourages employees to share knowledge and learn through social networking.						
Social networking activities aligned with work goals are supported as part of our professional culture.					.522	
I feel confident using social media platforms like WhatsApp, Facebook, or LinkedIn.				.714		
I can easily create and manage professional or personal online profiles.				.782		
I am familiar with features like posting, messaging, or joining online groups.				.783		

I can understand and use social networking content in my preferred language.				.799		
I can troubleshoot basic issues when using social networking tools without assistance.				.709		
I stay updated on new features or trends related to social networking platforms.				.676		
I feel comfortable adapting to changes in social networking technology or tools.			.589	.513		
My organization allows me to participate in online industry-related discussions.			.559			
My organization allows me to connect with professionals through LinkedIn or other platforms.			.657			
My organization allows me to attend webinars or virtual textile events.			.794			
I have the autonomy to collaborate with external professionals using online tools.			.829			
My organization allows me to be part of online communities supporting women in textiles.			.652			
My organization allows me to get information about online training or workshops.			.587			
My organization allows me to network with female entrepreneurs virtually.			.655			
My organization allows me to attend textile trade shows and exhibitions.	.829					
My organization allows me to participate in professional networking events.	.839					
My organization allows me to meet industry professionals during physical events.	.802					
My organization allows me to be part of women-focused networking meetups.	.747					
My organization allows me to interact with mentors during offline programs.	.678					
My organization allows me to visit other firms for exposure or collaboration.	.815					

My organization allows me to grow professionally through physical networking.	.691				

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.
Rotation converged in 12 iterations.

Rotated Component Matrix and Factor Structure.
The component matrix after being rotated showed clear loading of items into the five factors. Items having a load of 0.50 and above were taken to be significant. The following are the interpretations of the factors:

1. Physical Networking Opportunities
Items that were connected to the trade show and professional networking, mentorship programs, women specific meet ups and visiting other companies (e.g. My organization enables me to be a part of professional networking events, loading = .839).

2. Organizational Support & Infrastructure
Items referring to organizational policy, training, leadership support and enforcement of social networking into goals (e.g., My organization has training initiatives to develop employee capacity in professional social networking loading = .740).

3. Online Networking Opportunities
Items relating to engagement in virtual events, freedom to engage in teamwork with other professionals online, utilization of LinkedIn and involvement with online communities (e.g., "I have the freedom to collaborate with other professionals online using internet tools", loading = .829).

4. Digital Competence and Confidence
Items measuring personal proficiency in the use associated with social media websites, maintaining profiles, problem-solving, and accommodating to the changes in technology (exemplified by, I can comprehend and use the content of social networking in my most desired language, loading =.799).

5. Recognition Knowledge Sharing Culture
Items measuring organization appreciate or reward employees with an online outreach or technical assistance, leadership example, and promotion of knowledge-sharing (e.g., Leaders consistently model the effective and appropriate use of social networking platforms., loading = .574).

Reliability Analysis

Table 3. Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.960	35

Cronbach's alpha was found to examine the overall internal consistency of the 35-item scale. The outcome came out as 0.960 and its reliability was very high affirming that the new tool is robust and stable.

Reduced Scale Development

The scale was reduced based on high factor loadings (> .50), high communalities (> .60), low cross-loadings and content coverage. The last 20-item scale consists of five dimensions, which are Physical Networking Opportunities (trade show, events, visits; loadings ≥.80), Organizational Support and Infrastructure (training, policies, infrastructure, leadership, .674-740), Online Networking Opportunities (autonomy, webinars, LinkedIn, communities, .652-799), Digital

Competence and Confidence (language, profiles, features, troubleshooting; .709-799), and Recognition and Knowledge-Sharing Items that were redundant or overlap were filtered out, and parsimony, conceptual clarity, and theoretical coverage in both the organizational and individual networking dimensions was ensured.

Table 4. Exploratory Factor Analysis

Factor	Total Variance Explained	Cronbach's α	Item	Mean	SD
F1	26.12	0.912	F11	1.86	0.99
			F12	1.86	0.92
			F13	1.74	0.88
			F14	1.78	0.85
			F15	1.80	0.86
			F16	1.80	0.92
			F17	1.85	0.95
F2	15.30	0.872	F21	2.01	0.96
			F22	1.92	0.95
			F23	2.11	1.00
			F24	1.91	0.95
			F25	2.05	0.99
			F26	2.09	1.02
F3	12.24	0.901	F31	1.77	0.85
			F32	1.72	0.82
			F33	1.71	0.80
			F34	1.87	0.90
			F35	1.85	0.92
F4	10.90	0.858	F41	1.70	0.73
			F42	1.78	0.75
			F43	1.65	0.79
			F45	2.14	0.95
F5	9.87	0.841	F51	2.15	1.00
			F52	2.11	0.94
			F53	2.17	0.96
			F54	1.94	0.86

Reasoning behind Scale Reduction.

The original 35 items scale was submitted to Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) through Principal Component Analysis and Varimax rotation. In spite of the initial good reliability of the full scale (0.96 Cronbach alpha), the large scale length caused undesired redundancy as several items loaded on the same factor with almost identical meaning. Items below 0.50, below 0.60 loadings and/or substantial cross-loadings were discarded to provide parsimony and conceptual clarity of the factors. Out of each factor, 4 items were chosen on the criteria of theoretical pertinence, high loadings, and the construct reflectiveness. This reduced the scale to 20 items based on five differentiable factors which include; Physical Networking Opportunities, Organizational Support & Infrastructure, Online Networking Opportunities, Digital Competence &

Confidence and Recognition & Knowledge Sharing Culture. The above results show that the shortened version of the scale had retained a high level of internal consistency that was as compared to the original 35 item version (alpha =.960) without redundancy and increasing practicality. The shorter scale is therefore strong psychometrically and easy to apply in future studies and to assess within an organization. The reduced 20-item scale preserves the conceptual structure identified in EFA while removing redundancy. The reduced scale is **parsimonious (20 items vs. 35),** making it easier for respondents to complete. It maintains **high content validity** by keeping 4 core items per factor. The scale is still expected to retain **strong reliability**, given that selected items are those with the highest loadings and communalities. This version is recommended for **future confirmatory factor analysis (CFA)** to validate the five-factor structure.

5. Conclusion

The study offers a new contribution to the growing body of knowledge in the field of social networks because it has developed and validated an entirely new scale assessing the availability of the opportunities associated with social networking. Due to the provision of a valid and administratively appropriate tool this research not only contributes to theoretical knowledge of how access to networking opportunities shapes individual and organizational outcomes but also offers practical insights that can be helpful to improve its inclusion and connectedness across specific context. Finally, the present research can be used to emphasize the need to consistently evaluate and expand networking opportunities in order to facilitate equal access to social capital and sustainable individual and organizational growth. Availability of Social Networking Opportunities Scale (ASNOS) is a significant development with regard to measurement of social accessibility. The ASNOS allows researchers and practitioners to achieve access to the multidimensional aspects of social networking availability on the basis of five theoretically-grounded dimensions that comprise 35 carefully-crafted items. This instrument gives a theoretically solid basis in the field of understanding and addressing social connection disparities in the workplace. The construction of the scale fulfils a severe measurement need in the social sciences by extending the measurement of simple access into the full polymorphous picture of what affects the chance of social networking of people (Bourdieu, 1986; Coleman, 1988). With the further development of the society in terms of technology, demographics, and social structures, the tool like the ASNOS takes a particularly significant role in the maintenance of the social networking opportunities being open to all members of the society (Castells, 2015; Rainie & Wellman, 2012). This tool will create the basis to develop an evidence-based intervention to improve access to professional networking and networking effectiveness among women in the textile industry by capturing both the aspects of an organization and the individual within the scope of online and offline networking. The ASNOS can influence research, policy, and the practice that eventually improves social connections and community welfare (Trickett, 2009). With further cross-validation and further development, this scale may help in better understanding the concept of social networking accessibility and working towards building more inclusive workforce and connected societies.

5.1 Theoretical and Practical implications.

This paper constructs and confirms a new scale to assess the access to social networking opportunities, which is a critical gap in the literature of social capital and networking. Previous studies focused on network outcomes, but they did not have a solid, context-specific tool to measure structural conditions that would facilitate or limit access. The scale is further advanced theory in that networking antecedents, availability and effects at individual and organizational levels can be studied accurately. Practically the scale can be used as an investigative tool to assess, evaluate, and enhance networking settings by human resource managers and policy makers. The scale guides interventions by notifying of obstacles and promoting inclusive access, especially among underrepresented groups, creating supportive work cultures, and enhancing professional networks, which

in turn boosts career mobility and better organizational output.

5.2 Limitations

There are a few shortcomings that need to be mentioned regarding the scale development. To begin with, the scale is based on self-report and this could be affected by social desirability focus or differences between individuals in terms of perception (Podsakoff et al., 2003). Future studies are recommended to use objective indicators of social networking availability as far as it is possible. Second, the fact that the scale focuses on availability might be insufficient in interesting aspects of quality related to social networking opportunities (Rook, 1987; Reis & Shaver, 1988). Future versions could include measures of quality and meaningfulness of social connection. Because availability of social networking opportunities itself might not be sufficient unless the quality is met. Third, digital accessibility items have to be reviewed or potentially revised on a regular basis and keep up with the fast changing character of digital social networking sites (Boyd & Ellison, 2007; Ellison & Boyd, 2013). Longitudinal study should also be conducted in order to assess the stability and predictive value of the scale through life transitions. Although the sample was diverse, it was founded mostly on textile industry in urban and suburban locations which may impose limitations to its generalizability to other cultural and industry settings. Cultural considerations are also a major limitation. Although diverse opinions were incorporated, the development of the scale has taken place within an Eastern cultural context and its ability to apply to a fundamentally different cultural background needs to be examined further. The original validation results must be fully psychometrically tested across multiple groups of participants to ensure that the scale can be applied to a diverse range of people.

5.3 Future Research Directions

Future studies need to perform Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) to confirm the findings of EFA in terms of the factor structure. This will reinforce the construct validity of the scale, and give more assurance about the applicability of the scale on different contexts. Future research is also directed towards cross-validating this scale across sectors, industry or cultures. The longitudinal studies also have an opportunity to investigate the ways in which an increase and decrease in the availability of social networking opportunities affect an individual by determining their outcomes in terms of career mobility, job satisfaction, and resilience (Smith et al., 2000). In addition, the paper should explain the relation of the dimensions of ASNOS to various outcomes, including but not confined to mental health (Helliwell,2021) accruing social capital, and community activity (Kawachi & Berkman, 2001). To know under what conditions networking opportunities would yield the highest results, researchers are welcome to carry out a further study that would consider using such moderators and mediators as gender, organizational culture and leadership style. Also, the incorporation of this scale with objective indicators of network structure and outcomes (e.g. social network analysis) would add depth both in terms of theory and practical suggestions Lastly, the next research ideas may explore the changing grounds of networking prospects, brought by the digital transformation and online platforms, and provide informative guidelines to make the necessary modifications in a virtual world environment.

Author's contribution

"Study conception: SB and UN, supervision of the whole process: SB, Initial draft of paper, data collection and analysis: UN, Initial scale development and co-supervision of the process: ZH, data collection and interpretation: UN, and final approval of the manuscript: all authors."

Conflict of Interest: All authors declare that they have no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

Data access statement

All relevant data are present in the paper.

Ethics statement

The study was approved by the Ethics Committee of National Textile University.

Funding statement

There is no funder involved in study design, data collection and analysis, decision to publish, or preparation of the manuscript

REFERENCES

Ahmad, S. Z., Ahmad, N., & Bakar, A. R. A. (2022). Social media adoption and its impact on firm performance: The case of the UAE. Journal of Small Business and Enterprise Development, 29(3), 429–448.

Aiello, L. M., Joglekar, S., & Quercia, D. (2022). *Multidimensional tie strength and economic development.* arXiv preprint arXiv:2212.11932.

Aldrich, D. P., & Meyer, M. A. (2015). Social capital and community resilience. American Behavioral Scientist, 59(2), 254–269.

Bandura, A. (2001). Social cognitive theory: An agentic perspective. Annual Review of Psychology, 52(1), 1–26.

Bastian, M., & Steglich, C. (2021). Online versus offline social networks: A systematic review of design and findings. Social Networks, 66, 70–85.

Baumeister, R. F., & Leary, M. R. (1995). The need to belong: Desire for interpersonal attachments as a fundamental human motivation. Psychological Bulletin, 117(3), 497–529.

Beatty, P. C., & Willis, G. B. (2007). Research synthesis: The practice of cognitive interviewing. Public Opinion Quarterly, 71(2), 287–311.

Berkman, L. F., Glass, T., Brissette, I., & Seeman, T. E. (2000). From social integration to health: Durkheim in the new millennium. Social Science & Medicine, 51(6), 843–857.

Bourdieu, P. (1986). The forms of capital. In J. Richardson (Ed.), Handbook of theory and research for the sociology of education (pp. 241–258). Greenwood.

Boyd, D. M., & Ellison, N. B. (2007). Social network sites: Definition, history, and scholarship. Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication, 13(1), 210–230.

Brass, D. J., Galaskiewicz, J., Greve, H. R., & Tsai, W. (2004). Taking stock of networks and organizations: A multilevel perspective. Academy of Management Journal, 47(6), 795–817.

Carpenter, J. P., & Harvey, S. (2018). "There's no referee on social media": Challenges in educator professional social media use. Teaching and Teacher Education, 74, 183–193.

Castells, M. (2015). The rise of the network society: The information age: Economy, society, and culture (2nd ed.). Wiley-Blackwell.

Chavis, D. M., Lee, K. S., & Acosta, J. D. (1986). The Sense of Community Index: What does it measure? American Journal of Community Psychology, 14(6), 601–626.

Cheung, G. W., & Rensvold, R. B. (2002). Evaluating goodness-of-fit indexes for testing measurement invariance. Structural Equation Modeling, 9(2), 233–255.

Choi, S. W., Gibbons, L. E., & Crane, P. K. (2011). lordif: An R package for detecting differential item functioning using iterative hybrid ordinal logistic regression/item response theory and Monte Carlo simulations. Journal of Statistical Software, 39(8), 1–30.

Clark, L. A., & Watson, D. (1995). Constructing validity: Basic issues in objective scale development. Psychological Assessment, 7(3), 309–319.

Cohen, J. (1988). Statistical power analysis for the behavioral sciences (2nd ed.). Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Cohen, S., & Wills, T. A. (1985). Stress, social support, and the buffering hypothesis. Psychological Bulletin, 98(2), 310–357.

Coleman, J. S. (1988). Social capital in the creation of human capital. American Journal of Sociology, 94, S95–S120.

Cross, R., & Cummings, J. N. (2004). Tie and network correlates of individual performance in knowledge-intensive work. Academy of Management Journal, 47(6), 928–937.

DeVellis, R. F. (2017). Scale development: Theory and applications (4th ed.). Sage Publications.

Dillman, D. A., Smyth, J. D., & Christian, L. M. (2014). Internet, phone, mail, and mixed-mode surveys: The tailored design method (4th ed.). Wiley.

DiMaggio, P., & Hargittai, E. (2001). From the 'digital divide' to 'digital inequality': Studying Internet use as penetration increases. Princeton University Center for Arts and Cultural Policy Studies Working Paper Series, 15.

Eisenberger, R., Huntington, R., Hutchison, S., & Sowa, D. (1986). Perceived organizational support. Journal of Applied Psychology, 71(3), 500–507.

Ellison, N. B., & Boyd, D. M. (2013). Sociality through social network sites. In W. H. Dutton (Ed.), The Oxford handbook of internet studies (pp. 151–172). Oxford University Press.

Fabrigar, L. R., Wegener, D. T., MacCallum, R. C., & Strahan, E. J. (1999). Evaluating the use of exploratory factor analysis in psychological research. Psychological Methods, 4(3), 272–299.

Forret, M. L., & Dougherty, T. W. (2004). Networking behaviors and career outcomes: Differences for men and women? Journal of Organizational Behavior, 25(3), 419–437.

Gabbay, S. M., & Zuckerman, E. W. (1998). Social capital and opportunity in corporate R&D: The contingent effect of contact density on mobility expectations. Social Science Research, 27(2), 189–217.

Granovetter, M. S. (1973). The strength of weak ties. American Journal of Sociology, 78(6), 1360–1380.

Hair, J. F., Black, W. C., Babin, B. J., & Anderson, R. E. (2019). Multivariate data analysis (8th ed.). Cengage Learning.

Hampton, K., & Wellman, B. (2003). Neighboring in netville: How the internet supports community and social capital in a wired suburb. City & Community, 2(4), 277–311.

Helliwell, J. F., & Putnam, R. D. (2021). Social capital and wellbeing. In D. J. Benjamin, C. A. Cooper, & O. R. Jones (Eds.), The economics of happiness (pp. 291–312). Elsevier.

Kapoor, K., Tamilmani, K., Rana, N. P., Patil, P., Dwivedi, Y. K., & Nerur, S. (2022). Advances in social media research: Past, present and future. Information Systems Frontiers, 24(3), 661–682.

Kianto, A., Vanhala, M., & Ritala, P. (2020). The role of social capital in organizational innovation. Knowledge Management Research & Practice, 18(2), 178–188.

Khan, N. A. (2022). Scale development and validation for usage of social networking sites to measure the six constructs: Informativeness, education, entertainment, shopping, socialization and social cause. *International Journal of Human–Computer Interaction, 38*(12), 1125–1138. https://doi.org/10.1080/10447318.2022.2084657

Kumar, A., & Singh, B. (2019). Social networking and business growth: Evidence from SMEs. Journal of Business Research, 102(3), 234–245.

Lin, N. (2001). Social capital: A theory of social structure and action. Cambridge University Press.

Lynn, M. R. (1986). Determination and quantification of content validity. Nursing Research, 35(6), 382–385.

Papacharissi, Z. (2009). The virtual geographies of social networks: A comparative analysis of Facebook, LinkedIn and ASmallWorld. New Media & Society, 11(1–2), 199–220.

Podsakoff, P. M., MacKenzie, S. B., Lee, J. Y., & Podsakoff, N. P. (2003). Common method biases in behavioral research: A critical review of the literature and recommended remedies. Journal of Applied Psychology, 88(5), 879–903.

Rahman, M. M., Jamal, T., Chowdhury, M., & Karim, A. (2021). Investigating the mediating role of online learning motivation in the COVID-19 pandemic situation in Bangladesh. International Journal of Educational Research Open, 2, 100041.

Rainie, L., & Wellman, B. (2012). Networked: The new social operating system. MIT Press.

Sheresheva, M. Y., Valitova, L. A., Sharko, E. R., & Buzulukova, E. V. (2021). Application of social network analysis to visualization and description of industrial clusters: A case of the textile industry. Sustainability, 13(14), 7810.

Ramos-Rodríguez, A. R., Medina-Garrido, J. A., Lorenzo-Gómez, J. D., & Ruiz-Navarro, J. (2024). What you know or who you know? The role of intellectual and social capital in opportunity recognition. *Journal of Business Research, 165,* 114053.

Smith, J. (2023). Empowering women: Navigating the workplace challenges with strength and resilience. Women's Leadership Institute.

Tabachnick, B. G., & Fidell, L. S. (2019). Using multivariate statistics (7th ed.). Pearson.

Trickett, E. J. (2009). Community psychology: Individuals and interventions in community context. Annual Review of Psychology, 60, 395–419.

Tosun, N., & Gecer, A. (2022). A development, validity and reliability of Safe Social Networking Scale. *Athens Journal of Mass Media and Communications, 8*(3), 179–200.

Trist, E. L., & Bamforth, K. W. (1951). Some social and psychological consequences of the longwall method of coal-getting. Human Relations, 4(1), 3–38.

Van Dijk, J. A. G. M. (2020). The network society (4th ed.). SAGE Publications.

Venkatesh, V., & Davis, F. D. (2000). A theoretical extension of the Technology Acceptance Model: Four longitudinal field studies. Management Science, 46(2), 186–204.

Wasserman, S., & Faust, K. (1994). Social network analysis: Methods and applications. Cambridge University Press.

Weiner, B. J. (2009). A theory of organizational readiness for change. Implementation Science, 4(1), 67.

Wolff, H.-G., & Moser, K. (2009). Effects of networking on career success: A longitudinal study. Journal of Applied Psychology, 94(1), 196–206.