



Participatory Communication and Community Engagement in an Anonymous Digital Job-Seeker Community: The @worksfess Case on X

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Participatory Communication and Community Engagement in an Anonymous Digital Job-Seeker Community: The @worksfess Case on X

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Abstract

Digital job-seeker communities increasingly function as spaces for employment information, peer support, and interaction, yet the mechanisms through which participatory communication becomes relational community engagement remain insufficiently explained, particularly in anonymous and administrator-mediated settings. This study examines how participatory communication is enacted within @worksfess on X and how administrators and followers experience these practices as community engagement. A bounded qualitative case-study design was used. Data were generated from semi-structured interviews with four purposively selected participants—two account administrators and two active followers—and non-participant observation of five publicly accessible @worksfess posts and their interaction threads between May and August 2026. Data were analyzed through the Miles-Huberman-Saldana interactive process and interpreted using Rahim's dimensions of heteroglossia, dialogue, polyphony, and carnival alongside sense-of-community dimensions. The findings show that engagement is supported by reciprocal information exchange, diverse employment experiences, member-to-member advice, and an informal communication style that can lower interactional barriers. Administrators structure participation through content selection and posting, while followers extend discussions through replies, experiential advice, clarification, and mutual support. Visible interaction, however, is uneven and cannot be treated as evidence of community-wide or causal effects. The study extends participatory communication to an anonymous digital job-seeking context and shows how platform-mediated dialogue, plural voices, and shared experience can support a situated sense of community.

Keywords: Participatory Communication; Community Engagement; Digital Job-Seeking Community; Platform X.

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INTRODUCTION

Employment-related decision making increasingly depends on information seeking, networking, and the interpretation of recruitment signals as well as on formal vacancy information [1], [2], [3]. Social networking sites have become part of this process because job seekers can encounter opportunities, obtain peer advice, and learn from others' recruitment experiences beyond conventional employer–applicant channels [4], [5], [6]. In digitally mediated job-search environments, the key issue is therefore not only whether information is available, but how interaction around that information enables users to exchange interpretations, advice, and support.

Official labor-force data show that 7.24 million people were unemployed in Indonesia in February 2026, corresponding to an open unemployment rate of 4.68% [7]. Indonesia's labor market continues to present challenges related to competition, transitions between education and work, and uneven access to suitable employment opportunities [8]. These conditions make accessible job information, guidance, and peer support practically important. @worksfess is a relevant setting because it concentrates employment-related discussion within a social-media account where users encounter vacancies, recruitment experiences, interview strategies, workplace culture, salary considerations, and career advice. Its visibility, however, should not be equated with engagement; the communicative processes through which users respond to, reinterpret, and support one another require empirical examination.

Social media has expanded the communicative infrastructure of job seeking by combining information access with visibility, persistence, association, and interactive response [9], [10]. Online communities can also provide informational and relational support that contributes to continued participation and perceived connectedness [11], [12], [13]. In a job-seeking context, these affordances create the possibility that an employment-information account may function not only as a distribution channel but also as a site of peer interpretation and community interaction.

Table 1. Profile Performance Metrics of the @worksfess Account on Platform X

Aspect	Reported value
Total views	1.7M
Average views per post	17.3K
Average views per follower	1.32%
Total engagement	14.2K
Average engagement per post	27
Average engagement per follower	0.01
Reported engagement rate	0.82

Sources: Tweet Hunter [14]

Platform-based data were collected during the defined observation period from May to August 2026. The observed posts and interaction threads were selected purposively for their relevance to participatory communication, mediated support, and community engagement. Tweet Hunter was used only to obtain descriptive account-level metrics reported for @worksfess [14]. Because X does not provide a standardized, independently verifiable engagement-rate measure for this study, these figures are treated as contextual indicators of account activity rather than as statistically comparable measures of community engagement. The qualitative interpretation

therefore relies primarily on interview accounts and the observed interactional patterns within the bounded corpus.

The @worksfess community was selected because it provides a bounded example of an active, administrator-mediated job-seeking space on X. The case includes the @worksfess account and publicly accessible interactions observed from May to August 2026, with attention to posts concerning vacancies, recruitment experiences, salary, employment conditions, and related job-search issues. Anonymous user submissions are reviewed by administrators before publication, after which followers can respond through the platform's interaction features. This structure is analytically important: administrators mediate what becomes visible, while followers can extend, question, reinterpret, or contest the posted information in public reply threads.

This combination of anonymous submission, administrator curation, and public interaction creates a distinctive communication environment. Posts may prompt users to compare employment experiences, exchange practical knowledge, and express support, but these activities should not be assumed to constitute community engagement simply because they are visible. The empirical question is whether and how interaction develops into reciprocal dialogue, perceived influence, fulfillment of shared needs, and emotional connection.

High levels of platform activity do not necessarily translate into reciprocal dialogue, shared influence, or a sense of community. Research on digitally mediated engagement shows that visible reactions capture only part of participation and that engagement may involve cognitive, affective, and relational dimensions as well as observable behavior [15], [16], [17], [18]. Participatory and community-engagement research also demonstrates the importance of inclusive information exchange and collaborative interaction across different community settings [19], [20]. What remains insufficiently explained is how these processes operate in an anonymous, administrator-mediated employment community, where participation is simultaneously enabled and structured by platform architecture and account moderation.

The study uses Rahim's participatory communication framework, which emphasizes heteroglossia, dialogue, polyphony, and carnival [21]. Heteroglossia refers to the coexistence of diverse social and experiential voices; dialogue concerns reciprocal meaning negotiation; polyphony captures the articulation of distinct perspectives without reducing them to a single dominant position; and carnival refers to informal, playful, or alternative forms of expression that can open participation beyond conventional formal communication. In this study, these dimensions are used to examine how employment-related information becomes interactive rather than merely transmitted.

Prior research suggests that participatory communication can broaden access to information, reduce communication gaps, and create opportunities for collaborative engagement [19], [20]. Yet a key analytical distinction remains underdeveloped in employment-related social media: platform activity may represent information consumption or brief reaction without necessarily producing reciprocal participation or relational attachment. The present study therefore focuses on the mechanisms through which diverse voices, responses, informal expression, and peer support are experienced as engagement within @worksfess.

Accordingly, this study asks: How is participatory communication enacted within @worksfess, and how are these practices experienced as community engagement by administrators and followers? The objective is to explain the role of participatory communication in an anonymous digital job-seeking community while distinguishing visible platform activity from relational

engagement. The study contributes by integrating participatory communication, platform affordances, and sense-of-community dimensions within a single bounded case of administrator-mediated interaction on X

LITERATURE REVIEW

Participatory Communication in Digital Communities

Participatory communication conceptualizes communication as reciprocal meaning-making rather than one-way transmission. Rahim's framework foregrounds heteroglossia, dialogue, polyphony, and carnival as conditions through which different voices can enter, respond to, and reshape a communicative process [21]. In digital environments, these dimensions interact with social-media affordances such as visibility, persistence, association, and interaction [9], [10]. Participation, however, is not uniform: posting, replying, reading, observing, and supporting others represent different modes and intensities of involvement [22], [23]. For this reason, visible reactions are treated here as contextual traces of activity rather than as automatic evidence of dialogic participation.

Community Engagement and Sense of Virtual Community

Community engagement in digital settings is multidimensional. Research on online communities associates engagement with behavioral participation, cognitive investment, affective attachment, social support, and value creation [15], [16], [17], [18]. Sense-of-community scholarship, by contrast, focuses more specifically on the relational experience of membership, influence, integration and fulfillment of needs, and shared emotional connection [24], [25]. Virtual-community research further shows that support exchange, identification, social capital, community norms, satisfaction, and perceived involvement can strengthen belonging and continued participation [26], [27], [28], [29], [30], [31], [32], [33]. In this article, community engagement refers to the communicative and relational involvement visible or reported in the case, whereas sense of community is used as an analytical lens for how that involvement is experienced by participants. This distinction prevents observable interaction from being treated as equivalent to belonging.

Digital Job Seeking, Anonymity, and Platform Affordances

Digital job seeking increasingly combines formal employment information with interpersonal networking and social-media-based information seeking. Studies show that social networking sites can provide job leads, recruitment information, networking opportunities, and peer-generated cues that shape job-search behavior [1], [2], [3], [4], [5], [6], [34]. At the same time, anonymous or visually anonymous communication can lower inhibition and facilitate self-disclosure, particularly when users discuss sensitive or personally consequential experiences [35], [36], [37], [38]. These affordances may make it easier to discuss salaries, recruitment experiences, workplace concerns, and job-search strain, while also complicating credibility and accountability. Online-community research therefore cautions against reducing participation to visible posting alone because reading, information consumption, and low-visibility involvement may also be consequential [39], [40], [41], [42].

Prior Empirical Studies and Research Gap

Existing studies demonstrate the value of participatory engagement, inclusive information exchange, and multi-voice interaction across community settings [19], [20]. A separate body of research has developed sophisticated accounts of online community engagement [15], [16], [17], [18], [43], while job-search scholarship has concentrated on recruitment, networking, information seeking, and employment outcomes [1], [2], [3], [4], [5], [6], [34]. The intersection remains underdeveloped. It is still unclear how an administrator-mediated employment account structures communicative opportunities, how followers transform posted information into reciprocal peer interaction, and how those interactions are experienced as membership, influence, need fulfillment, and emotional connection. This study addresses that gap by treating participatory communication as the interactional process and sense of community as the relational lens through which community engagement is interpreted.

METHODS

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative case-study design to examine @worksfess as a bounded, digitally mediated communication space on X. The unit of analysis comprised communication practices visible in user-generated posts and interaction threads, with particular attention to participation, mediated support, and community formation. The study was situated within a constructivist orientation in which meanings are understood as produced through participants' experiences and interactions. A bounded case-study design was appropriate because the research question required an in-depth account of communication processes within the specific social and technological context of @worksfess rather than statistical generalization to all digital job-seeking communities.

Research Participants

Participants were selected purposively according to predefined inclusion criteria. Administrators were eligible when they (1) had a direct role in managing the @worksfess account, (2) had been involved in account operations for more than one year, and (3) had direct experience facilitating or observing interactions between the account and its users. Followers were eligible when they (1) were active X users with direct exposure to @worksfess, (2) had participated in @worksfess-related communication by submitting, replying to, reposting, or otherwise engaging with employment-related content, and (3) were currently seeking employment or had recent experience using @worksfess for job-related information or support. Four participants were included: two administrators and two active followers. Sample adequacy was considered using the information-power principle, which emphasizes the specificity of the sample, the focused study aim, use of established theory, quality of dialogue, and analytical strategy [44]. Administrator accounts were interpreted as institutionally situated and potentially shaped by organizational self-presentation; consequently, their claims were compared with follower interviews and observational evidence rather than treated as independent proof of community effectiveness. The two follower participants were not treated as demographically representative of the broader @worksfess audience; instead, their accounts provided information-rich perspectives on how participation and mediated support were experienced within the bounded case.

Table 2. Characteristics of Research Participants

Participant	Role	Job-seeking status	Length of involvement	Activity level	Relevant experience
ME	Social media administrator	Not applicable	2 years	High	Manages content publication
SN	Content administrator	Not applicable	2 years	High	Manages content publication
FA	Follower	Active	1 year	Moderate	Reads posts and comments on X
MMA	Follower	Active	6 months	Moderate	Reads posts and comments on X

Data Collection Procedure

Data were collected from May to August 2026 through semi-structured interviews and non-participant observation. The interview protocol was developed from Rahim's participatory communication framework [21] and the study's sense-of-community dimensions. Interviews were conducted in Indonesian via Google Meet, lasted approximately 10–20 minutes, and used open-ended questions to elicit participants' experiences and interpretations. With participants' consent, interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim by the researchers. Quotations are presented in English translation for publication. The observational corpus comprised five publicly accessible @worksfess posts and their interaction threads, selected purposively because they addressed job-seeking experiences, vacancy information, career advice, workplace concerns, or requests for and expressions of support. Structured field notes recorded publication date, content topic, interaction type, visible engagement, recurring communication patterns, and preliminary analytical observations. All interview participants provided informed consent. Private accounts, direct messages, and other non-public communications were excluded from observation.

Table 3. Semi-Structured Interview Protocol and Analytical Dimensions

Framework	Dimension	Administrator interview question	Follower interview question	Format
Participatory Communication Rahim [21]	Heteroglossia	How does @worksfess incorporate different social, economic, and experiential backgrounds into its communication?	How does @worksfess accommodate diverse backgrounds and experiences in the content it shares and the interactions it fosters?	Semi-structured
	Dialogue	How does @worksfess create opportunities for reciprocal communication with followers?	Does @worksfess provide space for two-way discussion? Please describe your experience.	Semi-structured

Framework	Dimension	Administrator interview question	Follower interview question	Format
	Polyphony	How does @worksfess enable different audience perspectives to become visible?	Does @worksfess give you opportunities to express opinions or experiences? What does this look like?	Semi-structured
	Carnival	How is informal or entertaining content used in communication with followers?	Does informal or entertaining content make you more willing to interact? Why or why not?	Semi-structured
Sense of Community McMillan & Chavis [24]	Membership	How does @worksfess cultivate a sense of digital community?	Do you feel part of the community around @worksfess? Please explain.	Semi-structured
	Influence	What kinds of audience influence are visible in @worksfess interactions?	Have @worksfess discussions influenced how you think, decide, or act regarding work? Please provide an example.	Semi-structured
		What observable changes do you associate with audience participation?	What changes, if any, have you experienced after following or interacting with @worksfess?	Semi-structured
	Fulfillment of needs	How does @worksfess address audience needs for information, connection, or support?	To what extent does @worksfess meet your needs for information, social connection, or other support?	Semi-structured
	Emotional connection	How does @worksfess cultivate emotional connection with its audience?	Do you feel emotionally connected to @worksfess or its community? Why or why not?	Semi-structured
		What communication practices appear to strengthen emotional closeness?	What makes you feel close to or connected with the community around @worksfess?	Semi-structured

Study Timeline

The data-collection periods were defined separately for each source. Participant interviews were conducted from May to July 2026, whereas observation of publicly accessible @worksfess interactions covered May to August 2026. Reporting the periods separately clarifies that interview and observational data were generated on overlapping, but not identical, timelines.

Data Analysis Procedure

The trustworthiness of the study was addressed through credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability [45], together with qualitative-quality principles emphasizing transparency, coherence, and an auditable analytical process [46], [47]. Credibility was supported through source triangulation and member checking. Member checking involved returning interview material and interpretations to informants for review [48]. Source triangulation compared administrator and follower interview accounts with publicly visible posts, replies, reposts, and discussion threads. An audit trail documented transcripts, field notes, coding decisions, analytical memos, and theme development. Transferability was supported through contextual description of the case, participants, data sources, and communication practices; dependability and confirmability were addressed through systematic documentation of data collection and analytical decisions.

Data were analyzed using the Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña interactive process of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification [49]. Interview transcripts were organized alongside observational records and field notes. The researchers first coded segments relevant to participation, mediated support, and community formation, then compared related codes and grouped them into broader analytical categories. Categories were examined across administrator accounts, follower experiences, and observed interactions on X. Final themes were checked against the original transcripts and observational records to ensure that interpretations remained grounded in the empirical material. Coding decisions were documented explicitly, and cross-source comparison was used to strengthen interpretive consistency rather than treating intercoder agreement as a universal requirement for qualitative rigor [50].

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The analysis identified two closely connected sets of findings: participatory communication practices and members' experiences of community engagement. Participatory communication was reflected in heteroglossia, dialogue, polyphony, and carnival, while community engagement was interpreted through membership, influence, fulfillment of shared needs, and emotional connection. Across interviews and observations, the most consistent pattern was that @worksfess operated as more than an information-distribution account: employment-related posts became prompts for reciprocal advice, contrasting viewpoints, experience sharing, and supportive interaction. The following results present the empirical evidence before the discussion interprets its theoretical significance.

Participatory communication in @worksfess was characterized by diverse viewpoints, reciprocal exchange, experience sharing, and informal interaction. Administrators framed posts as opportunities to distribute employment information and invite response, while followers and other users extended those posts through practical advice, clarification, disagreement, and accounts of

personal experience. The resulting communication was therefore neither purely top-down nor uniformly dialogic: some threads developed into reciprocal exchanges, whereas others remained brief or primarily informational. Follower accounts also indicated that reading other users' experiences could support recruitment preparation, broaden perspective, and provide a sense of peer support during job searching.

Participatory Communication: Diverse Voices, Dialogue, and Informality



Figure 1. Career-Switching Post and Visible User Responses
Source: Platform X (2026)

Figure 1 shows that a post about moving from corporate employment into teaching generated both supportive and cautious responses. Some users framed the transition as a viable career change, whereas others emphasized constraints related to prior experience, educational background, and salary expectations. The thread therefore contained contrasting interpretations and experience-based advice. ME described @worksfess as a source of employment information for people from varied backgrounds. Taken together, the post and interview account support the interpretation that posted information can function as a prompt for discussion, although they do not establish that every post produces sustained engagement.

“We strive to provide relevant information for a wide range of workers. Because our followers come from diverse backgrounds, we create a space for sharing work experiences from various industries, educational levels, and economic conditions. We choose language that is easy to understand and non-patronizing. Furthermore, we often highlight real-life experiences from our followers, making the message more relatable and compelling.” – ME



Figure 2. Employment-Offer Post Inviting Salary and Location Advice
Source: Platform X (2026)

The post in Figure 2 asked users to evaluate an employment offer involving salary, location, and contract duration. Responses reflected different personal circumstances: some users considered IDR 3.5 million difficult to sustain in South Jakarta, whereas others argued that family support, savings, short-term experience, or lower-cost accommodation could make the offer acceptable. The thread therefore illustrates heteroglossia and polyphony because one employment decision generated multiple, non-identical interpretations rather than a single community position.

SN similarly described the account's content strategy as attentive to audience diversity and grounded in real-life experience. In the analysis, this statement was treated as an administrator perspective and considered alongside the observed variety of employment topics and follower accounts. The convergence of these sources suggests that perceived relevance and experiential credibility can support willingness to read, respond to, and discuss employment-related content.

"We consider the diversity of our audience when creating content. We prioritize information based on real experiences so that the audience finds it easier to understand and trust the information presented." – SN

ME described social media activity as creating opportunities for users to respond to and interact through @worksfess. The observational evidence showed, however, that two-way interaction varied in depth. Some threads moved beyond isolated replies: users asked follow-up questions, supplied additional information, responded to other users' experiences, clarified claims, and expressed disagreement. These exchanges demonstrate responsiveness and reciprocal elaboration, which are more consistent with dialogic participation than reaction counts alone. ME also described an informal and entertaining communication style. In the analysis, humor and relaxed language were considered relevant only when they appeared to lower interactional barriers or invite further exchange; they were not treated automatically as evidence of engagement.

“We actively use social media through posts, threads, polls, and Q&A sessions. Furthermore, we often use lighthearted humor and a relaxed style of language to keep serious topics about the world of work interesting.” – ME

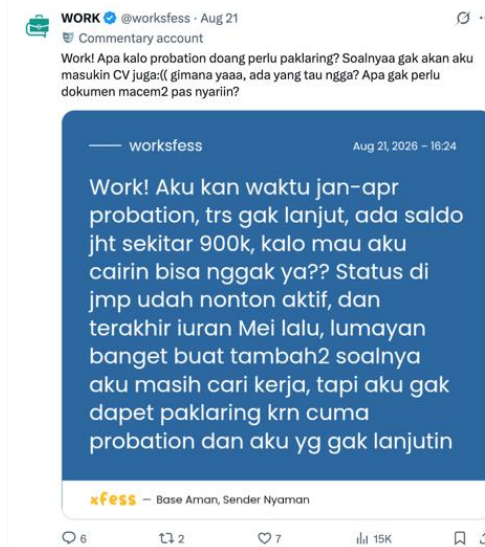


Figure 3. Probation and JHT-Withdrawal Information Request
Source: Platform X (2026)

The post shown in Figure 3 also generated experience-based responses concerning the withdrawal of JHT funds during probation. Users contributed procedural information and practical clarification, including references to employment certificates and account status. These comments provide evidence of reciprocity and informational support because participants responded to a concrete problem by extending the available information rather than merely reacting to the original post.

SN described informal and playful communication as a way to make employment-related discussion more approachable. Observed posts and replies likewise showed a relaxed register in some threads. The evidence therefore supports interpreting informality as an interactional resource that may reduce formality and make participation easier. It does not, by itself, demonstrate the full theoretical condition of carnival; rather, it indicates a bounded form of playful expression within an employment-focused community.

“Of course. Humor and lighthearted content are used to prevent the audience from feeling bored when discussing complex work issues” – SN



Figure 4. Examples of Relaxed, Informal Work-Related Conversation
Source: Platform X (2026)

Community Engagement: Membership, Influence, Needs, and Emotional Connection

Interview and observational evidence suggests that participatory communication and community engagement were connected through recurring discussion, experience sharing, and peer response. Participants described the community as a place where followers could encounter similar employment experiences, evaluate job-related information, and obtain practical or emotional support. These patterns are interpreted through the study’s sense-of-community lens rather than as evidence that @worksfess caused behavioral change across its entire audience.

“We build a sense of community through regular discussions, sharing work experiences, and providing a safe space for audiences to share their stories” – ME



Figure 5. Posts Inviting Career and Recruitment Advice
Source: Platform X (2026)

SN described digital community building in terms of a shared identity among workers and job seekers, combined with mutual information exchange and support. This interpretation was

consistent with observed comment threads in which users responded to one another's employment concerns and offered experience-based suggestions.

"We build our digital community by creating a shared identity as workers or job seekers who support each other and share information" – SN



Figure 6. Support-Seeking Posts on Employment Concerns
Source: Platform X (2026)

@worksfess provides a digital space in which users can exchange perspectives, share experiences, and offer support on employment and career issues. Observed comment sections included responses to job opportunities, workplace experiences, career decisions, and employment-related concerns. Visible likes, replies, and reposts indicate audience activity, but they are not interpreted as direct evidence that all followers participate. Some users may engage primarily by reading or following discussions. The case therefore contains both observable participation and less-visible forms of engagement associated with information consumption, shared experience, and perceived support.

Table 4. Audience Support in @worksfess Comment Interactions

Original public comment (Indonesian)	English translation
Pasti bisa kok, aku nganggur 5 tahun dan tahun ini alhamdulillah dapat kerja walau gaji blm nyentuh umr tapi masih cukup untuk kebutuhan keluargaku	You definitely can. I was unemployed for five years and, thank God, I found a job this year. The salary has not yet reached the regional minimum wage, but it is still enough for my family's needs.
Bisa, aku nganggur 3 tahun aja dapet	You can. I was unemployed for three years and still found a job.
Aku juga masih usaha nyari kerja fulltime dari freshgrad sampe expired. Kalo diitung udah 2 tahunan, semoga abis ini kita ketemu jalannya. Semangat	I am also still trying to find a full-time job. I have been searching since graduating, for

Original public comment (Indonesian)	English translation
	about two years. Hopefully we will find our way soon. Keep going.
Bisa, pls percayalah kalau keberuntungan is one huge factor on getting a job	You can. Please believe that luck is a major factor in getting a job.
Bisa kalo kamu fresh grad jangan terlalu picky, trabas aja semuanya	You can. If you are a fresh graduate, do not be too selective; apply broadly.
Pasti bisa kok, aku juga lagi nyari kerjaan fulltime lagi emang ngangur lama bikin stress sejujurnya karena ga ada pemasukan kan	You can. I am also looking for full-time work again. Being unemployed for a long time is honestly stressful because there is no income.
Bisa, asal ga terlalu picky aja, yang penting ada yang Nerima kerja udah syukur	You can. As long as you are not too selective; if someone accepts you for a job, be grateful.

Table 4 illustrates that users did more than exchange vacancy information. Participants offered contrasting assessments of salary adequacy, encouraged individuals facing prolonged job-search difficulties, and shared experience-based advice. These exchanges provided opportunities to compare viewpoints, consider career alternatives, and receive peer support. ME's interview account below is consistent with this observed pattern.

“They are more confident in discussing, asking questions about work, and sharing work experiences to help other audiences. We provide job opening information, career tips, discussions about the world of work, and a place to share experiences and seek social support.” – ME

SN associated participation with increased willingness to ask questions and share work experiences. Because this is an administrator interpretation, it is not treated as evidence of population-level behavioral change. Rather, it identifies a perceived form of influence that can be compared with follower accounts of becoming more critical, informed, or confident in employment-related decisions.

“Change is evident in individuals who actively interact and dare to ask questions.” – SN

Participants described relational comfort and responsiveness as important to their experience of the community. Administrator accounts emphasized listening and maintaining a supportive atmosphere, while follower interviews later described finding others with similar experiences and receiving useful information. Together, these accounts suggest an emotional and relational dimension to engagement, although the strength of that connection varied across participants.

"We build emotional closeness by listening to audience experiences, responding to their feedback, and maintaining a positive and supportive community atmosphere." – ME

Community discussions also functioned as a mechanism for addressing shared needs. Administrators emphasized up-to-date information, opportunities for discussion, and relationship building, while followers described practical benefits such as career information, recruitment preparation, and peer support. The evidence indicates that need fulfillment was experienced through both informational and relational resources.

"We use up-to-date information, community discussions, and provide opportunities to build relationships with fellow community members. In this regard, many individuals actively engage in the community by sharing experiences. Emotional closeness is formed through intensive communication with the audience." – SN

Facilitators and Constraints of Participation

The case also revealed constraints on participation. Administrators described a high volume of incoming messages and comments that made rapid response difficult, while the platform's distribution mechanisms could limit the visibility of particular posts. These conditions show that opportunities for dialogue are shaped not only by communicative intent but also by moderation capacity and platform architecture.

"The obstacle is high volume of incoming messages and comments, so not all of them can be responded to quickly" – ME

SN additionally emphasized the challenge of addressing followers with different backgrounds, needs, and expectations. This diversity is productive for heteroglossia, but it also requires administrators to adapt tone and framing so that employment-related content remains accessible across different user positions.

"The differences in follower backgrounds and needs often pose a challenge because each audience has different expectations. This requires account managers to adapt their communication style to be acceptable to various follower groups." – SN

ME identified relevant content, interactive features, and comment sections as conditions that facilitate participation, whereas SN emphasized trust in the usefulness and credibility of shared information. Trust was not a predetermined construct in the analytical framework; it emerged contextually from the interview material. It is therefore reported as a supporting condition associated with willingness to interact rather than as a measured causal predictor of engagement.

"The main supporting factor is content relevant to followers' needs, such as job openings, career tips, and self-development. Furthermore, the use of interactive features like polls, Q&A, and the comment section also helps improve communication with the audience." – ME

“In my opinion, a supporting factor is followers’ trust in the information shared. Followers tend to interact because they find the information useful for their career needs, and the comment section allows people to add information based on their own experiences.” – SN

Overall, participatory communication within @worksfess was expressed through reciprocal interaction, employment-related information exchange, peer support, and informal expression. Administrator and follower accounts converged on the importance of relevance and interaction but differed in how these processes were enacted and experienced. Observed exchanges also varied in reciprocity: some involved sustained comparison of experiences and perspectives, whereas others remained primarily informational. The findings therefore indicate opportunities for community engagement, not evidence that participatory communication uniformly produces engagement across the @worksfess audience.

Follower Experiences of Engagement

The two follower interviews provide a member-centered counterpoint to the administrator accounts. FA valued the breadth of work experiences represented in @worksfess content and described the account as relevant to both recent graduates and working professionals. Her account suggests that diversity of experience can increase the informational value of the community for users at different career stages.

“I think it's quite good because the content discusses work experiences from various walks of life, from fresh graduates to working professionals,” – FA

MMA described @worksfess posts as relevant to situations faced by many workers and distinguished visible participation from less-visible engagement. Her account suggests that engagement can include cognitive processes such as following employment information and learning from others’ experiences, as well as affective responses to relatable stories. Posting, replying, and commenting provide visible evidence of participation, whereas reading and following discussions are less observable. Consequently, neither high posting activity nor low posting activity should be treated as a complete measure of community engagement.

“I find this account quite inclusive because it discusses various work situations experienced by many people. Although I read more than I comment, I see a lot of interaction between users,” – MMA

FA also described the comment section as an active discussion space in which anonymous stories and responses introduced different viewpoints. Her account reinforces the observational finding that participation can involve not only direct replies to an original post but also interaction among users who respond to one another’s experiences.

“Yes. I often see active discussions in the comments section, and many opinions are responded to by both admins and other users. Yes. Many anonymous stories from users are published, allowing for diverse perspectives to emerge.” – FA

MMA emphasized that user-submitted stories can expose followers to perspectives they might not encounter through formal recruitment information. Her account positions @worksfess as a site of experiential knowledge exchange rather than merely a vacancy feed.

"It's a great opportunity because many user stories are published, and the information provided is also very interesting and can provide a different perspective to prospective employees."
– MMA

FA identified work-related humor as one reason that @worksfess content felt relatable. In a context where employment discussions can be stressful, humor appeared to make the communication environment less formal and more approachable. This supports the interpretation of playful expression as a facilitative feature of interaction rather than as an outcome in itself.

"Yes, especially the use of jokes that are relevant to the everyday lives of workers," – FA

MMA similarly described the account's relaxed communication style as reducing boredom and sustaining her interest in following the content. Her account suggests that accessible, informal language can support continued attention and willingness to remain connected to the community.

"Yes. The communication style is relaxed, so I don't get bored following the account." – MMA

FA associated community membership with encountering people who had similar experiences, which reduced feelings of isolation and increased confidence. MMA emphasized greater awareness of healthy and transparent work environments. These accounts show different dimensions of engagement—belonging for FA and perceived influence on employment-related awareness for MMA—without implying that the same effects occur for all followers.

"I feel like I'm part of a community because I often find people with similar experiences to mine." – FA

"Yes. I've become more aware of the importance of a healthy and transparent work environment" – MMA

FA described @worksfess as influencing how she evaluated potential employers, understood workers' rights, prepared job applications, and approached interviews. This evidence is interpreted as one participant's perceived community influence rather than as a causal effect of the platform.

"Yes. I've become more careful in choosing a company and have a better understanding of workers' rights. Furthermore, I also understand better how to apply for jobs, answer interview questions, and explore opportunities elsewhere" – FA

MMA reported becoming more critical when evaluating job-posting information and seeking additional references before applying. Her account indicates a perceived change in

information-evaluation practices after engaging with @worksfess, while the qualitative design does not establish causality.

"I'm more critical of job posting information and look for more references before applying." – MMA

FA likewise reported becoming more active in seeking career information and more confident in discussing employment issues. This account is interpreted as perceived influence at the individual level, not as evidence of a uniform behavioral effect across followers.

"I've become more active in seeking career information and more confident in discussing the world of work. I'm also more enthusiastic about building relationships and interacting with others." – FA

MMA described @worksfess as useful for understanding other workers' experiences, while FA emphasized job information, career insight, and support from fellow community members. Together, these accounts show that need fulfillment in this case combined informational resources with relational support.

"Quite helpful as a source of information and a place to understand the experiences of other workers." – MMA

FA described @worksfess as a useful source of job information, career insight, and support from other community members. This account aligns with the fulfillment-of-needs dimension because the perceived value of the community extended beyond vacancy information to career understanding and social support.

"It's quite significant. I get job information, career insights, and support from fellow community members." – FA

MMA described an emotional connection arising from stories that reflected experiences similar to her own. In the present analysis, this connection is interpreted as shared emotional resonance and perceived similarity with other members rather than as a branding outcome.

"There's an emotional connection because many of the stories reflect experiences I've had." – MMA

FA likewise associated shared experience with mutual understanding and comfort, while MMA emphasized support around issues close to workers' daily lives. Together, these accounts provide evidence for an emotional-connection dimension grounded in relatability and peer support.

"Yes, because I feel the experiences shared there are very relevant to my situation. There's a sense of mutual understanding and many experiences are relatable to my life." – FA

“Because the issues discussed are very close to the daily lives of workers, and many community members support each other.” – MMA

The follower interviews therefore indicate that relational closeness was built through shared experience, practical information, and mutual support. This finding is consistent with the study’s interpretation of community engagement as a combination of membership, influence, need fulfillment, and emotional connection, while remaining bounded to the experiences reported by the two followers.

Table 5. Summary of Research Findings

Analytical domain	Dimension	Evidence-based finding
Participatory communication	Heteroglossia	Different employment backgrounds and experiences produced non-identical interpretations of career, salary, recruitment, and workplace issues.
	Dialogue	Replies, follow-up questions, clarification, and experience-based advice created reciprocal exchanges, although not all threads developed into sustained dialogue.
	Polyphony	Multiple perspectives coexisted within discussion threads; visibility of different voices did not imply equal influence.
	Carnival	Informal language and work-related humor reduced formality and made serious employment topics more approachable, but playful expression alone did not demonstrate engagement.
Community engagement	Membership	Followers reported a sense of belonging when they encountered users with employment experiences similar to their own.
	Influence	Followers described becoming more critical or informed when evaluating job postings, companies, workers’ rights, and workplace conditions.
	Fulfillment of needs	Users obtained vacancy information, career advice, recruitment preparation, experiential knowledge, and peer support.
	Emotional connection	Relatable stories, mutual understanding, and supportive responses contributed to perceived emotional connection.

Discussion

The findings support the usefulness of Rahim’s participatory communication framework for interpreting digitally mediated interaction, particularly through heteroglossia, dialogue, polyphony, and carnival [21]. The @worksfess case also demonstrates that these dimensions are conditioned by platform affordances and administrator mediation. X provides visibility, persistence,

association, and reply functions, but technical affordances alone do not produce participation; participation emerges when users use those affordances to elaborate, disagree, clarify, and share experience [9], [10]. This distinction is important because visible platform activity can occur without reciprocal meaning-making.

Comments, replies, questions, and discussion threads created opportunities for interaction, but two-way exchange was not automatically equivalent to dialogue. Some observed threads involved substantive responses, clarification, disagreement, and follow-up information, whereas others remained brief or primarily informational. Administrator mediation was consequential because submissions were selected and framed before followers encountered them. Dialogue in @worksfess is therefore best understood as a mediated process: administrators structure the initial communicative opportunity, while followers can extend, redirect, or contest it through replies. This refines Rahim's dialogic emphasis by showing that participation on social media is simultaneously interpersonal and platform-structured [10], [21].

The coexistence of multiple perspectives on salaries, career switching, recruitment, and workplace experience supports a polyphonic interpretation of @worksfess. However, the presence of different voices does not imply equal visibility or influence. Platform dynamics and interaction patterns shape which contributions receive attention and which remain peripheral. Polyphony in this case therefore refers to the availability and articulation of distinct perspectives within a mediated communication environment rather than to equal communicative power among all participants [21], [51].

Informal and playful language was evident in some employment-related discussions and appeared to create a less formal interactional environment. This finding supports a cautious application of Rahim's carnival dimension: humor and relaxed expression can open alternative ways of participating in otherwise serious discussions, but they do not guarantee sustained engagement. Taken together, the four dimensions remain analytically useful while requiring platform-sensitive interpretation. Administrator mediation can facilitate relevant information and interaction while also structuring whose submissions become visible; similarly, platform affordances can support public participation while leaving reading and other low-visibility forms of engagement largely unobserved.

The findings also illuminate how community engagement was experienced relationally. McMillan and Chavis identify membership, influence, integration and fulfillment of needs, and shared emotional connection as core elements of sense of community [24], with subsequent research extending these dimensions to virtual settings [25], [28], [29], [30], [31], [32], [33]. In the present case, membership appeared when followers encountered people with similar employment experiences; influence was reflected in reported changes in how participants evaluated job information and workplace conditions; fulfillment of needs involved access to career information, advice, and peer support; and emotional connection emerged through relatability, mutual understanding, and supportive responses.

Conceptually, these results support a distinction between participation, engagement, and sense of community. Participation refers to communicative acts such as posting, replying, asking, clarifying, or sharing experience. Community engagement refers to sustained communicative and relational involvement around shared employment concerns. Sense of community captures how that involvement is experienced through belonging, influence, need fulfillment, and emotional connection. Treating these constructs as related but non-identical avoids inferring community from

reaction counts alone and is consistent with research showing that online involvement includes both visible contribution and less-visible forms of participation [22], [23], [39], [40], [41], [42].

The informational and relational functions observed in @worksfess also align with research showing that social support, connectedness, and information exchange can contribute to continued participation and attachment in online communities [11], [12], [13], [52]. This is particularly relevant in work-related contexts, where social-media communication can help maintain a sense of community and support [26]. At the same time, the findings differ from consumer or brand-community research in an important respect: @worksfess is organized around employment uncertainty and peer problem solving rather than brand identification or consumption. The value of engagement therefore lies primarily in shared interpretation, practical knowledge, and relational support, even though the same broader engagement literature helps explain behavioral, cognitive, and affective involvement [15], [16], [17], [18], [43].

This study extends Rahim's framework by showing how participatory communication operates under conditions of anonymity and administrator mediation. Anonymity may lower barriers to self-disclosure and make sensitive employment experiences easier to discuss, while also limiting interpersonal identification and accountability [35], [36], [37], [38]. Job-search research similarly shows that social media can shape information seeking, networking, and exposure to peer cues [1], [2], [3], [4], [5], [6], [34]. The theoretical contribution of the present case is therefore a three-part mechanism: platform affordances create communicative opportunities; participatory practices transform some of those opportunities into reciprocal interaction; and sense-of-community dimensions explain how that interaction may be experienced as relational engagement. The study does not claim that this sequence is universal or causal, but it provides a platform-sensitive explanation of how community can be experienced within an anonymous employment-information environment.

CONCLUSION

This study shows that participatory communication within @worksfess is enacted through diverse voices, reciprocal discussion, multiple perspectives, and informal interaction, while community engagement is experienced through perceived membership, influence, fulfillment of shared needs, and emotional connection. The administrator-mediated structure does not eliminate participation; instead, administrators shape the initial communicative opportunity and followers can extend it through replies, experiential advice, clarification, disagreement, and support. The central contribution is to show that engagement in an anonymous job-seeking community is relational and platform-mediated and should not be inferred from follower counts or visible reaction metrics alone. Practically, digital community managers can strengthen engagement by publishing content that invites substantive response, preserving space for multiple viewpoints, using accessible and context-sensitive language, and enabling peer-to-peer support rather than relying exclusively on one-way information delivery. Because the evidence comes from a single bounded qualitative case, these implications are analytical rather than causal or statistically generalizable. The study nevertheless offers a transferable framework for examining how participatory communication, platform affordances, and sense of community intersect in employment-related online spaces.

LIMITATIONS

This study has several limitations. First, four interview participants provide information-rich but not demographically representative perspectives, and the two follower participants may reflect more engaged users than the wider audience. Second, two participants were account administrators, so their accounts may contain elements of organizational self-presentation; these statements were therefore interpreted alongside follower interviews and observational evidence. Third, the observational corpus was limited to five publicly accessible posts and visible interaction threads, excluding private communication and forms of passive consumption that cannot be observed directly from the public interface. Fourth, the single-case design and May–August 2026 observation window constrain transferability across platforms, time periods, and job-seeker communities. Future research should compare multiple employment communities, include active and less-active members, and combine qualitative analysis with longitudinal or mixed-method measures of participation, support, and sense of community.

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Z.K. conceptualization, methodology, investigation, data curation, formal analysis, visualization, and writing—original draft; M.T.L. conceptualization, methodology, supervision, validation, project administration, and writing—review and editing. Both authors contributed to interpretation, critically revised the manuscript, and approved the final version.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

DECLARATION OF USE OF AI IN SCIENTIFIC WRITING

The authors used OpenAI ChatGPT during manuscript preparation for language refinement, structural editing, and reference-format checking. All AI-assisted revisions were critically reviewed and edited by the authors, who assume full responsibility for the accuracy, originality, interpretation, and final content of the manuscript.

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