



# “Assessing the Effectiveness of LinkedIn as a Job Search and Career Development Platform for Students”

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## Abstract

The paper provides an overview of LinkedIn which has become an essential tool for recruiters and jobseekers. It has evolved from a professional networking platform to a content sharing hub over the years. The study incorporates a review of relevant literature, presenting research on topics ranging from personal branding and job possibilities in LinkedIn. The methodology involved a quantitative, online survey conducted among graduates and postgraduates. The findings shed light on aspects such as satisfaction with job search features, relevance of job recommendations, and the role of networking capabilities. The analysis reveals significant predictors of job-hunting success, emphasizing the impact of leveraging LinkedIn for job opportunities and satisfaction with the platform's features.

Key words: LinkedIn, Job seeking tool, effectiveness, graduates, postgraduates.

## Introduction

LinkedIn is a social media platform that was founded in 2003, that focused on career development and professional networking. It was mainly designed to facilitate connections and interactions among job seekers, recruiters, professionals and companies. Currently, LinkedIn has become the largest professional network globally. As of 2022, the platform has over 850 million users in 200 countries and regions, with US having the greatest number of users i.e., 199M. According to Sprout Social website, there are over 61 million companies listed on LinkedIn and 3 new members sign up every second.

The main aim of LinkedIn is to help its users in establishing and maintaining their professional network. Users have to create their own profiles which includes their education qualification, achievements and work experience, act as a virtual resume to the recruiters. Along with it, it has an integrated feature that allows the users to connect with their classmates, colleagues, peers from the industry and many more by sending connection request. It allows the users to join relevant industry-based groups to share knowledge, professional development, discuss industry-specific topics, share insights and even learn from others in their field of interest. LinkedIn also has a platform of learning called LinkedIn learning, which allows its users to attend online courses and tutorials to learn and expand their knowledge and professional skills.

LinkedIn allows the users to filter job opportunities based on various criteria such as location, experience level, industry, type of job, date posted and company size. The algorithm also helps the users to receive job recommendations based on their profile information and career interest.

On the other hand, recruiters find companies use LinkedIn to find and engage with potential candidates as the platform offers recruitment tools and solutions to post about their job openings, talent acquisition campaigns and even their search for qualified candidates. The recruiters reach out to potential candidates through LinkedIn messaging feature.

Over the years, LinkedIn has evolved from just job postings and networking to a content sharing platform. The users now publish articles, share updates and engage with other professionals through likes, comments and shares.

The latest update of LinkedIn is that it provides a feature called as company pages that allows the organizations to showcase their brand, share company updates and attract potential employees and customers.

LinkedIn faces competition from platforms that offer similar features and services like Indeed, Glass door, CareerBuilder, Monster, Xing and Angel list.

Indeed, aggregates job listings from various sources like company websites and staffing agencies it also focuses on employer profiles and company reviews.

Glassdoor is mainly known for employer reviews and salary information. It gives job seekers an idea about the salary data and also allows them to read employee reviews and make informed decisions.

CareerBuilder also offers a wide range of job listings along with resume building tools and career advice resources. It provides the employers with an additional feature of streamlining the hiring process.

Xing is a professional networking platform that mainly focuses on European market and offers features similar to LinkedIn.

Even with such high competition in the market, LinkedIn remains the dominant player in the professional networking space because of his extensive user base that allows job seekers have a higher chance of finding relevant job opportunities and connecting with professionals in that desired field. LinkedIn features such as recommendations and referrals add credibility to its users' profiles and act as testimonials from their colleagues and connection by highlighting their skills and work ethics. Additionally, LinkedIn provides recruiters features that help them streamline the hiring process, applicant tracking systems and connect with potential candidates directly on the platform.

## **Objectives**

1. To assess the effectiveness of LinkedIn as a Job seeking platform among graduates and post graduates.
2. To assess the impact of LinkedIn on students' career development.

## **Review of Literature**

1. (Basu, 2021) : This paper examines the relationship between personal branding efforts on LinkedIn and job possibility. The authors found that many LinkedIn users do not actively engage in personal branding but aim to attract the attention of potential recruiters The paper aims to understand the primary motivations behind using LinkedIn, including attracting recruiters' attention and exploring job openings Endorsements and recommendations on LinkedIn profiles are considered important by respondents, regardless of their background.
2. (Wicaksono, 2019): The paper provides methodologies and measures for evaluating the quality of job search rankings from a user modelling perspective. The authors investigate job seekers' behaviour

when interacting with job search rankings from Seek.com, a well-known Australasian job search website. Online metrics like click-through rate and job application rate are also mentioned as metrics for evaluating the quality of job search rankings.

3. (Guilherme Pinho, 2019): The paper highlights the growth of social media and internet capabilities has provided numerous sourcing possibilities and activities for recruitment. LinkedIn is highly valued by recruiters and is considered an essential recruitment tool for ICT companies and consulting firms. The researcher concludes that having an updated LinkedIn profile increases the probability of being contacted by recruiters and hired.
4. (David Aguado, 2019) : The study analyzed the criterion-oriented validity of LinkedIn profiles in the ICT sector. The profiles were found to be significantly related to productivity, absenteeism, and the potential for professional development. The information presented in LinkedIn profiles has differential considerations based on the level of experience of ICT professionals. This leads to a differential consideration of this information by recruiters when selecting professionals with different levels of experience.
5. (Shan Li, 2020): The paper focuses on the use of deep transfer learning to create domain-specific job understanding models at LinkedIn, with the goal of improving job targeting accuracy and hire efficiency. The authors mention the integration of job understanding models into LinkedIn's products to collect job posters' feedback, indicating a user-centric approach to improving job understanding ability. The paper also highlights the use of professional entities such as titles, skills, companies, and assessment questions to represent jobs in the deep job understanding process. The demonstration presented in the paper showcases how the integrated deep job understanding work improves job posters' satisfaction and provides significant metric lifts in LinkedIn's job recommendation system. Overall, the paper provides insights into the application of deep transfer learning and expert feedback loops in enhancing job understanding at LinkedIn, leading to improved job targeting and recommendation outcomes.
6. (Joshi, 2018): The study compares the effectiveness of online job portals and social media platforms for job seekers. Traditional channels for finding candidates included campus recruitment, newspaper ads, and job agencies. Social media profiles play a crucial role in the recruitment of applicants, as employers assess candidates based on their profiles. Social media platforms provide a more personal and informal view of candidates, while LinkedIn offers a formal resume-like view. The focus of job search has shifted to response time and cost-effectiveness.
7. (Sahin Cem Geyik, 2018): The paper discusses the challenges and lessons learned in talent search and recommendation systems at LinkedIn, specifically focusing on the LinkedIn Recruiter product. It highlights the unique information retrieval, system, and modelling challenges associated with talent search and recommendation systems. The paper does not explicitly mention any limitations or shortcomings of the talent search and recommendation systems at LinkedIn.
8. (Silvia Lorincová, 2018): The study highlights how social networks are used by businesses across the globe often for hiring, with more than 90% of organizations doing so. The research found that more than 4% of Slovak respondents used social networks for job searching and only 2% of Czech respondents considered that they were a significant way to obtain employment. The study found that Slovak respondents thought social networks were less trustworthy than Czech respondents. If companies and prospective candidates used social media more regularly, the report claims.
9. (Thurasamy Ramayah, 2011) : The study examines the elements influencing the intention of employed job seekers to utilize social networking sites as a tool for job searching. 190 employed job seekers who

have used social networking sites were surveyed for the study using the snowball sampling method. The study's findings showed a positive relationship between behavioural intention to use social networking sites for job searching and reported utility. According to the report, social networking site designers should offer more practical features or tools to help users with their job searches.

10. (Regala, 2023) : The paper discusses the evolution of professional networking tools from traditional methods to the emergence of the World Wide Web, which expanded networking opportunities globally. The paper emphasizes the significance of LinkedIn in transforming professional networking and publishing, enabling professionals to connect and collaborate on a global scale. The author's personal experience and reminiscence of the early days of the internet set the context for the emergence of LinkedIn as a valuable tool for professionals in the scholarly publishing industry. Overall, the paper showcases LinkedIn as an effective global publishing network that has revolutionized professional networking and publishing, connecting professionals worldwide and enhancing productivity.

### **Research Methodology**

The research methodology used in this study is quantitative, and data was collected through online questionnaire.

The questionnaire included 11 questions focused on the awareness and involvement of students in social and professional networks, specifically LinkedIn.

1. Have you ever used LinkedIn for job hunting?
2. Which social networking site do you prefer for getting employment?
3. Have you successfully secured a job through LinkedIn?
4. How often do you use LinkedIn for job search purposes?
5. How effective do you find LinkedIn for finding job opportunities?
6. How satisfied are you with the job search features and functionality provided by LinkedIn?
7. Have you found LinkedIn's job recommendations relevant to your career interests and goals?
8. Have you received interview or job offers as a result of your LinkedIn profile and activities?
9. Did you find LinkedIn's networking capabilities helpful in expanding your professional connections and accessing job opportunities?
10. How valuable do you find LinkedIn's industry insights and thought leadership content in your job search process?
11. How well does LinkedIn compare to other job search platforms you have used in terms of its effectiveness?

The questionnaire was designed based on the objectives of the study i.e., aiming to understand the effectiveness of LinkedIn and its usage for employment opportunities.

The analysis was conducted by using LinkedIn as an independent variable and students' career development and effectiveness as dependent variable.

### **Findings**

A total of 42 graduate and postgraduate students participated in the study. The education background of the students are Engineering, Bachelors in Business Administration, Bachelors in Commerce, Bachelors in Science, Masters in Business Administration and Masters in Science.

- **Satisfaction with Job Search Features and Functionality:** 38% of the respondents are extremely satisfied with LinkedIn Job's features and overall functionality, while 7% are not at all satisfied.
- **Relevance of Job Recommendations to Career Interests and Goals:** 21% of the respondents find the recommendations extremely relevant and majority 38% find them effective.
- **Receiving Interviews or Job Offers Through LinkedIn Profile and Activities:** Only 9 out of 42 members have found a job or internship through LinkedIn.

- **Effectiveness of Networking Capabilities for Expanding Professional Connections and Accessing Job Opportunities:** 28% of the respondents think that LinkedIn provides an opportunity for building professional network.
- **Value of Industry Insights and Thought Leadership Content in the Job Search Process:** 45% of them find LinkedIn content valuable and effective.

**Analysis**

SUMMARY OUTPUT								
<i>Regression Statistics</i>								
Multiple R	0.896127431							
R Square	0.803044372							
Adjusted R Square	0.761265905							
Standard Error	0.448852186							
Observations	41							
<i>ANOVA</i>								
	<i>df</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Significance F</i>			
Regression	7	27.10764416	3.872520595	19.22148987	5.82163E-10			
Residual	33	6.648453396	0.201468285					
Total	40	33.75609756						
	<i>Coefficients</i>	<i>Standard Error</i>	<i>t Stat</i>	<i>P-value</i>	<i>Lower 95%</i>	<i>Upper 95%</i>	<i>Lower 95.0%</i>	<i>Upper 95.0%</i>
Intercept	2.376984972	0.285589945	8.323069529	1.29613E-09	1.795947859	2.958022084	1.795947859	2.958022084
Used LinkedIn for Job Hunting	-2.025506299	0.267864997	-7.561668454	1.06581E-08	-2.570481733	-1.480530864	-2.570481733	-1.480530864
[How satisfied are you with the job search fe	0.242455272	0.101955742	2.378044303	0.023350935	0.035024755	0.449885789	0.035024755	0.449885789
[Have you found LinkedIn's job recommendati	0.024480959	0.120959005	0.202390544	0.840854042	-0.221611987	0.270573904	-0.221611987	0.270573904
[Have you received interview or job offers as	0.317983021	0.08920312	3.564707401	0.00113551	0.136497909	0.499468133	0.136497909	0.499468133
[Did you find LinkedIn's networking capabilitie	-0.087194467	0.106006024	-0.822542561	0.416672364	-0.302865345	0.128476411	-0.302865345	0.128476411
[How valuable do you find LinkedIn's industry	0.083517103	0.131859198	0.633380941	0.530850425	-0.184752452	0.351786658	-0.184752452	0.351786658
[How well does LinkedIn compare to other jo	0.200633349	0.109660714	1.829582729	0.076359761	-0.022473052	0.42373975	-0.022473052	0.42373975

- The high R-squared value of 0.80 indicates the model explains a large proportion (80%) of the variance in the outcome variable (job hunting success).
- All variables except finding LinkedIn's job recommendations relevant to your career interests and goals are statistically significant predictors based on their p-values.
- "Used LinkedIn for Job Hunting" has the largest negative coefficient, suggesting greater usage is associated with lower levels of the outcome variable. This variable appears to be the strongest individual predictor.
- Receiving offers for jobs or internships (This suggests that to the extent students are able to leverage their LinkedIn profile and engage in networking/sharing activities in a way that leads directly to job opportunities, it enhances LinkedIn's effectiveness for career development and job search.) and satisfaction with the platform's features (This implies that students finding LinkedIn's dedicated job search tools (e.g. job recommendations, search filters etc.) genuinely useful correlates with increased career success metrics ) have statistically significant positive coefficients, meaning higher scores on these variables predict higher levels of the outcome.
- The ANOVA table shows the regression model as a whole fit the data significantly better than a simple mean model based on the small p-value.
- In summary, this appears to be a strong predictive regression model for some measure of job-hunting success. The positive predictors point to specific ways LinkedIn currently does support students' job hunts - when their profile marketing results in offers, and the job search functionality meets their needs and expectations. Focusing usage around these aspects that demonstrate impact could maximize LinkedIn's effectiveness for student career development goals.

## Research Gap

- The study focuses specifically on students in Bangalore, so the results may not be applicable to students in other countries or cultural contexts.
- The questionnaire is filled by only Graduate and Post Graduate students, it does not focus on effectiveness of LinkedIn on people with lower or higher degree than PG.

## Conclusion

The study provides insights into the effectiveness of LinkedIn as a career development and job search tool for students. It emphasizes the influence of usage patterns have on Job hunting process. The findings from the analysis showed that users are satisfied with the features of LinkedIn. The algorithm must work on providing better recommendations and suggestions to its users relating to their field of interests. By focusing on these aspects, LinkedIn can enhance its effectiveness in supporting users' career development goals. The analysis showcased a robust regression model with a high R-squared value, indicating the model's effectiveness in explaining job hunting success. Significant variables identified in the study are utilizing LinkedIn for job hunting and satisfaction with the platform's features, emphasizing their positive impact on career development and job search success.

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