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PERCEPTION OF YOUNG PROFESSIONALS IN COIMBATORE CITY TOWARDS USAGE AND INFORMATIONAL SERVICES OF LINKEDIN

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Abstract:

Job seekers and employers extensively use LinkedIn. Job seekers have the opportunity to pick their job, and employers can list their jobs and can select the appropriate candidates. In addition, LinkedIn helps small businesses connect with customers. This paper presents insights into the perception of young professionals using LinkedIn in Coimbatore city. Young professionals usage assessed, and benefits of LinkedIn (n=100)were assessed based on their perception through ranking and factor analysis. The study results reveal that the 'notification' feature in LinkedIn dominates with other features. While analysing the usage of the benefits of LinkedIn, it was identified that through its proper use both the job seekers and professionals gets benefited.

Key Words: Informational Benefits, Linkedin, Social Media

Introduction:

LinkedIn is one of the American businesses and employment-oriented online services that operates via websites and mobile apps. This Online platform was launched on May 5, 2003,which is primarily used for professional networking and career development and allows job seekers to post their resumes /CVs. At the same time, this platform allowsemployers to post jobs. As of September 2021, LinkedIn has 774+ million registered members from over 200 countries and territories. The real-world professional relationship is created with the help of LinkedIn, as the members (both professionals and Job seekers) create profiles and 'connect' with each other in an online social network. The membersof LinkedIn were allowed to invite any member or not to become a 'connection'. LinkedIn was used by the members for various events viz., to organise offline events, join groups, write articles, publish job postings, post photos and videos, and more.

User Profile Network:

Basic Functionality:

The functionality of LinkedIn allows users to create profiles, which for employees consist of curriculum vitae describing their work experience, education and training, skills, and a personal photo. Employers can list jobs and search for potential candidates. Users can find jobs, people and business opportunities recommended by someone in one's contact network. Users can save jobs that they would like to apply for. Users also can follow different companies.

Job Seeking:

Job seekers and employers extensively use LinkedIn. LinkedIn allows users to research companies, non-profit organisations, and governments they may be interested in working for. Typing the name of a company or organisation in the search box causes pop-up data about the company or organisation to appear. Such data may include the ratio of female to male employees, the percentage of the most common titles/positions held within the company, the location of the company's headquarters and offices, and a list of present and former employees. The premise for connecting with someone has shifted significantly in recent years. Before the 2017 new interface was launched, LinkedIn encouraged connections between people who already worked together, studied, and did business. However, after 2017, this process was removed, and users can connect with up to 30,000 people. This change means LinkedIn is a more proactive networking site for job applicants trying to secure a career move or for salespeople to generate new client leads.

Review of Literature:

Koch et al. (2018) investigated the impact of social media on the recruitment process in South Africa. The sample comprised 12 recruiters, spanning a wide range of industries in South Africa. Semi-structured interviews were conducted, and a thematic analysis was used to identify themes and subthemes. Despite still using some traditional recruiting methods, South African recruiters follow their international counterparts, with LinkedIn being central to their respective recruitment processes. Twitter and Facebook for recruitment were substantially lower in South Africa than elsewhere. Without following a focused approach, the volume of work emanating from social media may overwhelm a recruiter.

Silvia et al. (2018) identified that social media have enormous power and trigger changes in the whole spectrum of businesses and learning and education. A study of students' adoption of social media at the University of Economics – Varna (UE-Varna), Bulgaria, has proven its significant impact on young people. Using an online questionnaire among 378 students, the high popularity of social media was confirmed. An

important research question is whether higher education institutions teaching students mainly in social, economic and legal sciences use the benefits of social media in the context of Learning Management Systems (LMSs) and integrated social media tools. Most of the examined 24 universities use two LMSs - Moodle and Blackboard Learn. Both possess forums, chat, wikis, internal messaging, blogs, learning groups, collaboration tools. The study of the two Moodle platforms implemented at the UE-Varna shows discussion forums, chat, and internal messaging.

Objectives of the Study:

To study the perception of young professionals in Coimbatore city towards usage and Informational services of LinkedIn.

Research Methodology:

This study is analytical,and this study is based on the primary data collected from young Professionals through a well-designed and well-structured questionnaire from 100 respondents using a convenient sampling method. The collected data,which were adequately filled, is considered, and the incomplete questionnaires were rejected for the study. The perceptions of young professionals towards usage of LinkedIn were measured using 5 points Likert scale. To check the reliability of scales, Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient was used. The value is0.829, and the scale is more consistent and reliable.

Table 1: Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	No. of Items
0.829	7

Statistical Tools Used:

The statistical tools adopted for measuring the perception of young professionals in Coimbatore city towards usage and informational services of LinkedIn were done through reliability analysis, simple frequency analysis, rank analysis and factor analysis.

Reliability Analysis:

This study devised perception related questions to measure LinkedIn usage. In order to understand whether the questions in this questionnaire all reliably measure the same latent variable (perception of young professionals in Coimbatore city towards usage and informational services of LinkedIn) (so a Likert scale could be constructed), a Cronbach's alpha was run on a sample size of 100 young professionals. Each question was a 5-point Likert item from 'strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree'.

Simple Frequency Analysis:

The simple frequency analysis is used to match the field's values specified by creating a report that lists each value for those fields along with the number of times each value occurs.

Factor Analysis:

Factor analysis is a techniqueused to reduce a large number of variables into fewer numbers factors. This technique extracts maximum common variance from all variables and puts them into a common score. As an index of all variables, this factor score can be used for further analysis.

Analysis and Interpretation:

Profile of the Respondent:

The respondent's profile includes age, gender, educational qualification, working experience and duration of usage of LinkedIn, which were analysed through simple frequency analysis.

Table 2: Profile of the Respondents

Profile	**Frequency**	**%**
Age of the Respondents (in Years)		
Under 20	36	36.0
21-25	12	12.0
26-30	15	15.0
Over 30	37	37.0
Gender of the respondent		
Male	51	51.0
Female	49	49.0
Educational Qualification		
Graduates	32	32.0
Post Graduates	44	44.0
Professionals	24	24.0
Working Experience (In Years)		
0-2	23	23.0
2-4	29	29.0
4-6	22	22.0
Over 6	26	26.0

Duration of Usage of LinkedIn (In Years)		
0-2	21	21.0
2-4	15	15.0
4-6	32	31.0
Over 6 years	32	33.0

The respondent's age was categorised into under 20 years of age, 21-25 years of age, 26-30 years of age and above 30 years of age.A majority of 37 percent of the respondents falls in the 'over 30 years of age category. While considering the gender of the respondent, a majority of 51 percent of the respondents were male. While taking into account the educational qualification of the respondent, 44 percent of the respondents were postgraduates. While considering the working experience of the respondent, a majority of 29 percent of the respondents have 2-4 years of working experience. While taking into account, the duration of usage of LinkedIn, 33 percent of the respondents used LinkedIn for above six years.

Features of LinkedIn:

The features of LinkedIn were ranked based on the perception of young professionals towards usage of LinkedIn, which includes profile, network, jobs, messages and notification.

Table 3: Features of LinkedIn

Features	**Mean**	**Rank**
Notification	3.0200	1
Profile	2.6200	5
My Network	2.6600	4
Jobs	2.9500	2
Messages	2.7900	3

From Table3, based on the mean value, the feature 'notification' ranked. First, the feature 'jobs' ranked second, the feature 'messages' ranked third, the feature 'my network' ranked fourth, and the feature 'profile' ranked fifth based on the perception of young professionals towards usage of LinkedIn.

LinkedIn Benefits

The benefits of LinkedIn include 'basic free version', 'important people use of LinkedIn', 'its another way to see job postings', 'it may be part of the application process, it is an easy, modern way to maintain a Rolodex of connections that may be helpful in your career', 'it is a good way to research companies' and 'it can help build up your brand'. These variables were analysed through Factor analysis.Factor analysis estimatesor reduces many variables' dimensionality to fewer factors. It is a data reduction technique, and the main objective of the technique is to reduce the number of variables. KMO Test checks whether the number of samples is adequate to conduct Factor Analysis. The ideal value for the statistics should be more than 0.5. In the below table, KMO statistics is 0.760. It can be inferred that the number of respondents in the sample is adequate to conduct factor analysis. Bartlett's test of Sphericity shows whether data are suitable for Factor Analysis or not. It indicates that data are suitable for Factor Analysis. This test should be significant at 0.05 level. In the below table, the significant value is 0.0, which is lower than 0.05.

Table 4: KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.760
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	285.097
	df	21
	Sig.	.000

Table5 shows the communalities values of the variables. It is the regression value of each variable in the scale, which is shared by all the other variables. The cut-off value for the variable is 0.4. Variables above the 0.4 value are considered for further studies. In this case, all the variables have a value above 0.4, so all variables will be considered further for Factor Analysis.

Table 5: Communalities

Variables	**Initial**	**Extraction**
Basic Free Version	1.000	.582
Important People Use Linkedin	1.000	.421
Itis Another Way to See Job Postings	1.000	.650
It May Be Part of the Application Process	1.000	.673
Itis an Easy, Modern Way to Maintain a Rolodex of Connections that May Be Helpful in Ones'scareer.	1.000	.702
Itis an Excellent Way to Research Companies	1.000	.878
It Can Help Build Up One's Brand	1.000	.783
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.		

Table 6: Total Variance Explained

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	3.558	50.834	50.834	3.558	50.834	50.834	2.712	38.749	38.749
2	1.130	16.137	66.972	1.130	16.137	66.972	1.976	28.222	66.972
3	.782	11.171	78.142						
4	.590	8.430	86.572						
5	.426	6.085	92.657						
6	.295	4.212	96.869						
7	.219	3.131	100.000						
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.									

The Eigenvalue is the standardised form to decide the number of factors extracted from Factor Analysis. The ideal Eigenvalue is 1. So those factors which had the Eigenvalue of 1 or above had been considered for the study. Each factor here shows the percentage of variance in descending order. However,this study considered the cumulative variance of all valid factors together. The minimum cumulative variance should be more than 66% as per the research. Factor 1 has the Eigenvalue 3.558, having the variance of 38.749, Factor 2 has Eigenvalue 1.130and28.222. The cumulative variance of the two factors is 66.972 %. It is higher than the cut off value of 60%.

Rotated Component Matrix[a]			
Variables	Component		Labelled as
	1	2	
Itis Another Way to See Job Postings	.798		I (38.749) Usage
Basic Free Version	.763		
It May Be Part of the Application Process	.754		
Itis an Easy, Modern Way to Maintain a Rolodex of Connections that May Be Helpful in Your Career.	.745		
Important People Use Linkedin	.527		
It is an excellent way to research companies		.933	II (28.222) Brand
It Can Help Build Up Your Brand		.836	
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.a. Rotation converged in 3 iterations.			

The first factor consists of 5 variables, 'It is another way to see job postings' (0.798), 'Basic free version' (0.763), 'It may be part of the application process (0.754), 'It is an easy, modern way to maintain a Rolodex of connections that may be helpful in your career.' (0.745), 'Important people use LinkedIn' (0.527),accounting for 38.749 percent of the variance. These factors can be described as '*Usage'*. From the above table, it is found that the second factor consists of 2 variables, 'It is a good way to research companies' (0.933), 'It can help build up your brand' (0.836), accounting for28.222 percent of the variance. These factors can be described as '*Brand '*.

Findings of the Study:

Simple Frequency Analysis:

- Most (37%) of the respondents are in 'over 30 years of age category.
- A majority of 51 percent of the respondents were male.
- Most(44%) of the respondents were postgraduates.
- Most (29%) respondents have 2-4 years of working experience.
- A majority of 33 percent of the respondents have used LinkedIn for oversix years.

Rank Analysis:

Based on the mean value, the feature 'notification' is ranked. First, the feature 'jobs' ranked second, the feature 'messages' ranked third, the feature 'my network' ranked fourth, and the feature 'profile' ranked fifth based on the perception of young professionals towards usage of LinkedIn.

Factor Analysis:

The variables 'benefits of LinkedIn' were analysed through Factor analysis and factored into 'usage' and 'brand'.

Conclusion:

Social media sites like LinkedIn dominate the world in recruitment and create more opportunities for job seekers. LinkedIn providesseveral informational services for both Job seekers and Professionals towards employability. The perception of the users may vary according to their needs. Hence, the usage of LinkedIn and its services plays a vital role in employability.

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