

An Analytical Study on The Awareness Level And Perception of LinkedIn Users In Delhi-NCR

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[Abstract] LinkedIn, the world's largest network for working professionals, has become very vital for job-seekers in developing countries due to rising uncertainties and job-hopping. This study investigates whether LinkedIn users are familiar with different features of LinkedIn in Delhi-NCR. A cross-sectional survey was carried with 76 respondents cum LinkedIn users from various sectors and organizations, responded to an online questionnaire concerning LinkedIn. The respondents, aged 20 to 40, are majorly post-graduate degree holders followed by under-graduate students. Around 40 percent of them created LinkedIn accounts due to job search and often update their profiles as they got new skills or achievements as almost all of them feel it highly secure. We also found that 40 percent of respondents are not aware of at least one of the LinkedIn features asked about in the questionnaire. Such detailed insights, including what other features participants would like to see in LinkedIn, have helped us to form the basis of recommendations for enhancing user interaction.

[Keywords] job searching, linkedin, skills and endorsement, Delhi

Introduction

For quite sometimes, the labor market in India has been witnessing numerous uncertainties, including the problem of world recession, demonetization impacts, a slow fall in population growth, and the highest proportion of youth in the total population. The latest periodic labor force survey (PLFS) showed that the unemployment rate in the country in the financial year, 18 was at 5.3% in rural India and 7.8% in urban India, resulting in an overall unemployment rate of 6.1 (NSSO, 2019). Additionally, the nature of jobs in the private sector is more challenging and is based on short contracts. Because of this reason and youngsters' aspirations for a career path that ensures them of a rewarding and fast growth, job-hopping (i.e. working briefly with one position and organization rather than staying long-term) has been on a rise in past decade.

With all above challenges, people's perspective of job search has changed. Rather than looking for jobs by traditional methods, such as reading the newspaper or searching job portals, they actively use social media sources. Social media, which is a vital part of our everyday life, gives users the opportunity to represent themselves online in the professional world. Among all social media branches, LinkedIn, launched in 2003, is the exclusive site that not only provides a central destination for job-seekers and recruiters but also offers a wide-variety of information regarding professional development or career insights and advice. This provides a platform where users can brand themselves professionally by showcasing their skills and accomplishments (McFadden, 2014).

With more than 645+ million members in over 200 countries and territories, LinkedIn operates the world's largest professional network on the Internet with its mission to "connect the world's professionals to make them more productive and successful" (<http://mission-statement.com/linkedin/>).

Checking the LinkedIn profiles of applicants has become important in recruitment scrutiny over year. This process benefits everyone, as it reduces recruitment costs as well as ensures the authenticity of the

candidate profile. For a few specialized positions, the jobs are not advertised and recruiters use head-hunter approach to find the candidate. The users, on other side, get the benefit of all these aspects and connect themselves to a wider platform with “social distance” principles inherent in LinkedIn. By social distance, we mean the degree to which users are tied to each other. As a first-order distance, users are connected directly to their friends, followed by second-order connections, which are friends of friends, and then so on. The most beautiful and attractive feature for LinkedIn users is finding themselves on a Google page.



Figure 1. LinkedIn Users across World

Source: <https://news.linkedin.com/about-us#statistics>

Despite all these benefits, LinkedIn, though launched in 2003, is becoming popular recently. There are very few studies that have examined the awareness of LinkedIn features among its users and the use of LinkedIn by job seekers. The present study uses cross-section survey data from Delhi-NCR aimed to investigate LinkedIn users' familiarity with and perception of LinkedIn's features. This will provide insights into the features participants like and those they would like to see on LinkedIn. Based on users' inputs, we will frame recommendations for making the platform more user-friendly.

Review of Literature

No matter where users are located, LinkedIn not only provides a platform for job-seekers, but also offers specific features that help them build their career paths and networking. However, how much this platform has been helpful to job-seeker is not clear, as very few studies (with only one in India) have tried to explore it. The only study in India was carried out in Hyderabad and Secunderabad by Donthi and Nagaraju (2018). In this study, the researchers evaluated the perceptions of the job seeker regarding social media recruitment and assessed whether social media users are cautious about what they post on social media and whether their postings impact their employability. Random sampling was used for collecting data from 84 people by using the questionnaire technique. Pie charts, percentages, regression and Chi-square analyses were used for analyzing primary data. The results reveal that social networking has strong positive and significant relationship with job seekers' use of social media for job hunting.

The aim of the paper was to identify the importance of social media in job searching, students' behaviors on social media, and students' attitudes to the possibility of job searching through social media. The survey was conducted on students. The findings of the survey are young people spend a lot of time on social media, universities students use social media for job searching, 70% of the respondents got job offers through social media, half of the respondents use social media to get jobs, and 60% of respondents consider self-presentation on social media as important from the view of job searching (Kajnova, Sedlacek, & Soosova, 2017).

The purpose of the paper was to investigate the impact of social media on the recruitment process in South Africa. Semi-structured interviews were conducted. The findings show that use of Twitter and Facebook for recruitment was substantially lower in South Africa than elsewhere. The findings also confirm that social media has become an essential part of the recruitment process. However, recruiters should be careful not to be seduced into a hype or frenzy about the use of social media in recruitment (Koch, Gerber, & DKlerk, 2018).

The researcher made an attempt to discern the relation between citizens and policy with social media acting as the mediator, interface, and interlocutor in policy making. The researcher found that a major chunk of youth is using social media networks more than five hours a day, resulting in decreasing their general health in general and mental health in particular. We also found that media is playing both constructive as well as destructive roles; it has lots of advantages, but it has lots of disadvantages, and, in the end, it is up to the individual and society to decide which social media sites to use (H L., 2016). Based on gaps found in the study of various reviews of literature and backgrounds of the study, this research attempts to answer the research questions first, familiarity of users with LinkedIn's various features and second, job seeker perceptions about the role of LinkedIn in finding jobs.

Research Methodology

The prime objectives of this study are as follows:

1. To understand the awareness about LinkedIn features among LinkedIn user's
2. To understand the perception of job seekers searching for jobs through LinkedIn

This research paper is exploratory in nature and has used a cross-section time horizon because it was carried out in a short span of time consists of information collected through WhatsApp interviews through a questionnaire. The respondents are selected from Delhi-NCR for the purpose of collecting primary data. A pre-structured questionnaire based on literature review was designed by the researcher. The questionnaire is based on the objectives of the study and is piloted by three professionals by collecting information from 15 respondents. After that, the questionnaire was finalized after incorporating the suggestions.

A total of 90 respondents responded to the questionnaire; of them, 76 questionnaires were selected for further analysis. All the respondents are LinkedIn users. The secondary data was collected from various websites. The techniques used for analyzing the primary data are percentage and diagrammatic methods. The analysis was done using SPSS. The first section of the questionnaire examined socio-demographic characteristics of respondents, such as gender, age, education, and occupation. The second section was comprised of both open and close ended questions that helps in understanding the awareness level of LinkedIn users about different features of LinkedIn and their perceptions of LinkedIn.

Ethical Consideration

The information collected by the researcher has been used confidentially without disclosing the respondents' identities. The collected data was not modified by the researcher.

Limitations

The present study is limited only to Delhi-NCR. Hence, the results cannot be generalized. The sample size chosen was small because of time constraints.

Result and Discussion

The socio-demographics characteristics of the respondents are presented in Table-1. The results show that the majority of respondents who are LinkedIn users are female (54%). Of the respondents, 81.6% are from the 20-30 year age group, whereas 16.4% are from the 30-40 age group, which indicates that younger generation is using LinkedIn. Though we have not set criteria for age, by default we received information from the ages between 20 to 40 years. All the respondents, by target, are technology literate. The majority of the respondents have completed their post-graduate degree. We are also benefitted by having Ph.D. degree holders and professionals.

*Table 1
Socio-Demographics Characteristics of Respondents*

		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Female	41	54
	Male	35	46
Age	20-30 years	62	81.6
	30-40 years	14	16.4
Education	Under Graduate	17	23
	Post Graduate	49	64
	Doctorate	7	9
	Professionals	2	3
	B.Tech	1	1
Type of account	Normal	75	98.7
	Premium	1	1.3

The occupation results clearly show that 50% of the respondents are students, and the others are from diverse backgrounds such as assistant professors, research scholars, government employees, private sector employees, architects, business consultants, social workers, etc. Though LinkedIn provides a platform with no fees for checking jobs, etc., it also offers a few features with its premium account. The premium account can be purchased monthly or annually. So, some users purchase it during job-search to have wider options. We found only 1 percent of the users avail themselves of the premium account, followed by normal account used by rest of the users. It may be due to the high charges of upgrading to the premium account, but respondents did not upgrade their accounts from normal to premium.

When we asked about the purpose of creating a LinkedIn account, we found the majority of users created a LinkedIn account due to job requirements (42%), followed by a friend's suggestion (25%), and due to workplace peer suggestions (16%). The remaining users created accounts due to various reasons, such as it is compulsory for placement of college/university, corporate networking, some users created accounts due to their own will, a mandatory account to have for making new corporate connections, to grab new opportunities, to keep themselves abreast of innovations in the corporate sector, it was necessary due to workplace policies, the site had networking rich content (articles, videos etc.), and to connect with professionals and colleagues.

The number of LinkedIn account holders has been increasing tremendously for past few years. The number of years since the respondents have been using LinkedIn accounts has a wide range as shown in Table 2 below. This can be linked to the profiles of the respondents. The majority of respondents using a LinkedIn account in the last 6 months to 1 year are undergraduate students. The other reason for people who started recently may be lack of awareness. It has been 16 year since LinkedIn was launched (2003). Though, there were just 2, we also found users who had been using it for more than 10 years.

Table 2
Usage of LinkedIn Account in Years

6 months	1 year	2 year	3 year	4 year	5 year	Others
18.4%	25%	17.1%	15.8%	8%	7.9%	5.2%

Out of the total number of respondents, 43% are working presently or have been working the last six months, whereas 57% are not working. This clearly indicates the majority of the respondents who are not working are students who are still using their LinkedIn account, which shows the importance of LinkedIn in today's times. The results also show that out of 43% working respondents, 9% of them get jobs from LinkedIn's job search. Other sources from which they get jobs are campus placement, off-campus placement, employment newspapers, sarkarinaukri.com, college websites, university websites, and job portals.

Table 3
Frequency of Visiting on LinkedIn Account

Daily	Within one week	Twice a month	Within a month	When needed job	Once in a quarter
35.5%	31.6%	7.9%	14.5%	9.2%	1.3%

LinkedIn offers a wide variety of features, including circulation of ideas, articles, blogs, information about trainings/courses etc. These features keep LinkedIn users engaged to view it on a routine basis rather than using it only during job search. Table 3 states that 35.5% of the respondents visit their LinkedIn account daily, and 31.6% visit once a week, which clearly shows the importance of a LinkedIn account in people's lives. . This may also motivate people to keep updating their profiles.

Table 4
Frequency of Updating Profile on LinkedIn

Weekly	Monthly	When you start looking for job	Whenever you get to a new skill, talent etc.	Never Update
2.6%	22.3%	17.1%	56.6%	1.3%

Table 4 indicates that 56.6% of LinkedIn users update their profile whenever they get a new skill, talent, etc., whereas 22.3% update it monthly. As a LinkedIn profile can be directly downloaded in an Adobe PDF form, the users can use it for their job application immediately. This may be another reason to motivate users to update their profile regularly.

*Table 5
Respondents Perception about LinkedIn*

Statements	Strongly Disagree	Dis-agree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
Save job search time	-	3	42	37	18
Cost efficient as compare to other options of getting a job	3	5	28	42	22
Widens your job search	3	9	20	38	30
Reduce paper work when you apply for job	3	7	20	43	27
Right place for getting job where job providers can easily find you	3	7	35	35	20
To maintain your profile on social networking site such as LinkedIn is important today's times	-	3	22	33	42
LinkedIn is the king among other social media websites when looking from the job seeker's perspective	-	11	30	28	31
LinkedIn will soon replace the traditional method (recruitment agency, newspaper, job website, job fairs) of recruitment	5	9	38	29	19
LinkedIn profile are much stronger than a regular CV	-	11	36	34	19
LinkedIn website is easy to use, interactive & user-friendly	-	5	20	47	28

The above table is about respondent's perception about LinkedIn. It clearly show that majority of people agree that LinkedIn is cost efficient as compare to other options of getting job, LinkedIn widens job search, reduce paper work when you apply for job, LinkedIn website are Easy to use, interactive & user-friendly, to maintain your profile on social networking site such as LinkedIn is important today times and LinkedIn is the King among other Social Media website when looking from Job Seeker perspective.

The results also show that majority of respondents are undecided about that LinkedIn save job search time, LinkedIn will soon replace the traditional method (recruitment agency, newspaper, job website, job fairs) of recruitment and LinkedIn profile are much stronger than regular CV. 20% respondents strongly agree that LinkedIn is the right place for getting Job where Job providers can easily find you, whereas among the respondents 35% agree and 35% undecided about this.

Table 6

Respondents Level of Awareness about LinkedIn Features

Statements	Not at all aware	Slightly aware	Some -what aware	Moderately aware	Extreme ly aware
I can see who viewed my profile	8	5	26	25	36
I can see who viewed my posts/article/activity	9	17	18	33	23
Career advice hub + career interest point (where recruiters know that you are open for opportunities) + salary insights	5	19	32	31	13
Skill and endorsements	3	7	21	34	35
You can download your CV with information in LinkedIn	13	18	19	26	24
Advance search options	12	13	20	29	26
Hashtags work on LinkedIn	13	11	21	28	27
“Job Functions” and “Job Titles” filters available	4	13	20	32	31
That your LinkedIn profile shows up on Google (note: this is possible if you have switch on your public visibility in your profile settings)	9	11	15	32	33

The above table clearly shows that the majority of people are aware of the different features/options of LinkedIn, but approximately 40% are less aware. Therefore, there is a need that some promotion or awareness program should be done so users know about all available options.

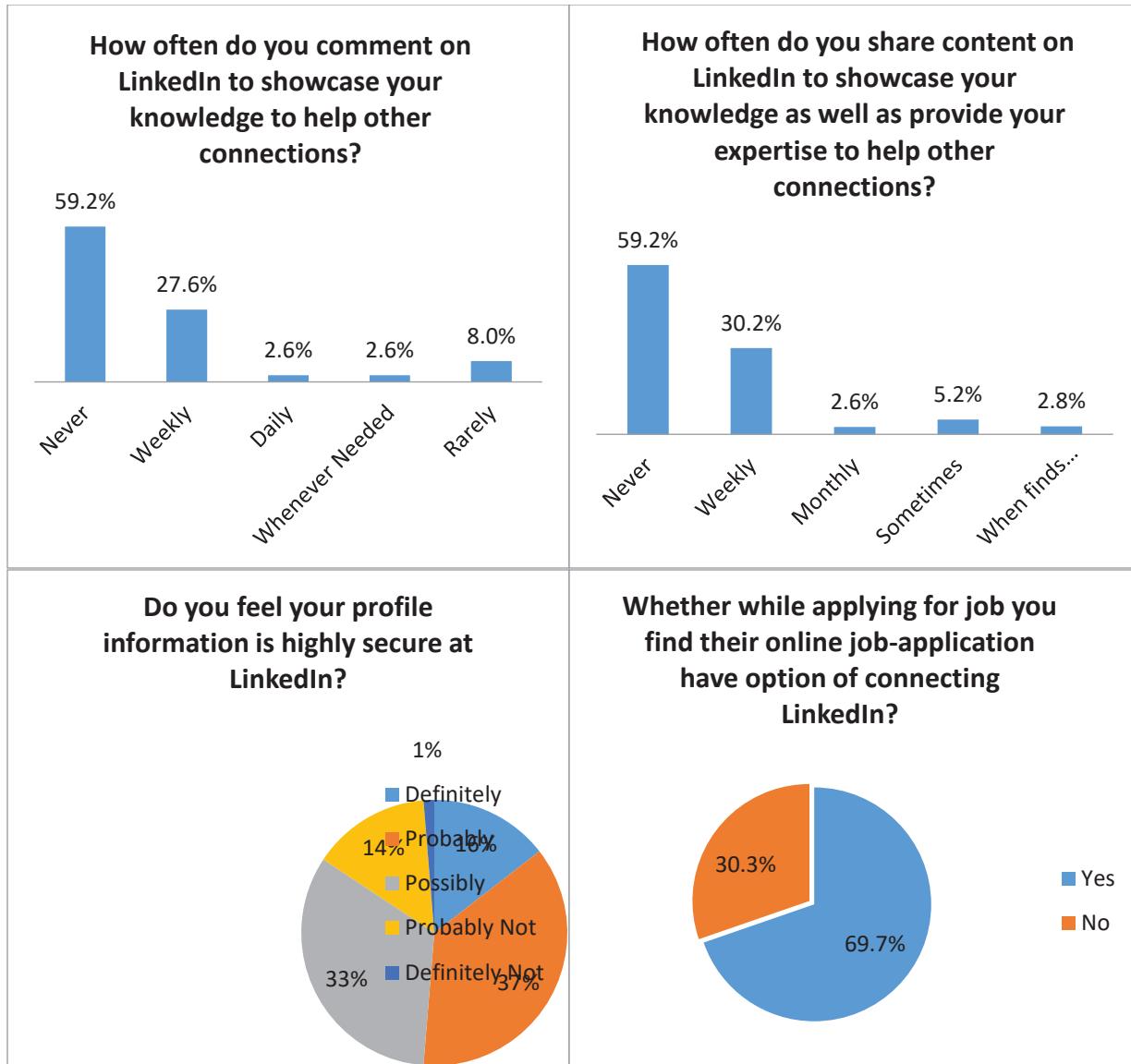


Figure 1, Questions and Answers

The first quadrant of Figure 1 clearly shows that 59.2% of respondents never comment on LinkedIn to showcase their knowledge to help other connections, 27.6% comment weekly, 2.6% daily, 7.8% rarely, and 2.6% comment whenever needed. The second quadrant of Figure 1 clearly shows that 59.2% of respondents never share content on LinkedIn to showcase their knowledge as well as provide their expertise to help other connections, whereas 30.2% share weekly, 2.6% share monthly, 5.2% share sometimes, and 2.6% share their knowledge only when they find something interesting.

The third quadrant of Figure 1 clearly shows that only 16% of the respondents definitely feel that their profile information is highly secure, 37% feel it is probably secure, 33% feel it is possibly secure, 14% feel it is probably not secure, and only 1% feel it is definitely not secure. Results show that one of the disadvantages of using LinkedIn, according to respondents, is that their profile information can be hacked.

The last quadrant of Figure 1 clearly shows that 69.7% of the LinkedIn users know that while applying for job, their online job-application have the option of connecting to LinkedIn, whereas 30.3% of the LinkedIn users do not know about this option.

Findings and Conclusions

The main deductions from the survey are as follows. The majority of LinkedIn users are in the 20-30 age group and are post graduates.

- Both primary and secondary data indicate that the majority of LinkedIn users have a normal account. Only a few have a premium account.
- More than 42% have created a LinkedIn account due to job requirements.
- Results show that out of 43% working respondents, 9% get a job from a LinkedIn job search.
- More than 50% of LinkedIn users update their profile whenever they get a new skill, talent, etc.
- Proper groups exist in other social media resources, like Facebook, should be also on LinkedIn. The ones in LinkedIn are not really nice to use.
- From the job seeker's point of view, job positions should be shared by different groups and people. LinkedIn adds some features so people and companies can directly connect from overseas.
- LinkedIn needs to ensure only genuine recruiters advertise their posts and are able to view the profile of job seekers.
- Some people consider this to be a social media platform where they can connect with others for a friendship or something. They still can't understand the fact that LinkedIn is a platform for professional work.
- Due to lot of absurd posts on LinkedIn, like on other social media sites, the professionalism of LinkedIn's platform is degraded.

According to the present survey, LinkedIn plays an important role in the day-to-day lives of the respondents, whether it is for job searching, making connection with others, helping in making personal or business brands, helping respondents in getting information easily about a company or industry, etc. In today's times, a LinkedIn profile is a most important thing; it is a replica of personal knowledge and work. Therefore, it is necessary for all to maintain a profile on LinkedIn. It is a platform where people find job opportunities, recruiters can find job seekers, and people can share personal opinions to help others.

Future Scope

The research specific to LinkedIn is at the nascent stage in India. Use of LinkedIn by job seekers for getting jobs is quite a new area; therefore, researchers have a wide scope for further research. In the future, studies can be done especially for any sector/industry or comparison studies can be done among different sectors.

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