



Teaching and
Learning Centre

The following paper was written during LSE GROUPS 2019.

LSE GROUPS takes place during the final fortnight of the summer term. Undergraduate students are placed in small groups; these are cross-year, interdisciplinary, and group members do not know one another in advance. Each group must then devise its own research question, and carry out all stages of a small-scale research project in less than two weeks.

The overall theme of LSE GROUPS 2019 was *The Future of Work*.

This paper was submitted on the final Thursday afternoon of the project. (Students then presented their work at a conference, on the closing Friday.)

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Cracking the enigma of the hidden labour market: an analysis of the role of social and professional networking sites in the job-seeking process.

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Social and professional networking sites (SPNS) are becoming increasingly integrated into the recruitment process. Despite this, students report feeling unequipped to utilise networking sites in their job hunt. This paper draws on over 150 surveys of students and recent graduates in order to identify the most effective ways of using social media to secure employment. This approach focuses on the lesser-studied applicant perspective, yielding unique insight into how job hunters can enhance the searching and matching process. The expansion of social networking sites has been paralleled with an increase in the size of the hidden labour market. Furthermore, those that have been successful in their job hunt use networking sites differently to those who have not. We see that successful applicants engage with networking sites in ways which facilitate access to the hidden labour market while students are generally more passive. We conclude by highlighting where students could learn from successful applicants in their pursuit of future employment.

Keywords: Professional networking; social networking sites; social media; LinkedIn; graduate jobs; hidden labour market; employability; job-seeking process.

Our lives have become permeated by social and professional networking sites (henceforth SPNS). One of the most notable areas is in the recruitment process. Companies advertise vacancies on sites like Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn, providing them with a direct link to the applicants' social or professional profile. Where our professional-self used to be almost wholly distinct from our social-self, hiring managers now capitalise on the publicly accessible information we share on SPNS to gain a better idea of the personality behind the resume. By providing a means to find the right candidate

without having to spend excessive, expensive hours in interviews, the integration of SPNS and recruitment seems unavoidable given the competitive labour market. It is therefore crucial that individuals are equipped to utilise these sites in their hunt for employment.

In this study, we aim to investigate how individuals starting out their careers utilise SPNS to boost their employment prospects. More specifically, we investigate the role of SPNS in current students' and recent graduates' job finding process. We

surveyed students and alumni in an effort to determine how they use social media when finding work, and how crucial this is to their success in obtaining jobs.

Through our research we hope to provide a fresh insight into SPNS' uses in the recruitment process. With this information we can advise students and career consultants on the most effective ways to incorporate these sites into the job application process, and possibly get a clearer idea as to what the process may look like in the future.

BACKGROUND LITERATURE

Over the last ten years the use of social media has increased dramatically throughout the recruitment process¹. The increasing prevalence of social media has given social networking a crucial role in applying for and securing a job². 93% of recruiters use LinkedIn, and 70% of hiring managers admit to screening social media accounts prior to inviting a candidate for interview³.

Social media has become an important tool for employers. Recruiting online has improved the speed of the recruiting process by 30%⁴. Social media screening has increased this further by allowing recruiters to gain a better idea of candidate personalities, image and integrity before inviting them to interview. Social media has also reduced the cost of recruitment. The global head of resourcing at an international electro-component firm reports that the average cost per hire is £714 for senior posts when using social media, compared with £7,500 with traditional methods⁵. Furthermore, corporations engaging with social media often enjoy a better reputation and therefore receive more job applications⁶. Whilst screening applicants' social media accounts may risk violating their privacy rights, the benefits in

efficiency and talent-pooling appear to outweigh these concerns⁷.

The radical transformation of the recruitment process holds both advantages and disadvantages for job-seekers. Over half of hiring managers admit to rejecting a candidate based on what they saw on social media⁸. Nevertheless, the same survey also showed that over half of hiring managers found reasons to offer a candidate a job based on their presence on social media⁹. Furthermore, the use of professional networking sites such as LinkedIn has helped students profit from their internships at the start of graduate careers by allowing them to maintain important connections¹⁰. The general consensus is that SPNS are effective for applicants as they facilitate connecting with professionals, finding career opportunities and researching firms before the interview stage¹¹.

Nevertheless, it is apparent that while students understand that social media skills add value to job applications, they ultimately fail in exploiting SPNS resources and in maintaining a professional image¹². Carmack and Heiss (2018) see that students are generally passive users of sites.

Students need to be able to use social media more effectively in the job-seeking process. Employers' opinions have formed the main focus of a number of academic studies. Yet comparatively fewer have investigated the subject from the perspective of recently-employed graduates and final-year students. Subsequently, this paper seeks to fill a gap by investigating the role of social media and online networking platforms in the job finding process of current university students in employment and recent graduates in employment, in an effort to demonstrate the ways in which social

¹ Broughton, Foley, Ledermaier, & Cox, 2013; Career Builder, 2018

² Schuele, Madison, & Gourniak, 2010

³ Bruce, 2016; Career Builder, 2018

⁴ Constantinou, Pavlou, & Melanthiou, 2015

⁵ Broughton, Foley, Ledermaier, & Cox, 2013

⁶ Nilsen, Olafsen, & Sivertzen, 2013

⁷ Jeske & Shultz, 2016

⁸ Career Builder, 2018

⁹ Career Builder, 2018

¹⁰ He, Gu, Wu, Zhai, & Song, 2016; McCorkle, 2012

¹¹ Herbold & Douma, 2013; Utz & Breuer, 2017; Gandini & Pais, 2015

¹² Sutherland & Ho, 2017; Root & McKay, 2014

media can be utilised most effectively by future job seekers.

METHOD

Surveys proved an effective method for collecting quantitative data on the usage of social and professional media platforms. Two surveys were created using Google Forms, due to its clean design and functionality. An interview with a specialist provided richer, qualitative data, as well as a different perspective.

Student Survey

We surveyed students to investigate what tools they think are going to be valuable in their upcoming job search. The survey asked on students' perception and usage of social and professional media in job seeking. To do this we asked participants to rank the tools they thought would be most useful in securing employment. Options included: company websites, career consultants, directly contacting employers, professional network, and online networking platforms. Students were found and contacted through social media platforms as this was the most efficient way to gather a large sample in our short time frame. This meant that most respondents were fellow students at the LSE. Students at The LSE are career focused and so should be some of the most adept students in the country when it comes to effective job hunting. Misguided perceptions in this sample may therefore represent misguided perceptions on a larger scale in other universities. Care must however be taken in how results are generalised to the rest of the student population.

Graduate Survey

This survey aims to assess to what extent and how graduates have used social and professional media platforms in securing employment. Recent graduates of predominantly London universities were contacted directly via online networking sites. We asked participants to rank the usefulness of various job seeking methods, and the perceived usefulness of features of social and professional networking platforms. Open-ended questions were also included to allow elaboration on the specific

means and methods used. Responses were categorised by year of graduation and industry employed. Contacting through networking platforms proved effective although responses were often delayed as people ignored messages or took a few days to a week to reply. Because of this, we only had a sample of 35 when we analysed our data. It would be interesting to run statistical analysis again with a larger sample.

Interview

A semi-structured qualitative interview with a career advisor at the LSE Career Advice Centre was conducted to gather expert insight into the recruitment process. We asked about the ways in which social media platforms permeate the recruitment process, and what advice the expert gives to students to exploit this integration. The interview allowed the flexibility to ask follow-up questions from which useful information could be gained that was not initially sought. We are aware this data is not wholly objective, however time constraints made it an effective way to gather a wealth of experience from one source.

RESULTS

Student Survey

Of the surveys sent, 115 responses were gathered. 52.2% of respondents were female, 45.2% male, and 2.6% other. 7 responses had to be rejected due to consent issues. 74% of the respondents were LSE students and 64% of students had a quantitative background. The sample pool consisted of 59 first-year, 27 second-year and 22 third-year or above students.

Company websites and SPNS are considered by respondents the two most important factors in job seeking. 55% of the respondents think that both company websites and SPNS are helpful, 31% said that only company websites are helpful and 6% said only SPNS is helpful. Among the 86 people who have a LinkedIn account, networking was the most popular reason for joining (68.6%) and 57% use LinkedIn at least weekly. Moreover, 81% of the respondents claim that they make a conscientious

attempt to build a professional image across all SPNS. 29% of respondents said that overall, LinkedIn is useful in the job-seeking process, with the most popular feature used being job search and direct messaging (appendix).

Graduate Survey

35 responses were obtained from the alumni survey. 12 respondents were female and 23 were male. Respondents were primarily from consulting, and banking and finance sectors, 28.6% and 17.1% respectively. This was closely followed by 11.4% currently working in legal services.

Regarding job-finding methods, on average, graduates considered networking the most useful, followed by company websites. In contrast, they found career consulting the least useful.

With regards to SPNS, 80% found LinkedIn to be the most useful online platform to find a job. By contrast, 34.3% found Instagram to be the least useful.

In particular, respondents deemed job search as the most important LinkedIn feature, with 71.4% rating it as 'very helpful' or 'somewhat helpful'. This was followed by direct messaging, at 65.7%. ProFinder was rated the least useful, with no responses rating it as 'very helpful' and only 5.7% deeming it 'somewhat helpful'. Beyond the features, they also generally believed that LinkedIn connections and the ability to find out more about interviewers and experienced individuals in a desired industry were useful.

Qualitative Interviews

One semi-structured interview was conducted with a career advisor from LSE Careers. The interviewee highlighted that LinkedIn was one of the most useful digital platforms to use in the job-seeking process. However, its overall importance varies significantly amongst job sectors, being particularly important in the commercial sector.

The interviewee stated that the four main functions of LinkedIn for job seekers are: image-building and self-portrayal, career insight, company research and vacancy searching. The interviewee also noted that employee screening has become more and more prominent and thus crucial for job-seekers to consider when building their social media presence. The interviewee revealed that platforms like LinkedIn are becoming increasingly important in order to be able to access the hidden labour market. Companies find it costly to sort through the enormous volume of applications received regularly, and consequently do not advertise a number of job openings. These are rather filled through via personal and professional connections. Candidates are therefore strongly encouraged to use tools like professional networking platforms in order to access these hidden jobs.

DISCUSSION

Support of Existing Literature

There was a consensus in the literature that LinkedIn is a valuable tool in job-seeking. Results from the graduate survey support this, demonstrating that 80% of graduates consider LinkedIn to be the most useful platform in the job-seeking process¹³ with 12.1% relying on LinkedIn as their main strategy¹⁴. Notably, 26% reported that LinkedIn helped them find their first and/or current job.

Similarly, the student surveys indicated that a large number of students (80%) have a LinkedIn account¹⁵. However, 42.3% out of the students that are on LinkedIn reported that they use it less than two times per month¹⁶. More surprisingly, 22.8% of students find it barely or not helpful at all. This supports the observation found in the literature review that students are more passive users of SPNS in the job-seeking process.

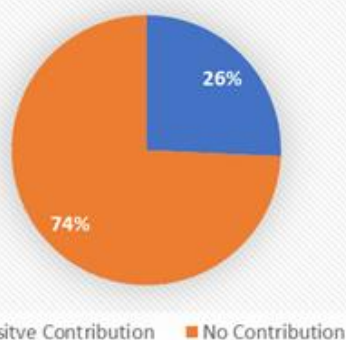
¹³ Appendix 1, Table 8

¹⁴ Appendix 1, Table 2

¹⁵ Appendix 1, Table 9

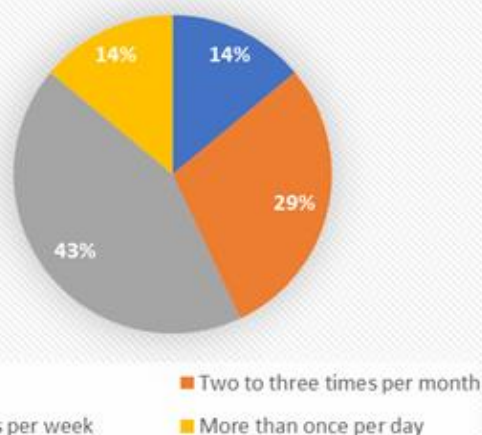
¹⁶ Appendix 1, Table 3

Contribution of LinkedIn in Finding First and/or Current Job for Graduates



Our research also addressed the specific functions of professional media platforms noted in the literature. The interview with LSE careers highlighted four key uses of LinkedIn: image-building, career insights, company research and vacancy search. In addition, the most common motivations for students joining LinkedIn were: job prospects (63.0%), networking (69.6%) and career and industry insights (51.5%)¹⁷. A similar conclusion can be drawn from the open-ended questions where both survey groups commented on the significant ways in which LinkedIn helped them get a job.

Frequency of Use



Important New Discoveries

The interview with the LSE career advisor revealed that as the scope for social connections has increased, so has the size of the hidden labour market. Social and professional networking technologies mean that connections can be built and maintained with people you may have never met in person. Additionally, the highly competitive nature of the current labour market, along with the high costs of traditional recruitment methods, mean that finding and keeping talent can be a long and expensive task. These costs have led to a preference for referrals over resumes, causing an increase in the amount of jobs available through the hidden labour market.

We have incorporated these new insights into the hidden labour market through the analysis and interpretation of our data. In an appeal to rationality, we expect to see that job-seekers utilise online network platforms in a way that facilitates strong, broad networks.

Commonalities and Discrepancies in Job-Seeking Methods between Students and Graduates

The survey responses revealed two key areas of commonalities and discrepancies between students and graduates, in the usefulness of job-finding methods, and various SPNS tools.

Job-Seeking Methods

Both groups agree that company websites and professional networking are the most useful job-finding methods. However, a discrepancy can be found in the ranking of importance of job seeking websites, which obtained a rank of 5.49 by students, and 5.13 by graduates¹⁸¹⁹. On average students recognise the importance of professional networks to some extent as they rank it more helpful than career consultants, directly contacting companies, and SPNS in job-seeking. Additionally, there is a difference in the perceived importance of career consulting, with students having ranked it as

¹⁷ Appendix 1, Table 5

¹⁸ Lower ranking conveying higher usefulness

¹⁹ Appendix 1, Table 6

the third most useful job-seeking method in contrast to graduates who have found it to be the least useful²⁰.

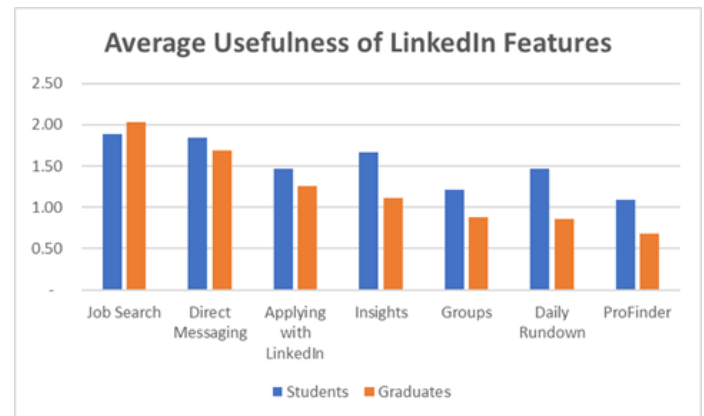
The above findings illustrate the phenomenon of “the hidden labour market.” In particular, the high perceived importance of networking indicates that aside from the traditional application method of company websites, networking plays a significant role in the job-finding process. The discrepancy in rank of importance between students and graduates could be explained by the ‘insider-outsider problem’. Working graduates have access to a wider professional network while students have a more limited access. Moreover, students may not be as aware of the hidden labour market and of the importance of networking to find certain job opportunities. Additionally, a possible explanation could be the possible idealisation of the labour market by students, who have not yet faced some of its challenges and believe in the traditional and fair application methods. This theory can be backed up by one of the open-ended survey responses, where a respondent stated that their preferred method of finding a job would be “seeing a job application on a company’s website and applying directly as [they] feel this is a level playing field for everyone”.

Social Media Tools

A two-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) indicates that there are statistically significant differences between students and graduates on how they use LinkedIn (p-value=0.0195)²¹.

Both groups recognise the ‘Job Search’ feature of LinkedIn to be the most useful, with graduates using this feature on average 7% more than students²². Moreover, both groups listed direct messaging as the second most important useful tool, again reinforcing the vital role of networking in the job-seeking process.

Additionally, there was a consensus that LinkedIn’s ‘ProFinder’ feature was the least useful, however students found it to be 59% more useful than graduates²³. This may be because students in the early stages of their career rely more on Pro-Finder’s CV-building features.



LinkedIn’s feature “Insights” was given a relatively high rank by both groups with a significant difference between students and graduates, with students finding it more useful. This could indicate that as outsiders, students try to maximise access to industry knowledge, which is less necessary for more experienced graduates.

Finally, intriguing results were found regarding the image-building of job seekers on SPNS. 27% of respondents reported not making an effort to maintain a favourable, professional image on SPNS²⁴. This supports that students are unaware of how their presence on social media plays a role in giving them access to the hidden job market.

The Variation in Engagement with LinkedIn between Different Disciplines

Another finding that emerged from the research is the inconsistency in the usage of professional media platforms between qualitative and quantitative students. 81.1% of quantitative students have LinkedIn whereas only 76.9% qualitative students have LinkedIn²⁵. There were significant differences in the frequency of use as

²⁰ Appendix 1, Table 6

²¹ Appendix 1, Table 11

²² Appendix 1, Table 7

²³ Appendix 1, Table 7

²⁴ Appendix 1, Table 12

²⁵ Management is considered a quantitative degree as graduates find similar jobs to other quantitative degrees

well as in the perceived usefulness of LinkedIn in the job-seeking process. Quantitative students find LinkedIn notably more useful than qualitative students ($p\text{-value}=0.0223$) and they also use it more frequently ($p\text{-value}=0.0105$)²⁶. 89% of management students had a LinkedIn account.

These findings support the conclusions drawn from the interview that the effectiveness of a particular social media platform depends on the job sector. For careers in the service industry, LinkedIn is particularly advantageous as it caters to the networking needs of the sector²⁷. Additionally, the interview revealed that in an attempt to cut costs, firms frequently perform keyword searches, which may be more targeted towards students with rather specific skills, which mostly have “a strong quantitative background (...) in subjects like maths, statistics and economics”.

CONCLUSION

We conclude that students may be disadvantaged in job-seeking as they may not be exploiting digital tools like LinkedIn which can give them access to the hidden job market. We found that job-seeking students do not use networking platforms in a way that facilitates broad networks. Furthermore, a notable proportion of students do not conscientiously make an effort to present themselves in a professional manner on SPNS. As the modern-day first impression, self-portrayal on social media is fundamental to forming the strong connections required to access hidden jobs. Consequently, we encourage students to maintain a more professional brand image online.

The variation in engagement with LinkedIn between different disciplines could possibly indicate limitations to the generalisability of our research. In particular, further research is necessary to ascertain whether the use of SPNS is more advantageous in certain fields of work and employment than in others.

²⁶ Appendix 1, Tables 9 and 10

²⁷ This is under the assumption that quantitative students tend to enter these sectors more than qualitative students

APPENDICES

Appendix 1

Table 1 : Respondents categorised as per University, Year of study and Degree type

University and Year of Study	Degree Type		Grand Total
	Qualitative Degree	Quantitative Degree	
LSE			
Year 1	10	45	55
Year 2	15	3	18
Year 3	4	3	7
	29	51	80
Other			
Year 1	2	2	4
Year 2	4	5	9
Year 3	2	11	13
Year 4	2	-	2
	10	18	28
Grand Total	39	69	108

Table 2 : Responses to Usefulness of Company Websites and Social and Professional Media

Usefulness of Social and Professional Media	Usefulness of Company Websites					Grand Total
	Very Helpful	Somewhat Helpful	Indifferent	Not Useful/Harmful	Not Applicable	
Very Helpful	7	11	1	-	-	19
Somewhat Helpful	18	23	4	2	-	47
Indifferent	8	18	5	-	1	32
Not Useful/Harmful	2	3	1	-	-	6
Not Applicable	-	2	1	-	1	4
Grand Total	35	57	12	2	2	108

Table 3 : Frequency of Use

Frequency of Use	No. of Respondents
Very rarely	12
Two to three times per	25
A few times per week	37
More than once per day	12
Grand Total	86

Table 4 : Helpfulness Rank of LinkedIn Features given by Students

Helpfulness Rank	LinkedIn Feature						
	Job Search Feature	Direct Messaging Feature	Group Feature	Application Feature	Insights Feature	Daily Rundown Feature	ProfFinder Feature
Very Helpful	17	20	2	3	16	8	-
Somewhat Helpful	38	29	18	32	26	22	9
Indifferent	15	20	43	30	27	33	41
Not Useful/Harmful	5	6	7	5	7	6	4
Not Applicable	11	11	16	16	10	17	32

Table 5 : Responses to Motivation for Joining LinkedIn

Motivation for Joining	No. of Respondents
Career Prospects	62%
Networking	69%
Career/Industry Insights	51%
Peer Pressure	44%
Other	3%

Table 6 : Average Usefulness of Job – Seeking Methods for Students and Graduates

Job - Seeking Methods	Average Usefulness	
	Students	Graduates
Company Websites	5.49	5.35
Professional Networking	5.84	5.14
Career Consulting	6.62	9.17
Social and Professional Media	6.65	7.09
Directly Contacting Companies	6.71	6.82
Headhunters	7.75	8.47

Note : Lower numerical value conveys higher usefulness.

Table 7 : Average Usefulness of LinkedIn Features for Students and Graduates

LinkedIn Features	Students	Graduates
Job Search	1.89	2.03
Direct Messaging	1.84	1.69
Applying with LinkedIn	1.47	1.26
Insights	1.67	1.11
Groups	1.21	0.89
Daily Rundown	1.46	0.86
ProFinder	1.09	0.69

Table 8 : Responses for Ranking of Usefulness of Social and Professional Media by Graduates

Ranking for Usefulness	Different Social and Professional Media Platform						
	LinkedIn	Facebook	Glassdoor	Twitter	Indeed	Instagram	Other
1 (Most Useful)	80%	3%	6%	3%	3%	-	6%
2	6%	6%	63%	3%	9%	-	14%
3	9%	20%	6%	3%	37%	11%	14%
4	3%	26%	6%	20%	14%	11%	20%
5	-	29%	11%	23%	14%	14%	9%
6	-	6%	6%	43%	9%	29%	9%
7 (Least Useful)	3%	11%	3%	6%	14%	34%	29%

Table 9 : One-way ANOVA for Type of Degree and Usefulness of LinkedIn

One-way ANOVA : Type of Degree and Usefulness of LinkedIn						
Summary Table						
Group	n	Sum	Mean	Variance		
Qualitative Degree	30	55	1.83	0.76		
Quantitative Degree	56	127	2.27	0.64		
ANOVA Table						
Source	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	F crit
Between	4	1	3.69	5.42	0.02	3.95
Within	57	84	0.68			
Total	61	85				
Data on Type of Degree and Usefulness of LinkedIn for Students						
Type of Degree	Qualitative	Quantitative				
No LinkedIn	9	13				
0	2	1				
1	8	8				
2	13	23				
3	7	23				
4	-	1				
5	-	-				
Total	39	69				

Table 10 : One-way ANOVA for Type of Degree and Frequency of Use

One-way ANOVA: Type of Degree and Frequency of Use of LinkedIn						
Summary Table						
<i>Group</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>Sum</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Variance</i>		
Qualitative Degree	30	67	2.23	0.87		
Quantitative Degree	56	154	2.75	0.70		
ANOVA Table						
<i>Source</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>P-value</i>	<i>F crit</i>
Between	5	1	5.21	6.86	0.01	3.95
Within	64	84	0.76			
Total	69	85				
Data on Type of Degree and Frequency of Use of LinkedIn						
Frequency of Use	Qualitative Degree	Quantitative Degree				
No LinkedIn	9	13				
Very rarely	7	5				
2-3 times per month	12	13				
A few times per week	8	29				
More than once per day	3	9				
Total	39	67				

Table 11 : One-way ANOVA for Type of Degree and Frequency of Use

Two-way ANOVA : Effects of Survey Group and Features on Use of Social and Professional Media						
Summary Table						
<i>Summary</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>Sum</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Variance</i>		
Students	7.00	10.65	1.52	0.09		
Graduates	7.00	8.51	1.22	0.24		
Job Search	2.00	3.92	1.96	0.01		
Direct Messaging	2.00	3.53	1.76	0.01		
Groups	2.00	2.10	1.05	0.05		
Applying with LinkedIn	2.00	2.73	1.36	0.02		
Insights	2.00	2.79	1.39	0.15		
Daily Rundown	2.00	2.32	1.16	0.18		
ProFinder	2.00	1.78	0.89	0.08		
ANOVA Table						
<i>Source</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>P-value</i>	<i>F crit</i>
Students/Graduates	0.32	1.00	0.32	9.99	0.02	5.99
Features of LinkedIn	1.76	6.00	0.29	9.04	0.01	4.28
Residual	0.20	6.00	0.03			
Total	2.282986418	13				

Table 12 : One-way ANOVA for Type of Degree and Frequency of Use

Extent of people presenting themselves professionally on SPNS	
Score	Number of respondents
1 (Least Professional)	6
2	15
3	15
4	63
5 (Most Professional)	7

Appendix 2 – Surveys

Student Survey

Section 1 of 8

Do you identify as male or female?

- Male
- Female
- Other
- Prefer not to say

Which university are you enrolled in?

- LSE
- UCL
- Imperial
- SOAS
- KCL
- Oxford
- Cambridge
- Warwick
- Other (please specify)

What is your degree?

What year of studies are you in?

- First Year
- Second Year
- Third Year
- Fourth Year

Have you secured a job after you graduate?

- Yes (*go to Section 2*)
- No (*go to Section 3*)

Section 2 of 8

Which sector will you be working in?

- Banking and Finance
- Legal Services
- Consultancy
- Accounting and Assurance
- Other (please specify)

Section 3 of 8

How helpful are the following for job-seeking for you?

	Very Helpful	Somewhat Helpful	Indifferent	Not Helpful/Harmful	Not Applicable
Company Websites					

Career Consulting					
Directly Contacting Companies					
Professional Network					
Headhunters					
Social and Professional Media					

What is your preferred way, method or tool of finding a job? Could you outline some of the steps involved in the process?

Do you have a LinkedIn account?

- Yes (*go to Section 4*)
- No (*go to Section 6*)

Section 4 of 8

How frequently do you use LinkedIn?

- More than once per day
- A few times per week
- Two to three times per month
- Very rarely

What was your motivation for joining LinkedIn? (You can select multiple.)

- Career prospects
- Networking
- Career/industry insights
- Peer pressure
- Other (please specify)

When did you join LinkedIn?

- Before university
- During university

Has LinkedIn contributed to searching or finding the job?

- Yes
- No
- Not Applicable

How helpful are each of these LinkedIn features in searching or finding the job?

	Very helpful	Somewhat helpful	Indifferent	Not helpful/harmful	Not applicable
Job search					
Direct messaging					
Groups					
Applying with LinkedIn					
Insights					
Daily rundown					
ProFinder					

Section 5 of 8

Overall, how useful do you consider LinkedIn to be/will be in your job-finding or job-searching process?

- 0: It is not helpful
- 1: I am on LinkedIn, but I hardly used it
- 2: I use LinkedIn, but it only offers some help in the process
- 3: I obtain a lot of useful information on LinkedIn, but I also use other platforms
- 4: I rely mostly on LinkedIn when I find a job
- 5: I completely rely on LinkedIn

If LinkedIn has been particularly helpful in your job-seeking or networking process, please outline the ways in which it has helped (e.g. through reaching out to specific individuals, or through being invited to networking events). (If it has not, please state so.)

(Go to Section 7)

Section 6 of 8

When do you plan to create a LinkedIn profile in the future, if at all?

- Before graduation
- After graduation
- Unlikely/Never

Section 7 of 8

To what extent do you make a conscious attempt across all media to present yourself in a certain light, aware that recruiters are able to find you?
 (Scale of 1 to 5)

	1	2	3	4	5	
I do not make a conscious attempt						I make a conscious attempt

Section 8 of 8: Consent Form

The researcher requests your consent for participation in a study about the usefulness of social media in the job-searching process. This consent form asks you to allow the researcher to record your response to the survey in question to enhance understanding of the topic.
 The purpose of the survey is to further our understanding of the use of social media in the job-seeking process and the specific tools and ways in which it is used.

The records from this study will be kept as confidential as possible. Only the research project group and our supervisor will have access to the files. Your data will be anonymised – your name will not be used in any reports or publications resulting from the study. All files will be given codes and stored separately from any names or other direct identification of participants. Any hard copies of research information will be kept in locked files at all times.

Participation in this study is completely voluntary. If you decide not to participate there will not be any negative consequences. You can withdraw at any point of the study, without having to give a reason. If any questions of the survey make you feel uncomfortable, you do not have to answer them. Withdrawing from the study will have no effect on you. If you withdraw from the study we will not retain the information you have given thus far, unless you are happy for us to do so.

The LSE Research Privacy Policy can be found at: <https://info.lse.ac.uk/staff/divisions/Secretarys-Division/Assets/Documents/Information-Records-Management/Privacy-Notice-for-Research-v1.1.pdf>

To request a copy of the data held about you, or if you have any questions or complaints please contact: b.t.han@lse.ac.uk

By submitting this form you are indicating that you have read the description of the study, are over the age of 18, and that you agree to the terms as described.

First and Last Name

I have read and understood the study information dated [06/06/19]. I have been able to ask questions about the study and my questions have been answered to my satisfaction.

- Yes
- No

I consent voluntarily to be a participant in this study and understand that I can refuse to answer questions and I can withdraw from the study at any time, without having to give a reason.

- Yes
- No

I understand that the information I provide will be used for research publication and that the information will be anonymised.

- Yes
- No

I agree that my information can be quoted in research outputs.

- Yes
- No

I understand that any personal information that can identify me – such as my name, address, will be kept confidential and not shared with anyone.

- Yes
- No

I give permission for the (anonymised) information I provide to be deposited in a data archive so that it may be used for future research.

- Yes
- No

If you would like to be considered for the prize draw and stand a chance to win a £10 Amazon voucher, please enter your email address below. Leave blank if you don't want to enter.

Graduates Survey

Section 1 of 3: Survey Questions

1. Rank the usefulness of the following methods in your job searching process

	Company websites	Career Consulting	Directly Contacting Companies	Professional Network	Headhunters	Social and Professional Media
1 (most useful)						
2						
3						
4						
5						
6 (least useful)						

2. Are there any other ways that significantly helped you in getting a job? Please specify

3. Rank the usefulness of the following social and professional media platforms in your job searching process

	LinkedIn	Glassdoor	Facebook	Indeed	Twitter	Instagram
1 (most useful)						
2						
3						
4						
5						
6						
7 (least useful)						

4. What other social or professional media helped you in your job search? Please specify in what way

5. Do you have LinkedIn Premium?

- Yes
- No

6. How helpful was LinkedIn when you were looking for a job?

- 0: It was not helpful
- 1: I was on LinkedIn, but I hardly used it
- 2: I did use LinkedIn, but it only offered some help in the process
- 3: I obtained a lot of useful information on LinkedIn, but I also used other platforms
- 4: LinkedIn was my main strategy, and there were little that I could do without LinkedIn
- 5: I completely relied on LinkedIn when I was looking for a job

7. To what extent did the following features of LinkedIn help in getting you a job?

	Very helpful	Somewhat helpful	Indifferent	Not helpful/Harmful
Job search				
Direct messaging				

Groups				
Applying with LinkedIn				
Daily rundown				
ProFinder				

8. Are there any other significant ways in which LinkedIn helped you to get a job?

Section 2 of 3: Personal Information

1. What is your gender?

- Female
- Male
- Other
- Prefer not to say

2. What is your age?

- 18-25
- 25-30
- 30-35
- 35+

3. In which year did you graduate?

4. What sector is/was your first job in?

- Banking and Finance
- Legal Services
- Consultancy
- Accounting and Assurance
- Other (please specify)

5. What sector is your current job in?

- Banking and Finance
- Legal Services
- Consultancy
- Accounting and Assurance
- Other (please specify)

6. When did you join LinkedIn?

- Before university
- During university
- After university

INTERVIEWER 1: In your opinion how useful are social media platforms in the job-seeking process?

INTERVIEWEE: They are very useful

INTERVIEWER 1: Which social media platforms would you say are the most useful?

INTERVIEWEE: Certainly the ones that we see students and graduates have success with are LinkedIn and then, sites that aggregate vacancies so Indeed is an example of that. The thing about LinkedIn is that it is good for learning about careers and steps that people take in their careers and not just finding vacancies.

INTERVIEWER 1: How useful do you find LinkedIn specifically?

INTERVIEWEE: Specifically, LinkedIn is particularly strong. It seems to have cornered the market at the moment.

INTERVIEWER 1: When you are having these conversations with students and giving them advice do you often recommend using LinkedIn?

INTERVIEWEE: We try not to be very directive with advice. We ask students what they use and ask them to reflect on that and think about what else might be useful. Often they say LinkedIn is useful and then we help them think about how to best use it. Writing a profile is not always straightforward and needs some thought. It is a learning process to create a profile as well as to find good people to connect with and others whose career pathways you can learn from.

INTERVIEWER 1: In what ways specifically can it be a useful tool? What are 3 or 4 features of LinkedIn which are the most important for students to focus on?

INTERVIEWEE: The first is to learn how to present themselves appropriately for different audiences. The second is to learn about people in work and their career progression. Three is to learn about organisations that people have worked in and fourth to use it as a vacancy source.

INTERVIEWER 1: How important would you consider social media platforms right now to be in comparison to other job seeking tactics.

INTERVIEWEE: It probably depends on the sector that you are applying for. There are some sectors which are much more likely to be in that digital space than others. If you wanted to be an artist for example being on Instagram and showing your work there might be better. Within the LSE context LinkedIn is the main one. If you were having an academic career LinkedIn might not be the most important place to be. There are alternatives but generally LinkedIn is the broad one. It is a good one to start with because it is very structured the template is nice and clear... there aren't too many mistakes that you can make.

INTERVIEWER: If students are not using these platforms would you say that they might be at a disadvantage when job-seeking?

INTERVIEWEE: Again, it depends on the sector. If they wanted to be a school teacher or a social worker it makes no difference. But if they wanted to be in the commercial sector they are probably at a disadvantage. I mean they could go through a graduate recruitment scheme and not be looked at online by an employer but they would have missed out on lots of learning opportunities

and opportunities to link with people and make connections which probably would disadvantage them.

INTERVIEWER: We have done a lot of research and found information regarding screening processes. Is that something that you talk to students about? Do you let them know that it might be something to watch out for?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes, I let them know if their Facebook page might need tidying up or that their privacy settings need to be checked carefully.

INTERVIEWER: So obviously you said that LinkedIn is very useful and learning from others and following career paths etc. But do students ever get jobs directly from LinkedIn? Have you heard from students that directly messaged someone and got a job?

INTERVIEWEE: They will see vacancies, vacancies will come to them. If you say that you are looking for certain types of work, those ads come through. I can think of examples of people who have gotten their jobs through LinkedIn.

INTERVIEWER: So that was through seeing vacancies and applying through LinkedIn or messaging specific people and getting them to help them out?

INTERVIEWEE: Both, but definitely through vacancies. I can think of examples of that.

INTERVIEWER: Do you know what industries those examples were in?

INTERVIEWEE: In the tech industry. Also people with a particular strong quant background. I can think of a couple PhD students in subjects like maths, statistics and economics who will be approached directly by employers with vacancies saying that they are looking for people with your skills. But that is because they have skills in something very specific.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think that people generally apply through the traditional company website and then get jobs from there?

INTERVIEWEE: I think the labor market is very complicated and different employers recruit in different ways. For graduate schemes, there is only one way into there and that is through the standard recruitment cycle process. Do what they say by the closing date and it is very straightforward and rule-bound. But it is a very small proportion of the graduate workforce that get their jobs in that way. Then we talk about the hidden labor market and all the vacancies that do not get advertised. Some come through LinkedIn or you get them through making personal connections with somebody. We can't measure how big that is because we don't know how many people get these jobs. But we survey graduates about how they got their jobs and many will say through contacts, through networking, through online platforms like LinkedIn.

LinkedIn are very good at promoting themselves. They tell students and graduates that's the place to be. It is a big virtuous circle. People start to use it and then employers start to look there.

INTERVIEWER: Would you say that there is a move towards more job openings in the hidden labor market or would you say we are moving towards the traditional recruitment process?

INTERVIEWEE: I would be guessing but my instinct is that a lot of people get their jobs in the hidden labor market. Employers get overwhelmed by applications and they can't process them all which is why keyword searching and automation has become an easy way. It takes ages for them to read through applications and a huge cost to an organisation to pay people to read through them. They save money by making the screening more efficient. Even though they know that they

are missing good people. The candidate has to be a lot more resourceful and put a lot more time into their applications which we know is not necessarily a good way to spend your time. It is not an efficient way to job hunt.

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