

Descriptive Research: LinkedIn's Role for Fresh Graduates, Undergraduates, and Interns

1. How Students and Graduates Use LinkedIn

Recent research into LinkedIn usage among fresh graduates and students reveals nuanced patterns in behavior and perception:

- **Passive vs. Active Use:**

Many recent graduates and students use LinkedIn primarily as passive observers. They create profiles, browse job postings, and gather information about companies and professionals, but often do not fully utilize interactive features such as posting, sharing, commenting, or actively networking ^[1] ^[2].

This passivity limits their visibility and the potential benefits they could gain from the platform, such as being noticed by recruiters or expanding their professional network ^[1].

- **Awareness of Opportunities:**

While students and graduates recognize that LinkedIn can be highly beneficial for job searching and career advancement, they often feel unsure about what content to contribute or how to engage meaningfully with others on the platform ^[1].

Some studies found that students value the ability to research employers, learn about potential colleagues, and understand industry trends, but hesitate to participate actively ^[1] ^[3].

- **Networking and Groups:**

LinkedIn groups and communities provide a supplemental resource for career development, especially when tailored to specific academic disciplines. Participation in such groups fosters engagement, skill-building, and access to industry professionals beyond what traditional college career centers offer ^[4] ^[2].

2. Impact on Career Development and Learning

- **Career Preparedness and Employability:**

Empirical studies show that integrating LinkedIn into academic assignments or career development programs increases students' awareness of its value, improves their digital identity, and strengthens social network literacy ^[3].

Most students who participated in such assignments continued to use LinkedIn years after, suggesting a long-term positive impact on career development ^[3].

- **Skill Development:**

Using LinkedIn can enhance students' communication, writing, and self-presentation skills. Publishing articles, reflecting on internship experiences, and sharing achievements not only

demonstrate professionalism but also help students command their own stories, boosting confidence and interview performance^[5] ^[2].

- **Motivation and Learning Performance:**
LinkedIn is found to boost students’ learning motivation and communication skills. It enables them to connect with professionals, access industry knowledge, and stay updated on trends, which can translate into better academic and career outcomes^[2].

3. Key Features and Functions Utilized by Students

Feature	Typical Student Usage	Observed Benefits
Profile Creation	High (most create a profile)	Digital resume, online presence
Job Search	High	Access to internships and entry-level jobs
Networking	Moderate (mostly passive)	Potential for mentorship, referrals, and guidance
Groups/Communities	Low to moderate	Peer support, industry insights, career advice
Content Engagement	Low (few post or comment)	Visibility, personal branding, skill demonstration
Skill Endorsements	Low	Credibility, recruiter interest

4. Barriers and Challenges

- **Uncertainty About Engagement:**
Many students are unsure about what to post or how to engage professionally, leading to minimal activity beyond profile creation^[1] ^[3].
- **Lack of Confidence:**
Students often feel less confident in building and maintaining professional networks, despite recognizing its importance^[3].
- **Underutilization of Interactive Features:**
Compared to platforms like Facebook or Twitter, students are less likely to engage in posting, sharing, or commenting on LinkedIn, missing out on potential career benefits^[1] ^[2].

5. Recommendations for Maximizing LinkedIn’s Value

- **Encourage Active Participation:**
Students should be encouraged to share articles, reflect on internship experiences, and engage with professionals to increase visibility and showcase their skills^[5] ^[2].
- **Leverage Groups and Communities:**
Joining discipline-specific LinkedIn groups can provide tailored support, networking opportunities, and industry insights beyond university resources^[4].
- **Profile Optimization:**
Regularly updating profiles, highlighting achievements, and seeking endorsements can make students more attractive to recruiters^[6].

- **Institutional Support:**

Integrating LinkedIn assignments into curricula can help students develop digital literacy and understand the platform's career benefits^[3].

6. Empirical Insights and Long-Term Outcomes

- **Sustained Use:**

Students who learn to use LinkedIn as part of their academic journey are more likely to continue using it for career development after graduation^[3].

- **Career Impact:**

Active and strategic use of LinkedIn is linked to increased recruiter contact, broader professional networks, and better preparedness for job searches^{[1] [3] [2]}.

Conclusion

Descriptive research consistently shows that while LinkedIn is recognized as a valuable tool for career development among fresh graduates, undergraduates, and interns, it is often underutilized-especially in terms of active engagement and networking. Students benefit most when they move beyond passive use, leveraging LinkedIn's full suite of features to build their professional identity, connect with industry insiders, and showcase their skills and experiences. Institutional interventions, such as LinkedIn-based assignments and group participation, can significantly enhance students' confidence, motivation, and long-term career prospects^{[1] [3] [4] [2]}.

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1. <http://www.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:1480741/FULLTEXT01.pdf>
2. https://www.academia.edu/77904925/Impact_of_LinkedIn_on_Boosting_Students_Learning_Motivation_and_Career_Prospects
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4. <https://www.scirp.org/journal/paperinformation?paperid=128575>
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6. <https://www.internsinasia.com/blog/a-step-by-step-guide-on-how-to-build-a-linkedin-profile>