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LinkedIn Usage and Career Readiness among BBA and MBA Students: An Empirical Study

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ABSTRACT

The rapid growth of professional networking platforms has transformed career development practices among students. LinkedIn has emerged as a prominent platform for professional networking, skill showcasing, and employment opportunities. This study examines LinkedIn usage and its influence on career readiness among Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA) and Master of Business Administration (MBA) students. A quantitative survey was conducted among 114 students from various higher educational institutions. Descriptive statistical techniques were employed to analyze demographic characteristics, LinkedIn usage behavior, networking activities, and career readiness dimensions. The findings reveal that 87.7% of respondents possess LinkedIn accounts and actively utilize the platform for profile development, networking, and job search activities. Students reported high levels of confidence in career readiness, particularly in job search preparedness, professional networking, and overall employability confidence. The study concludes that LinkedIn serves as a valuable tool in enhancing students' career readiness and professional development. The findings provide implications for higher education institutions seeking to improve graduate employability through digital professional networking platforms.

Keywords*LinkedIn, Career Readiness, Employability, Professional Networking, BBA Students, MBA Students, Higher Education*

Introduction

The digital transformation of recruitment and professional networking has significantly altered the career development landscape for students. Social networking platforms designed for professional purposes have become essential tools for building professional identity, networking with industry experts, and exploring career opportunities. Among these platforms, LinkedIn has gained widespread recognition as the world's leading professional networking site.

Universities and business schools increasingly encourage students to develop professional online profiles to improve employability and career prospects. LinkedIn enables students to showcase educational qualifications, skills, certifications, internships, and professional achievements while connecting with recruiters and industry professionals. Previous studies suggest that active engagement on LinkedIn contributes positively to networking competence, career awareness, and job search effectiveness.

Despite the growing relevance of LinkedIn, limited empirical evidence exists regarding its influence on career readiness among management students in India. Therefore, this study investigates the extent of LinkedIn usage among BBA and MBA students and evaluates its contribution to career readiness dimensions such as professional communication, networking skills, job search readiness, and employability confidence.

Review of Literature

The role of social networking platforms in career development and employability has gained significant scholarly attention in recent years. Among these platforms, LinkedIn has emerged as a leading professional networking tool that supports students and job seekers in building professional identity, expanding networks, and enhancing job search effectiveness.

Aldhaheri, Ameen, and Isaac (2020) found that social media usage positively influences students' career development by improving access to professional information and networking opportunities. Their study emphasizes that structured engagement with professional platforms enhances employability skills among university students.

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Benson, Morgan, and Filippaios (2014) highlighted the concept of "social career management," explaining that platforms like LinkedIn help bridge the gap between academic learning and industry expectations. They argue that students who actively manage their online professional profiles demonstrate stronger employability competencies.

Caers and Castelyns (2011) examined the role of LinkedIn in recruitment and selection processes and concluded that employers increasingly rely on social networking profiles to evaluate candidates. This highlights the importance of maintaining a professional and updated LinkedIn presence for career advancement.

Chiang and Suen (2015) focused on self-presentation in online communities and found that professional identity construction on platforms like LinkedIn significantly influences hiring recommendations. The study suggests that digital self-presentation is now an essential part of employability.

Nikolaou (2014) emphasized the use of social networking sites in job search behavior and found that LinkedIn enhances access to job opportunities, professional contacts, and industry updates, making it a critical tool in modern recruitment processes.

Roth et al. (2016) further explained that social media has become an influential factor in employee selection-related decisions. Employers often review candidates' online profiles, making LinkedIn activity an important component of career readiness.

Van Dijck (2013) provided a theoretical perspective on digital connectivity and argued that platforms like LinkedIn shape professional identity and influence how individuals present themselves in digital environments.

Weber and Mahringer (2021) investigated digital networking and employability among university students and found a positive relationship between online professional networking activity and career readiness outcomes, including job search confidence and communication skills.

Research Gap:

- The reviewed studies consistently indicate that LinkedIn and similar professional networking platforms contribute positively to employability, career awareness, and job search effectiveness. However, most existing research has been conducted in Western contexts, with limited empirical evidence focusing on Indian management students.
- Therefore, there is a clear need to examine how LinkedIn usage influences career readiness among BBA and MBA students in the Indian higher education system. This study addresses this gap by empirically analyzing LinkedIn usage patterns and their relationship with career readiness dimensions.

Objectives of the Study

- To examine LinkedIn usage among BBA and MBA students.
- To assess students' networking and content engagement activities on LinkedIn.
- To evaluate the level of career readiness among students.
- To analyze the relationship between LinkedIn usage and career readiness.

Materials and Methods

Research Design: The study adopted a descriptive research design using a structured questionnaire.

Sample and Data Collection: Primary data were collected from BBA and MBA students through an online survey. A total of 114 valid responses were obtained and analyzed.

Sampling Technique: Convenience sampling was employed to collect responses from students belonging to different

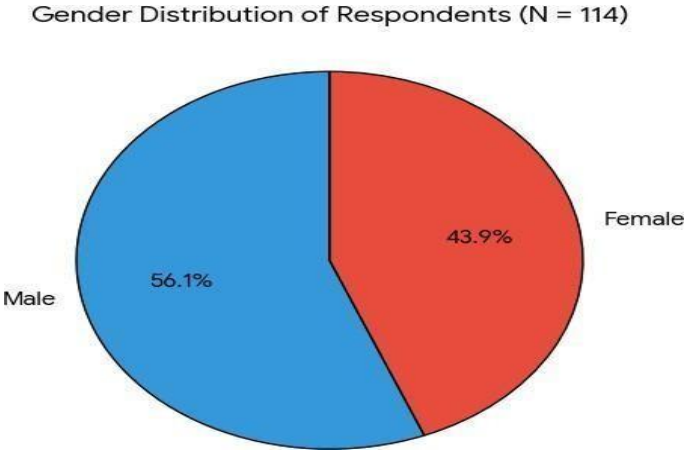
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institutions and specializations.

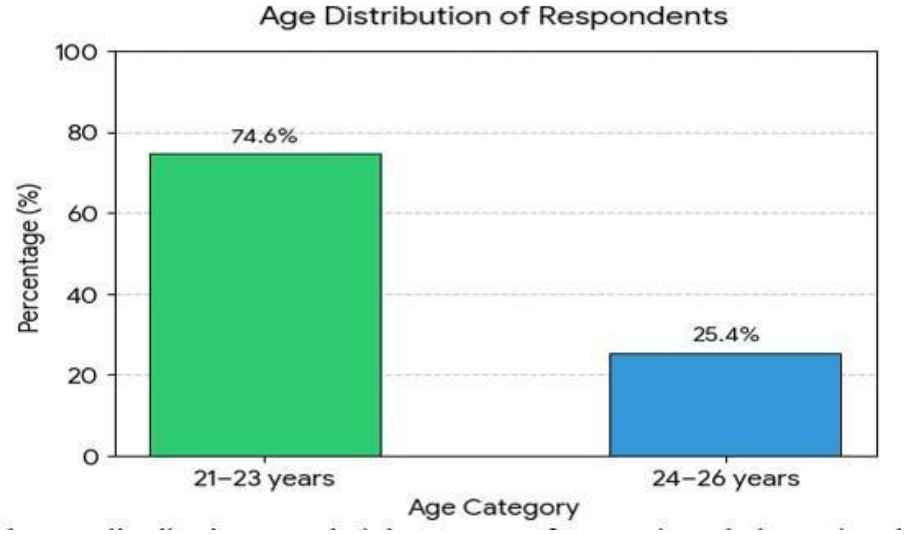
Statistical Tools: The collected data were analyzed using Excel and Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Descriptive statistics including frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation were used for interpretation.

Results and Discussion

Demographic Profile:



Among the 114 respondents, 56.1% were male and 43.9% were female, indicating balanced gender presentation



The age distribution revealed that 74.6% of respondents belonged to the 21–23 years category, while 25.4% were aged 24–26 years.

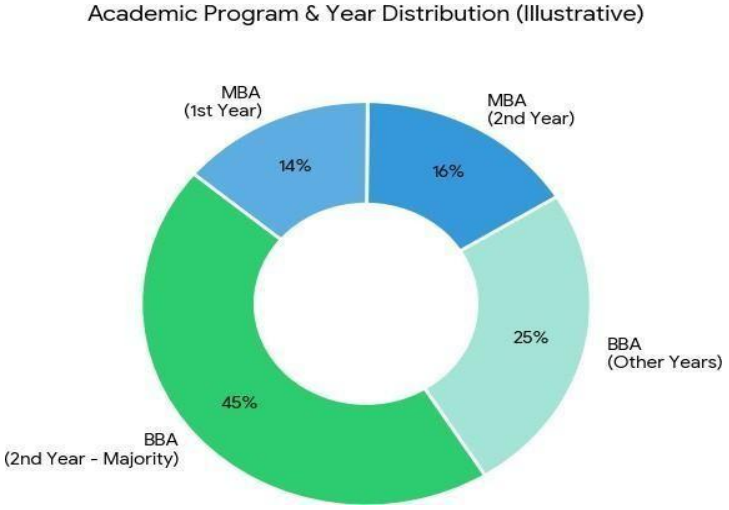
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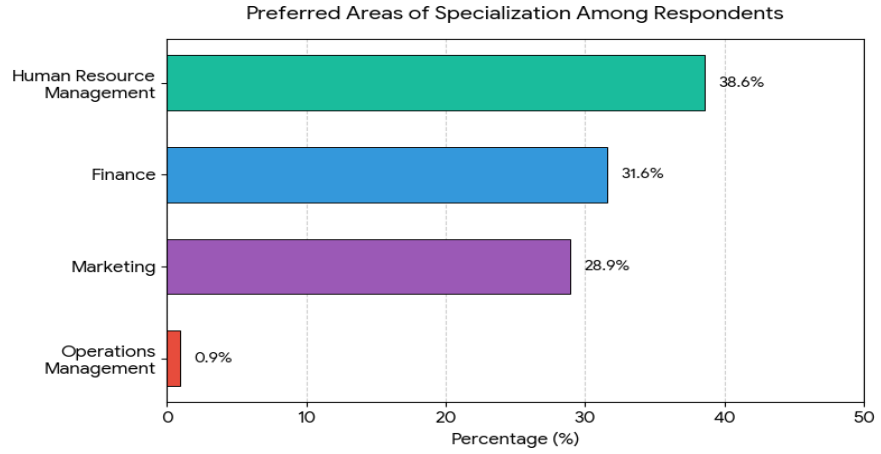
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Vol.01,Issue2,June2026,pp:403-410



Regarding academic programs, BBA students constituted the majority of the sample, with second-year students representing the largest subgroup. Among MBA respondents, second-year students slightly outnumbered first-year students.

Educational Characteristics



Human Resource Management emerged as the most preferred specialization (38.6%), followed by Finance (31.6%) and Marketing (28.9%). Operations Management had minimal representation (0.9%).

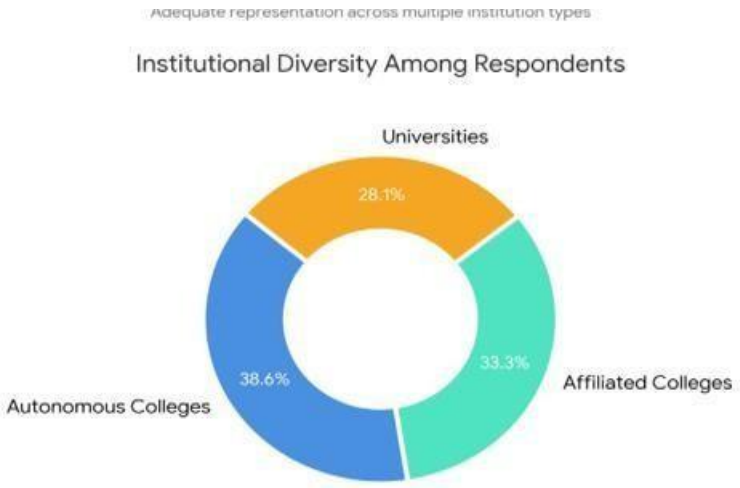
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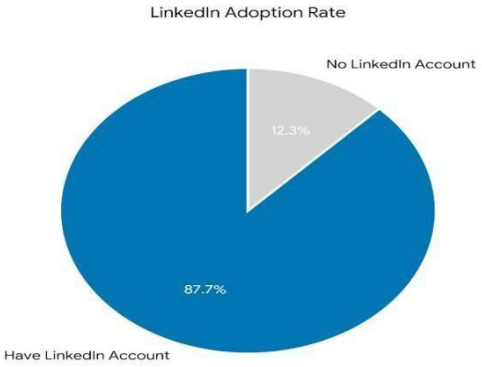
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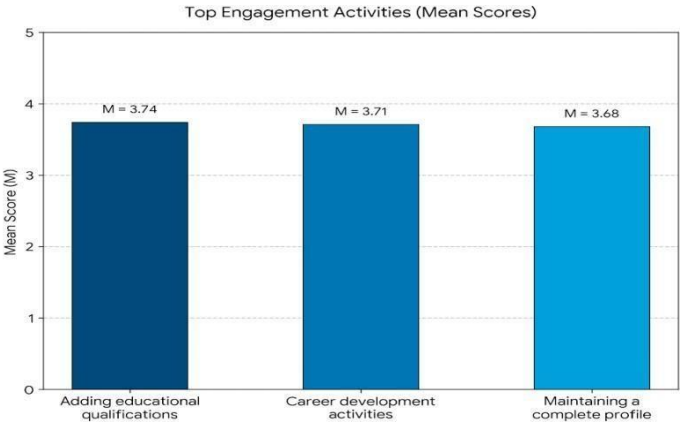
Vol.01,Issue2,June2026,pp:403-410



Students were drawn from Autonomous Colleges (38.6%), Affiliated Colleges (33.3%), and Universities (28.1%), indicating adequate institutional diversity.

LinkedIn Usage





The findings indicate widespread adoption of LinkedIn among students. A significant majority (87.7%) reported having a LinkedIn account, while only 12.3% had not created one.

Students demonstrated positive engagement with LinkedIn. The highest mean scores were observed for:

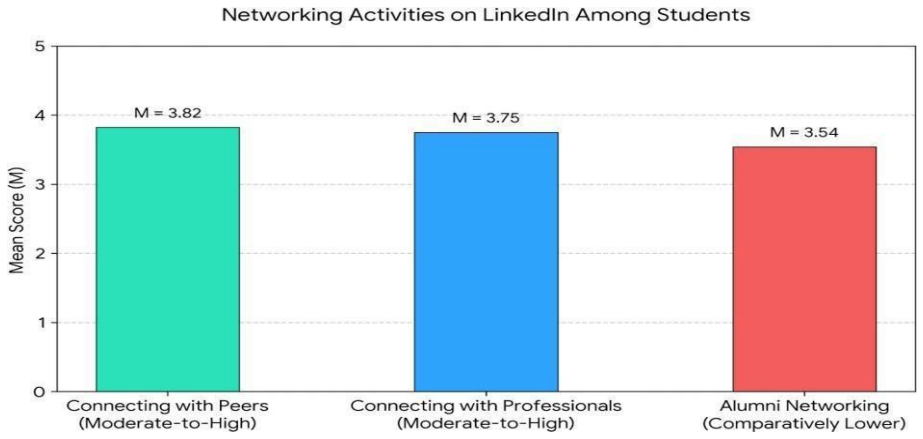
- Adding educational qualifications (M = 3.74)
- Using LinkedIn for career development activities (M = 3.71)
- Maintaining a complete profile (M = 3.68)

These findings suggest that students recognize LinkedIn as an important platform for professional visibility and

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career growth.

Networking and Content Engagement

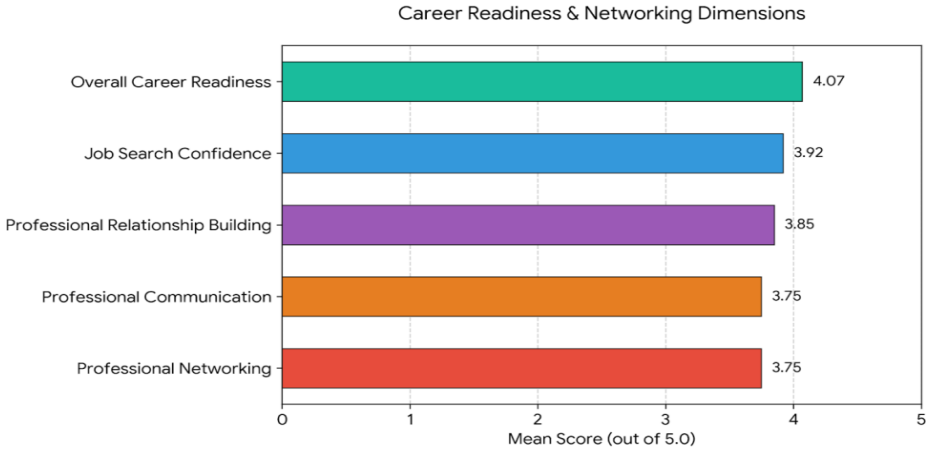


Students actively connected with professionals and peers through LinkedIn. Networking-related activities recorded moderate-to-high mean scores. However, alumni networking showed comparatively lower engagement (M = 3.54).

Peer & Professional Networking: Visualized with moderate-to-high relative engagement scores.

***Alumni Networking*:** Explicitly marked at M = 3.54 to visually contrast its comparatively lower engagement level. Content engagement activities, including following companies and industry updates, recorded positive mean values ranging from 3.61 to 3.65, indicating consistent use of LinkedIn for professional knowledge acquisition.

Career Readiness Assessment: Career readiness indicators demonstrated encouraging results. The highest-rated dimensions were:



Students reported confidence in preparing resumes, searching for job opportunities, and maintaining professional relationships. These findings indicate that LinkedIn contributes positively to employability development. Nevertheless, awareness of available career opportunities (M = 3.40) emerged as the lowest-rated component,

suggesting the need for additional career guidance and mentoring initiatives.

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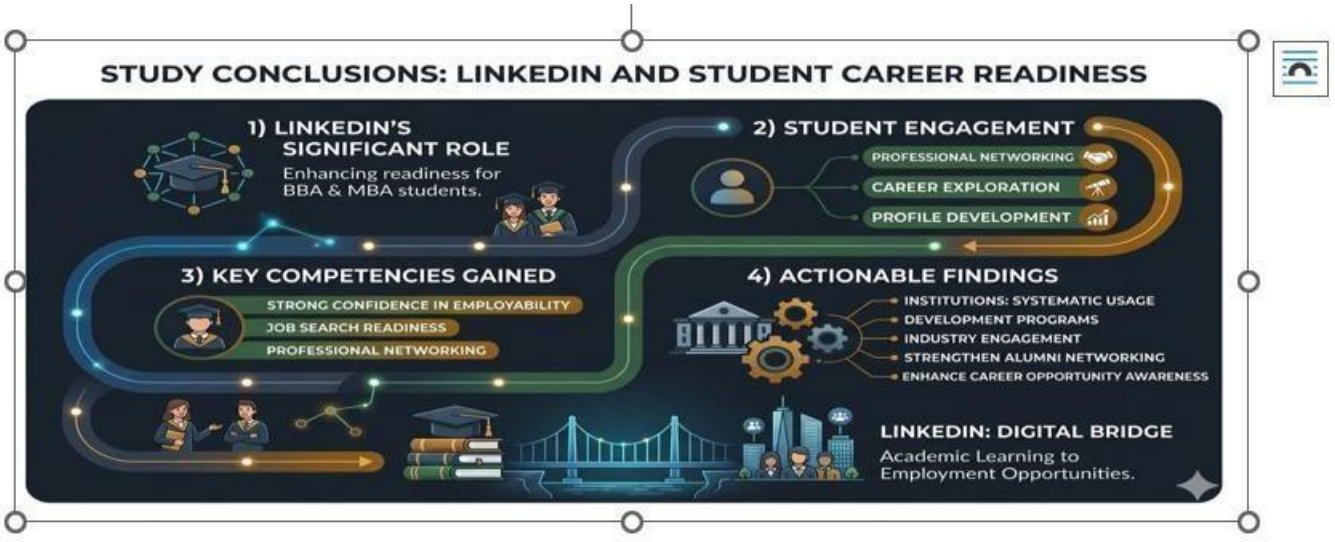
Vol.01,Issue2,June2026,pp:403-410

Discussion

The results support the growing body of literature emphasizing the role of professional networking platforms in enhancing employability. The high adoption rate of LinkedIn among students reflects increasing awareness of digital career management practices.

The findings indicate that students who actively engage in profile building, networking, and career exploration demonstrate higher levels of career readiness. LinkedIn facilitates professional identity development and strengthens employability-related competencies such as communication, networking, and job search skills.
Educational institutions may further leverage LinkedIn by integrating profile development workshops, recruiter interactions, alumni engagement programs, and digital career readiness training into academic curricula.

Conclusions



The study concludes that LinkedIn plays a significant role in enhancing career readiness among BBA and MBA students. Most respondents actively use LinkedIn for professional networking, career exploration, and profile development. Students demonstrated strong confidence in employability-related competencies, particularly job search readiness and professional networking.

The findings suggest that educational institutions should encourage systematic LinkedIn usage through career development programs and industry engagement initiatives. Strengthening alumni networking and career opportunity awareness can further enhance students' professional preparedness.

Overall, LinkedIn serves as an effective digital platform for bridging the gap between academic learning and professional employment opportunities.

- **Current Strengths:** Highlights active adoption, profile development, and strong job search readiness.
- **Actionable Recommendations:** Outlines next steps for academic institutions, such as integrating LinkedIn into career development programs and bolstering alumni networking.
- **Ultimate Impact:** Emphasizes LinkedIn's role in filling the gap between academic education and real-world employment.

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