



Master of Business Administration Programme

LCMB7035 – Dissertation Proposal

Name : Patel Manthan Parshottambhai

Student ID: 2420712

EFFECTIVENESS OF LINKEDIN AS A PLATFORM FOR STARTUP IT COMPANIES IN SOURCING NEW TALENTED WORKFORCE IN UK – WHAT CHALLENGES THE COMPANIES FACE AND WHAT POSSIBLE STRATEGIES CAN HELP TO MITIGATE THEM

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background of Study

Social media based recruitments are gaining the essential popularity due to maintaining the large scale community and availability of the two way communication with the recruiters for the startup companies (Davis *et al.*, 2020). Among the different social media platforms LinkedIn has become the central channel for sourcing the talents in the IT companies of the UK while making it a natural focus for the startup companies that need repeat and post effective hiring. Employer adoption also has been high within LinkedIn. The data from Mawardi (2024) indicated that LinkedIn developed itself into the 42 billion British pound industry due to having essential penetration among the users. Among the one billion users of LinkedIn almost 30 million users are based in the UK. The data also indicated that the AI enhanced advertising and hiring control related tools also improve the efficiency of the hiring process for both of the companies and for the candidates.

CIPD (2025) also focuses on the community related aspects for finding the particular employees through the networking among the people for the startup companies who need the cost effective and rapid hiring. The recent studies such as Rocha and Grilli (2023) analysed that the startup companies face major issues of the resource constraint regarding the recruitment while they also face the competitive pressure from the incumbent companies due to the reduced benefits and wages while sourcing candidates of IT industry who are majorly focused on joining the large IT firms. On the other hand the data from Jobs (2022) highlighted that the referral systems are preferred by the candidates which also help the startup companies to gain an access to the larger pool of talent. The research in this context has focused on evaluation of the use of social media channels including LinkedIn for sourcing the new talented work forces by the startup IT companies of the UK.

1.2 Problem Statement and Rationale

Despite the rapid growth of the Technology sector in the UK, the startup companies in the IT sector continue to face the significant challenges in attracting and retaining the skillful professionals. The research of Rehman *et al.* (2022) indicated that verification and authentication of the information regarding the candidates are the major barriers for the companies while maintaining the recruitment through the use of different channels including social media such as LinkedIn. However, the factors of networking between the employers and the candidates help in improving the communication and also help in sharing the aspirations and expectations between the employer and candidates to improve the quality of recruitment.

The data from Borrett and Strauss (2024) on the other hand indicate that the overall job market has declined significantly in 2025 then the different other countries. The majority of reasons are associated with the cost effective hiring process by the incumbent companies. The data also indicate that from 2020 to 2024 the job advertisement and recruitment have reduced by 41% in the software development sector of the UK.

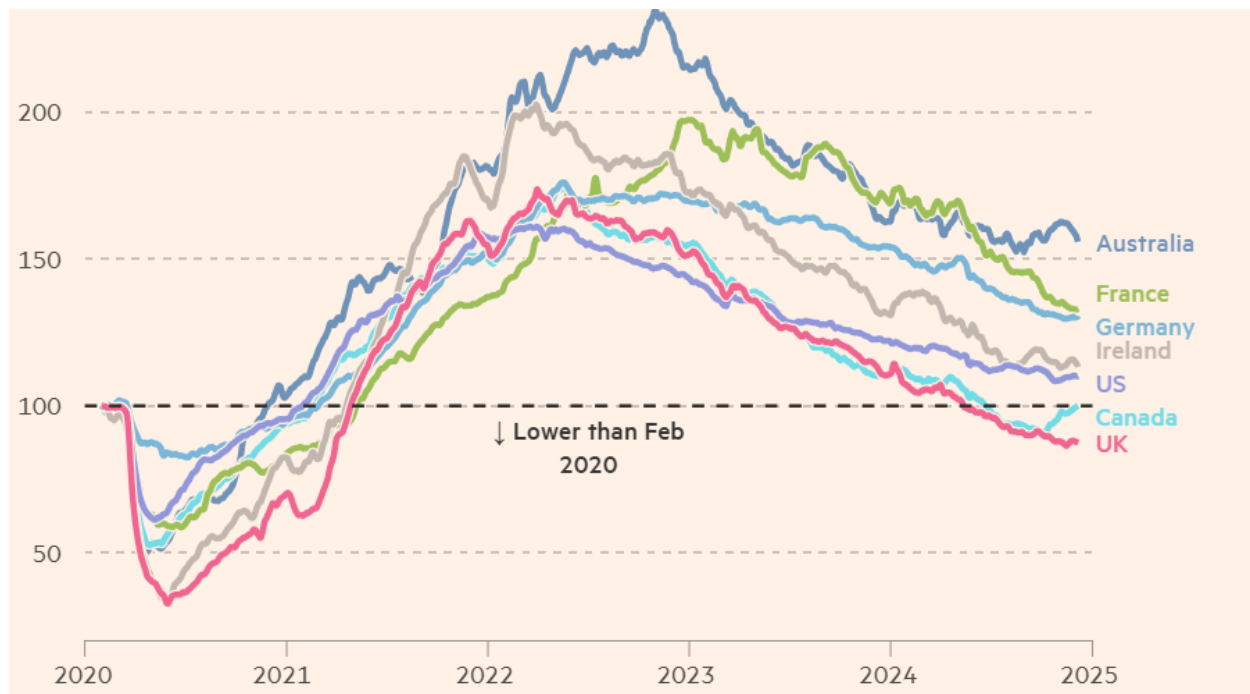


Figure 1: Slowdown of hiring process of UK

(Source: Borrett and Strauss, 2024)

In this context the overall process of hiring was also difficult for the startup companies within the IT sector of the UK. However, Davis *et al.*(2020) indicates that the majority of the candidates generally use linked in for networking among their peers. These facilities also enabled the startup companies who mainly focus on hiring employees in a rapid manner while getting the access of a large number of potential candidates. In this context the research is viable for analysing the particular benefits of the startup companies while sourcing talented employees through LinkedIn and evaluating the challenges faced by the startup companies where there is limited literature regarding analysis of the challenges of the startup companies uniquely. The research is also vital as it will focus on suggesting the recommended Strategies for reducing the challenges from the perspectives of the workers of IT start ups or the linkedIn users. The study will mainly focus on

bridging the gaps of evaluating and analysing the unique challenges of LinkedIn based talent resourcing process for the start up companies and providing evidence based recommendations.

1.3 Research Questions

- **RQ1:** How do startup IT companies in the UK currently use LinkedIn as a platform for sourcing and recruiting new talent?
- **RQ2:** What are the perceived benefits of using LinkedIn compared to traditional recruitment methods for startup IT companies?
- **RQ3:** What challenges and limitations do startup IT companies face when using LinkedIn for talent acquisition?
- **RQ4:** How effective is LinkedIn in enhancing employer branding and improving the quality of hires for startup IT companies in the UK?

1.4 Aim and Objectives

Aim

The main aim of the research is evaluating and analysing the challenges of using LinkedIn for talent resources in process by the startup IT companies of UK and providing possible Strategies and actions to mitigate those challenges.

Objectives

- To explore how LinkedIn is used as a platform for hiring new talents for organisations
- To evaluate the effectiveness of LinkedIn for startup IT companies in sourcing new talented workforce
- To identify what challenges the IT startup companies face while using LinkedIn as a recruitment platform in UK
- To recommend solutions for mitigating the identified challenges in UK

2. Literature review

2.1 Benefits of recruitment through social media channels such as LinkedIn

The recent literature also provides essential insights regarding the benefits of recruiting through social media channels such as LinkedIn. Such platforms have revolutionised the recruitment process by facilitating direct engagement between the employers and the potential candidates. Davis et al. (2020) Highlighted that LinkedIn enables the professionals to expand their networks in the strategic manner and provides access to the diverse career opportunities for enhancing the employability through the visibility and reputation building. Similarly Pena et al. (2022) Found

that active LinkedIn usage significantly contributes to the improved career outcome and expectations demonstrating that candidates perceive the tangible professional benefits from the platform engagement.

For employers, LinkedIn provides an efficient and data driven recruitment tool. Hosain and Liu (2020) revealed that organisations perceive LinkedIn as a highly usable and cost effective platform for sourcing the talent compared to the traditional hiring methods. The platform algorithms and filters also allow the employers to identify the candidates based on the specific skills and professional attributes. Rehman et al. (2022) further argue that Technology based recruitment supports sustainable talent acquisition by reducing the recruitment cost and the time to hire.

Moreover, Habets et al. (2021) demonstrated that social media interventions enhance the perceived employability by improving the digital networking skills and career Management. Lensari and Shekhar (2025) also emphasize that social media driven recruitment promotes transparency and inclusivity which align with the modern HR trends focused on diversity management.

2.2 Challenges of Recruitment using Social media such as LinkedIn

Despite the advantages, recruitments through social media platforms such as LinkedIn also present different challenges. Hosain and Liu (2020) reported that while the employers recognise the usability of LinkedIn, different users face issues concerning the information reliability and candidate authenticity. The profiles may contain exaggerated qualifications which make it difficult for the recruiter to verify the competencies of the candidates. In the similar manner, Ruparel et al. (2020) identified the data privacy concern as a major limitation with both employees and applicants wary of how the personal and professional information are used on these platforms.

Ahmad et al. (2022) notes that excessive social media use in the workplace can also reduce productivity regarding recruitment. Habets et al. (2021) Observe when all the social media enhance employability and the digital skill gaps know the users can hinder the effective recruitment outcome. Additionally, Pena et al. (2022) highlighted the issues of networking inequality where the candidates with more established networks can have better visibility and potentially create a bias in the recruitment result.

Rehman et al. (2022) further discussed that Technology based recruitment required consistent investment in the analytics and the employer branding to remain effective which can impact The Limited budget of the startup companies. Lensari and Sekhar (2025) concluded that social media

recruitment is growing yet the challenges regarding authenticity and privacy continue to impact the full potential.

2.3 Theoretical Frameworks

Social Cognitive Theory

Social cognitive theory emphasizes that individuals learn and develop behaviours through observation, imitation and social interactions. Pena *et al.*, (2022) in the study has indicated in the context of the social media channels such as LinkedIn, professionals actively observe and emulate the online behaviours of the successful peers. For the startup IT companies this theory explains how the recruiters and the candidates interact in a dynamic learning environment where the visibility and engagement create mutual professional development. The recruiters learn the effective sourcing behaviour while the candidates shape their online identity to enhance the employability.

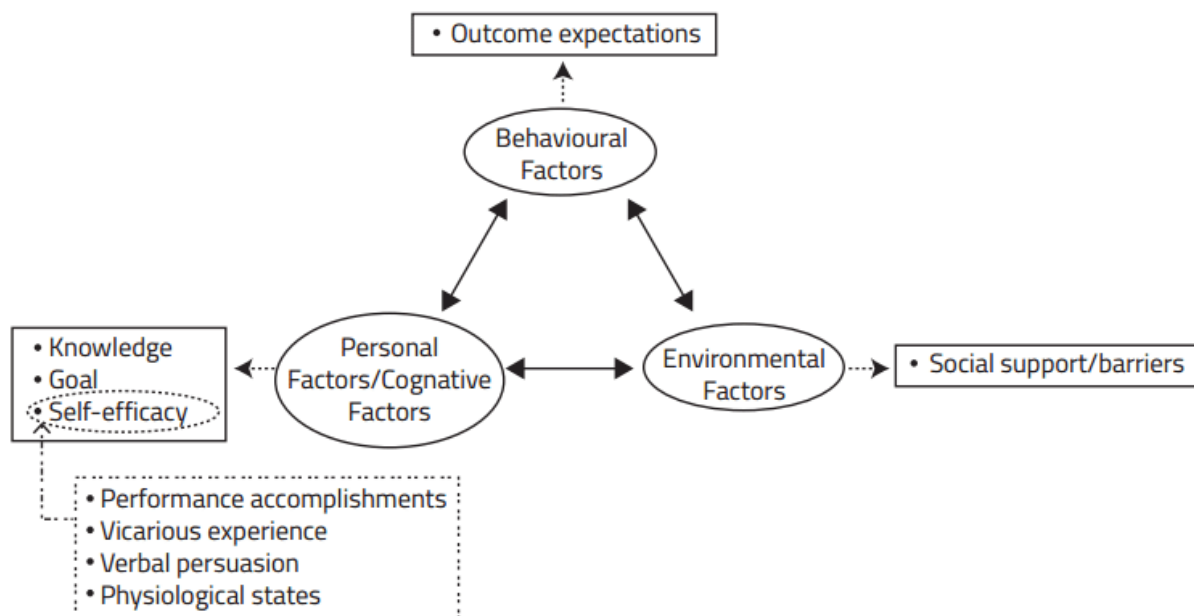


Figure 2: Social Cognitive Theory

(Source: Adapted From Pena *et al.*, 2022)

Social Capital Theory

Social capital theory shows that social networks create value by providing access to information and trust as well as opportunities. As per Habets *et al.*, (2021) social media channels such as LinkedIn serve as the digital embodiment of the theory offering the structured network where the connections facilitate the recruitment efficiency. For the startup companies with the Limited

branding related recognition, social capital built through the LinkedIn helps to expand the access to the potential candidate and industry groups as well as the professional community.

Self-Determination Theory

Self-determination theory focuses on the intrinsic motivation of the individuals which is driven by autonomy and competence as well as relatedness. As per Ahmad *et al.* (2022) LinkedIn and social media channels enable the job seekers to express these psychological needs by showing the achievements and engaging with the professional communities. For the startup recruiters, understanding these motivational drivers allows them to design more appealing job posting and engagement strategies which attract intrinsically motivated and talented employees with innovative growth.

2.4 Literature gap

Although existing studies have explored the role of LinkedIn in the professional networking, liability and the recruitment efficiency there is limited research especially examining its effective dress for the startup IT companies. The majority of the previous studies focus on the large organisations or the general recruitment trends rather than resource constrained startups. There is also lack of sufficient empirical analysis about the tools such as employer branding and skill based search process impacting the talent acquisition outcome of the startup companies. This literature gap is taken as a main focus of the research for understanding the perspective of the workers of the startup IT companies.

3. Methodology

3.1 Methodological Focus

In the methodological context the study will focus on utilising a Positivism Framework. It will help through maintaining a structured approach of the research for achieving the anticipated outcome associated with the challenges and the recommendations regarding the usage of LinkedIn for talent sourcing by the startup IT companies (Gupta and Gupta, 2022). The anticipated outcomes will be evaluated through the review of the recent literature and the data will be matched with the primary data which will be collected through the survey for better cross referencing. The research will also focus on utilising a deductive approach for evaluating the effectiveness of the theoretical models including the social capital theory, cognitive theory and the self determination theory rather than developing the new theoretical models with inductive approach (Saharan *et al.*, 2024). A descriptive design will be utilized for developing the cause and effect relations regarding the

LinkedIn based employee resourcing process and the challenges of utilising social media for the startup companies which are unique for the IT industry (Verma *et al.*, 2024).

3.2 Data Collection

The study will focus on choosing the primary quantitative data for having the greater consensus from the IT professionals working in the startup companies. The numeric data and the statistical evaluation will provide the analysis about the effectiveness of using LinkedIn for talented employees sourcing processes with a measurable outcome.

For the process of Data collection the study will consider conducting a survey among the IT professionals working in the startup companies of UK who generally utilise LinkedIn for the career opportunities. Within this survey the startup company based recruiters will also be included. Its total number of 100 samples will be collected through the quantitative survey which will be based on a survey questionnaire comprising 12-15 questions associated with effectiveness of LinkedIn for The talented employee sourcing process for the IT startup companies in the UK. The survey questionnaire will be distributed through the Google forms and the participants will be recruited through the social media advertisement in LinkedIn as well as in the different other platforms.

3.3 Sampling

A simple random sampling will be utilised for choosing the random sample of the participants who are from the startup IT companies in the UK. A total number of 1000 samples will be chosen randomly which will help in reducing the data bias. The oral survey will be conducted among 200 to 250 participants and among those 100 samples will be gathered through the random sampling process to avoid the data bias related issues.

3.4 Data Analysis

In the process of the data analysis the descriptive statistics as well as the inferential statistics will be analysed through using the SPSS. In terms of the descriptive statistics the mean and medium will be evaluated for understanding the effectiveness of LinkedIn is the recruitments and the increase of these practices among the startup companies. Apart from that, for maintaining the validity of the data a Cronbach's alpha test (>0.7) will be analysed. Apart from that, the Regression and T-tests will be done for analysing the impact of LinkedIn based recruitment on the talented employees sourcing process of the startup companies in the UK. The analysis will also help in gathering the information regarding the challenges while providing the recommendations regarding avoiding such issues.

4. Ethical Considerations

The main ethical challenges can be associated with the privacy management of the participants. In this respect no Private data will be collected regarding the identification of the participants within the survey process. Apart from that the data will be anonymised in the published paper for awarding the identification related issues. Apart from that consent will be accumulated from the participants before collecting the data and an information sheet will be provided regarding their rights of withdrawing themselves at any point as per their intentions. The data will be stored in the university library OneDrive account with ID and password protection for avoiding third party access to the data.

5. Expected findings

The expected outcomes of the survey study can reveal that LinkedIn is an effective and efficient platform for the UK startup IT companies to attract the skill to professionals due to its reach and target search tools as well as enhanced employer branding features. The quantitative analysis will also show the significant correlations between the LinkedIn usage and intensity and the recruitment success such as the reduced time to hire and improve candidate quality. Their results may also highlight the challenges including the competition for the top talent, Limited visibility for the smaller companies and authenticity issues in the candidate profiles. The findings are expected to provide the data driven insights for the optimisation of LinkedIn based recruitment Strategies for the startups.

6. Limitations

The study can face several limitations. At first the data collected through the survey could be influenced by the participants' subjective perceptions leading to the potential response related bias. Secondly the sample size can be limited to the specific UK start up IT companies reducing the generalizability of the findings across the different other industries and the region. In this context the cross reference with the literature review will be done for providing the generalized findings in the study for developing conclusions.

7. Timeframe

Task / Activity	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7	Week 8	Week 9	Week 10	Week 11	Week 12
Finalising Research Proposal												
Ethical Approval & Permissions												
Literature Reviews and Desk Research												
Developing questionnaire and Data collection												
Data Analysis												
Drafting Results & Discussion												
Writing Conclusion & Recommendations												
Final Editing & Proofreading												
Submission of Dissertation												

Figure 3: Timeframe of Study

8. Conclusion

In conclusion the study will particularly focus on the quantitative analysis from the larger consensus of the participants to understand if LinkedIn is effective for the smaller and startup IT companies in the UK for recruiting the employees. Moreover it will also be helpful to analyse the challenges including hiring with resource constraints and lack of authenticity of the profile of candidates. It will also be helpful for developing the recommendations regarding the two step authentication process and the qualitative evaluation of the employees before hiring.

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