

Measuring university students' awareness of finding jobs through social network sites use

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Received Date: 03 / 11 / 2015

Accepted Date: 09/ 01 / 2016

Abstract

Nowadays, there is a growth of creating new accounts in social network sites (SNSs) specially by young people among whom are university students. SNSs (e.g. Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Myspace and so many others) are useful communication tools in which people exchange ideas in their areas of interest. This incredible growth of using these applications makes it significant to investigate specific personal or professional purposes. The purpose of this study was to investigate the extent of awareness among university students for finding jobs through using SNSs. The targeted group was undergraduate and graduate Türkiye Scholarship holders at Ege University, Izmir-Turkey for the spring semester 2014-2015. Two variables were explored: their current ways and awareness of using SNSs for finding jobs. The method applied in this study was quantitative in nature; a web questionnaire was shared through Facebook and randomly 61 participants responded to it who are about 14% of the total number. The data was analyzed by using the SPSS program 19. However, many users have already joined groups and pages in SNSs concerning jobs. The results indicate that there is a lack of awareness among them towards finding jobs and only 14.8% of them who have already been hired as a result of using SNSs. Further; they use SNSs for personal matters rather than professional ones.

Keywords: Finding Jobs; Social Network Sites Use; SNSs; Online Users; Awareness

1. Introduction

Social network sites (SNSs) has rapidly spread among individuals specially university students. A primary purpose of joining social networks' platforms is connecting people with each other (Gross & Acquisti, 2005; Sharma, 2008; Richter & Koch, 2008). Brandtzæg & Heim (2009) found that the most important purposes of joining SNSs are to contact people, to keep in touch with friends, to be socialized and share information. Livari (2014) summarized a couple of studies by stating that socialization is the main fact of using SNSs. Some social platforms focus on achieving personal goals such as Facebook, Myspace while others concentrate on professional goals such as LinkedIn and Ryze (Crompton & Sautte, 2011, p.68). Actually, social networks can be classified into professional, personal or mixed of the two. LinkedIn, for example, is considered to be a professional social network. While, Facebook can be used for both personal and professional purposes. It is emphasized that Facebook also can be viewed as a useful job search tool, Facebook can be useful for personal and professional development (Kelkar, & Kulkarni, 2013).

The top used social networks among users are Facebook, LinkedIn, Pinterest, Twitter and Instagram (Perrin, 2015). Almost all of these platforms are provided with features that help users to achieve their professional purposes such as searching for jobs. Online users can join groups and

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follow professional associations to get up to date about their areas of interests. SNSs allow interaction between job seekers and recruiters. Many online users connect to friends with SNSs like Facebook and Twitter, and other sites such as Myspace and LinkedIn which allow them to discuss issues in regard to professional contexts.

Social networks play the role of both recruiting people and job hunting sites. Nowadays it is common that people use SNSs for professional purposes. Recently, lots of benefits have been witnessed in the fields of having jobs through SNSs such as LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, etc. Yet, it is not known how individuals' awareness of professional usage is. The aim of the present study was to investigate the awareness among university students for finding jobs through using SNSs.

The hypotheses of study are as follows

1. There is a lack of awareness among online users of using SNSs for finding jobs.
2. Users' current usage is still focused on personal purposes.
3. There is a lack of selecting the right social networks for achieving professional purposes.

In order to examine the hypotheses presented above, a web questionnaire was conducted between May 25th and June 17th, 2015.

2. Research background

According to Jobvite Social Recruiting Survey (2013), the most used social networks for recruiting are: LinkedIn with 94%, Facebook with 65% and Twitter with 55%. These applications can be used for both personal and professional purposes. On LinkedIn, for example, individuals can connect with each other for achieving professional purposes. A lot of professional individuals and associations are connected with LinkedIn accounts. Ellison, & Boyd, (2013) indicated that SNSs users have the opportunity to interact by joining different groups like communities on SNSs. These individuals and associations have their own groups that are useful in providing information to members of the group (Reed, 2012). By following them, online users can get updated about their areas of interests. However, online users have little knowledge that utilizing SNSs for professional purposes would really help in finding jobs.

Social network sites have positively contributed to the growth of job opportunities. They have successfully connected people from all over the world in order to reach their goals and provided assistance for the purpose of gaining professional purposes. SNSs have almost become universal and positively contributed to recruiting and job search as well. By 2014, LinkedIn has more than 300 million professional members all over the world (Statista, 2014). Brad and Schepp, emphasize LinkedIn as a successful tool for both job seekers and recruiters. They added that some people have already found jobs as a result of using LinkedIn (Brad & Schepp, 2010). Nowadays, SNSs have influenced the process of searching for jobs. Some Individuals are trying many ways to find jobs through SNSs. Social interactions which transfer information among social networks are the first step to find better results about jobs (Granovetter, 2005). Salpeter, (2011) referred to the importance of joining groups and sharing information and asking questions within the network.

After creating a SNS account, users start designing their profiles according to their purposes of use. Profiles are the users' opportunity to reflect what they are doing. Almost all types of SNSs have similar profiles provided with features and tools that can be used in order to help users reach their aims. Therefore, online users, who want to find jobs, should reflect a good impression in

their profiles (Roberts & Roach, 2009). They need to be aware of sharing their information and make their social presence more positive (Benson & Filippaios, 2015). Furthermore, SNSs offer very useful features for those who want to improve their professional fields such as searching for jobs. Some of the prominent features that promote finding jobs are search and groups. It is emphasized that social networking sites have powerful search engines which can help you to track down individuals and companies that may be of interest to you (Fagan, 2011, p. 93). These services are offered in almost every social network. They enable users to search for keywords (e.g. online jobs, Human Resource Manager) related to their areas of interest and to join and interact with experts.

3. Methodology

A web questionnaire was designed by the researcher for the purpose of measuring the awareness of finding jobs on social networks among university students. The web questionnaire contains demographic questions and consists of 3 simple and multiple choice questions. It also includes 9 items about the awareness among online users, and 7 items about the users' current usage. The web questionnaire was posted for data collection between May 25th and June 17th, 2015. It was shared through Facebook and personal emails of Turkish scholarship holders. A total of 61 valid responses was collected through the online application Pollmill. The answers were downloaded in a form of sav and xlsx format files. Based on the sampling method, the participants were university students those who are under the auspices of Erasmus program at Vilnius University.

Figure (1) Demographics of the responses

Respondents	Gender		No	Percent
	M	F		
Undergraduate students			26	42.06%
Graduates (Master)			35	57.04%
Total	43	18	61	

4. Findings and Discussion

The present study is an attempt to investigate the awareness of finding jobs through social networks usage among online users (Turkish scholarships holders at Ege University, Izmir- Turkey, spring semester 2014-2015). The findings indicated that a total of 61 undergraduate and graduate students answered the web questionnaire questions. Using the data from the web questionnaire, this study examined the three hypotheses mentioned in the introduction.

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Table 1. Awareness of using SNSs among users

Items	Mean	Std. Deviation
Using social network sites improved my knowledge about jobs	3,61	,802
Finding jobs in social network sites is an important source for me	3,05	,990
Following jobs sites and institutions on social network sites will help me find jobs	3,51	,887
Following professional peoples' pages and blogs enable me to find good professional opportunities	3,39	,918
My profile design is important for finding jobs and scholarships	3,10	,961
Social network sites offer useful tools for posting jobs and scholarships	3,46	1,026
Social network sites enable me to achieve my professional goals	3,03	1,169
Social network sites encourage people to search for jobs and scholarships	3,57	,884
I believe social networks have developed my professional life	3,13	1,087
Over Average	3,31	,969

In table 1, the results clearly show online users' awareness aspects towards finding jobs on social networks. The over average (M: 3.31, SD: 1.101) which indicates limited interest of users to find jobs through social networks. It also points out to the highest rated point is "using social network sites improved my knowledge about jobs" with (M: 3.61 and SD: .802), and the lowest rated point is "finding jobs in social network sites is an important source for me" with (M:3.05 and SD: .990). The results show that users are little aware of the posts regarding jobs and they are sometimes exposed to jobs news but they don't depend much on social networks to find jobs. This leads to support the first hypothesis "there is a lack of awareness towards finding jobs through using social networks".

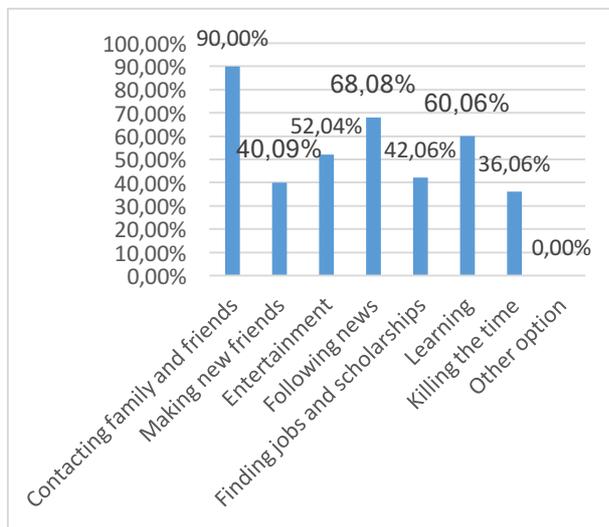
Table 2. Current ways of using SNSs

Items	Mean	Std. Deviation
I follow jobs posts and pages in my social network sites	3,28	1,157
I regularly use social network sites to find jobs	3,00	1,017
I post news about jobs in my social network sites	2,72	1,227
On my social network sites, I exchange information about jobs	2,74	1,196
I ask my network friends about posting jobs	2,90	1,150
I follow professional associations or institutions in the social networks	3,54	1,026
I use social networks in personal matters more than professional matters	3,79	,933
Over average	3.13	1.100

Table 2 is provided in order to determine the users' current practices of social network sites for the sake of searching for jobs. The over average (M: 3.13, SD: 1.100) shows the practices of finding jobs is very limited. The highest rated point is "I use social networks in personal matters more than professional matters" with (M:3.79, SD: ,933), and the lowest rated point is "I post news about jobs in my social network sites" with (M: 2.72, SD: 1,227). The results reveal that online users joined social networks in order to achieve personal goals more than professional

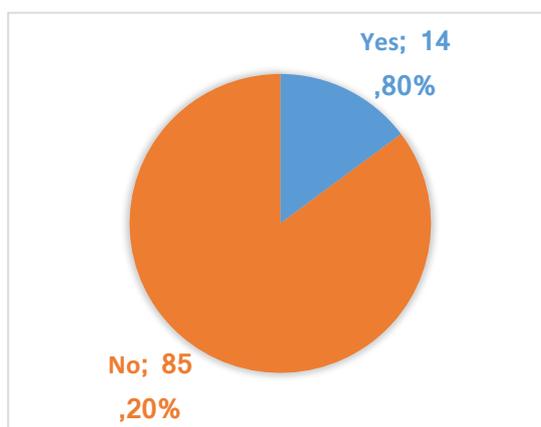
ones. However, they follow some professional associations; their mindset is limited towards searching for jobs and they rarely share information concerning jobs on their social networks.

Figure 2. Using SNSs for professional purposes



The purpose of the question asked in this table is to know how much percent of users use social network for professional purposes. The result reveals that only 42.06% of users utilize social networks for the sake of job search. A main purpose of joining social networks is to contact family and friends, to follow news and to learn. 90.00% of users indicated contacting family and friends is their top goal in using social networks. On the basis of this result, it can be stated that users' attitudes and views regarding accomplishing professional purposes is very less compared to being socialized like contacting family and friends. Both table (2) and figure (2) support the second hypothesis in which users tend to use social networks for reaching personal goals.

Figure 3. Percentage of Hired users



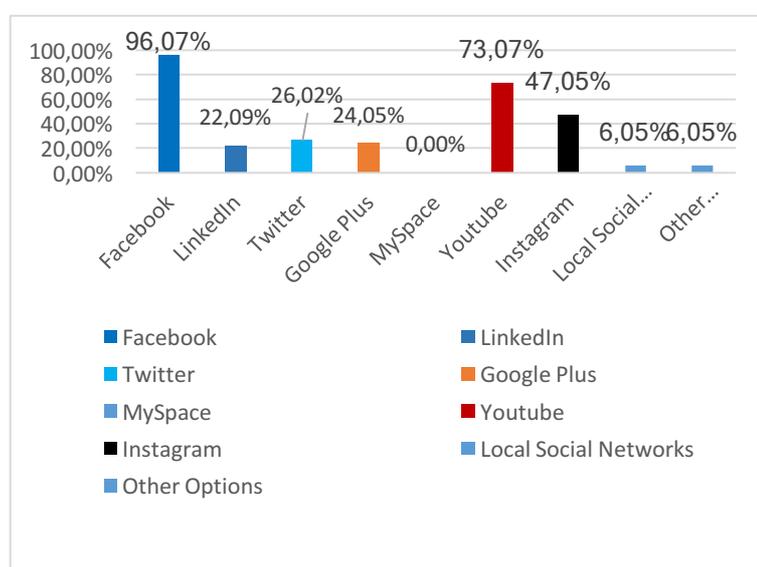
In order to examine the extent of online users who had already got jobs as a result of using social network sites, they were asked a direct question “Have you ever got a job by contacting professional institutions through social network sites?” The result shows that the over majority

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indicates they have not got jobs by contacting professional institutions and only 14.80% of them who got hired through SNSs.

In order to test the hypothesis concerning the lack of selecting the right SNSs for achieving professional purposes, the respondents were asked about types of SNSs they are actively using. It is found that users use more than one social network and the most used SNSs among users are Facebook (90.07%), YouTube (73.07%), then Instagram (47.05%) is followed. From the figure analysis, there is a positive indication in which many users use more than a social network. That means the more diverse SNSs they use, the better job opportunities they might find. On the other hand, a few of them use LinkedIn and Twitter although these social networks are considered effective to job search.

Figure 4. Type of Social network sites



The study emphasized that the most important reasons for joining social networks are to contact family and friends and follow news. Similarly, there are many significant purposes that online users would achieve in joining SNSs. The most important two are to contact people and be in touch with friends (Brandtzæg and Heim, 2009). As found in research done by Kodjamanis & Angelopoulos, (2013) with regard to consumer attitudes towards advertising on SNSs Facebook in particular, they found that a percent of 14.9 uses Facebook for the purposes of searching for jobs. This study shows 42.06% of university students use SNSs in order to achieve professional goals such as finding jobs and 14.80% of them got hired as result of their use to SNSs. Another study by Suki, Ramayah, Ming and Suki indicated that only 18.4% use SNSs in order to search for jobs (Suki, Ramayah, Ming, & Suki, 2011, p. 43). Thus, the findings of this study provide strong support for the first hypothesis that there is a lack of awareness among university students for finding jobs through SNSs.

The result of this study suggested that many online users use more than one social network which is a good indication to raise the opportunity of finding jobs. But, there is a lack in selecting the right network so that they wouldn't easily achieve professional goals. Participants in this study use Facebook and YouTube at the first place then Instagram and Twitter come next. Facebook is

also considered to be a valuable tool for finding jobs (Crompton, & Sautte, 2011; Kelkar, & Kul-karni, 2013). This study shows that the majority of users have already joined Facebook more than other social networks such as LinkedIn and Twitter. It is noted that Twitter has professional development like other SNSs and LinkedIn is a more professional social network which enable users to assist each other regarding job matters (Salpeter, 2011). The result of this study supports the hypothesis number 3. It indicates that participants are less interested in joining LinkedIn and Twitter. Thus, their chances to find jobs on social networks might be less. Online users, who want to follow jobs, should take advantage of the provided tools and selecting the correct network in order to hunt jobs. In general, the findings of this study support the hypotheses, namely users' lack of awareness to find jobs through social networks, selecting the right SNSs and focusing on personal purposes.

5. Conclusion

Using social network sites can not only be limited to contacting friends and daily routine usage, it can also be used in order to achieve professional purposes namely job search. Many previous studies confirm the usefulness of using SNSs to gain professional goals such as finding jobs, but a large percent of online users are still not aware of the usefulness of SNSs in finding jobs. The present study aimed at investigating the attitudes and views of online users (Turkish scholarship holders at Ege university, Izmir-Turkey) towards their awareness of finding jobs through using social network sites. There is an increase of joining social networks platforms on a daily basis, and many users have been already using more than one social network. Within the network, they joined groups and professional associations and job employers. This study indicates that there is a lack of awareness among them towards finding jobs. Also, only few users benefit of getting jobs as a result of using social networks. It is only 14.8% of them who have already been hired as a result of using SNSs. In addition, the study revealed that many of them tend to use social networks in order to achieve personal purposes more than professional ones. It is recommended that in order to achieve professional purposes such as finding jobs, users are advised to use social network features like groups and searching. They also need to create accounts in professional networks such as LinkedIn. This study makes a significant contribution to the way university students use social networks for finding jobs.

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