



Characteristics of Social Networking Sites Users: LinkedIn in Obtaining Career Benefits

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Abstract. This study further explores networking behavior using LinkedIn Social Networking Sites (SNS) related to personal characteristics, specifically Extraversion and Protean Career Orientation traits, in obtaining career benefits. Using a sample that focuses on LinkedIn users in Indonesia aged 25–34 years which is the age of dominance of LinkedIn users, this research was conducted using a quantitative method from LinkedIn profile characteristics and an online questionnaire. Data were collected from 615 respondents who filled out the questionnaire and were confirmed as valid LinkedIn users in Indonesia. Results showed that Extraversion and Protean Career Orientation both indeed have a positive relationship to various networking behaviors. However, networking behaviors themselves do not mediate the relationship between individual characteristics and individual LinkedIn usage. Also, we found that the passive consumption of LinkedIn tends to result in more various career benefits instead of the active scope.

Keywords: Social Networking Sites · Career Benefits · Extraversion · Protean Career Orientation · Networking · LinkedIn

1 Introduction

The dynamics of economic and social conditions in current developments encourage substantial transformation and new perspectives related to career management [1]. With such a dynamic work environment as currently experienced, the possibility of each individual finding and/or maintaining a position in the labor market both internally and externally becomes essential to reduce the impact of insecurity in the employment sector [1]. The modern career perspective describes more proactive behavior, choices, and changes that individuals make in their lives to achieve career outcomes [2]. The shift occurred from Traditional Career Management or Organizational Career Management (OCM) to Individual Career Management or commonly known as Career Self Management (CSM) [1].

This trend occurs in line with the concept of a “new career,” which explains that with a high level of ambiguity towards careers, this makes careers increasingly influenced by one’s intrinsic values compared to extrinsic motivation from companies or organizations and then develops with the concept of protean career orientation. [1] identified that in Individual Career Management, there are two basic efforts made in the context of career development, namely self-nomination and networking. Networking refers to developing relationships to gain access to information, career guidance, and career support.

As networking has various benefits to individuals professionally, various studies suggest that networking is a vital career self-management strategy for career success [3]. Networking behavior carried out by individuals is in line with how a person makes decisions about his career. In making these decisions, many individuals seek support from friends, family, and colleagues who can help them make better decisions [4]. No exception with connections on Social Networking Sites (SNS). The widespread use of SNS as a medium for conducting networking behavior has made the media also utilized by Human Resources (HR) practitioners, especially recruiters. Because even though today’s career decisions are more directed to the individual level, organizations/companies still have a role in it [5].

[4] explained that research related to the reasons behind these networking activities is still minimal, especially in the use of Social Networking Sites (SNS) when in fact, their use is beneficial both personally and professionally for its users. Various studies related to networking are more focused on traditional or face-to-face networking behavior. Even today, many SNSs have sprung up, and one of the most frequently used ones is LinkedIn, which was formed to facilitate various groups of people to connect professionally. Founded in 2003, LinkedIn is now the largest professional network on the internet, with a total of 722 million users with various backgrounds. (LinkedIn, 2021). In Indonesia, based on data published by (Statista, 2021), as of December 2021, the number of LinkedIn users has reached 20 million users.

1.1 Literature Review

In networking behavior, several aspects of personality have a positive influence. This is explained based on (Wolff & Kim, 2012) in [6] that extraversion has a closer relationship with networking than introversion. One form of networking behavior, the use of SNS, is also one aspect of Career Self Management (CSM) that individuals can do. Research shows that extraversion and neuroticism affect the CSM process through influence: extraversion facilitates the CSM process through increasing positive affect, which in turn is positively related to self-efficacy and outcome expectations (Wilhelm & Hirschi, 2019). Several studies have shown that extraversion shows a positive relationship with the use of Social Networking Sites (SNS) [3]. Specifically, several studies support that LinkedIn provides a strong signal regarding extraversion [6].

Hypothesis 1. Individuals who have Extraversion characteristics have a positive effect on the use of LinkedIn’s Social Networking Sites (SNS)

Various studies on career success have developed, especially in proactive behavior in careers such as networking, planning, and exploration [7]. Research shows that Protean

Career Orientation is associated with various proactive behaviors, including networking [7]. Individuals with the Protean Career Orientation characteristics focus more on themselves as the main actors in their careers than individuals who rely more on their organization. Those with a higher Protean Career Orientation are more independent in self-direction in their careers [3], so they will actively seek to build relationships with others who may have the potential to provide assistance or career opportunities. Thus, individuals with the characteristics of the Protean Career Orientation will actively build relationships with other people in order to provide career opportunities. [3].

Hypothesis 2. Characteristics of Individuals who have a Protean Career Orientation have a positive effect on the use of LinkedIn's Social Networking Sites (SNS).

Several studies have been carried out as Social Networking Sites (SNS) support social relationships in networking. However, most research focuses on traditional or face-to-face networking behavior. Due to the limitations of this study, there is not much literature that can support the formulation of hypotheses regarding the effect of using SNS [3]. There are at least three ways in which SNS can support networking behavior including SNS can help close weak ties, strengthen strong ties, and can help users to explore weak ties in order to build relationships [3].

Hypothesis 3. Networking Behavior has a positive influence on the use of Individual LinkedIn Social Networking Sites (SNS)

Extraversion affects networking behavior because it facilitates individual social activities [8]. Extraversion is closely related to a person's ability to socialize with other people, whereas people with high levels of extraversion tend to like to connect with other people. Research conducted by [3] suggests that there is a role for networking that mediates extraversion relationships and LinkedIn uses. Specifically, several studies support that LinkedIn provides a strong signal regarding extraversion [6].

Hypothesis 4. Networking Behavior mediates the effect of the characteristics of individuals who have an extraversion personality on the use of LinkedIn's Social Networking Sites (SNS)

Career management strategies are essential because the burden of responsibility for one's career has shifted from the organization to the individual [3] also revealed that Protean Career Orientation significantly affects an individual's networking ability, as indicated by the number of contacts and the frequency of use of LinkedIn. Engaging in networking behavior is one method that professionals can use to help manage protean careers proactively [9].

Hypothesis 5. Networking Behavior mediates the influence between the characteristics of individuals who have a protean career orientation on the use of LinkedIn's Social Networking Sites (SNS)

Using Social Networking Sites (SNS) provides opportunities for individuals to explore information about their connections, so they can know whom to approach if they need professional help. This implies that individuals need to write their interests and activities on their SNS accounts so that others can skim through their information to see what is of interest or use to them [3] It was found that the influence between the frequency of LinkedIn use and network benefits was consistently higher than the effect of Networking Career Benefits using passive measures in LinkedIn profile data [3].

Hypothesis 6. Use of LinkedIn's Social Networking Sites (SNS) Individuals has a positive influence on Networking Career Benefits.

2 Methods

2.1 Participants and Procedures

We used the sample of ages ranging from 25–34 years old of LinkedIn users in Indonesia as that range dominates with the percentage of 58.6% of total Indonesian users. From the 690 respondents that we got filled the online questionnaire, we only used the 615 respondents because some of them do not agree with making their LinkedIn page our research object. Also, not only because of no consensus, but some of the respondents also do not have LinkedIn, which is not relevant for our research.

2.2 Survey Measures

Extraversion

This study measured extraversion with John and associates [10] eight-item scale ($\alpha = 0.890$; all reliabilities refer to this study). Respondents indicated their level of agreement on a seven-point Likert scale from 1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree.

Protean Career Orientation

This study used [11] seven-item scale ($\alpha = 0.692$). Respondents indicated their level of agreement on a seven-point Likert scale from 1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree.

Networking Behaviors

We assessed networking using [12] multidimensional 44-item questionnaire. In accordance with the two facets of (1) internal vs. external networking and (2) building – maintaining – using contacts, this measure consists of six subscales.

These subscales are building internal contacts (six items, $\alpha = 0.836$), maintaining internal contacts (eight items, $\alpha = 0.732$), using internal contacts (eight items, $\alpha = 0.795$), building external contacts (seven items, $\alpha = 0.812$), maintaining external contacts (seven items, $\alpha = 0.641$), and using external contacts (eight items, $\alpha = 0.844$).

LinkedIn Profile

This study refers to the measurement that [3] uses in measuring LinkedIn profiles. Specific to this variable, the researchers directly observe and get the information from each LinkedIn page of respondents. We divide this variable into two-dimension: active scope and passive consumption. We measured active scope ($\alpha = 0.550$) by looking at their posted photo (0 = no, 1 = yes), number of connections, number of endorsements, number of received recommendations, and number of groups membership. For passive consumption ($\alpha = 0.454$), we measured their pages of influencers, companies, schools, and causes following. Because the numbers are highly skewed, we use log transformation for this variable measurement.

Networking Career Benefits

This study used [9] 38-item networking benefits scale. The stem of the networking benefits scale was modified to state, "By using LinkedIn..." to emphasize the networking benefits of using LinkedIn. Participants indicated their responses on a seven-point Likert scale from 1 = not at all to 7 = to a very large extent. The scale measures seven networking benefits: work-related assistance (seven items, $\alpha = 0.934$); career sponsorship (seven items, $\alpha = 0.909$); social support (five items, $\alpha = 0.922$); job search assistance (five items, $\alpha = 0.773$); business assistance (six items, $\alpha = 0.806$); protection and political guidance (five items, $\alpha = 0.852$); and information and ideas (three items, $\alpha = 0.821$).

3 Results and Discussion

3.1 Results

We conducted path analyses using SmartPLS to examine our model concerning professional usage of SNSs. The hypothesized model fits the data, $\chi^2 = 18.994,021$, NFI = 0,600, SRMR = 0.071, Rms_Theta = 0.087.

Hypothesis 1 predicts that Extraversion has a positive relationship with the usage of LinkedIn, which is partially supported in this research. The result is insignificant regarding the relationship between extraversion and passive consumption of LinkedIn usage (Path coefficient = 0.060, P-value = 0.208). Hypothesis 2 is also not supported by our result. Individuals with protean career orientation have no significant relationship

with their usage either in active consumption (Path coefficient = 0.109, P value = 0,151) or passive consumption (Path coefficient = 0.074, P value = 0,293).

Hypothesis 3 is also partially supported. Networking behavior: building internal contacts has a significant negative effect on the use of LinkedIn's Social Networking Sites (SNS) in an active scope (Path coefficient = -0.100 p-value = 0.012). Meanwhile, no significant negative effect was found on using LinkedIn's SNS in passive consumption (Path coefficient = -0.08 p-value = 0.081). In addition, it was also found that there was no significant negative effect on the relationship between networking behavior: maintaining internal contacts on the active scope (Path coefficient = -0.006 p-value = 0.946), using internal contacts on passive consumption (Path coefficient = -0.036 p-value = 0.482), building external contacts to the active scope (Path coefficient = -0.046 p-value = 0.610), maintaining external contacts to passive consumption (Path coefficient = -0.034 p-value = 0.659), using external contacts on passive consumption (Path coefficient = -0.061 p-value 0.378). There are also four relationships that state that there is no significant positive effect. Networking behavior: maintaining internal contacts against the use of Social Networking Sites (SNS): passive consumption (Path coefficient = 0.069 with p-value = 0.311) using internal contacts against active scope (Path coefficient = 0.016 with p-value = 0.842), maintaining external contacts to the active scope (Path coefficient = 0.083 p-value = 0.222), using external contacts to the active scope (Path coefficient = 0.060 with a p-value = 0.398). In this study, the hypothesis is only supported by one dimension. Networking behavior: building external contacts has a positive influence on the use of LinkedIn: passive consumption (Path coefficient = 0.169 p-value = 0.003).

For Hypothesis 4, the Indirect relationship between extraversion and use of LinkedIn: Active Scope through the mediation of Building Internal Contacts has a path coefficient of -0.038 with a p-value of 0.126; through the mediation of Maintaining Internal Contacts with a path coefficient of -0.001 and p-value 0.951; through mediation Using Internal Contacts with path coefficient 0.000 and p-value 0.933; through the mediation of Building External Contacts with path coefficient -0.006 and p-value; through mediation Maintaining External Contacts with path coefficient 0.011 and p-value 0.321; through mediation Using External Contacts with a path coefficient of 0.007 and a p-value of 0.457. Individual extraversion characteristics have no significant positive effect on using LinkedIn SNS: Passive Consumption (path coefficient: 0.060 with a significance level of p-value 0.208). Mediating networking behavior did not change the relationship and remained insignificant at all, indicating that there was no mediating effect on this relationship. The indirect relationship between extraversion and use of LinkedIn's Social Networking Sites: passive consumption through the mediation of Building Internal Contacts has a path coefficient of -0.031 with a p-value of 0.098; through the mediation of Maintaining Internal Contacts with a path coefficient of 0.010 and p-value 0.384; through mediation Using Internal Contacts with path coefficient -0.001 and p-value

0.807; through the mediation of Building External Contacts with a path coefficient of 0.023 and a p-value of 0.079; through mediation Maintaining External Contacts with path coefficient -0.004 and p-value 0.710; through mediation Using External Contacts with path coefficient -0.007 and p-value 0.463. Job-search assistance (path coefficient = 0.142 p-value = 0.000), information ideas (path coefficient = 0.134 p-value = 0.000). The use of passive consumption with work-related assistance (path coefficient = 0.088 p-value = 0.032), protection and political guidance (path coefficient = 0.116 p-value = 0.034), information and ideas (path coefficient = 0.091 p-value = 0.003).

In Hypothesis 5, there is a relationship that indicates that there is a role for full mediation, namely through the mediation of Building External Contacts with a path coefficient of 0.027 and p-value of 0.025). It can be concluded that Building External Contacts is a variable that fully mediates the relationship between protean career orientation and the use of LinkedIn passive consumption because previously, the direct effect that appeared was not significantly positive, but with the addition of the mediating variable.

For Hypothesis 6, the results of the statistical test of the hypothesis in this study found a negative relationship. The use of LinkedIn's Social Networking Sites (SNS) in terms of active scope has an insignificant negative effect on Networking Career Benefits: Protection and Political Guidance (Path coefficient = -0.007 p-value = 0.925). This study also found that there were at least six relationships that were stated to have a significant positive effect. Active scope with work-related assistance (path coefficient = 0.112 p-value = 0.036), job-search assistance (path coefficient = 0.142 p-value = 0.000), information ideas (path coefficient = 0.134 p-value = 0.000). The use of passive consumption with work-related assistance (path coefficient = 0.088 p-value = 0.032), protection and political guidance (path coefficient = 0.116 p-value = 0.034), information and ideas (path coefficient = 0.091 p-value = 0.003).

The use of Social networking Sites (SNS) LinkedIn active scope has a positive and insignificant effect on the acquisition of networking career benefits career sponsorship (path coefficient = 0.064 p-value = 0.498), social support (path coefficient = 0.100 p-value = 0.158), business assistance (path coefficient = 0.093 p-value = 0.117). The use of SNS LinkedIn passive consumption has an insignificant positive effect on the acquisition of networking career benefits: career sponsorship (path coefficient = 0.081 p-value = 0.163), social support (path coefficient = 0.078 p-value = 0.072), job-search assistance (path coefficient = 0.077 p-value = 0.068), business assistance (path coefficient = 0.079 p-value = 0.089).

3.2 Discussion

The most consistent finding in various studies is that individuals with extraversion personality have a positive influence on the use of social media. This is in line with the results of this study which found that extraversion personality has a positive influence on the use of SNS: LinkedIn. The study also suggests that the use of SNS: LinkedIn both active scope and passive consumption have an influence on various dimensions of networking career benefits. However, it is known that there is one negative influence that appears, namely the use of LinkedIn: active scope on networking careers benefits: protection and political guidance. Whereas previous research found that the effect that arises is a positive influence. Like using LinkedIn: active scope refers to activities that require more effort than passive consumption, which tends to only receive information from the pages you follow. People who are actively using their LinkedIn SNS tend to make multiple posts and receive comments from their SNS connections. Various comments that appear are not only positive comments but also negative comments that are not in line with the individual values of SNS users. So that it makes users feel they don't feel protected. As protection and political guidance refer to the benefits obtained in the form of protection that threatens someone from harm or guidance regarding a policy or system. The interesting thing from the results of this study is how the use of LinkedIn active scope is only influenced by extraversion characteristics and network behavior has no mediating effect on this relationship. Meanwhile, for passive use of LinkedIn, the positive influence of network behavior in the form of building external contacts is influenced by all independent variables.

4 Conclusions

Our study's findings that passive consumption in the usage of LinkedIn was more strongly related to various career benefits. This means that the users tend to use LinkedIn to get information by following various pages that may be related to them instead of actively using LinkedIn by connecting with more people, joining more groups, or many others. Managers and professionals can use these research results to be more considerate in using their organization's page to share information that may be related to their benefits.

Besides that, this study also suggests that the active scope LinkedIn users tend not to get the protection and political guidance benefits specifically because the shared information on LinkedIn tends not to be as updated as others. Therefore, managers and professionals need to put more consideration into sharing information using LinkedIn by making sure that the information is as updated as possible.

This study indeed enriches the research specifically in the field of networking and career benefits, especially in the use of Social Networking Sites (SNS), which is very relevant. Even so, there is still some limitation of the study that needs to be acknowledged

and must be taken into consideration for future research. First, in terms of the construct research, it is still focused on characteristics of extraversion and protean career orientation. It would be advantageous if future research could provide broader characteristics to explore regarding SNS usage. Second, this study only uses a sample of 25–34 years old users of LinkedIn. Even though this age range sample is chosen due to most of the users, the different results may also be implied in a different age range. Third, it would be advantageous for future research to use longitudinal data to explore more career benefits that the respondents get from time to time. This study still has not captured those since we only use cross-sectional data.

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