

Understanding the University Students' Outcome Expectations by Using a Professional Networking Site: The Theory of Social Cognitive

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ABSTRACT

Recently, many university students have utilized LinkedIn to their advantage and launched their professional careers. This research attempts to ascertain the relationship between university students' attitudes, intentions, self-efficacy (independent variables), and outcome expectation (dependent variable). There were 157 respondents in the sample, but only 144 replies were valid. An online survey was used to obtain the data for this cross-sectional research. The survey data were calculated and analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS). Results show that self-efficacy and intention significantly influence outcome expectations. Specifically, self-efficacy had a strong positive effect ($\beta = 0.503$, $p < 0.001$), while intention also positively impacted outcome expectations ($\beta = 0.316$, $p < 0.001$). However, students' attitudes toward LinkedIn did not significantly affect outcome expectations ($\beta = 0.141$, $p > 0.05$), leading to the rejection of the hypothesis regarding attitude. These findings indicate that students' confidence in their abilities and their purposeful engagement with LinkedIn are more influential in shaping positive outcomes than their general attitudes toward the platform. To improve student outcomes, universities, and career services should focus on developing students' self-efficacy and LinkedIn skills.

Keywords: Career Networking Site; LinkedIn; Outcome Expectation; Social Cognitive Theory; Social Media

INTRODUCTION

Recently, many university students have increasingly turned to social network sites (SNSs) to interact, connect, and learn academically. These platforms provide students with opportunities to gain skills, knowledge, and various other benefits (Alaslani & Alandejani, 2020). Commonly used SNSs among university students include Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, WhatsApp, and LinkedIn.

Among these, LinkedIn stands out as one of the largest professional networks globally, boasting over 875 million users across more than 200 countries (LinkedIn, 2023). LinkedIn is particularly suitable for university students seeking to establish and develop their professional careers. The platform allows them to showcase their professional identities, connect with peers and industry professionals, and exchange knowledge and information (Castillo-de Mesa & Gómez-Jacinto, 2020).

Moreover, 82% of employers recommend that candidates utilize LinkedIn and other professional SNSs to enhance their visibility. They advise candidates to optimize their profiles by adding relevant headers and sections to effectively showcase their skills and experiences (Hosain & Liu, 2020a). A longitudinal study conducted by Garcia et al. (2023) revealed that having an active and well-structured LinkedIn profile significantly influences hiring decisions. This underscores the importance of LinkedIn as a critical tool for students looking to navigate the job market successfully. By leveraging LinkedIn effectively, students can improve their employability, network with professionals, and access various resources that can aid their career development.

According to Carmack and Heiss (2018), it is essential for university students to understand the value of LinkedIn and actively use the platform to develop a robust online professional network. LinkedIn offers numerous benefits for students, including the ability to explore various professional connections, seek out internship opportunities, and engage with industry experts. However, while recent studies have examined factors such as students' intentions to use LinkedIn, employability, institutional support, and self-branding, there remains a significant gap in research regarding students' outcome expectations when utilizing the platform.

To address this gap, the present research employs Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) as a theoretical framework. SCT emphasizes the interaction between personal factors, behavioral factors, and environmental influences in shaping individuals' behaviors and expectations. By utilizing this theory, this study aims to identify university students' attitudes toward LinkedIn, their self-efficacy in using the platform, and their intentions to engage with it more actively. Additionally, the research will investigate the specific outcome expectations that students anticipate achieving through their LinkedIn usage, such as increased job offers, enhanced professional visibility, or improved networking opportunities.

Understanding these outcome expectations can provide valuable insights for universities and educators seeking to enhance student engagement with LinkedIn. By fostering a deeper awareness of how LinkedIn can impact their career trajectories, students can be better equipped to leverage the platform effectively, ultimately enhancing their employability and professional growth.

University students increasingly turn to LinkedIn as a vital professional networking platform, recognizing its potential to foster connections and enhance career opportunities (Mogaji, 2019; Peterson & Dover, 2014). As the job market becomes more competitive, it is essential for university leaders to equip students with the necessary skills to engage

with online professional communities effectively. By educating students about the benefits of LinkedIn, institutions can help them transition from academia to the professional world and become employable graduates (Brown et al., 2019; Mogaji, 2019).

This research aims to explore various aspects of LinkedIn usage among university students, focusing on their attitudes and outcome expectations. Specifically, the study seeks to analyze the relationship between students' self-efficacy in using LinkedIn and their anticipated outcomes from the platform. Furthermore, the research will examine how students' intentions to engage with LinkedIn correlate with their expected results, providing a comprehensive understanding of the factors that influence their online professional behavior.

To guide this investigation, three research questions have been formulated. The first question explores the relationship between university students' attitudes and their outcome expectations when using LinkedIn (RQ1). The second question examines how self-efficacy influences students' outcome expectations on the platform (RQ2). Lastly, the third question assesses the connection between students' intentions to utilize LinkedIn and their anticipated outcomes (RQ3). Through addressing these questions, the study aims to contribute valuable insights into how LinkedIn can be leveraged by university students for their professional development and future career success.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Social Cognitive Theory (SCT)

SCT is a widely recognized framework that has gained prominence among researchers for its versatility in various domains, including psychology, sociology, and political science (Manjarres-Posada et al., 2020). Developed by Albert Bandura in 1977, SCT emphasizes the dynamic interplay between personal, behavioral, and environmental factors, illustrating how these elements collectively influence human agency and cognitive processes. This theory posits that individuals are not merely passive recipients of environmental stimuli; rather, they actively shape their behaviors and outcomes through their interactions with their surroundings.

Recent research has highlighted the applicability of SCT across diverse fields. In education, for instance, SCT has been employed to understand how students' self-efficacy and outcome expectations affect their learning experiences and academic performance (Yin et al., 2022). In health contexts, it has been utilized to analyze health behaviors and promote healthy lifestyle choices (Manjarres-Posada et al., 2020). Similarly, in entrepreneurship, SCT provides insights into how aspiring entrepreneurs develop confidence and resilience to navigate challenges (Adebusuyi et al., 2022). Furthermore, SCT has been applied to the realm of social media, examining how users' beliefs and perceptions shape their engagement and interactions within online platforms (Kashian & Liu, 2020).

At its core, SCT posits that achieving desired outcomes is a motivational process, whereby individuals sustain their motivation through a combination of personal beliefs, observed behaviors of others, and feedback from their environment (Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2020). This emphasis on the interplay between individual agency and external influences makes SCT a valuable lens through which to explore behavior, motivation, and learning across various contexts.

Hypothesized Model

Outcome Expectation

Outcome expectation is a fundamental concept within SCT, as highlighted by [Bandura \(1986\)](#), who identified it as a crucial variable influencing behavior. Outcome expectation encompasses the anticipated consequences or results that individuals believe will occur as a result of their actions or behaviors ([Fasbender, 2019](#)). These expectations can manifest in various forms, including physical outcomes, such as success in sports, or psychological outcomes, such as improved social connectivity through platforms like social media, depending on the individual's goals and aspirations ([Adebusuyi et al., 2022](#)).

In the context of professional networking, particularly on platforms like LinkedIn, recent studies have demonstrated that users often rely on the anticipated benefits of engagement to justify their participation. Research indicates that university students increasingly recognize LinkedIn as a valuable tool for achieving desired outcomes, such as expanding their professional networks and accessing job opportunities ([Davis et al., 2020](#); [Ruparel et al., 2020](#)). For instance, studies have shown that students expect to enhance their employability through effective networking and visibility on LinkedIn ([Fetherston et al., 2018](#); [Hosain & Liu, 2020b](#); [Nawazkhan et al., 2022](#); [Pena et al., 2022](#)).

As technology continues to shape professional landscapes, university students' reliance on LinkedIn as a means to achieve their career goals highlights the significance of outcome expectations in their engagement with the platform. Investigating these beliefs provides valuable insights into how students view LinkedIn as a catalyst for achieving their professional aspirations. Understanding these expectations can help educators and institutions better support students in leveraging digital tools for career development. Thus, this research aims to explore the relationship between university students' beliefs and their expected outcomes from using LinkedIn, shedding light on the platform's role in fostering career advancement and professional growth.

Attitudes

Attitudes play a crucial role in shaping an individual's beliefs and behaviors, particularly in the context of using professional networking platforms like LinkedIn. According to [Poppy & Bappy \(2020\)](#) and [Putri et al. \(2021\)](#), attitudes encompass a person's beliefs about behavior and its association with specific outcomes, including both positive and negative evaluations of those beliefs. This comprehensive evaluation contributes to how individuals approach a behavior, ultimately influencing their intentions and actions.

The significance of attitudes in predicting behavior is well-established in psychological literature. [Sommer \(2011\)](#) emphasizes that attitudes are fundamental to understanding human behavior, serving as a lens through which individuals assess their environments and make decisions. [Fazio and Williams \(1986\)](#) further argue that attitudes provide a broad perspective on one's overall evaluations of objects, people, or situations, thereby affecting intentions and subsequent behaviors. In this sense, positive attitudes towards LinkedIn may lead to increased engagement and utilization of the platform for professional development.

Moreover, perceived behavioral control, as discussed by [Ahn et al. \(2020\)](#) and [Ajzen \(2002\)](#), reflects the ease or difficulty of performing specific behaviors based on prior experiences. This concept aligns with the idea that students who feel confident in their ability to navigate LinkedIn will likely have more favorable attitudes toward using the platform, subsequently impacting their outcome expectations.

Carmack and Heiss (2018) found a significant relationship between university students' attitudes and their intentions to use LinkedIn. Building on this foundation, the current study posits that university students' attitudes toward LinkedIn are closely related to their outcome expectations when engaging with the platform. Thus, the first hypothesis is formulated as follows:

H1: Attitudes have a positive influence on outcome expectations.

Self-Efficacy

Self-efficacy, defined as an individual's belief in their ability to execute the actions necessary to achieve specific goals (Damayanti, 2019), plays a crucial role in influencing behavior and motivation (Bandura, 1994). This belief can significantly impact how individuals approach tasks and challenges, shaping their persistence and resilience in the face of difficulties (Bandura, 1997). Recent research has highlighted the importance of self-efficacy across various fields, demonstrating its relevance in guiding individuals toward successful outcomes.

For instance, Pekkala and van Zoonen (2021) explored the indirect relationships involving work-related social media use, finding that self-efficacy served as a significant mediator. Similarly, Alvanex-Risco et al. (2022) examined the impact of self-efficacy on individuals' intentions to engage in the Facebook Metaverse. These studies underscore the value of self-efficacy in understanding how users navigate and leverage online platforms effectively.

The comprehensive and accessible foundational knowledge provided by LinkedIn Learning significantly enhances the effectiveness of student-directed exploration and reading courses. In such courses, new subjects are continually investigated collaboratively, promoting a culture of inquiry and shared learning. Given the evolving educational landscape and the need to equip learners who are also professionals, resources like LinkedIn Learning serve as essential tools. These platforms not only provide a wealth of information but also cater to the diverse learning needs of adult learners, allowing them to acquire skills and knowledge at their own pace.

Administrators and educators can adopt various management approaches—such as directive, participatory, or guiding—to foster environments that encourage open access to resources like LinkedIn Learning. By creating opportunities for students to engage with these platforms, institutions can promote a sense of independence and confidence among learners. This empowerment is crucial, as it can lead to improved performance in their professional roles.

Moreover, actors within the educational landscape have shown a growing interest in lifelong learning, largely due to the value and availability of open, asynchronous resources. Such resources not only facilitate skill development but also align with the principles of andragogy, which emphasize the importance of self-directed learning in adult education. By nurturing a normalized educational environment that encourages exploration and development, learners can build upon their strengths, ultimately enhancing their employability and adaptability in the workforce. This focus on lifelong learning is fundamental to preparing individuals for the dynamic challenges of the modern job market, ensuring that they remain competitive and well-equipped for future opportunities.

In the context of LinkedIn, self-efficacy can influence how users perceive their capabilities and, consequently, their outcome expectations regarding the platform's potential benefits. This research seeks to investigate how self-efficacy affects LinkedIn

users' engagement and their anticipation of achieving professional networking opportunities, skill development, and job placements. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H2: Self-efficacy has a positive influence on outcome expectation.

Tone-Driving Learning

Online learning necessitates a significant degree of self-directed learning. Students enrolled in online courses have the opportunity to learn and practice self-direction, empowering them to decide where, when, and sometimes how they will complete their studies (Fozeli et al., 2022). Adult learners particularly value having choices and engaging in intentional learning experiences, which leads to a preference for self-directed education. This built-in customization is extremely beneficial for learners as it allows them to tailor their educational experiences to align with their individual learning preferences.

Many individuals utilize LinkedIn Learning to refresh their knowledge from previous courses and acquire new skills and languages relevant to their part-time employment. Workers can deepen their understanding of previously learned concepts and enhance their web development skills through resources available on LinkedIn Learning. The platform's extensive library enables students to explore a vast array of videos and courses, allowing them to find content that meets their specific needs. Features such as release dates, course feedback, and skill levels enhance the user experience by facilitating informed choices.

Student-directed learning is known to have a profound impact on educational outcomes, as it fosters reflection, critical thinking, and increased motivation through ownership of the learning process (Shahi & Giashi, 2019). For undergraduate students participating in self-directed courses, the skills and knowledge gained can lead to promising opportunities in postgraduate studies and innovative career paths. By cultivating a habit of self-directed learning, students can better prepare themselves for the complexities and demands of the modern workforce, positioning themselves as proactive learners and adaptable professionals in an ever-evolving job market.

Scholars should be encouraged to enroll in self-directed and exploration-oriented courses in their postgraduate studies by providing them with foundational knowledge, tools, and frameworks. Enhancing the effectiveness of independent exploration has the potential to directly benefit individual research endeavors and close gaps in the availability of specialized postgraduate courses. Such encouragement not only empowers students to take ownership of their educational journeys but also equips them with the necessary skills to navigate the challenges of their chosen fields.

Intention

This research focuses on the intention of LinkedIn usage to understand university students' desires and interests in engaging more deeply with the platform to achieve their desired outcomes (Alvarez-Risco et al., 2022). According to Fishbein and Ajzen (1975), an individual's intention is influenced by their emotions and beliefs. In the context of LinkedIn, the greater the intention to use the platform, the more likely university students are to continue utilizing it for exploring professional networks and seeking job or internship opportunities (Ajzen, 2020; Candra et al., 2020).

Intention is seen as a precursor to action; it reflects the motivation and commitment of students to engage with LinkedIn in a meaningful way. For instance, if students have a strong intention to connect with industry professionals or seek mentorship opportunities,

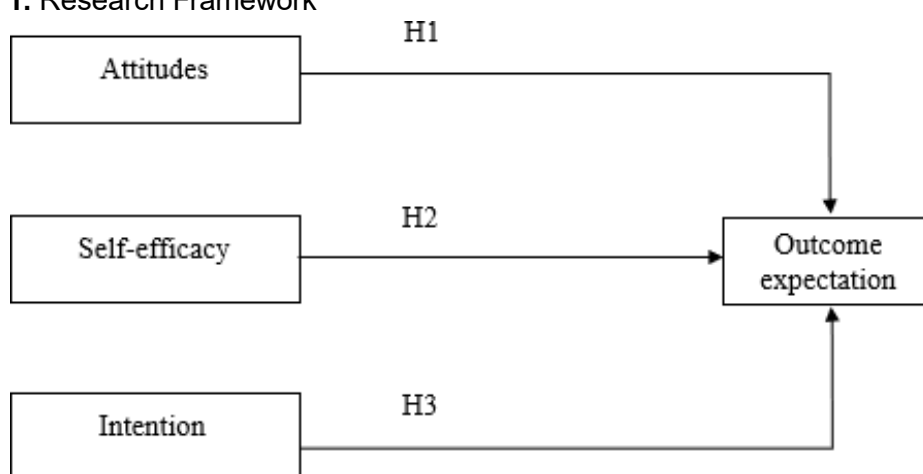
they are more likely to take proactive steps, such as updating their profiles, reaching out to connections, or engaging with relevant content on the platform. This behavior can lead to positive outcomes, such as enhanced professional networks and increased job prospects.

Thus, this research proposes the following hypothesis:

H3: Intention has a positive influence on outcome expectation.

Figure 1 below displays a research framework adopted by SCT. This research framework assumes that a person's attitude, self-efficacy, and intention could influence a person's outcome expectation.

Figure 1. Research Framework



RESEARCH METHOD

In this research, responses were gathered using a quantitative approach. To examine the outcome expectations of university students, a simple random sampling procedure was employed, targeting university students who have an active LinkedIn account. This method ensured a representative sample of the population under study, allowing for the collection of unbiased data.

Instrumentation

An online survey via Google Forms was utilized to facilitate data collection. The questionnaire consisted of five sections: demographic information, attitudes toward LinkedIn usage, self-efficacy regarding LinkedIn, intentions to use LinkedIn, and outcome expectations from using the platform. The demographic section aimed to gather information on participants' gender, age, nationality, education level, field of study, and frequency of LinkedIn usage, providing a comprehensive background of the respondents.

For the attitudes variable, the questionnaire was adapted from Carmack and Heiss (2018), with a reliability coefficient (α) of 0.70, mean (M) of 3.64, and standard deviation (SD) of 0.603. It included four items that assessed students' attitudes toward LinkedIn, such as statements like "LinkedIn is a useful medium for job or internship searching" and "LinkedIn is valuable for socializing."

The self-efficacy section also drew from Carmack and Heiss (2018), with a mean of 3.74, SD of 0.757, and a high-reliability coefficient (α) of 0.85. This part of the questionnaire included five items that measured students' self-efficacy regarding LinkedIn usage,

including statements such as "I am able to use LinkedIn for job or internship searching" and "I am able to access the LinkedIn website." These carefully structured instruments aimed to capture the various dimensions of university students' interactions with LinkedIn and their expectations regarding its use.

The intention variable in the questionnaire consisted of four items, including statements like "I intend to use LinkedIn because it is very effective for job or internship applications," which were adopted from Carmack and Heiss (2018). The outcome expectation scale included six items, such as "If I use LinkedIn, I will gain a lot of useful information" and "If I use LinkedIn, I will spend less time searching for jobs or internships." This scale was adapted and validated with a reliability coefficient (α) of 0.86. All items related to attitudes, self-efficacy, intention, and outcome expectations were rated on a seven-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree), allowing for nuanced responses that reflected the participants' beliefs and intentions regarding LinkedIn usage.

Data Collection

Data collection for this research was conducted in December 2022 using an online questionnaire survey. The survey was disseminated through various social media platforms, including Facebook, LinkedIn, WhatsApp, and Telegram, to reach a broad audience of university students. To determine the necessary sample size, G*Power software was utilized, which indicated that 99 respondents were required for the study (Kang, 2021). Ultimately, a total of 157 responses were collected, exceeding the minimum requirement. However, after filtering for validity, only 144 responses were considered usable, as some respondents indicated that they did not have a LinkedIn account.

Data Analysis

Data analysis for this research was performed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) Statistics version 26, which is recognized for its comprehensive capabilities in quantitative research (Rahman & Muktadir, 2021). SPSS is a powerful and user-friendly software that facilitates statistical data analysis across various fields, including engineering, computer science, pharmaceuticals, chemistry, biology, and other scientific research areas (Okagbue et al., 2021; Ong & Puteh, 2017). In this study, SPSS was employed to conduct descriptive analysis, assess the reliability of the measurement instruments, perform correlation analysis, and execute multiple regression analysis to evaluate the relationships among the variables.

RESULTS

Demographic Profile

Table 1. Summary of Respondent's Profile (N = 144)

Characteristics		Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Female	87	60.4
	Male	57	39.6
Age	18-20 years old	5	3.5
	21-24 years old	138	95.8
	25-28 years old	1	0.7
Nationality	Malaysian	109	75.7
	Indian	23	16.0
	Chinese	6	4.2
	Indonesian	4	2.8
	Thailand	1	0.7
	Canadian	1	0.7

Level of Education	Bachelor of Degree	121	84.0
	Master Degree	23	16.0
Stream of Study	Art	90	62.5
	Science	46	31.9
	Engineering	8	5.6

Table 1 provides a detailed summary of the demographic profile of the respondents in this study. Among the 144 students surveyed, 60.4% identified as female, while 39.6% identified as male. The age distribution reveals that 3.5% of respondents were aged between 18 and 20 years, with a significant majority (94.8%) falling within the age range of 21 to 24 years. Only one respondent (0.7%) was between 25 and 28 years old. The sample predominantly comprised Malaysians (75.7%), followed by Indians (16.0%), Chinese (4.2%), and Indonesians (2.8%), with one student each from Canada and Thailand (0.7%). In terms of academic pursuits, 84.0% of respondents were enrolled in bachelor's degree programs, while 16.0% were pursuing master's degrees. Additionally, a noteworthy 62.5% of the students were studying in the arts field, highlighting a strong representation of arts students in the sample.

Descriptive Statistics, Reliability, and Correlations Analysis

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics, Zero-order Correlations of All Study Variables and Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha

Variables	ATT	SE	INT	OE
ATT	0.928			
SE	0.923**	0.938		
INT	0.852**	0.837**	0.909	
OE	0.875**	0.898*	0.857*	0.949
Number of items	4	5	4	6
Mean	6.453	6.550	6.396	6.545
Standard deviation	0.949	0.924	0.931	0.831
Skewness	-3.649	-3.690	-2.925	-3.310
Kurtosis	16.432	17.683	11.113	14.437

Note: N = 144; *p < 0.05, **p < 0.01

Descriptive statistics, reliability, and correlations analysis were conducted to assess the four key variables in this study: attitudes, self-efficacy, intention, and outcome expectations. The reliability of these variables was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha, which measures internal consistency. The results in **Table 2** indicated strong reliability for each variable, with Cronbach's alpha values ranging from 0.909 to 0.949. These values suggest that the scales used in this research possess high internal consistency, indicating that the items within each variable effectively measure the same underlying construct (Sürücü & Maslakçi, 2020; Taber, 2018). This high level of reliability enhances the validity of the findings and supports the robustness of the analysis.

Multiple Regression Analysis

Table 3. Summary of Multiple Regression Analysis

Hypothesis Path	Unstd. B	Std. Error	Std. B	t	Sig.	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
H1: ATT → OE	0.124	0.082	0.141	1.513	0.133	-0.012	0.259
H2: SE → OE	0.453	0.080	0.503	5.647	p<0.001***	0.320	0.586
H3: INT → OE	0.282	0.058	0.316	4.824	p<0.001***	0.185	0.379

Note: N = 144; ***p < 0.001

Table 3 presents the results of a multiple regression analysis that evaluates the relationships between attitudes (ATT), self-efficacy (SE), and intention (INT) on outcome

expectations (OE). The analysis includes three hypotheses: H1 posits that attitudes positively influence outcome expectations, H2 suggests that self-efficacy has a positive impact on outcome expectations, and H3 proposes that intention positively influences outcome expectations.

For H1, the unstandardized coefficient (Unstd. B) is 0.124, with a standard error of 0.082 and a t-value of 1.513. The significance level (Sig.) for this path is 0.133, which is above the common threshold for statistical significance ($p < 0.05$). This result indicates that the influence of attitudes on outcome expectations is not statistically significant, as the confidence interval includes zero (-0.012 to 0.259). Therefore, the data do not support H1, meaning that attitudes do not have a significant positive effect on outcome expectations in this model.

In contrast, H2 shows a significant positive relationship between self-efficacy and outcome expectations, with an unstandardized coefficient of 0.453, a standard error of 0.080, and a high t-value of 5.647. The p-value is less than 0.001, indicating strong statistical significance. The confidence interval (0.320 to 0.586) does not include zero, reinforcing the reliability of this finding. Thus, the data support H2, suggesting that self-efficacy has a substantial positive impact on outcome expectations.

Similarly, H3 is supported by the analysis. The unstandardized coefficient for the effect of intention on outcome expectations is 0.282, with a standard error of 0.058 and a t-value of 4.824. The p-value is less than 0.001, indicating statistical significance, and the confidence interval (0.185 to 0.379) confirms the positive effect. This result supports H3, indicating that intention positively influences outcome expectations.

Table 4. Summary of Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	Path	Decision
H1	ATT -> OE	Not supported
H2	SE -> OE	Supported
H3	INT -> OE	Supported

Table 4 provides a summary of the hypothesis testing outcomes. H1 (ATT -> OE) is marked as "Not supported," consistent with the lack of statistical significance found in Table 3. Both H2 (SE -> OE) and H3 (INT -> OE) are marked as "Supported," aligning with the significant positive relationships observed. In summary, the analysis confirms that self-efficacy and intention positively impact outcome expectations, while attitudes do not have a significant effect in this context.

DISCUSSION

This research further explores the coefficient of determination (R^2), which assesses the proportion of variance in the dependent variable that can be explained by the independent variables (Hair & Sarstedt, 2021). In this study, the R^2 value for outcome expectations was found to be 0.846, indicating that 84.6% of the variability in outcome expectations can be attributed to the combined influences of attitudes, self-efficacy, and intention.

Attitude

The findings indicate that university students' attitudes toward LinkedIn do not significantly influence their outcome expectations, leading to the rejection of H1. This lack of a significant relationship suggests that students hold a wide range of attitudes toward LinkedIn, encompassing both positive and negative perceptions, which collectively do not translate into a consistent effect on their expectations of the platform.

Some students may view LinkedIn as a valuable tool for professional networking and career advancement, while others may find it intimidating, irrelevant, or merely a requirement imposed by academic or professional environments. These varying attitudes dilute any singular impact that attitudes might have on students' expectations of what they will gain from using LinkedIn.

The absence of a significant link between attitudes and outcome expectations may also imply that students' anticipated benefits from LinkedIn are shaped more by practical, external factors rather than by their feelings toward the platform. For instance, students may focus on LinkedIn's potential to connect them with employers or provide access to industry information, regardless of how much they personally like or dislike the platform. Their expectations could be influenced by career counselors, educators, or peers who emphasize LinkedIn's utility, thus making external advice and social influences more critical in shaping their outcome expectations than personal attitudes alone. This suggests that students' use of LinkedIn may be motivated more by pragmatic considerations than by intrinsic enthusiasm or belief in the platform's effectiveness.

Additionally, personal experiences with LinkedIn could overshadow general attitudes in influencing students' expectations. For example, students who have successfully secured internships, job leads, or networking opportunities on LinkedIn may develop high outcome expectations based on these tangible experiences, even if they were initially skeptical of the platform. Conversely, students who have not seen immediate results might hold lower expectations regardless of a positive attitude toward LinkedIn's concept. This complex interplay of attitudes, personal experiences, and external influences highlights that outcome expectations may be driven more by what students have observed or been advised about LinkedIn's practical utility than by their general attitudes. Ultimately, these findings reveal that the mere presence of a positive or negative attitude does not predict outcome expectations, underscoring the need to consider a broader range of factors that shape students' perceptions of LinkedIn's potential benefits.

Self-Efficacy

The research revealed a positive relationship between university students' self-efficacy and their outcome expectations on LinkedIn, confirming H2. This result implies that students who believe in their own capabilities to effectively use LinkedIn tend to have higher expectations regarding the platform's potential benefits. Self-efficacy, as defined by [Bandura \(1989\)](#), is a person's belief in their own ability to succeed in specific situations. This sense of confidence plays a critical role in motivating individuals to engage with and persist in behaviors that they believe will lead to successful outcomes. In the context of LinkedIn, students with high self-efficacy are more likely to take proactive steps—such as building a professional profile, connecting with industry professionals, and actively seeking job opportunities—because they believe these actions will result in tangible career advancements.

The findings align with previous studies, such as [Alruwaie et al. \(2020\)](#), which underscore the importance of self-efficacy in driving students' expectations of success on digital platforms like LinkedIn. When students feel confident in their ability to use LinkedIn's various tools and features effectively, they are more likely to engage deeply and set ambitious goals, such as securing internships, job offers, or valuable networking connections. This high level of engagement stems from their belief that their efforts on the platform will be fruitful, enhancing their motivation to invest time and energy into LinkedIn activities. Students with lower self-efficacy, on the other hand, may not anticipate the same level of benefit and may thus engage with the platform in a more limited or superficial way, thereby potentially limiting their career development opportunities.

This correlation between self-efficacy and outcome expectations suggests that fostering students' confidence in using LinkedIn could be a valuable strategy for educational institutions aiming to support students' career readiness. When students feel capable and competent in their use of LinkedIn, they are not only more likely to engage with the platform but also to set higher expectations for what they can achieve. This expectation, in turn, may reinforce their commitment to leveraging LinkedIn as a tool for professional growth. As Bandura's theory highlights, self-efficacy can serve as a powerful motivational force, propelling students to take initiative in their career planning. Therefore, interventions such as LinkedIn workshops, guided profile-building sessions, and mentorship programs could be beneficial in enhancing students' self-efficacy, which may ultimately lead to more substantial career outcomes and a more optimistic outlook on the benefits of networking platforms like LinkedIn.

Intention

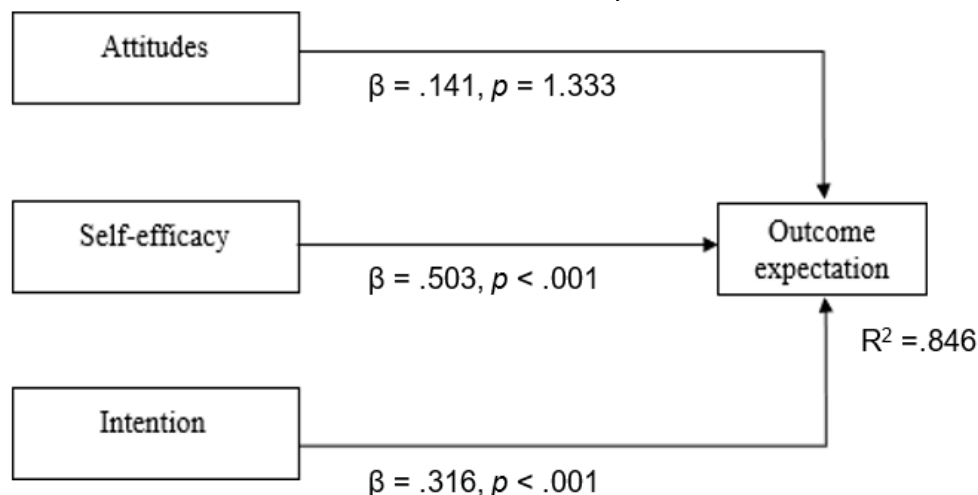
The study found that university students' intentions have a positive impact on their outcome expectations when using LinkedIn, supporting Hypothesis 3. This finding aligns with Bandura's (1986) theory that outcome expectations, or the anticipated results of a behavior, can be shaped by an individual's intentions to engage in that behavior. For university students, this means that when they perceive LinkedIn as a valuable platform for professional development—offering opportunities for skill enhancement, networking, and career exploration—their intention to use it increases, which, in turn, raises their expectations of achieving positive outcomes. Intention serves as the motivational bridge between students' perceptions of LinkedIn's benefits and their anticipated results, indicating that students who actively intend to use the platform are more likely to envision success in terms of career-related gains.

This relationship suggests that students' outcome expectations are not only a product of their self-efficacy but are also reinforced by their intentions to utilize LinkedIn for professional growth. When students recognize that LinkedIn can be a strategic tool for reaching their career goals, they are more inclined to engage with the platform consistently, actively seek connections, join professional groups, and explore career resources. The act of setting an intention to use LinkedIn meaningfully strengthens their engagement with the platform and creates a positive feedback loop in which their actions align with their anticipated outcomes. Pardim et al. (2021) highlight this dynamic, noting that students who are intentional in their LinkedIn usage often exhibit higher levels of commitment and persistence, which leads to better networking opportunities, skill acquisition, and, ultimately, enhanced career prospects.

The findings underscore the importance of fostering both self-efficacy and intention to boost students' engagement with LinkedIn and increase the likelihood of positive outcomes. While self-efficacy gives students the confidence to navigate LinkedIn's tools and features, intention solidifies their resolve to leverage the platform purposefully for career advancement. Educational institutions and career services could play a crucial role in nurturing these intentions by promoting LinkedIn as an essential part of students' career planning toolkit. Through targeted interventions, such as setting up goal-oriented LinkedIn workshops or emphasizing LinkedIn's role in successful career stories, institutions can help students form clear intentions around using LinkedIn for professional growth. By doing so, students are more likely to develop sustained engagement with the platform, supported by a strong sense of purpose and confidence. Consequently, the combination of self-efficacy and intention can drive more meaningful LinkedIn interactions, potentially leading to more substantial professional outcomes and greater alignment with students' career aspirations.

Figure 2 provides a visual summary of the research model, detailing the R^2 , beta values, and p-values, along with additional statistical metrics such as the F-value of 256.728 and a Durbin-Watson value of 1.879.

Figure 2. Research Model with R^2 , Beta Values, and p-Values



CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this research has succeeded in achieving its objectives, which included determining the correlation between university students' attitudes and the outcomes they anticipate when using LinkedIn. The second objective was to examine the connection between university students' self-efficacy and their expected outcomes through LinkedIn. Finally, the research aimed to ascertain the relationship between university students' intentions and the outcomes they expect from using LinkedIn. The findings revealed that most respondents were university students who regularly engage with the LinkedIn platform. When contextualizing these results within the framework of SCT, it is evident that the three independent variables—attitude, self-efficacy, and intention—exhibit varying degrees of significance in relation to the dependent variable, outcome expectations. Specifically, the variable of attitude (ATT) did not demonstrate a significant relationship with outcome expectations (OE), indicating it is not supported. In contrast, self-efficacy (SE) and intention (INT) were found to have a positive relationship with outcome expectations, thereby supporting the research hypotheses.

These findings can serve as a motivational tool for university students to engage more regularly with LinkedIn, as the platform could facilitate access to job applications and a broad array of professional opportunities, ultimately aiding students in their career aspirations. Moreover, these insights can be valuable for educational institutions and career services, allowing them to design tailored programs that encourage effective LinkedIn usage among students.

LIMITATION

Several limitations were encountered in this research. Firstly, due to constraints in time and resources, the study was conducted with a relatively small sample of 157 respondents, all of whom were university students from Malaysia, Indonesia, and India. This limitation may impact the generalizability of the findings to a broader population. Secondly, the focus was exclusively on undergraduate (Bachelor's Degree) and postgraduate (Master's Degree) students, which means that the perspectives of students at different educational levels, such as diploma or associate degree holders, were not included. Thirdly, the research model centered only on individual factors—attitude, self-

efficacy, and intention—without considering other potentially influential elements, such as environmental factors or social influences. Finally, the scope of the study was limited to specific variables, leaving room for the exploration of additional factors in future research that may enrich the understanding of LinkedIn usage among university students. Addressing these limitations in future studies could lead to more robust findings and a more comprehensive understanding of how various factors influence LinkedIn usage and outcomes for students.

Building on the limitations identified, future research should aim to expand upon this study's findings by including a more diverse sample population that encompasses students from various educational backgrounds and geographic regions. This would help enhance the generalizability of the results and provide a more inclusive perspective on LinkedIn usage. Furthermore, it would be beneficial to explore additional variables beyond attitude, self-efficacy, and intention, such as social support, cultural factors, and the influence of institutional resources. Investigating these dimensions could provide a more comprehensive understanding of the factors that motivate university students to engage with LinkedIn. Additionally, studies could incorporate qualitative methods, such as interviews or focus groups, to gain deeper insights into students' experiences and perceptions regarding LinkedIn. Longitudinal studies could also be employed to assess how attitudes, self-efficacy, and intention evolve over time and how they correlate with actual usage patterns and outcomes. Such a comprehensive approach could contribute valuable insights into the ways LinkedIn can be leveraged to foster professional development among students, including working-class individuals and fresh graduates, thus addressing the evolving landscape of the job market.

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DECLARATION OF CONFLICTING INTERESTS

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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