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# Business-Oriented Social Network As a Platform For Personal Promotion

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## Abstract:

**Research Question:** This paper aims to investigate the influence of relevant factors on the personal promotion of business-oriented social network users. **Motivation:** Although personal promotion in online communities has been covered in academic literature (Sczesny & Kaufmann, 2018; Yu & Kim, 2020; Hollenbaugh, 2020), a significant gap in previous studies is found in neglecting influential factors on self-promotion through a business-oriented social network, such as LinkedIn. Therefore, this paper aims to explore LinkedIn users' opinions about the impact of selected constructs on this business-oriented social network setting. The developed model points to the personal promotion predictors that contribute to the broader business community and career development by enabling the building and strengthening of a personal brand by demonstrating individuals' knowledge and expertise in a particular field. **Idea:** The core idea is to research social network users' opinions about the impacts of the independent variable Need to Use and dependent variables, Professionalism, Usefulness in Work, and Intention to use on their Personal Promotion. **Data:** Data analysis was conducted based on replies obtained from 1044 questionnaires distributed in Serbia from November 2019 to July 2020. **Tools:** Structural equation modelling (SEM) was employed and included evaluating the measurement model and testing the structural model. **Findings:** The survey shows that the need to use social networks influences an individual's usefulness and professionalism. Results also indicate that professionalism influences the intention of exploiting social network. Finally, the intention to use social networks affects an individual's personal promotion. **Contribution:** The research contributes to the literature about individuals' professional and personal promotion and facilitates job-seekers to find a desirable workplace as well as employers to find appropriate candidates.

**Keywords:** social network, personal promotion, LinkedIn, structural equation modelling, business

**JEL Classification:** M51, M31, L84

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## 1. Introduction

Significant changes in the business environment are perceptible in contemporary surroundings, rapidly modifying mainly under the influence of technology. Through this technology-based progress, civilisation has built new possibilities for individuals and organisations (Islam et al., 2019) and brought essential transformations in the world of communication. For example, internet technologies have transformed the old media into a new kind named "social media" (Durak & Saritepeci, 2019). These social networks and media allow new, more intense forms of exploitation and offer tools that enable a more efficient way of sending promotional messages. Moreover, these technologies have a widespread impact on individual careers (Davis et al., 2020; Pena et al., 2022).

Nowadays, the exploitation and effects of social network sites (SNS) on organisations and individuals are widely recognised. From an organisation perspective, social networks provide marketing development, improve communication, connection, and collaboration, and enhance knowledge creation and sharing within organisations (Qi & Chau, 2018; Chin et al., 2020). From an individual point of view, professional social

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media sites allow personal promotion (Rui, 2018) and self-rated extraversion (Van de Ven et al., 2017; Habets et al., 2021; Baumann & Utz, 2021) measured through connections, job searching success, and collaborations with potential clients (Carmack & Heiss, 2018). Despite the various benefits SNSs for organisations, the further direction of interest will be focused only on personal benefits.

One of the well-known professional SNS intended for self-promotion, recruiting, and networking is LinkedIn (Knight, 2019). This site changed the business practice by replacing paper versions of curriculum vitae with electronic ones. The application of modern technology implemented through this platform offers insight into a growing number of potential employees and employers worldwide (Smith & Watkins, 2020). Furthermore, LinkedIn is an attractive and successful site for measuring the success of the applicants' and employees' engagement (Paliszkievicz & Madra-Sawicka, 2016), indicating intended utilisation for those who count on online self-presentation, primarily for professional purposes (Scolere et al., 2018).

Hollenbaugh (2020) gathered and synthesised studies on self-presentation in social networks and media, precisely with audio/channel-specific effects. The effects resulted in a conceptual model which illustrated "the moderating effects of social media affordances and perceived audience on the relationship between one's identity goal and chosen self-presentation content in social media" (Hollenbaugh, 2020, p. 83). Although personal promotion in online communities has been covered in academic literature (Sczesny & Kaufmann, 2018; Yu & Kim, 2020; Hollenbaugh, 2020), a significant gap in previous studies is found in neglecting influential factors on self-promotion through a business-oriented social network, such as LinkedIn. Therefore, this paper aims to explore LinkedIn user opinions about the impact of Need for Use, Professionalism, Usefulness in Work, and Intention of Use on their Personal Promotion in this business-oriented social network setting.

## 2. Theoretical Framework

LinkedIn is one of the world's largest professional SNS (Quinton & Wilson, 2016), which brings together job-seekers, head-hunters and recruitment agencies in one place. By creating a LinkedIn profile, users become online resources that allow employers to review individuals' LinkedIn profiles, thus facilitating and speeding up the recruiting process. On the other hand, people are just interested in expanding or maintaining business contacts (Kuzior, 2019). Therefore, the duly completed LinkedIn profile is significant in the business social surroundings because it presents peoples' work-related capabilities and skills essential for audience reaction and eventually established connections (Chang et al., 2017; Lopez-Carril et al., 2022).

Although getting a job is often the target of self-presentation, it is not the target per se. People deal with self-promotions for many social reasons, including doing their jobs, making friendships or merely expressing their personality. However, when individuals become online community members, they have to choose relevant information for self-presentation to align with online communities' scenarios (Banerji & Reimer, 2019; Davis et al., 2020; Pena et al., 2022).

To explore how LinkedIn is useful in work, how the professionalism of individuals reflects on the intention to use LinkedIn, whether a person feels the need for LinkedIn exploitation, and whether they show an intention to use it, the operational definitions are given in Table 1.

**Table 1:** Operational definitions

Constructs	Definitions
The need to use	The informative and social need for social network use (Lin, 2016).
Usefulness in work	The subjective prospect that a specific system is useful for increasing job performance (Schere et al., 2015; Algarni, 2020).
Professionalism	Creation and maintaining an online profile for professional network building (Power, 2015).
Intention to use	The strength of one's intentions to use technology in the future (Amanbek et al., 2020).
Personal promotion	Professional self-presentation in social networks (Uski & Lampinen, 2016) "to communicate some information about oneself to others" (Tifferet & Vilnai-Yavetz, 2018, p. 34).

## 2.1. The need to use

People recognise their needs and choose suitable media to meet them (Lin, 2016), which is why the number of accounts on social networks is growing rapidly (Toker & Baturay, 2019). LinkedIn is considered as a revolution in terms of employment and recruitment needs in companies because it bridges the gap between unemployed job seekers and executives looking for candidates for the job through an online platform where they can communicate interactively (Davis et al., 2020). However, LinkedIn professional focus offers little room for non-professional use (Utz, 2016). LinkedIn usefulness in work is reflected in the distribution of information (Ewing, 2016). It provides "work-related content and access to weaker ties in the relevant field, which results in higher informational benefits" (Utz, 2016, p. 2688). Also, some authors investigated the usefulness of social networks in the field of solving business problems, as well as in the development of employees' innovative behaviour (Xerri & Brunetto, 2017). When we know our informational and social needs for the professional business-oriented social network, we are able to understand its usefulness and exploit it for increasing job performance. Hence, Hypothesis 1 is:

**Hypothesis 1.** *The need to use a social network has a positive effect on its usefulness in work.*

By uploading CVs, potential employees become available to many companies whose leadership quickly and efficiently may reach qualified individuals and meet their needs (Leftheriotis & Giannakos, 2014). Users' motives for using social networking websites can be external (need for information) or/and internal (social need) (Lu & Yang, 2014; Lin, 2016). Those internal influence personal motives for SNS use, such as communicating with friends, sending/receiving messages, looking at or posting photos, making/reading wall posts, commenting, community forum participation etc. (Pornsakulvanich & Dumrongsiri, 2013). On the other hand, "external influences refer to media, significant others, social, economic, and political situations that affect SNS use" (Pornsakulvanich & Dumrongsiri, 2013, p. 2789). Accordingly, identifying needs for the social network is necessary for motivation to build a strong professional network. Based on the considered dimensions above, the following hypothesis is derived:

**Hypothesis 2.** *The need to use a social network has a positive effect on individual professionalism.*

## 2.2. Usefulness in work

Usefulness in recruitment is one of the foremost reasons people use SNS, particularly on business-oriented sites such as LinkedIn (Kuzior, 2019). On the other hand, LinkedIn can be useful for identity development, relationship and reputation building (Kuscu, 2020). Job search through social networks includes individual actions directed to contact friends, acquaintances and other people who have a job to obtain information, benefits or tips for getting a job. Authors such as Manzanares-Lopez et al. (2014) emphasise the positive aspect of this possibility (quick path to the necessary information and public review of interesting events, current offers vacancies, etc.). A previously defined usefulness means LinkedIn can improve job performance in general or for specific purposes. LinkedIn usefulness is in the hands of each user (Alanzi et al., 2020). According to Chang and Tung (2008), Scherer et al. (2015), Tarmuji et al. (2018), and Akour et al. (2022), usefulness is perceived as a construct that directly predicts intentions to use. Hence, this study assumes the following:

**Hypothesis 3.** *The usefulness of a business-oriented network in work has a positive influence on the intention of its usage.*

## 2.3. Professionalism

The professional purpose of LinkedIn is fundamentally different from other social networks such as Facebook or Twitter (Power, 2015). Users need to raise awareness and knowledge about LinkedIn usefulness as a potential opportunity for professional development (Alanzi et al., 2020). Fostering individuals' professionalism on business social networks, such as being up-to-date on friends' career changes and other organisations' activities, appointments with professional contacts, information about applicants, or selecting applicants invited for an interview, may increase the level of exploiting a social network. The positive effect of commitment to work affects an individual's well-being, accomplishment, work-related attitudes and behaviours (Merilainen et al., 2019; Roulin & Levashina, 2019; Pena et al., 2022). The LinkedIn platform allows one to show professional skills in connecting, collaborating, sharing best practices and disseminating research (Power, 2015; Lopez-Carril et al., 2022), thus triggering people to use it more frequently in the long run. In light of the preceding arguments, which include the professionalism of individuals, the following hypothesis can be set up:

**Hypothesis 4.** *The professionalism of individuals has a positive effect on the intention to use social networks*

## 2.4. Intention to use

From an individual standpoint, LinkedIn provides opportunities to meet, exchange knowledge and find a job (de Jesus et al., 2018). Developing an online professional personal brand should help users make a good impression and be prominent among their peers (Kuzior, 2019). LinkedIn users are keen on job opportunities, potential customers or people, and professional networking, so it is not surprising that they are inclined to promote personal promotion (Tifferet & Vilnai-Yavetz, 2018). The number of contacts on professional SNSs indicates one's networking ability and professional standing (Brooks, 2019), thus serving as a self-promotion tool. When searching for individuals' profiles, recruiters primarily pay attention to experience, skills, and education (Tifferet & Vilnai-Yavetz, 2018). Hence, individuals develop their professional profiles to be considered eligible for different stakeholders, which usually involves personal promotion/self-presentation to make their profiles more attractive (Aguado et al., 2019; Pena et al., 2022). Some prior studies have observed the impact between individuals' self-presentation and intention to use SNSs (Hsu et al., 2015; Gan & Li, 2018). Hence, Hypothesis 5 is set:

**Hypothesis 5.** *The intention to use a social network has a positive influence on personal promotion.*

According to the previous literature review, we assume that the main variables influencing individual promotion have all four concepts: the need for using, usefulness, and professionalism of LinkedIn can be regarded as indirect benefits of personal promotion through LinkedIn. Therefore, the only direct influence on personal promotion has the intention to use LinkedIn. Following the proposed hypothesis, the conceptual model consists of five latent variables (Figure 1).

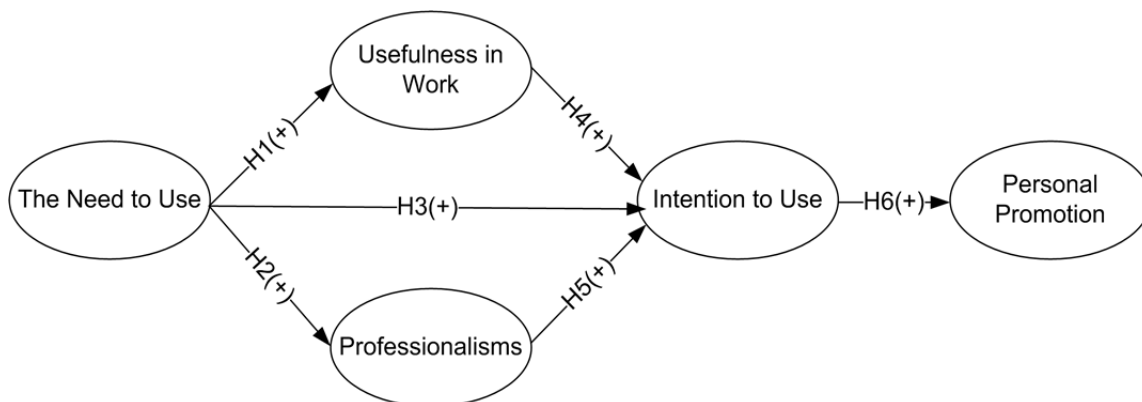


Figure 1: Conceptual model

## 3. Methodology

### 3.1. Sample and method

LinkedIn is among the most widely used social media that focuses on professional orientation and career development (Lopez-Carril et al., 2022; Manca & Ranieri, 2016). This research was focused on using the social network LinkedIn as a tool for personal and professional promotion of individuals. The survey was conducted from November 2019 to July 2020. The questionnaire was anonymous, and the research was conducted in two ways: in-person and via e-mail. In the first phase of the research, a face-to-face method of collecting answers was applied, and later, due to new circumstances resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, the research was continued online. The questionnaire link was distributed by e-mail. The targeted persons were individuals from faculties and scientific institutes, students, and employees in public and private companies in Serbia. The collection generated 1044 completed responses, 351 of which were excluded because they were incomplete.

The questionnaire consists of four demographic characteristics questions (employees' gender and age, profession, and work experience). The results of the demographic structure of respondents are presented in Table 2. Of the respondents, 40.5% were men, and 59.5% were women. In addition, most of them are younger than 30 (53.4%) and are employees in public and private companies (40.5%).

**Table 2:** Demographic profiles and descriptive statistics of respondents

Demographic variables	The sample composition	
	Categories	Percentage ( % )
<b>Gender</b>	Male	40.5
	Female	59.5
<b>Age</b>	< 30	53.4
	31 – 45	36.2
	> 46	10.4
<b>Profession</b>	Employees in public and private companies	40.5
	Researchers	31.0
	Students	28.5
<b>Work experience</b>	No work experience	39.7
	<10	42.2
	10 –20	11.2
	> 21	1.2

The following 17 questions were connected to the level of use and purpose of LinkedIn for individuals' personal and professional promotion. The questions were formulated based on a review of relevant literature (Leftheriotis & Giannakos, 2014; Caers & Castelyns, 2010). All questions are divided into five groups: the need to Use a social network like LinkedIn (NU); the Usefulness of the social network LinkedIn for Work (UW); the Intention to Use the social network LinkedIn (IU); the Professional nature of social network LinkedIn (PR); Personal Promotion through LinkedIn (PP) (Appendix). For grading of the obtained results, a Likert five-point scale was employed.

### 3.2. Data analysis

The suggested model and hypotheses are tested on data collected from questionnaires. The degree and direction of the connections between concepts are determined by applying structural equation modelling using (SEM). The two-phase procedure was followed by Anderson and Gerbing (1988). The measurement model was first evaluated, followed by the structural model, provided that the measurement model resulted in satisfactory fitting indexes (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988). Data were analysed by the software package SPSS v.18 and AMOS v.13. For the data analysis, the method of maximum plausibility estimation was employed.

By using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), the only dimensionality within all five groups in the model was confirmed. The obtained values using confirmatory factor analysis are presented in Tables 3 and 4. In addition, the internal consistency of group claims (Table 3) relating to the concepts covered in the survey was tested. For assessing the internal consistency Cronbach's coefficient  $\alpha$  (Cronbach, 1951), Spearman-Brown coefficient and  $\Omega$  (Milijic et al., 2013) were used.

When questions are assessed on an internal scale such as a 5-point Likert scale, Cronbach's coefficient  $\alpha$  (Cronbach's, 1951) is used. Within each group of questions (Nannally, 1978), a value of  $\geq 0,7$  is considered a priority. The values of Cronbach's alpha factor per group are shown in Table 3, while the value of 0.898 indicates Cronbach's alpha factor for the total population. Also, the reliability coefficient can be estimated based on the Spearman-Brown coefficient (Milijic et al., 2013) and coefficient omega ( $\Omega$ ) (Nannally, 1978). The proposed minimal value of these coefficients is 0.70. Based on the Spearman-Brown coefficient values and the omega coefficient ( $\Omega$ ), the validity of Cronbach's coefficient  $\alpha$  can be confirmed, as depicted in Table 3.

**Table 3:** Interconsistency Coefficients of the Self-Promotion Questionnaire

Scale	No. of Items	Cronbach's $\alpha$	Spearman-Brown Coefficient	$\Omega$
THE NEED TO USE	3	0.718	0.643	0.783
USEFULNESS IN WORK	3	0.922	0.907	0.890
INTENTION TO USE	4	0.871	0.869	0.841
PROFESSIONALISM	5	0.793	0.693	0.819
PERSONAL PROMOTION	2	0.902	0.903	0.822

Following Fornell and Larcker's (1981) recommendations, Confirmatory Factor Analysis was used to estimate the convergent and discriminant validity. Table 4 shows the correlation matrix and discriminant validity. Bold values on the diagonal represent the square root of AVE, while elements outside the diagonal represent the correlation values. The correlation is significant at the level of 0.01. To achieve statistical significance, all standardised factor loadings on their structures have to be on the level ( $p < 0.1$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), indicating that convergent validity was achieved (Hair et al., 1998). The values of the load factors and a critical relation are shown in Table 5, indicating that most structures have a high convergent validity ( $AVE \geq 0.5$ ), except the constructs NU and PR (where the AVE value is 0.427 and 0.459, respectively), which have somewhat lower values but which are justifiable and can be considered acceptable according to the authors Malhotra et al. (2012). Fitting Indexes  $RMSEA=0.074$ ,  $RMR=0.052$ ,  $NFI=0.917$ ,  $IFI=0.966$ ,  $TLI=0.941$ ,  $CF=0.965$ , indicate proper model fitting.

**Table 4:** Correlation Matrix and Discriminant Validity

	<b>NU</b>	<b>UW</b>	<b>IU</b>	<b>PR</b>	<b>PP</b>
<b>NU</b>	<b>0.653</b>				
<b>UW</b>	1.039	<b>0.891</b>			
<b>IU</b>	0.620	0.487	<b>0.802</b>		
<b>PR</b>	0.590	0.336	0.834	<b>0.677</b>	
<b>PP</b>	0.245	-0.005	0.175	0.554	<b>0.902</b>

$p < 0.01$

**Table 5:** Measurement Model Results

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Standardised factor loading</b>	<b>S.E.</b>	<b>Critical Ratio (CR)</b>	<b>AVE</b>	<b>Discriminant Validity</b>	<b>P</b>
<b>NEED TO USE</b>						
NU1	0.625			<b>0.427</b>	<b>0.653</b>	***
NU2	0.576	0.070	7.784			***
NU3	0.748	0.075	7.305			***
<b>USEFULNESS IN WORK</b>						
UW1	0.882			<b>0.793</b>	<b>0.891</b>	***
UW2	0.903	0.075	14.72			***
UW3	0.886	0.068	15.273			***
<b>INTENTION TO USE</b>						
IU1	0.858			<b>0.643</b>	<b>0.802</b>	***
IU2	0.814	0.171	8.963			***
IU3	0.805	0.149	8.895			***
IU4	0.724	0.159	8.608			***
<b>PROFESSIONALISM</b>						
PR1	0.671			<b>0.459</b>	<b>0.677</b>	***
PR2	0.601	0.116	8.034			***
PR3	0.808	0.183	7.543			***
PR4	0.744	0.176	7.117			***
PR5	0.528	0.161	5.283			***
<b>PERSONAL PROMOTION</b>						
PP1	0.868			<b>0.815</b>	<b>0.902</b>	***
PP2	0.936	0.114	10.202			

$p < 0.01$

The structural model testing was conducted considering the validated measurement model. Indices in Table 5 indicate that the obtained values of the index of fit from the proper model are satisfied. Besides, conditions for the interpretation of the structural coefficients are fulfilled. All load factors (Table 6), as well as the Chi-square goodness-of-fit statistics structural model  $\chi^2=121.9$ ,  $df=81$ ,  $p < 0.05$ , have statistical significance ( $p > 0.5$ ).



**Table 6:** Fit indices for the structural model for LinkedIn

$\chi^2$	$\chi^2/df$	GFI	RMSEA	RMR	CFI	NFI	IFI
$\chi^2=121,9$ $df=81$ ( $p<0.05$ )	1.506	0.895	0.066	0.051	0.972	0.924	0.973
<b>Accepted fit</b>	<3	>0.90	<0.08	<0.10	>0.90	>0.90	>0.90

Tables 7 and 8 show the regression coefficient (b coefficient). The  $R^2$  estimate the part of the variance of the dependent variables. Thus, the structural model is explained. It indicates the quality of the adjusted model. The coefficient of determination  $R^2$  revealed that the influence of latent variables on personal promotion could be calculated with 7.6% of the variance. In this light, Cohen (1988) suggests that  $R^2 = 1\%$  is classified as a small effect size,  $R^2 = 9\%$  as a medium effect size, and  $R^2 = 25\%$  as a large effect size. This indicates that the linear correlation of 7.6% of the variance of the personal promotion is attributable to the endogenous variable. Thus, the structural model has to be confirmed with 7.6%.

**Table 7:** Path coefficients and T-values

The relationship or path	Standardised parameters	T-value	Causal relations
H1 The need to use → Usefulness in work	0.642 (a)	9.571	R1:yes
H2 The need to use → Professionalism	0.137 (b)	3.042	R1:yes
H3 Usefulness in work → Intention to use	0.328 (a)	3.645	R1:yes
H4 Professionalism → Intention to use	1.592 (a)	3.569	R1:yes
H5 Intention to use → Personal promotion	0.249 (b)	2.840	R1:yes

(a) Significant at the 99% level; (b) Significant at the 95% level

The trajectory results analysis confirms the statistical significance of all hypotheses, which tells us that all the hypotheses are confirmed.

**Table 8:** Path coefficients and t-values - observed and latent variables

Variables	Standardised factor loading	Critical ratio or (t-value)	$R^2$
<b>THE NEED to USE</b>			
NU1	0.706		/
NU2	0.587	8.367	
NU3	0.834	6.388	
<b>USEFULNESS IN WORK</b>			
UW1	0.871		0.863
UW2	0.902	15.759	
UW3	0.898	14.838	
<b>INTENTION to USE</b>			
IU1	0.856		0.583
IU2	0.830	11.574	
IU3	0.945	8.790	
IU4	0.729	9.065	
<b>PROFESSIONALISM</b>			
PR1	0.728		0.233
PR2	0.401	3.784	
PR3	0.747	2.967	
PR4	0.734	4.102	
PR5	0.370	4.269	
<b>PERSONAL PROMOTION</b>			
PP1	0.769		0.076
PP2	1.067	6.833	

#### 4. Discussion

This study aimed to define and test a LinkedIn social network model for personal and professional promotion. The research was conducted in Serbia. Researchers, employees and students in Serbia's public and private companies were included in this study's purpose. In total, 40.5% of respondents were employees in the public and private sectors, 31% were researchers, and 28.5% were students as potential employees. Results in Table 2 show that more than a third of respondents have no work experience, while 42.2% have less than ten years of work experience. According to Desai and Lele (2017, p. 802), generations Y and Z are considered "highly connected, with active use of communications and media technologies". These data show that our respondents' structure is suitable for examining the impact of LinkedIn on professional and personal promotion.

The SEM methodology was employed to investigate the predictors of personal promotion via a social network. CFA results show that the requirement of coexisting reliability, discriminant and convergent validity are fulfilled. Furthermore, properly fitting measurement and structural models indicate that all load factors and the Chi-square goodness-of-fit statistics of measurement and structural models have statistical significance ( $p > 0.5$ ). These indicators show that the data fit well in models.

The conceptual model was developed by a structural equation, and all five proposed hypotheses are confirmed. The coefficient of determination found that latent predictors' influence on individual success and personal promotion can be calculated with 43.9% of the variance. The trajectory analysis results show that NU significantly and indirectly influences PP. Previous investigations have found that the need to use business-oriented networks is positively related to personal promotion outcomes, incorporating job search success, boosting the professional reputation, and achieving long-term personal success (Davis et al., 2020). Therefore, it is found that NU has a very strong, direct influence on the UW, reflected in the beta coefficient of 0.642. Hence, Hypothesis 1 is confirmed. These findings are also supported by Leftheriotis and Giannakos (2014) and Davis et al. (2020). The usefulness of a business-oriented network such as LinkedIn in work may have a hedonic value to the users, which is pleasure-oriented, and focused on the enjoyment felt while using it. Besides, NU has a weak but positive impact on the PR with a beta coefficient of 0.137, which supports Hypothesis 2. The same conclusion is found by Roulin and Levashina (2019).


LinkedIn allows users to share and follow professional biographies, educational backgrounds, work experiences, and peers' personal skills. NU contribute to PR development because interested parties can be up-to-date on career changes, activities of organisations, applicant information, etc. the UW represents a significant, influential construct on the IE of social networks to find new contacts and business partners, recruit new staff and maintain contacts with them to monitor the market and competition. The significance of this relation is confirmed by the beta coefficient of 0.328. Hypothesis 3 is also proven, which aligns with Manzanares-Lopez et al. (2014). PR has a significant influence on IU of LinkedIn to monitor the activities of other organisations on this social network, find the necessary information about the applications that are necessary for a job interview, arranging meetings with professional contacts (colleagues), which can be confirmed by the excellent link  $b = 1.592$ . Therefore, Hypothesis 4 is tested and confirmed. According to Merilainen et al. (2019) and Roulin and Levashina (2019), similar findings are noticed. Respondents who want to be professional also use this social tool to find new business partners, customers, and suppliers, monitor competition, maintain current contacts and recruit prospective employees. IU significantly influences PP, reflected in biography presentations with completed professional training and working skills to companies and potential clients. This link was confirmed by the beta coefficient of 0.249; finally, Hypothesis 5 is supported. These findings have been corroborated by the recent statement of Brenzel and Reichelt (2018), Tifferet and Vilnai-Yavetz (2018), and Davis et al. (2020).

The results indicate that the intention to use the business-oriented network is essential in building a personal identity. A personal brand is vital to the LinkedIn environment. It is crucial to present one and make one recognisable in the business community, especially if one wants to receive something for themselves or their business.

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#### Conclusion

This study's motivation was to examine whether the promotion of individuals through social networks like LinkedIn can be influenced by the intention to use, which is directly related to professionalism and usefulness in work. Since finding a job has become one of the foremost reasons people use professionally-oriented networks, users can benefit from exploiting it. It is reflected through self-promotion skills, completed professional training and working experience (Caers & Castelyns, 2010; Leftheriotis & Giannakos, 2014; Chiang & Suen, 2015).





Although the importance of professional promotion has been well documented in the scientific literature (Altenburger et al., 2017; Tifferet & Vilnai-Yavetz, 2018; Rui, 2018), this study is unique in that it examined the key factors that influence the personal promotion of individuals. In that way, this research gives added value to the scientific literature by overcoming the existing gap. This study can also encourage more significant scientific research, given the growth of social network sites and their benefits for individual promotion. In addition to the scientific contribution, this research has a significant practical contribution. Firstly, this research highlights the importance of increasing awareness among users regarding the effects of a successful implementation of LinkedIn. The developed model points to the personal promotion predictors that contribute to the broader business community and career development by enabling the building and strengthening of a personal brand by demonstrating individual knowledge and expertise in a particular field. Additionally, this research increases the awareness among users regarding their personal promotion through the LinkedIn social network in the modern digital world.

Since this study included mainly researchers, individuals in private and public sectors, and students as prospective employees, future research will focus on assessing additional moderators (such as various types of workplaces) to clarify the projected model's boundary conditions further. In addition, a comparative analysis of the utilisation of LinkedIn for professional reasons in different regions of Serbia and in developing and developed countries can serve for future research. However, as most studies are conducted for scientific purposes, this study has certain limitations, such as the respondents' professionalism and orientation. Also, the research might provide valuable insights if a study examines causal relationships between possible determinants of personal promotion, which is now considered a limitation. Further, LinkedIn profiles, including skills, endorsements, recommendations, publications, projects and contacts, would provide information relevant to the business community's shared interest in Serbia and the region.

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**APPENDIX:**

**Survey Items Used in the Study** (Inspired by Caers & Castelyn, 2010; Leftheriotis & Giannakos, 2014)

**THE NEED TO USE**

- N1.** I regularly use LinkedIn to maintain and strengthen communication with colleagues in my work
- N2.** I often use LinkedIn to obtain work-related information and knowledge
- N3.** I frequently use the LinkedIn social network for different professional and personal needs

**USEFULNESS IN WORK**

- U1.** Using social media LinkedIn for your work is helpful
- U2.** Using social media LinkedIn for your work is functional
- U3.** Using social media LinkedIn for your work is necessary

**INTENTION TO USE**

- O1.** To find new contacts/customers/clients/business partners/...
- O2.** To monitor the market /competition
- O3.** To maintain contacts with customers/clients/colleagues/partners/...
- O4.** For recruitment (finding) new staff

**PROFESSIONALISM**

- PR1.** To stay up-to-date on my friends' career changes
- PR2.** To stay up-to-date on the activities of other organisations
- PR3.** To make appointments with my professional contacts
- PR4.** To find information about applicants that I need to interview/evaluate
- PR5.** To determine which applicants will be invited for a first interview

**PERSONAL PROMOTION**

- PP1.** You can promote yourself by showing organisations you know important people
- PP2.** You can promote yourself by showing organisations what training you received