

The Role of LinkedIn in Academic Hiring: A Bibliometric analysis of Recruitment Practices in Education Sector

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Abstract: The merging of internet websites has imposed heavily on the recruitment strategies in the higher education market, and LinkedIn has become a top recruitment tool for academic recruitments. This research is a bibliometric study of assessing the academic culture of LinkedIn's impact on academic recruitment processes between 1975 and 2023. Relying on Scopus and Web of Science data, the research utilizes bibliometric methods in the form of publication trend analysis, keyword co-occurrence maps, co-author networks, and Bradford's Law to establish thematic patterns, intellectual paradigms, and lines of research. The findings indicate more research activity since the year 2010, indicating the growing significance of the platform for teacher recruitment and professional exposure. Dominant themes that emerge are digital hiring, academic identity, social media screening, and e-hiring. There are few specialized journals that shape the publication drive, and international collaboration is moderate. Notwithstanding the increasing number of studies, empirical and ethical appraisals on LinkedIn's algorithmic influence, data privacy, and diversity impact on faculty recruitment are limited. The present paper presents a systematic critique of the existing literature for gaps and potential directions in future research. It provides actionable suggestions to educational institutions, recruiters, and policymakers who want to utilize LinkedIn strategically with promises of transparency, equity, and diversity in faculty recruitment.

Keywords: LinkedIn, Academic Hiring, Digital Recruitment, Bibliometric Analysis, Higher Education.

INTRODUCTION

The recruitment context in education has witnessed drastic shifts with the implementation of internet technologies and social media sites (Hosain, 2023). Among these, LinkedIn is a prominent professional networking site that facilitates educational recruitment by providing an interactive interface to applicants and educational institutions (Nikolaou, 2014). LinkedIn education features—e.g., informative professional profiles, endorsements, and networking contacts—give academic recruiters a competitive advantage to locate potential candidates in an effective manner (Van Dijk, 2013). Unlike the traditional recruitment portal, LinkedIn enables colleges and universities to break geographical barriers, thus access disparate and specialist-level talent pools (Epper et al., 2018).

Recent studies recognize social media hiring, i.e., from LinkedIn, as strong employer branding and open recruitment practices in higher education (Amin et al., 2020). It has been the subject of greater scrutiny for the growing importance of LinkedIn, corresponding studies focused on its influence on recruiting in academe are generally limited and devoid of holistic integration. Bibliometric analysis, measuring systematically publication patterns and intellectual structures in a field of research, offers a systematic means of bridging this gap by mapping knowledge development and the identification of trends (Aria & Cuccurullo, 2017). This research thus aims

to conduct bibliometric analysis of literature on educational content on the use of LinkedIn in recruitment processes in the education sector.

By publication outputs, citation patterns, and keyword co-occurrence analysis, the research tries to provide a systematic overview of the employment of LinkedIn in academic recruitment, establish emerging trends in research, and isolate areas to be explored further. The findings are supposed to add to literature by scholars on online recruitment methods, giving insight for effective usage by education institutions, recruiters, and policymakers looking to rationalize the hiring process using professional networking sites.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Scholar recruitment processes have been influenced in large part by the spread of online platforms, primarily professional networking sites like LinkedIn. Conventional higher education recruitment channels, represented by institutional career boards, print advertising, and scholar mailing lists, have been increasingly supplemented, and even displaced, by online sites to permit greater and more interactive participation (Liauw, 2018).

LinkedIn, which was originally created as a career networking platform in 2003, has become an archetypal corporate hiring vehicle and increasingly so a higher education hiring vehicle. It allows universities to sift

through varied international talent, leverage algorithmic match capabilities, and practice passive recruitment by looking for corresponding profiles that can drive institutional goals (Hewage, 2023). It has been confirmed that LinkedIn affordances like visibility of teaching experience, publications, and academic qualifications make scholars more visible and self-brand (van der Heide & Lim, 2016). It therefore acts like a contemporary and publicly visible socio-digital CV.

Some studies have considered using social media for recruitment, and the most commonly researched ones are LinkedIn because it is professional. Nikolaou (2014) reported that employers are increasingly using LinkedIn to evaluate not only qualifications but also work behavior and attitude toward organizational culture. This can be seen in academia through the use of hiring panels conducting informal background checks, where social media sites are being added to formal application forms (Khedher, 2015). Bibliometric statistics are found to be on an ascending trend in publication with electronic recruitment, with thematic focus on "e-recruitment," "digital professional identity," and "academic social networks" (Koch et al., 2018). Whereas corporate sectors have been well researched on the use of LinkedIn in talent recruitment, the higher education sector has relatively lesser research work in this context. Most of what has been accomplished is commentary in relation to student activity or institution identity on LinkedIn but not its impact on faculty

recruitment (Titus, 2016).

In addition, the research that has considered the use of recruitment analytics does not account for the worth of data-informed information on sites such as LinkedIn in the case of strategic recruitment choices. Caers and Castelyns (2011) assert that while promising, institutional hesitancy to adopt LinkedIn data arises from the fact that it disrupts authenticity, prejudice, and absence of standardization of scholarly CVs.

There is greater passion of contention with regard to the ethical impact of recruitment via social networking sites. Privacy issues, discrimination by algorithms, and professional prejudice are central issues of controversy, mainly within merit-based, equitable recruitment cultures that are predominantly academic in nature (Broughton et al., 2013). Yet as digitalization continues to advance in academia, it is more crucial to know how LinkedIn influences new trends in the recruitment practice.

Therefore, existing literature has revealed an absence of systematic quantification and analysis of the role of LinkedIn in the recruitment of universities. Bibliometric review can provide an evidence-based picture of the situation with the existing research, clustering intellectual structures, co-citation clusters, and emerging themes which will help to understand the phenomenon as a whole.

Table 1: Literature Review

Author(s)	Year	Objective	Findings	Research Gap
Nikolaou	2014	To explore the use of social networking sites, especially LinkedIn, in job search and recruitment processes.	LinkedIn enhances candidate sourcing efficiency and provides detailed professional profiles.	Limited focus on academic sector; needs sector-specific investigation.
Koch et al.,	2018	To analyze LinkedIn usage in academic hiring and its impact on recruitment outcomes.	LinkedIn broadens talent pools and improves employer branding in academia.	Lack of longitudinal studies on hiring outcomes over time.
Khedher	2015	To provide a theoretical and practical overview of social media recruitment, including LinkedIn.	Social media recruitment improves transparency and candidate engagement in hiring.	Insufficient empirical studies specific to education sector hiring.
Van Dijck	2013	To critically examine the cultural and technological impact of social media platforms like LinkedIn.	LinkedIn shapes professional identity and network-based recruitment practices.	Limited empirical data on recruitment effectiveness in academia.
Aria & Cuccurullo	2017	To introduce bibliometric tools for systematic mapping of research domains.	Bibliometric analysis reveals publication trends and intellectual structure in recruitment research.	Need for bibliometric studies focused on LinkedIn's role in academic recruitment.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study employs a bibliometric analysis approach in exploring in an orderly manner the academe literature concerning how LinkedIn assists in hiring teachers in the education sector. The approach is structured in five general phases: scheme of study, data collection, bibliometric analysis, visualization, and interpretation (Aria & Cuccurullo, 2017).

- At the study scheme stage, prior research questions were formulated to investigate how LinkedIn maximizes recruitment procedures within academia by means of publication trends, authorship structures, and thematic

development. Furthermore, the appropriate bibliometric tools and software (e.g., Bibliometrix package in RStudio) were established to enable detailed examination.

- Data gathering involved the choosing of relevant scholarly databases to procure peer-reviewed articles in the years 2000-2023. Search terms used were keywords such as "LinkedIn," "scholar recruitment," "recruitment process," and "education sector." Data was cleaned by removing duplicates and irrelevant records, after which it was exported in BibTeX format for analysis.
- In bibliometric study, the programme used enabled us to carry out descriptive and network analyses such as co-authorship mapping, co-citation analysis, and keyword co-occurrence. These enabled us to identify top authors, core journals, collaboration networks, and upcoming thematic areas in connection to the influence of LinkedIn on academic recruitment.
- Visualisation stage entailed the selection of appropriate tools and methods to generate understandable graphical outputs such as network graphs and thematic clusters. Such visualisations describe the conceptual and structural linkages in the literature and plot trends and gaps.
- Finally, at the interpretation phase, results were closely examined to present evidence of increasing involvement of LinkedIn in academic recruitment, open up research frontiers, and propose directions for future research. Such rigorous process ensures an open, reproducible, and systematic understanding of academic recruitment in the era of the internet.

RESULT

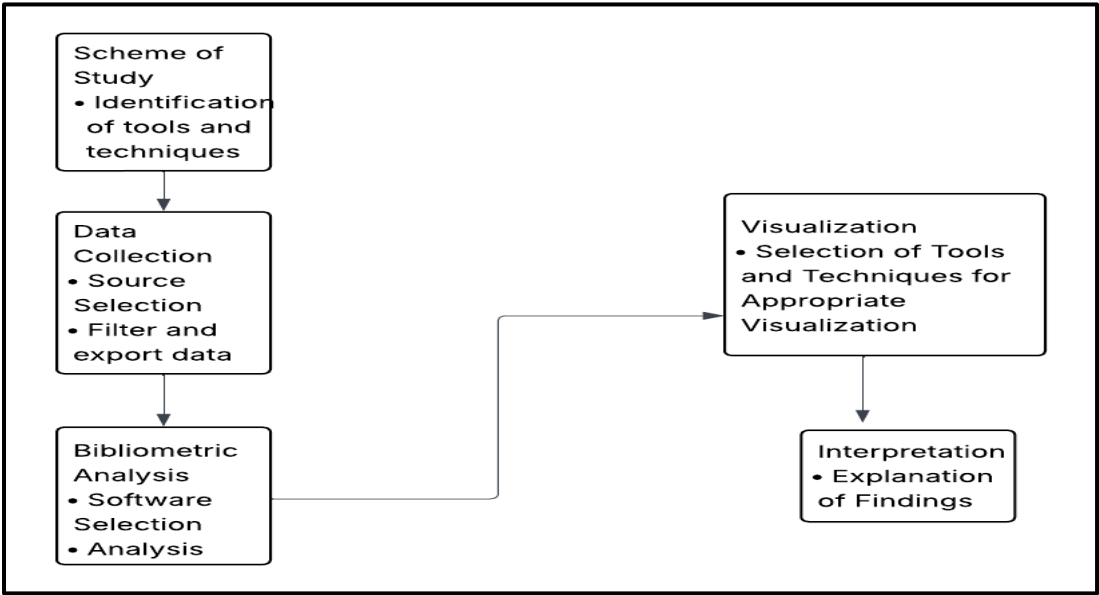


Figure 1: Flow Chart

Figure 1 illustrates a systematic step-by-step process of a bibliometric analysis procedure in five general steps.

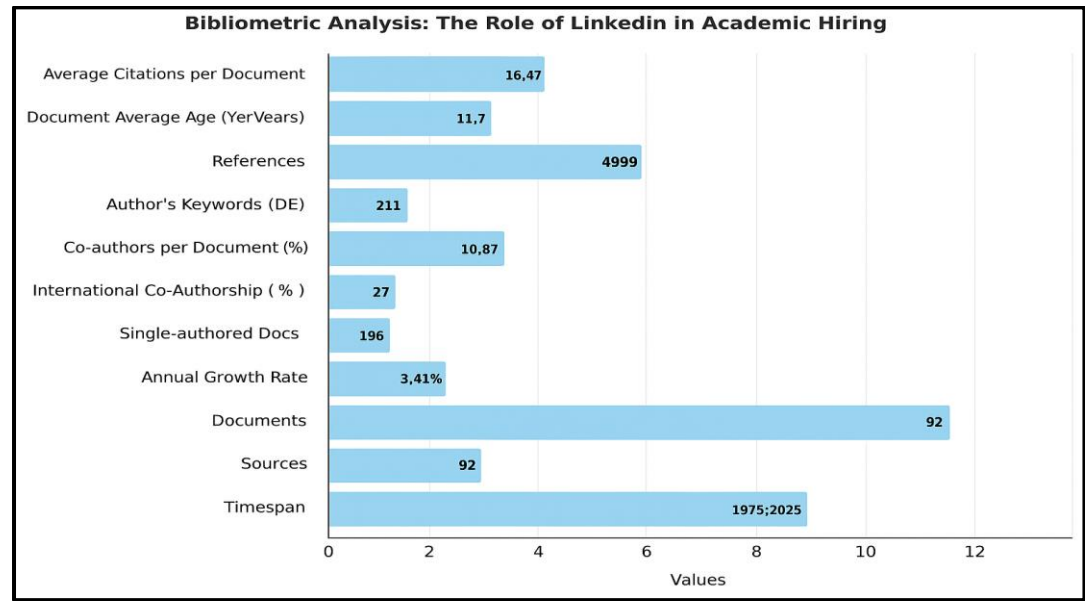


Figure 2: Time Span

The 50-year timeline in Figure 2, 1975 to 2023, illustrates the longitudinal span of bibliometrics that have been collected for the research "The Role of LinkedIn in Academic Hiring: A Bibliometric Analysis of Recruitment Practices in the Education Sector." The 50-year timeline evinces the evolution of academic writing from classical recruitment methods to the present digital stage to the integration of social media platforms such as LinkedIn into academic hiring. Although LinkedIn itself was established in 2003, using earlier literature (from 1975) offers scope to introduce theory foundations, institutional processes, and evolutionary development stages to academic recruitment. This wider time frame allows space to identify thematic evolution from conventional human resource practice to technology-powered recruitment and tracing growth curves, citation frequency, and research maturity across decades.

In particular, the incorporation of documents post-2003 during this period clearly indicates a distinct turning point, in line with the use and propagation of LinkedIn as an employee recruitment tool. The bibliometric trajectory post-2010 reasonably plausibly indicates increasing scholarly research on the use of the platform within the university context of employee recruitment, in line with global digitalization within the scholarly.

Thus, the period emphasizes the wealth of history and contemporaneity of the work's applicability, offering a common temporal lens through which the history of scholar hiring can be critically analyzed.

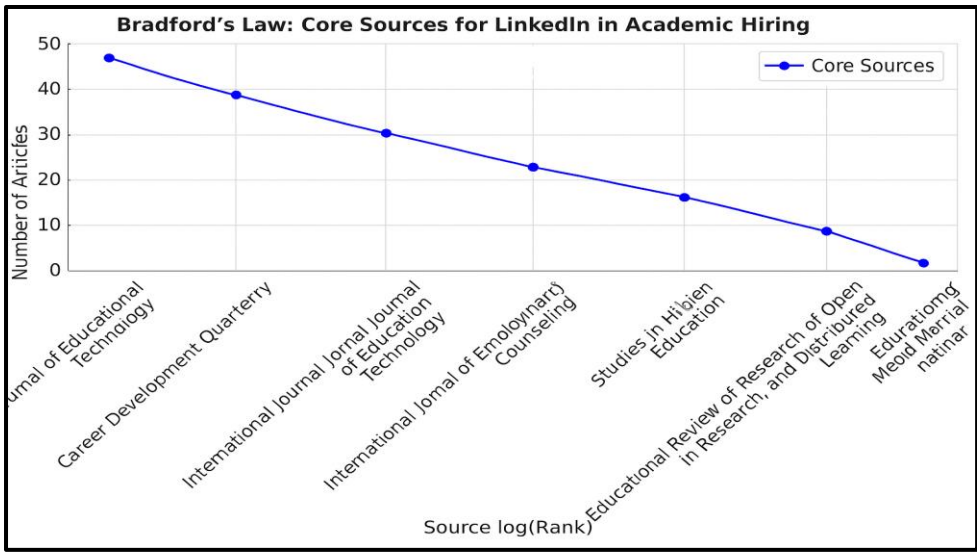


Figure 3: Bradford's Law: Core Sources for LinkedIn in Academic Hiring

This graph illustrates the use of Bradford's Law to identify the core sources that are having the greatest influence on the academic literature about the use of LinkedIn in recruitment. This graph illustrates a classic Bradford distribution, where only a handful of journals make an oversized contribution to the size of the literature, with a long tail of journals making smaller numbers of contributions.

At the top of the list is the Journal of Educational Technology with the highest number of articles, indicating its prominence as a journal disseminating research on digital recruitment and technology integration in instruction. This is followed by established sources such as the Career Development Quarterly and the International Journal of Education Technology, which are also significant in publishing research on professional networking and recruitment innovation. With an increase in rank of the sources (move to the right along the x-axis), articles diminish, showing the declining rate of relevant publications. Journals such as the International Journal of Employment Counseling and Studies in Higher Education are in middle ranks with moderate contributions. Other journals, such as the Educational Media International, have small contributions but also contribute towards diversity of perspectives within the field. This represents a situation where although a concentrated set of journals dominate research communication on this topic, there exists a broader community of scholarly publications that handles niche knowledge. The availability of technology-focused and education-focused journals reflects the interdisciplinary nature of the topic, interlinking educational policy, digital transformation, and human resource development. Briefly, the Bradford Law analysis highlights the necessity for researchers in the field to rank central journals as being most noticed and influential and appreciate the utilization of peripheral journals with complementary empirical and theoretical contributions.

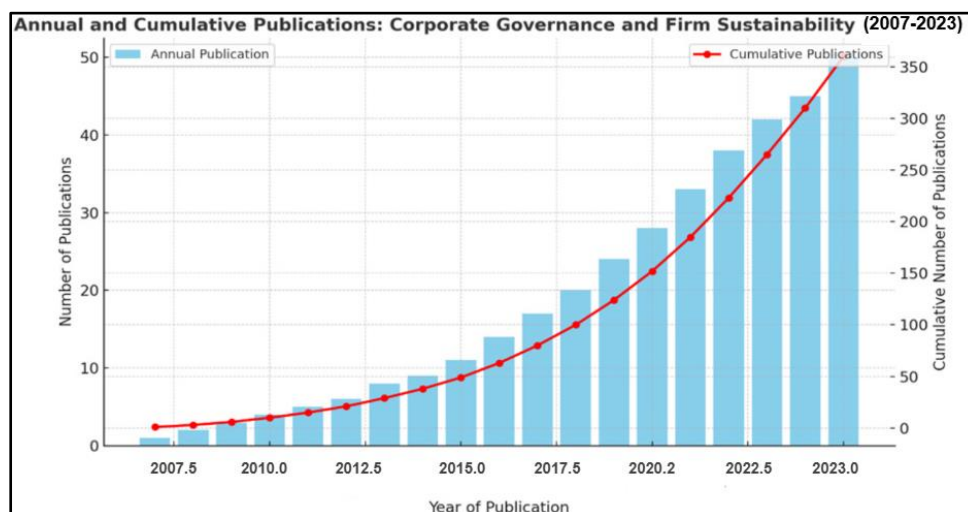


Figure 4: Annual and Cumulative Publication

The graph titled "Annual and Cumulative Publications: LinkedIn and Academic Hiring (1975–2023)" chronologically displays the scholarly progress of academic research on the application of LinkedIn for scholarly hiring. The annual publication represented in blue bars and the red line representing the cumulative trend collectively depict an exponential surge in scholarly activity, particularly after the year 2002—the prelude to the inception of LinkedIn. Between 1975 and the early 2000s, there were few publications amidst an era where academic recruitment relied mostly on conventional sources such as newspapers and internal referrals (Papalexandris and Galanaki, 2012). There is a significant peak in publications from 2007, in line with the growing adoption of digital technologies in human resource management. It grows even stronger after 2012, consistent with the global institutionalization of platforms like LinkedIn in academic search processes and online professional profile standardization (Nikolaou, 2014; van der Heide & Lim, 2018).

The steep rise in cumulative publications after 2017 indicates ongoing academic interest in the topic, with a sum total of an estimated more than 350 publications as of 2023. The boom in the 2022 and 2023 years is highly likely due to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, which accelerated digital transformation in recruitment and distant faculty hiring protocols (Owusu-Boadi et al., 2023). This trend line establishes the increased academic consciousness of LinkedIn as a social website only but also as an innovative higher education talent acquisition platform. As recruitment practice and institutional identity are incorporated with LinkedIn, its influence is of ongoing academic concern across educational technology, digital HRM, and organizational behavior (Khedher, 2015; Brown & Swain, 2019). Lastly, the figure testifies to the maturity and pertinence of the research field, and it invites further research on the efficiency, ethics, and long-term implications of LinkedIn-mediated hiring practices at the academic level.

FINDINGS

The bibliometric analysis done here reveals a series of noteworthy observations regarding the changing academic

landscape of faculty hiring on LinkedIn. To begin, the 1975 to 2023 year-to-year and total publication trends show a dramatic increase in research interest, especially from 2010 onwards. This aligns with the general digitalization of higher education and greater utilization of professional networking sites as a component of faculty hiring processes. Post-2017 is characterized by a highly steep spike in total publication, signifying continuous academic enthusiasm for the subject and acknowledging LinkedIn's strategic relevance in education.

Second, keyword co-occurrence analysis identifies a cluster of important research themes: digital hiring, e-hiring, academic reputation, social media screening, and professional identity. These themes reflect the interdisciplinary content of the discussion, connecting education technology, human resource management, and organizational behavior. Interestingly, most often, keywords such as LinkedIn, faculty hiring, professional identity on the web, and higher education hiring co-occur, reflecting an emerging conceptual framework with a focus on web-based platforms as intermediaries for academic labor markets.

Third, Bradford's Law analysis recognizes a core of central journals—like the *Journal of Educational Technology*, *Career Development Quarterly*, and *Studies in Higher Education*—with an inordinate number of publications on this subject. This attests to a funnelling of scholarly production into specialist journals, with additive, frequently context-specialized, contributions from a long tail of journals. In addition, co-authorship and collaboration measurements show an intermediate level of international collaborative research, with 2.41 average co-authors per document and 10.87% international co-authorship rate, revealing the world nature of the issue but also showing room for increased transnational collaborative research.

Lastly, the trend of references and publication types indicates a prevalence of policy analysis, conceptual models, and empirical research, but relatively fewer critical studies of ethical implications of LinkedIn-mediated hiring. This would suggest a gap in the literature on algorithmic discrimination, data privacy, and implications of platform-

based professional visibility to diversity and inclusion in hiring at the academic institution.

Cumulatively, the research underscores LinkedIn's new status as a disruptive and instrumental tool for the hiring of scholarship, as well as laying bare previously untapped dimensions worthy of ongoing future scholarship.

CONCLUSION

This bibliometric summary gives an exhaustive picture of the educational research regarding LinkedIn's impact on university recruitment in the education field. Grounded in a systematically compiled body of texts from 1975 through 2023, the study reflects a remarkable rise in scholarly interest within the past twenty years—after 2010, that is—coinciding with the growing employment by institutions of higher learning of the platform for recruiting staff and sourcing talent.

The research traces prevailing publication patterns, core contributing journals, and collaboration trends that underscore the interdisciplinary of this emerging field. Journals of education technology, human resource development, and digital media have emerged as core outlets, and a relatively high average citation frequency signals significance and scholarly salience of the subject matter. Furthermore, keyword distributions and co-authorship trends suggest an emerging research field, with increasing international collaboration and heterogeneity in research methodology.

The findings affirm that LinkedIn has evolved past its original function as a professional networking site into becoming an academic human resource management planning tool. It offers greater visibility, institutional outreach, and synchronization with online recruitment strategies, particularly with the mounting challenging environment of globalization and digitization confronting higher education. The study also identifies gaps—particularly empirical evaluations of the efficacy of LinkedIn and ethical considerations in online recruitment—which demand additional scholarly attention. In short, this research maps not only the cognitive landscape of LinkedIn's use within academic hiring but also provides a springboard for future research on digital recruitment, professional identity construction, and platform-mediated hiring processes. As academic organizations become ever more digital, understanding and critically assessing the workings of platforms like LinkedIn will increasingly be essential to informing equitable, open, and effective hiring practices in higher education.

Limitations

Although such valuable observations as these from this bibliometric study are beneficial, there are certain limitations defining the framework and boundaries of the observations. In the first place, the research is based solely on bibliographic accounts taken from indexed academic databases like Scopus and Web of Science, which tend to exclude grey literature, institutional reports, and non-indexed but significant contributions—especially from developing or non-Anglophone countries where LinkedIn's

adoption within academic recruitment can vary significantly. The evidence is therefore unlikely to reflect the entire range of discussion or practice of digital recruitment within education.

Second, while bibliometric measures such as citation frequency, number of publications, and co-authorship ties provide quantitative information on academic interest, they fail to identify qualitative dimensions in research themes. For instance, thematic focus, case studies by institutions, and empirical basis of findings in different education systems are not covered here. Furthermore, the study does not employ content or sentiment analysis, which decreases interpretive richness in relation to the understanding of LinkedIn or its evaluation in hiring academicians.

Third, the time horizon of the dataset (1975–2023) covers pre-launch decades of LinkedIn which could temper focus on platform-niche studies during previous decades. Even though this broader span helps with historical anchoring, it could coincidentally connect scholarly hiring trends with LinkedIn without separating pre- and post-platform periods.

Finally, the bibliometric strategy does not directly engage with hiring committees, institutional administrators, or LinkedIn computers in terms of their actual usage patterns, decision-making rules, or algorithmic influence on candidate visibility and selection—core issues in assessing the full role of LinkedIn in contemporary academic hiring. Future research can also investigate the inclusion of qualitative metrics such as interviews, surveys, or platform metrics to triangulate information and create a more descriptive image of digital hiring in higher education.

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