Competitive Analysis Between LinkedIn and Indeed

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Executive Summary

This study explored user interface preferences between LinkedIn and Indeed by evaluating task efficiency, usability, information quality, interface quality, and system usefulness. Ten participants completed five tasks on each platform. Data was collected through a prestudy survey, the Post-Study System Usability Questionnaire (PSSUQ), and the Single Ease Question (SEQ). Key findings included:

- Task Efficiency: Participants completed tasks significantly faster on Indeed (M = 31.20 seconds) than LinkedIn (M = 205.00 seconds), t(10.341) = -9.004, p < .001.
- Usability (PSSUQ): Indeed received higher usability ratings (M = 3.37) compared to LinkedIn (M = 2.09), t(17.97) = 2.12, p = .048.
- Information and Interface Quality: Indeed outperformed LinkedIn in information quality (M = 3.44 vs. M = 2.15, p = .043) and interface quality (M = 3.45 vs. M = 1.80, p = .029).
- 4. **System Usefulness:** Both platforms were rated similarly, t(16.26) = 1.20, p = .247.

Overall, Indeed demonstrated a clear advantage over LinkedIn in terms of task efficiency, usability, information quality, and interface quality. While both platforms were rated similarly in system usefulness, participants consistently favored Indeed for its user-centric design and performance. These findings highlight Indeed's superior interface, specifically related to the tasks completed by participants, which may contribute to better task outcomes and user satisfaction.

Background

This competitive analysis between LinkedIn and Indeed stems from their global presence and use. LinkedIn, has over 1 billion annual users, utilizing the website's social networking and job search capabilities. Of those 1 billion users, only 50 million users use the job search page each month. On the flip side, Indeed has over 500 million monthly users, all of whom are using the platform to find and apply for jobs. Students are a large part of this population as they are often looking for jobs, internships, and co-ops to develop and begin their professional careers. LinkedIn, is one of their greatest tools, as they can market themselves with a public profile, connect with industry professionals, and message recruiters about jobs they have posted. Because of this, LinkedIn should be trying its best to control the market share of job seekers, but it clearly does not. This paper investigates if the reason for poor market share is due to poor user experience through interface design.

Methods

Participants

Ten total participants were run for this study, ranging from ages 21-56, with five participants aged 23 and under. No other demographic information, other than age, was collected from participants.

Tasks

There were 5 total tasks for this study. Task one was simply signing into the designated website using a provided username and password. Task two was to upload a provided resume to their profile, utilizing any tools or methods they chose. Task three was to search for a job relevant to their provided resume after analyzing it for 5 or fewer minutes. Participants were allowed to utilize any search criteria they wanted but were required to use the exact same criteria, if possible, on the other website to ensure consistency. After searching and finding a job posting, task four was to save that posting to their profile. Once this was completed, task five was to navigate to their saved jobs.

Measures

Qualitative and Quantitative measures were collected during the study to ensure quality findings. While completing tasks, a think-aloud protocol was active. Meaning participants were encouraged to express all of their thoughts and feelings out loud for the facilitators to record and analyze later on. Participants were also asked for an overall preference between LinkedIn and Indeed when they were finished, providing reasoning for their decision. Quantitative data consisted of collecting the total time on task (TOT) for each task, a single ease questionnaire (SEQ), as well as the Post Study System Usability Questionnaire (PSSUQ).

Procedure

Participants were asked to begin their study with a pre-study survey, designed to collect data on their age, previous experiences, and perceived expertise level for both LinkedIn and Indeed. Upon completing the pre-study survey, participants were instructed to navigate to either LinkedIn or Indeed, based on the counterbalanced order established prior to the start of the study. Once their survey was completed, they would begin the study, starting on either LinkedIn or Indeed, based on their counterbalanced order. Participants were provided with one task at a time, starting with task one, as well as any relevant instructions pertaining to the current task. Participants were given the list of tasks with their descriptions, after they were ready, they would begin the task. Upon completion of each individual task, participants were provided with the SEQ. Once the task was finished, the SEQ was assessed, qualitative data was also collected. After all five tasks were completed for one website, participants completed the post-study survey consisting of the PSSUQ. After the PSSUQ survey, the same five tasks for the other website were given, also completing the SEQ after each task and providing qualitative data. After the second website tasks were completed, the same PSSUQ survey was given. Once all tasks on both websites were finished, a final overall preference was given to the facilitators. This was the final step in the study.

Results

An independent samples t-test was conducted to compare user experience measures between the Indeed and LinkedIn interfaces. Time on Task was significantly lower for Indeed (M = 31.20, SD = 16.12) compared to LinkedIn (M = 205.00, SD = 58.87), t(10.341) = -9.004, p < .001, two-tailed¹. Overall PSSUQ scores were higher, indicating better usability for Indeed (M = 3.37, SD = 1.32) than LinkedIn (M = 2.09, SD = 1.38), t(17.97)= 2.12, p = .048, two-tailed. For Information Quality, Indeed (M = 3.44, SD = 1.26) scored significantly higher than LinkedIn (M = 2.15, SD = 1.38), t(17.86) = 2.18, p = .043, two-tailed. Interface Quality was also rated significantly higher for Indeed (M = 3.45, SD = 1.64) compared to LinkedIn (M = 1.80, SD = 1.45), t(17.74) = 2.38, p = .029, two-tailed. No significant differences were observed for System Usefulness, t(16.26) = 1.20, p = .247, twotailed. These results suggest that participants performed tasks more efficiently and rated Indeed higher in overall usability, information quality, and interface quality compared to LinkedIn. The specific results of the analyses can be found in Table 1 and Table 2. **Table 1**

	Interface	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Time on Task	Indeed	10	31.20	16.116	5.096
	LinkedIn	10	205.00	58.873	18.617
PSSUQ Overall	Indeed	10	3.366190	1.3241059	.4187191
	LinkedIn	10	2.086140	1.3780252	.4357698
System Usefulness	Indeed	10	3.183320	1.4260727	.4509638
	LinkedIn	10	2.250000	2.0019339	.6330671
Information Quality	Indeed	10	3.443330	1.2605367	.3986167
	LinkedIn	10	2.155000	1.3775069	.4356059
Interface Quality	Indeed	10	3.450000	1.6406300	.5188127
	LinkedIn	10	1.800000	1.4520101	.4591659

Group Statistics

¹ Time on Task violated an assumption necessary conducting t-tests by failing Levene's Test for Equality of Variances. As a result, these figures account for the violation of the assumption and can be found in the Equal variances not assumed line for Time on Task in Table 2.

Table 2

Independent Samples Test												
		Levene's Test f Varia	t-test for Equality of Means									
					Signifi	icance Mean		Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference			
		F	Sig.	t	df	One-Sided p	Two-Sided p	Difference	Difference	Lower	Upper	
Time on Task	Equal variances assumed	10.197	.005	-9.004	18	<.001	<.001	-173.800	19.302	-214.352	-133.248	
	Equal variances not assumed			-9.004	10.341	<.001	<.001	-173.800	19.302	-216.616	-130.984	
PSSUQ Overall	Equal variances assumed	.001	.980	2.118	18	.024	.048	1.2800500	.6043352	.0103889	2.5497111	
	Equal variances not assumed			2.118	17.971	.024	.048	1.2800500	.6043352	.0102441	2.5498559	
System Usefulness	Equal variances assumed	.415	.527	1.201	18	.123	.245	.9333200	.7772659	6996551	2.5662951	
	Equal variances not assumed			1.201	16.264	.124	.247	.9333200	.7772659	7122425	2.5788825	
nformation Quality	Equal variances assumed	.059	.810	2.182	18	.021	.043	1.2883300	.5904641	.0478111	2.5288489	
	Equal variances not assumed			2.182	17.860	.021	.043	1.2883300	.5904641	.0471142	2.5295458	
nterface Quality	Equal variances assumed	.836	.373	2.382	18	.014	.028	1.6500000	.6928203	.1944385	3.1055615	
	Equal variances not assumed			2.382	17.738	.014	.029	1.6500000	.6928203	.1928961	3.1071039	

Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Task 2 (Uploading the resume), featured the highest difference in TOT and SEQ scores, with LinkedIn scoring very poorly vs. Indeed. This was due to the lack of a simple "upload resume" option in the user profile section. To remedy this problem and improve user experience and interface design, a button should be added. A mockup of this is shown in Figure 1.





Recommendation 2: Another area that LinkedIn struggled to compete with Indeed was the viewing saved jobs task. Unlike Indeed, LinkedIn does not have a section to view jobs in the user profile, users must go back to the jobs page. Additionally, there is not an easily

findable quick link on the LinkedIn page. To solve this issue, LinkedIn should move the "view saved job" link to under the "save" button. A mockup of this solution is shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2. Redesigned "View Saved Jobs Link"

