

Perspectives on Personas in Practice - An analysis of LinkedIn discussions among UX professionals

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Abstract. It is a challenge to gain insight into the development and application of personas across multiple companies. Moving beyond single case studies to understand the industry perspective, this study employs analyses of social media data on persona practice to capture and conceptualize practitioner experiences. The paper reports on an analysis of three LinkedIn discussions among 75 UX practitioners on their real-world experiences and attitudes towards the persona method, examining both the perceived benefits and obstacles. Positively, personas support user-centered design and decision-making during the UX design process. Criticism concerns poor data quality, misconceptions about the method, and a negative discourse, which hinder effective method adoption and persona creation during the persona design process. This aligns with previous research. However, the study's demonstration that negative perspectives often stem from the flawed application of the method is novel. Furthermore, the study presents a new way to obtain knowledge from practical experiences.

Keywords: Personas, Practice, Theory.

1 Introduction

Earlier studies have divided the persona practices literature into three different categories: *case studies* where the researchers have been part of the UX design process either as facilitators or researchers (e.g., [32]), *in situ studies* where the researchers observed the use of the method in practice (e.g., [4,10]), and *empirical studies* where researchers capture, analyze, and report practitioners' perceived understandings of the method, using qualitative or quantitative methods (e.g., [20]). Lately, *literature studies* that analyze literature on persona use (e.g., [13]) have appeared. The current study provides a fifth category for understanding practice through the *analysis of social media discussions*, which to the best of our knowledge is new.

To obtain knowledge on industrial practices is not simple and to look across multiple sites is even more challenging. To move beyond single case studies to understand the industry perspective, this study employs analyses of social media data in the form of LinkedIn discussions on persona practice to capture and conceptualize practitioner experiences.

Personas are fictitious user types [8] representing the diverse needs, wants, and contexts [27] of real user groups during design processes. UX designers, software developers, marketers, and other stakeholders use personas to make user-centric decisions [31]. Prior research has shown that personas are widely applied in both research and industry practices [36]. Despite the growing interest over the past two decades in human-computer interaction (HCI) and similar fields, few studies are based on real-world experiences of how personas are applied in practice. Most studies of practice apply surveys [33], case studies, or interviews [37], where researcher interests drive the data collection, and in the case of interviews and case studies, focus on a limited data set.

In this paper, we report based on insights into persona practice through unmonitored and unstimulated discussions and opinions arising from problems and questions, which practitioners have shared in LinkedIn discussions. To extract findings from these discussions, we explore data that differs significantly from traditional quantitative and qualitative data, focusing on the dialogues, and practical references provided by the practitioners who partook in the discussions.

2 Related Literature

The literature on personas covers various topics and domains, including software development, healthcare, robotics, dialogue systems, games, privacy and security, recommendation systems, marketing, and architecture [28]. It is recommended to create personas at the beginning of the design process [20] as they can facilitate customer segmentation, help prioritize segments and features and address the most crucial audiences [26]. The literature on personas primarily emphasizes the use of personas in the design process of digital systems and services, secondarily for software development, such as for requirement elicitation [38] and product design e.g. within health [34]. Personas are often integrated with or supported by other methods such as scenarios [18] and participatory design practices [19]. Personas are primarily created using qualitative data such as interviews, quantitative data such as surveys or online data, or a mix hereof [15,16]. Each method has its strength and weaknesses, as will be presented below.

In the following, we present literature on the positive and negative perspectives concerning the method as an understanding hereof forms the backdrop for this study, particularly for how we frame our findings and draw conclusions.

2.1 Positive perspectives on personas

Research shows that researchers and practitioners consistently display interest in creating and using personas toward user-centric design goals [12,27,33]. In the following we will focus on research on persona practice. The research have found that some UX designers understand the persona method and have multiple ways of applying and using it [6]. The benefits are related to data, ideation, problem understanding, vision creation, marketing [25], evaluation, and implementing design [1,20], thus covering both the design process, the implementation of the design, and the sales and marketing processes.

In the UX design process, personas are beneficial as they make data about users explicit [26]. During ideation, personas help in understanding users' needs and context. They also align user understanding and improve communication among stakeholders and design team members [14,24]. For the implementation process, it can support the creation of implementation and adaptation strategies (see e.g. [21]). In sales and marketing personas provide knowledge of the relevant target groups of buyers, that might differ from the users and provide understanding of these (see e.g. [5]).

The literature emphasizes well-implemented personas processes with the necessary prerequisites. Thus, there are specific circumstances related to a positive experience and attitude toward personas, particularly formal training in the method, extensive knowledge from working with personas in practice [24], and general expertise in qualitative methods [1]. Two smaller studies found that [2,3] personas are more successful when designers and developers work closely together. In this case, they help to ensure that developers understand the intended users. Additionally, personas are more successful if scenarios and user stories are used in combination with personas to capture behaviors and behavioral change [14].

1.1 Negative perspectives of persona use

The critique of the method falls into two strands. Firstly, research-based critique problematizes the research and assumptions that go into creating the persona descriptions, the applicability of personas, and the difficulty of demonstrating the value of applying the persona method [7,10,15,23,27,33]. Secondly, practice-based critique has found that designers rarely use personas in meetings and decision-making [10], skepticism towards personas persists as they are considered too abstract and potentially misleading [24], internal agendas and politics challenge the use of personas [32], and organizations lack the maturity to adopt personas [36]. Finally, specific prerequisites need to be in place for personas to be successful [2,20]. Thus, the criticism from studies with practitioners can be categorized into persona creation, evaluation, implementation, and organizational factors [35].

Most of the criticism refers to the persona design process, covering data collection about users, data analysis, and development of persona descriptions [27]. The persona design process is often time-consuming, especially when using qualitative data [15], and persona projects aimed at developing persona descriptions frequently suffer from a lack of resources, time, and sufficient funding [2,3]. Personas are rarely based on a continuous data collection process, and in some cases, persona creators use no external data but instead use internal knowledge and experiences to create ad-hoc personas [30] that are validated in later research. Since the data used is not always displayed and often comes from qualitative methods, there can be distrust in the underlying data [24].

It is considered challenging to create useful persona descriptions with enough and proper information for making design decisions [20,39]. The personas method is perceived as risky as the personas may portray a wrong user group [2,3]. Finally, some designers prefer to meet real users as opposed to user representations [39].

The personas are not integrated with development [2,3] or poorly implemented in the organization [32]. Likewise, research points to a connection between poor implementation and low organizational UX maturity [2,20,39]. Inadequate training leads to

improper method utilization and a lack of understanding of the role the method can play during the UX design process [2,3,39]. Moreover, even if there is a before and after effect when using the method, it is difficult to quantitatively evaluate the impact of personas [39].

The major challenges identified in persona research relate to lack of training, lack of resources, lack of standardized instructions for persona creation, and seeing persona creation predominantly as a technical exercise [37]. Floyd et al. [9] nicely sums it up: *“It is both a strength and a weakness of PBD [persona-based design] that the idea seems so appealing that many people choose to adopt it and knowingly or inadvertently modify it in both positive and negative directions.”* [9] p. 14. More than ten years later, there is still limited understanding of practitioners’ perceptions of the benefits and obstacles of using personas, including integration with other methods. This study aims to explore what practitioners perceive as beneficial and which obstacles arise when and where (e.g., during the persona design process, the UX design process, or during implementation and method integration).

3 Method

We analyzed three discussions on LinkedIn: (A) a request to share real-world persona success stories from 2021 with 41 comments, the latest from the same year, (B) a request to share examples of personas in behavioral design or behavior change, and also potential critiques of personas from 2022 with 112 comments, the latest from the same year, and finally, (C) an invitation to share how product teams, designers, researchers or stakeholders reference personas from 2022 with 71 comments, the latest from March 2023. In total, we analyzed 224 comments from 75 professionals (see Table 1).

These social media data differ significantly from traditional qualitative data, such as interview data. While interview data typically involves longer transcribed texts collected from a limited number of participants engaged in synchronous dialogue, social media data consists of dialogue threads with several shorter posts exchanged asynchronously among numerous participants. In the following, we present our process.

3.1 Data collection

The data was collected from three practitioner discussions on LinkedIn. The first discussion from 2021 was prompted by a question from a UX designer: *“Looking for real-world persona success stories. As a designer working in tech for more than 10 years, I’ve rarely seen personas used well. Often, they’re made and then forgotten about, or they become too bloated, too specific etc to be useful. I teach students about personas and archetypes and want to give them stories about when they actually work. So, I’m curious—does your team actually use personas day-to-day? How and when do you use them? Or if not, why not?”*. The second discussion was prompted by a similar question. A behavioral science consultant asked in 2022: *“I’m looking for examples of personas in behavioral design or behavior change, and also potential critiques of per-*

sonas (as they have traditionally been created) from a BeSci [behavioral science] perspective.” This spurred a discussion about positive and negative experiences with personas and recommendations for alternatives.

Similarly, in 2022, a UX lead designer created a poll and asked: “*I would love to know how your product teams, designers, researchers or stakeholders reference personas. If you have been on a team that references them often, I want to talk to YOU! I am seeking people who have had success with personas on their projects. Please tell me in the comments.*”

Together the three posts got 224 comments from 75 unique participants. The networks of practitioners were diverse, without overlaps between the participants in the three discussions. Despite all three initiatives being US-based, participants were also located in India, Australia, Romania, Holland, Finland, Sweden, and Denmark.

Table 1: overview of participants

LinkedIn discussion	Number of comments	Number of participants	Examples of job titles
A	41	33	Designers: (Innovation & Service Design Leader, Service Designer, Design Lead) Executive Coach Behavioral Science Expert The Brand Scientist
B	112	15	Managers: (Design and Product Executive, VP-Product, Co-Founder & Principal Experience Strategist) Designers: (Design leader, EX Consulting, Product designer, Principal Product designer) Research: (Design Research Lead, strategist/researcher)
C	71	27	Managers: (Design Director, Senior Manager, Global Head of Design) Designers: (Senior Product designer, UX designer, UX lead designer) Product development Design Research UX architect Social Anthropologist

3.2 Data analysis

Each of the three discussion threads was unfolded, copied, and saved. Next, the data analysis was performed using a three-stage procedure [11], with first-order codes, second-order themes, and third-order concepts, as the framework for inductive thematic analysis.

In the first stage, each discussion thread was analyzed separately to identify first-order codes. Taking inspiration from our literature study, we prompted Chat-GPT3 to identify positive and negative perspectives on personas and to find alternative methods.

The following prompts were run: (1) analyze the text for positive perspectives on personas, (2) analyze the text for negative perspectives on personas, (3) analyze for alternative approaches to personas.

From the first order coding, a manual study of the codes found 22 positive second order themes, 35 negative themes, and two themes related to other preferred methods. These themes were reviewed and validated against the data to ensure accuracy.

These themes were finally manually clustered into five high level concepts related to positive aspects comprising creating user understanding supporting a user-centered design process, communication, organization, and validation. The negative aspects fall into seven high level concepts comprising persona data, persona descriptions, long-term persona use, personas and behavioural change, poorly constructed personas, missing the broader picture, and persona implementation. Most themes fall within poorly constructed persona descriptions.

All examples mentioned in the findings section are derived from the first order analysis. We have anonymized the participants. However, by accessing these links, the original quotes can be found:

A: <https://www.linkedin.com/feed/update/urn:li:activity:6765035612849496065/>

B: <https://www.linkedin.com/feed/update/urn:li:activity:6997856412378746880/>

C: <https://www.linkedin.com/feed/update/urn:li:activity:7013909515859374081/>

In the second stage, we shifted to manual coding as prompts for clustering did not provide meaningful results. Thus, in this stage, all codes across the three threads were manually interpreted and collapsed into themes (e.g., codes as such Visualization and Content, Diversity, Empathy and Design, and were summarized into a theme labelled Creating User Understanding). The coding process resulted in 13 themes.

Following this, in the third stage, we analyzed the themes to identify high-level concepts. Manually clustering the themes, we derived five concepts related to the perceived benefits of personas, seven concepts related to the perceived obstacles of personas, and one concept associated with other preferred methods. These concepts represent the core findings of our analysis.

4 Findings

The findings presented in this section cover both the UX design process, the persona design process, and integration with or preferences for other methods. In the following, we will divide the reported findings accordingly.

4.1 The perceived positive perspectives on personas

The persona method is perceived as a multifaceted approach to enhancing user understanding, facilitating communication, supporting organizational goals, and ensuring validation throughout design decisions. These positive themes concern the use of personas during *the UX design process*.

The LinkedIn conversations reveal a broad spectrum of persona applications, ranging from high-level strategic decision-making to agile short-term project development.

This range highlights the adaptability of personas in addressing various stakeholder requirements and contexts. Furthermore, the widespread use of personas across multiple industries and professional domains, including technology, academia, and design, demonstrates their cross-sectoral relevance. The engagement of professionals from diverse backgrounds indicates a shared recognition of the method's value.

The professionals emphasize that personas enhance user understanding, which is strengthened by both the layout and content of persona descriptions. By referencing their research, industry experiences, and case studies, they advocate for the effectiveness of personas in shaping user-centered design strategies. This indicates a commitment to continuously improving how personas are created, communicated, and utilized to support the UX design process.

During the UX design process, the persona descriptions create user understanding and empathy, which facilitate the design of more meaningful and relevant user experiences. Designers gain confidence in their decision-making, knowing that their insights are grounded in data-driven user understanding. This empowerment extends beyond individual designers to entire organizations and design teams, reinforcing the collective pursuit of user-centric innovation.

The visual composition of persona descriptions plays a vital role in making user segments more relatable to design teams. Through compelling layouts and clear representations, the cast of personas help designers visualize the diversity of their target audience. Moreover, the specific details embedded within personas—such as behavioral insights, goals, and motivations—offer designers a deeper understanding of the factors influencing user decisions. As a result, personas not only validate design assumptions but also guide solution development, helping teams avoid costly design errors and ensuring a more informed, user-focused approach to product and experience creation.

Example from the first-order analysis: *“A participant share personas were effective in drawing out user flows and making new website proposals compelling to senior users.”*

Furthermore, personas provide shared understanding and serve as a communication tool between different teams and stakeholders. This is both effective and foster collaboration.

Examples from the first-order analysis: *“A participant mentions Nerdwallet as a company that used personas effectively across product teams.” “A participant emphasizes the importance of using personas throughout the design process, rather than treating them as a one-time exercise.”*

Finally, some participants mention that it is beneficial to supplement personas with user journey maps to better visualize user behaviors, and identify pain points, opportunities, and touchpoints throughout the user journey.

In summary, the positive aspects of personas are the fostering of empathy, the ability to facilitate discussions and decision-making throughout the design process, and the creation of shared understanding among team members and stakeholders. Thus, personas are an embodiment of user-centered design principles, and the participants emphasize that personas play a crucial role in supporting the UX design process.

Table 2: The themes concerning the UX design process

User-centered design approach	<p>They keep the focus on users throughout the design process, ensuring that design decisions align with user behaviors and preferences.</p> <p>Personas help define and solve problems from a user-centric perspective.</p> <p>Personas help prioritize design features and improvements based on the needs and preferences of the most important user segments, leading to more impactful design decisions.</p>
Informed decision-making	<p>By having a clear understanding of user archetypes and their needs, teams can make decisions that align with user expectations and preferences.</p>
Iterative design approach and long-term planning	<p>The use of personas promotes an iterative design approach. As personas are continuously updated with new insights, the design process evolves to better address user behaviors and preferences.</p> <p>Personas offer a foundation for long-term design strategies, as they can evolve over time to reflect <u>changing user needs and market trends</u>.</p>
Reduced subjectivity	<p>Personas provide an objective framework for decision-making, reducing the influence of individual biases and assumptions in the design process.</p>
Design-contextualization	<p>The contextual information guides the design process. Personas provide context to user behaviors by highlighting the specific situations, environments, and circumstances that influence decision-making.</p>
Guidance for innovation	<p>Personas inspire innovation by encouraging designers to think creatively about how to solve user problems and fulfil their needs.</p>

4.2 The perceived negative perspectives on personas

The negative aspects associated with personas encompass seven key themes: persona data, persona descriptions, long-term persona use, personas and behavioral change, poorly constructed personas, missing the broader picture, and persona implementation. A predominant concern is the creation of poorly constructed persona descriptions during *the persona design process*.

One of the major critiques concerns persona data. Many participants doubt the validity of the data used to create personas, questioning whether they accurately represent users and whether the voices and perspectives incorporated truly reflect the diversity of user segments. This mistrust extends to concerns over the authenticity of user descriptions and whether personas are grounded in meaningful research or merely speculative assumptions, e.g., “*A participant shares a concern about introducing bias early in projects while creating personas.*”

The most significant criticisms focus on the persona descriptions themselves. Methodological issues include the risk of oversimplification, the incorporation of fictitious elements, and flawed execution in their development. Some participants argue that personas often rely on generalized stereotypes rather than nuanced user insights, which can lead to misleading representations that fail to encompass the full spectrum of user segments. These shortcomings not only limit the effectiveness of personas in guiding

design decisions but also undermine their credibility during UX design, raising broader concerns about their practical application and impact. These challenges are further compounded by perceived difficulties in updating personas when user behaviors evolve, the struggle to effectively apply them in dynamic, fast-paced environments such as agile development, and the tension between prioritizing user needs over broader business objectives.

Several concerns about the implementation of persona descriptions during the UX design process is mentioned. Firstly, some participants highlight that personas may not fully capture user behavior or account for behavioral changes over time. Secondly, the insights derived from personas tend to remain at a high level, lacking the actionable guidance needed for designers, such as specific recommendations for behavioral change interventions. Additionally, personas often fail to consider the broader contextual factors that influence user behavior, limiting their effectiveness in shaping comprehensive design strategies. Moreover, inaccuracies in persona descriptions, whether due to incorrect data or poor presentation, can lead to design decisions based on flawed assumptions or incomplete information. This can, in turn, result in solutions that may be ineffective or misaligned with actual user needs. These concerns underscore the need for a more rigorous and adaptive approach to persona development, ensuring that they provide designers with accurate, actionable insights while minimizing the risk of misrepresentation and bias.

Bias is a recurring issue in the discussions, as illustrated in these examples from the first-order analysis: *“Two participants caution that personas can be misused, sometimes reflecting internal biases and hindering inclusive design.”*, *“A participant expresses skepticism about the effective application of personas, stating that each team applies them differently and often with unintended biases”*.

Table 3: Themes for concept of Implementation

Misalignment with agile methods	In fast-paced agile development environments, personas might not be practical due to their static nature and the need for quick iterations.
Disconnection from business goals	Personas might focus solely on user needs and overlook the alignment with broader business goals, potentially leading to design solutions that don't drive business value.
Limited effective use	Some participants express dissatisfaction with the way personas are often used in practice. They mention that personas are frequently created but then forgotten or become too complex to be practical.
Differing perspectives on usage	Some participants mention that personas might not be as universally applicable as initially assumed.

In summary, the negative perceptions of personas are primarily related to the persona design process due to poor data, bias, and the static nature of personas. This has consequences for the UX design process where a vague dataset feeds into the design process and design decisions by not incorporating user needs in the desired way, thereby leading to unsuitable designs.

Table 4: The themes for poorly constructed persona descriptions

Stereotyping and oversimplification	Critiques point out that personas can lead to oversimplification and stereotyping of users. They may not capture the complexity and diversity of real users, reducing individuals to predefined categories.
Lack of realism	Some view personas as overly idealized representations of users, lacking the flaws, contradictions, and complexities that real individuals possess.
Complexity of users	Critics stress that users are complex and multi-dimensional, and personas might not capture the entirety of their behaviors, motivations, and needs.
Lack of emotional depth	Some participants argue that personas often lack the emotional depth required to understand the underlying motivations and feelings that drive behavior.
Oversimplification	Personas can oversimplify complex user behaviors and motivations, potentially leading to shallow or inaccurate representations of real users.
Generic stereotyping	Personas might rely on stereotypes and assumptions, contributing to biased and homogenized portrayals of user groups that do not accurately represent their diversity.
Limited scope	Personas might not capture all relevant user segments, leading to the neglect of less prominent but equally important user groups.
Loss of individuality	Personas aggregate user characteristics, potentially overlooking individual differences and unique preferences.
Bias and over-specification	There's a concern raised about bias and over-specification in traditional demographic-based personas. Mention is made of arguments that using attributes like race, photos, and age can lead to bias.
Complexity and lack of usefulness	Some participants mention that personas can become too bloated or too specific, diminishing their usefulness.
Fictitious elements	There is a mention of end users' complex background stories being woven from seemingly simple statements in personas. Another participant mentions that some individuals might struggle with the perceived fiction-writing aspect of personas, indicating that there might be challenges in getting team members to fully embrace and utilize personas.

4.3 Other preferred methods

Due to a negative discourse about the persona method and in some cases negative experiences, some participants have come to prefer other tools and approaches. Among these 'Jobs To Be Done' is the most mentioned alternative. Other alternatives include Attitudinal Profiling to understand the mental models, attitudes, and motivations that drive behavior. Behavioral frameworks, such as Diffusion of Innovation, Stages of Change, and COM-B (Capability, Opportunity, Motivation, Behavior), and Need-based profiles that focus on understanding the needs, biases, beliefs, and expectations of individuals. An example from the first order analysis: *"A participant suggests using audience segmentation through polling to understand and cluster different groups' attitudes and behaviors. This method provides a more data-driven way to segment users based on their behaviors."*

In summary, many other methods are mentioned, primarily in relation to the negative discourse that surround the persona method.

Table 5: Themes for concept of other methods preferred.

Alternative approaches	The conversation introduces alternative approaches such as Jobs To Be Done and Value Proposition Canvases, methods that might be perceived as more focused and actionable than traditional personas.
Potential overlooking of alternatives	There is a perception that personas might overshadow other potentially effective methodologies.

5 Discussion

In the following section, we will discuss our findings.

As stated in the Related Literature section the benefits of using the persona method relates to the design process, the implementation of the design, and the sales and marketing processes [25] 1,20]. While the negative aspects relate to persona creation, evaluation, implementation, and organizational factors [35].

Our findings on the positive perceptions and the critique of the persona method align with existing literature. But contrary to much of the research our contribution is built upon many practitioners who have used the method, which refutes the research that designers do not use the method [10].

In contrast to existing literature, we identify and conceptualize the positive aspects as mainly related to supporting the UX design process, while most negative comments pertain to the persona design process. Additionally, the negative discourse itself hinders the effective use and adoption of the method.

Positively, the method facilitates a user-centered design approach, fostering an understanding of users and creating empathy. It also acts as a communication tool that aligns project teams and can validate both design assumptions and projects. Among satisfied users, there are ongoing efforts to enhance the value of personas and from an organizational perspective, we found that personas empower UX designers. This aligns with existing literature [5,14,21,24,26].

Negatively, some practitioners perceive the method as static, with irrelevant or sparse information, poor descriptions, and a lack of context. The criticisms include three main aspects: 1) the method strictly limits the type of information included in descriptions, 2) poor implementation, often due to inadequate data collection and poor descriptions, and 3) a lack of actionable insights for design. A main finding is that these issues stem from a flawed persona design process and a misunderstanding of how to include information in the descriptions, which has not been reported in earlier literature.

Concerning the misconception, participants noted that the method cannot incorporate information on user behavior. This seems to stem from a misunderstanding of the method as being too restrictive to include necessary information. Interestingly, it was mentioned that when the method is integrated with user journey maps, it can provide adequate insights into behaviors.

Participants often view poor data quality as an inherent flaw of the method, rather than a consequence of insufficient data collection practices. Our analysis reveals that this creates a negative perception of the method as having numerous shortcomings, including stereotypes and oversimplification, which is a result of poor implementation.

Concerning the lack of actionable insights for design, the data collectors for persona descriptions appear unaware of the different information needs among persona users, e.g. UX designers require specific types of information to design, such as user motivations and goals for use, while business stakeholders need different data to make informed decisions, such as buying habits and preferences of diverse user segments.

The above points offer unique insights into the struggles participants face. However, familiarity with the extensive, well-established literature on the method or adequate training could mitigate many of the challenges and negative experiences, see [2,3,39]. Thus, a key finding from this research is that there is a gap in practitioners' understanding of the method, as the purpose of personas is precisely to overcome simplification and stereotyping through thorough data collection on users and their diverse needs.

Moreover, the lack of understanding of the method and insights from research does not seem to reach practitioners. This is evident in discussions about the method's inability to align with agile development, despite scientific literature reporting the possibility of integrating personas in agile development (see e.g., [17,22,29]).

In general, our analysis shows that misconceptions about the method prevail among practitioners and that these misconceptions lead to a negative perception that might hinder further adoption and much-needed training. However, the willingness to engage in LinkedIn discussions also indicates an interest in the method.

Finally, our contribution to persona research is two-fold. Firstly, while there is a well-established literature-based and empirical research stream about the use of the persona method in practice, we demonstrate that novel insights can be obtained by focusing on LinkedIn data. This data has the advantage of covering numerous practitioners' positive and negative experiences from different roles. Moreover, the discussions are initiated and maintained without researcher intervention. Thus, complementing case studies, in situ studies, empirical studies, and literature studies, the current study provides a fifth category of capturing practice by analyzing LinkedIn discussions, which to the best of our knowledge, is new.

6 Conclusion

This study has two contributions. Firstly, it contributes to the sparse literature on persona practice by examining discussions on LinkedIn among 75 UX professionals, highlighting the perceived benefits and obstacles associated with the method. Our findings indicate that personas facilitate user-centered decision-making during the UX design process. However, issues related to data quality and a negative discourse impede broader adoption and the effective creation of persona descriptions with adequate information during the persona design process. This underscores the necessity of more

formal training for persona creators and calls for further research into the varied information needs of diverse persona users (i.e., UX designers, software developers, marketers, and sales personnel).

Secondly, it contributes with a new data source to understand practice, in this case analysis of existing LinkedIn discussions that cast light on practitioners' use and perceptions of the persona method.

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