

**The impact of the business networking site LinkedIn on private,
large, multinational companies' recruitment process in Ireland**

by Andrea Reger

Master of Arts in Human Resource Management

National College of Ireland

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Abstract

The world is constantly changing while the technology is developing unremittingly. These facts impact all parts of a multinational company's (MNC) business in Ireland, therefore it cannot be ignored in order to remain competitive these days.

Recruitment is not an exception either.

While in 2009 a '*Personnel Today*' survey revealed that four hundred and three Human Resources (HR) professionals in the United Kingdom (UK) (Williams 2009) considered '*social networking*' as one of the most unpopular recruitment methods, it has undoubtedly changed over the last three years as by the end of 2012, forty-six per cent of those one hundred and thirty-eight organisations that participated in the XpertHR survey (Suff 2013) indicated using some sort of social media to entice talents.

So technology significantly influences not just current teenagers' but other generations' life too as well as the organisations' recruitment process since the rise of the Internet and the interactive social media platforms.

By the means of semi-structured interviews and a questionnaire, this research is intended to closely examine the private, large MNCs' opinion, attitude, behaviour and actions regarding recruitment and the largest, business networking site LinkedIn to find out 'What is the impact of the business networking site, LinkedIn on private, large, MNCs' recruitment process in Ireland?'

Based on a number of HR and Recruitment professionals' responses from the semi-structured interviews and the questionnaire it was concluded that while social recruitment is being used by all participants to support their recruitment efforts, it did not change significantly these MNCs' recruitment process, strategy or best practices. Although a number of areas were identified where the impact is more significant than in others, it can be seen clearly that the new, innovative social recruitment channels are only used in complementation to the traditional recruitment methods, since some of those still considered to be the most successful recruitment tool.

This study aimed to discover what parts of the MNCs' recruitment process were impacted by LinkedIn and how; it made no attempts to explore and examine all areas that could be potentially affected by the utilisation of the innovative social recruitment.

Declaration

I declare that the work which is now being submitted for examination is wholly my own work and that all materials consulted and ideas garnered in the process of researching the dissertation have been properly and accurately acknowledged.

Signature: _____

Name: Andrea Reger

Student number: x11103990

Degree for which the thesis is submitted: Master in Arts in HRM

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This thesis is dedicated to my son, who was with me from almost the very beginning of the journey to the Master qualification and gave me power and motivation to finish it before his first birthday.

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List of Abbreviations

GSM	– Global System for Mobile Communications
HR	– Human Resources
MNC	– Multinational Company
SNS	– Social Networking Site
TBI	– Talent Brand Index

Chapter I. – Introduction

Since the rise of the Internet in the 1990s, the way of finding talents to fill vacancies in a multinational company (MNC) in Ireland is constantly changing. The demography of the workforce is moving while the technology is improving with an incredible speed. MNCs' recruitment strategy should be transformed accordingly and take into account these factors in order to remain in competition in the ongoing war for the best talents. As "*the best people will always be in demand*" (McLuhan 2008) regardless of the world economic situation or the composition of the workforce, MNCs started utilising the services of the – mostly – free social media in Ireland too in order to (1) support the overall business strategy (Doherty 2010) and (2) to succeed in engaging and attracting future employees who can come from any of the five working generations.

Although some of the traditional recruitment methods of finding talents seem to be neglected, most of them are still being used successfully by the MNCs in Ireland together with the innovative recruitment tool of social media.

Even though there are numerous social media sites that could be used for finding talents, as previous Irish and American researches O'Raghallaigh (2010) and the annual global Jobvite survey (2012) suggested, LinkedIn is the organisations' first choice when it comes to social recruiting. Therefore this research focuses on the biggest business networking site, LinkedIn which appears to be the most useful social recruitment tool these days.

The primary aim of this dissertation was to explore whether this is still the case in 2013, among the large, private, MNCs in Ireland and to find out why these organisations use LinkedIn over other social media sites for recruitment and what these companies' perception is on LinkedIn's effect on their recruitment process. Ultimately the research is intended to find the answer to the overall question of 'What is the impact of the business networking site, LinkedIn on private, large, MNCs' recruitment process in Ireland?' by applying valid and reliable data collection and analysis techniques which enable the researcher to make conclusions about the findings in comparison with the reviewed literature.

There have been some secondary researches conducted previously on this field, mainly in the USA: Jobvite (2012) or worldwide: Dehestani (2013) and Nalkesen

(2012). There are a number of previous papers which attempted to explore social recruiting in an Irish context for example Kelly (2012), O'Raghallaigh (2010) and Navan (2010); however, those papers covered social media recruitment generally, including recruitment agencies' and (in some cases) jobseekers' points of view as well.

The main approach in this dissertation comes from the business standpoint by examining closely the private, large, MNCs in-house recruitment efforts, attitude, behaviour and opinion about the largest business networking site and evaluate the impact of LinkedIn on their recruitment process in the last twelve months.

So this research puts two elements under the microscope: the biggest business networking site LinkedIn and the private, large, MNCs – irrespective of the industry they operate in – that have their Head Quarters in Ireland, a live account and a company page on LinkedIn.

To support the data collection and the answer to the main question, three sub-objectives were developed.

The first intended to find out which recruitment method was more successful in the last twelve months: traditional or social, in private, large MNCs in Ireland. Successfulness was measured by the length and the cost of the recruitment process as well as by the retention of the new recruits for at least six months.

The second sub-objective was to explore how satisfied the scope companies are with their LinkedIn subscription and to explore if there was any connection between the level of their satisfaction and the LinkedIn subscription.

And the last was to ascertain which recruitment methods are being used and planned to be used in private, large MNCs in Ireland, and establish the concerned HR or Recruitment professionals' opinion; whether social media will ever replace recruitment agencies in Ireland or they agree with Doherty (2010) who claimed that social media should and will not be used as an exclusive recruitment tool.

In order to meet the above objectives 'mixed-method research' was used, which enabled the researcher to discover the key issues at the exploratory stage (using the qualitative method of semi-structured interviews) and analyse them qualitatively before applying the quantitative questionnaire to collect expressive data from a wider audience (Tashakkori and Teddlie (eds) 2003 in Saunders et al. 2009) and analyse them quantitatively. Another advantage of using this method was that they

compensated the weaknesses of each other with their strengths, and together they were able to offer an insight that neither of the methods could have provided on its own. By utilising both approaches, too much reliance on one single method could be eluded which enhanced the level of confidence in the findings (Saunders et al. 2009).

The dissertation consists of five chapters.

After this first chapter 'Introduction', the current literature is reviewed in chapter two where following the introduction of the theory first some of the key expressions are defined, then a brief summary of the generations and the traditional recruitment methods is given, which is followed by the overview of the background of the social media sites and finally the focus goes to the main scope of this dissertation which is the world's largest business networking site, LinkedIn. In that sub-section LinkedIn's 'Talent division services' for employers is introduced and evaluated to see what are the possibilities with LinkedIn to improve the successfulness of the recruitment process of a private, large, MNC in Ireland. In order to ensure authenticity of this paper the researcher reviewed and processed theories that were revealed between January 2006 and the middle of March 2013.

Chapter three explains the Methodology of the research, where first the research questions, aims and objectives are determined and then the purpose, the methodology, the approach, the strategy, the research choices and the time horizon of the survey are discussed. This chapter is closed with the description of the data collection and data analysis techniques.

The first part in chapter four presents the analysis of the three semi-structured interviews and the questionnaire. In the second part, first the three research sub-questions are answered by explaining and describing the findings from the questionnaire in comparison with the literature review and then the overall research question is answered based on the findings to the sub-questions.

The last chapter starts with the presentation of the conclusions first about the research questions, aims and objectives followed by the methodology and then the findings in comparison with the literature review. The section is closed by a list of recommendations that the researcher feels would be worth further examination in future researches.

To complete the work, the references, bibliography and the appendices are also attached at the end of the dissertation.

Chapter II. – Literature review

II.1 Introduction

There are two main factors which are currently impacting the world: the after-effect of the recent global economic crisis and the unremitting, incredible technological development. Everyone and everything experiences the change regardless of the geographical or financial situation of a population or organisation.

Since the modern, fast and cheap technical improvements made the Internet and computer attainable for everyone, even for the underprivileged segment of the population like the poor, old and socially-excluded members of society (Hooley, Hutchinson, & Watts 2010), all aspects of both people's and organisations' lives are significantly affected including private, social and business platforms.

Although "*the best people will always be in demand*" (McLuhan 2008) regardless of the world economic situation, to become a cost-conscious organisation in these years is more important than even before in order to remain successful in business.

However, recruitment is here to stay; there will always be growing organisations that have new vacancies to find talents for, replacements that need to be found to take over retirees' positions and to fill challenging jobs – like engineering and science in the UK (O'Reilly 2009) – where shortage is always in demand. This statement was also supported by Meister & Willyerd (2010) who added that the world's population will always be short in certain skills and workers despite the fact that there are five generations working simultaneously at the moment in the workplace.

CPL, which is one of the biggest recruitment agencies in Ireland, highlighted in the article that they published on their blog on their website (www.cpl.ie), that there are certain industries and particular positions such as junior developers, Java, PHP, Application and .Net developers, experienced Software Engineers, Senior program managers, Project managers, Business Analysts and Systems administrators/engineers for '*Cloud computing*', for which the demand is constantly high in Ireland. Cloud computing can be defined as "*computing in which your computer acts as a terminal and you are using a computer elsewhere*" (Clapperton 2009).

This list was extended by Meister & Willyerd (2010) who also included the following areas and positions into that group of roles for which the global competition is high: dealers, sales representatives, technicians, engineers, experts in finance and accounting and managers and senior executives.

As the war for talents heightens in the current era, companies should revisit their current recruitment strategy and existing attitude towards recruitment, and make the necessary changes to gain competitive advantage (Doherty 2010).

To fully exploit the available technology phenomena while maintaining cost-saving strategy (which is inevitable these days for an organisation to take up), companies must start utilising the services of the – mostly – free social media, which is the most powerful, innovative recruitment tool since the telephone was invented (Sullivan 2010). This step would be not just reasonable but expected from the HR departments to take in order to support the overall business strategy (Doherty 2010).

More and more companies – even those that were initially afraid of engaging with it (Doherty 2010) – all over the world have started to realise that social media is not just a temporary fad; it is popular, growing, easy to access and cheap.

Meister and Willyerd (2010) added that in addition to transforming the actual recruitment process, companies should also concentrate on building their employer brand with already the young generations. They suggest that organisations should visit middle and high schools as a part of their brand building strategy.

Nowadays, the values and advantages of social media can be seen clearly, so those organisations that want to recruit the best talents, have to start extensively utilizing this virtual platform in all areas of their businesses including recruitment. By creating a company profile on these sites proves that the firm is a learning organisation that aims to stay young, fresh, up-to-date and relevant. Creating such informal channels to interact with potential, enthusiastic candidates could be the key to fill the company's job vacancies that might arise in the future (Doherty 2010).

II.1.1 Definitions

In order to understand the content of this dissertation, some of the words and expressions need to be defined.

II.1.1.1 Recruitment

“Recruitment is the process of attracting a large pool of candidates and making them sufficiently interested to put themselves forward for consideration for the job.”

(Yeung 2008)

Gunnigle, Heraty & Morley (2006) contended that recruitment has three functions. The first is to entice those talents who would be suitable for the position, the second is to keep away those who would not be a perfect fit for the vacancy and the last is to develop and strengthen company brand.

II.1.1.2 Active jobseekers

Active jobseekers are those candidates who are *“currently unemployed, who represent ten per cent or less of the total workforce at any given time”* (Joos 2008).

II.1.1.3 Passive jobseekers

A candidate is called *‘passive jobseeker’*, when they are not putting a lot of energy into seeking a new position and are currently in employment, but *“would consider making a job change if the conditions were right”* (Joos 2008) or in other words: *“who is curious about what’s out there”* (Joos 2008). DeKay (2009) argues with the above definition by claiming that people who are interested in considering any job offer cannot be called *‘passive’*. He claims that a definition of *‘Passive jobseeker’* should only pertain to that small group of individuals who clearly indicate on their LinkedIn profile that they can only be contacted to exchange experience, expertise or just simple *‘stay in touch’*.

Therefore, those who created an online Curriculum Vitae (CV) to obtain a business profile on the world’s largest professional network site to take into consideration new career opportunities or job offers should not be called *‘passive jobseekers’* as this is the same action that an active jobseeker would do.

However, despite DeKay’s reasoning, for the purpose of this paper, the more common definition from Joos (2008) will be used for passive jobseekers.

II.1.2 Generations

This sub-chapter provides a summary of the generations, as in order for an organisation to succeed in engaging and attracting future employees who can come from any of the five working generations, need to be familiar with the traits, expectations and the alteration of them to be able to develop an appropriate recruitment strategy that includes targeting and finding top talents from all age groups.

II.1.2.1 Introduction

The rapid aging of the population causes huge implications for governments (BBC News 2013) as well as for organisations, as they will be left without adequately skilled and experienced talents to take over retired employees' places (Rankin 2008). In mainland Europe, not just the aging population will result in a decrease in the available workforce, but the major drop in fertility rates will also play a dominant role in the overall talent shortage (Meister & Willyerd 2010).

Doherty (2010) claims that as the workforce in the world generally ages, the war for talents intensifies as it becomes more and more difficult to entice and keep real talents of the new generation: GEN Y.

Although Ireland is the only European country where the population is not ageing, as we could see from the above CPL (2013) article, there are certain industries and job categories in this country too, which suffer from a permanent talent shortage.

II.1.2.2 Age groups

Although there is not a universal start and finish date of the age groups, and they exist under different titles, researchers agree (Castenmiller 2009 cited in Lingen 2012, Quinn 2010, and Meister & Willyerd 2010) that the current workforce consists of five groups of generation at the moment.

The first are the '*Veterans*' who are also called '*Traditionalists*', '*The Silent Generation*' or '*The Greatest Generation*'.

This population was born before 1945, so they are over sixty-eight years of age in 2013.

This generation is famous for being loyal; they have an ability to be able to put aside their needs and work towards common, universal goals. They experienced lots of technological change in their personal as well as professional lives such as invention of fax machine, television, personal computer, mobile phone and the Internet. They represent formal style in all areas of their lives which is also well respected by them. They accept and trust in authority and believe in a hierarchical system. They prefer face-to-face interactions but occasionally, if necessary, can use online communication channels. They are patient, and open for new things if they come in small quantities (Meister & Willyerd 2010).

The second group can be called the '*Baby boomers*', '*The Cold War generation*' or '*The Growth economy generation*' (Tapscott 2009 in Meister & Willyerd 2010).

They were born between 1946 and 1964, so they are between forty-nine and sixty-seven years old in 2013. It is the rebellious generation; they initiated and accomplished lots of changes in their lives, wanted to conquer the world with their competitiveness and hard-working job moral. They also experienced lots of technological change; the most important that had the biggest impact on their life was the invention on the television, but of course the other modern technological developments have also formed their 'semi-formal' style. They respect the '*Traditionalists*' and follow all rules and regulations that were created by them. They are interested in everything – including technological developments – but only in an appropriate amount, and when they are in the mood. Similarly to the '*Veterans*' they also prefer face-to-face interactions, but they are more open to use the online communication channels with enhanced confidence (Meister & Willyerd 2010).

The third age group is called Generation X. Interestingly no alternative name was found in the literature for this population, whose members were born between 1965 and 1976. They are between thirty-seven and forty-eight years of age in 2013.

This generation is famous for being individualistic and idealistic. They like to take things easy and they are only interested in matters that are relevant to them. They are often labelled to be cynics, sceptics and impatient. They value free time highly; to achieve work-life balance is their main focus. The main technological developments that influenced their lives were the personal computer and the mobile phone. They

are considered to be the best material to become the mentors and coaches of the next generation, the '*Millennials*'.

The fourth group has at least five different names. They can be referred to as '*Generation Y*', '*Millennials*', '*The Net Generation*', '*Digital Natives*' or '*The Google Generation*'.

This ambitious, demanding and hyperconnected population was born between 1977 and 1997, when the technology development significantly and both directly and indirectly determined people's life. As they are between the age of sixteen and thirty-six, in two years time, they will be the largest generation of the workforce.

This easy-going group of youth is interested in things that are relevant to the present while they naturally use information technology on demand, wherever and whenever they need; as part of their normal, everyday activity (Meister & Willyerd 2010).

They only accept that type of authority which earned their respect. They are constantly online on the World Wide Web in order to be part of everything that is actually happening. They have a huge appetite for success and they require constant information stimulus; they want to know everything 'five minutes ago' in order to accomplish what they believe in: that they can change the world.

They want to work for companies where coaches and mentors are available to learn from. Their attitude, behaviour and reaction is highly influenced by the everywhere available, mostly free, fast Internet connections and their smart phones that enable them to be online non-stop while communicating real-time either on phone or on social media sites (Joos 2008).

Joos (2008) also added that finding and enticing workers of this generation is more likely to be successful online rather than the traditional ways. Meister & Willyerd (2010) added that it is not enough just attracting them; in order to retain them, their expectations need to be met; the technology must be provided for them at the workplace unrestrictedly, as they got used to having easy access to it in their personal lives. This view was supported by Curtis, Dempski & Farley (2009) who contended that "*Millennials are likely to select an employer based on the ability to access the latest tools and technologies at work*" (Meister & Willyerd 2010).

This holds up to a fact that only those companies will have a chance to entice and hold onto Gen Y that understands their needs and supply those tools, equipments and platforms that are important to them.

The last, fifth generation can be called ‘*Generation Einstein*’, ‘*Gen Z*’, ‘*9/11*’ or ‘*Gen 2020*’. They were born from 1998, so the oldest members of this population are fifteen years old. Although they are not entering into the workforce for at least another three years, and it will take around twenty years to be significantly represented in the global workforce, companies that want to be able to attract and recruit this most hyperconnected generation in the future, must start completing some research and study on them.

Even though each generation has its own special expectation from an employer, these age groups have lots in common since people in general are driven by their basic needs (Maslow 1943): they want to feel trusted, valued, secured, empowered and engaged at work.

II.2 The recruitment methods

In this chapter first the available different traditional recruitment methods are overviewed in order to provide a brief understanding on the origin of social recruitment. Then it will be explained how social media and social recruitment generated, which will be followed by the presentation and examination of this new phenomenon.

II.2.1 Traditional recruitment methods

There are numerous different recruitment techniques that companies could choose from – depending on the available time, the nature of the job, the state of the labour market, the company’s HR policies, resources, culture, finances and overall business strategy (Lucas, Lupton & Mathieson 2006) – even before the age of social media.

The summary of traditional methods was completed by Gunnigle, et al. (2006) by creating the following five groups: (a) Internal or existing employees – such as self-applicants, supervisor/manager recommendations, succession planning; (b) Existing contacts – such as unsolicited enquiries, previous applicants, previous employees, existing employees’ contacts; (c) External contacts – such as union referrals, professional referrals, employment exchange, out-placement consultants, private

selection consultants, management selection, search consultants or head-hunters, schools and career services, colleges, universities, government training schemes, temporary agencies; (d) Advertising or media – such as press, television, radio, cinema; (e) Online or e-recruitment – such as career page on the company website, job boards.

It is argued in the literature what constitutes '*traditional recruitment methods*'. Some publishers like Andrews (2012) and Williams (2009) do not include online recruitment into the traditional channels; however, as it has one of the key features of the traditional methods such as '*targeting active job-seekers*' (Joos 2008) and does not have one of the key features of the social recruitment of '*two-way communication*', for the purpose of this dissertation e-recruitment is included into the traditional recruitment methods. This approach supports Sherrie's (2011) study in which job boards were labelled '*traditional*' when she revealed that this method, together with employment fairs, are becoming less popular and less common.

E-recruitment plays a very important role in the course of the development of social media. As we learnt before, the technology is evolving at an incredible speed making the Internet available for the vast majority of the world's population irrespective of the particular society's geographical or financial features (Hooley et al. 2010).

Once the Internet emerged in the 1990s, a new platform, the job-oriented web sites (like Monster.com, Yahoo's HotJobs.com and Jobster.com in the UK, Irishjobs.ie and Jobs.ie in Ireland) evolved gradually which resulted in a drastic setback of the first four categories of Gunnigle, et al.'s (2006) traditional recruitment methods of finding talents.

The popularity of the online job boards lies in its unique feature of being accessible by not just the active, unemployed job-seekers who are looking for a job but by everyone else too, who although are in employment, curious to see what would be available if they were interested. Therefore, a new definition of '*passive job-seekers*' has emerged by the rise of the internet and ultimately by the job boards (Joos 2008).

II.2.2 Innovative recruitment method (Web 2.0)

So the latter form of traditional recruitment methods, by exploiting the features and the opportunity provided by the technology, started taking up some of features of the new, innovative method of social recruitment.

II.2.2.1 The rise of Social media

Once the Internet spread, every segment of people's life started to change drastically. Although they were reluctant in the beginning to fully trust in this unknown virtual 'monster' and they found it hard to unconditionally share credit card details with an online shop for example; it has gradually become natural and safe to do so. And this was the turning point when websites like Amazon.com started to become interactive, as after a product was purchased, encouraged shoppers to write reviews on their online site giving feedback on the product and service. This is how blogging, the first form of social media, started (Clapperton 2009).

DeKay (2009) contended, the age of social media began in 1995 with the launch of the first social networking website, '*Classmates.com*' which is contravene with Boyd & Ellison (2008) who claim that the first social networking site was '*SixDegrees.com*' in 1997.

However, all of them agreed that the first business-orientated networking site was 'Ecademy', in 1998.

There have been numerous professional network website initiations in the last fifteen years of which LinkedIn (which was officially launched in 2003) has become "*the world's largest professional network with 200 million members in 200 countries and territories around the globe*" (www.linkedin.com).

II.2.2.2 Definitions

There are different expressions that are used to describe the new, Web 2.0 recruitment method such as 'Social media', 'Social Networks', 'Social network sites', 'Social networking sites', 'Social media recruitment', 'Social media recruiting', 'Social recruitment', 'Social recruiting' and 'Social hiring'.

It can be confusing and frustrating to decide which term should be used and when, especially, since there have been amazingly many, both professional and amateur

attempts in the literature and on different web sites too to define these idioms. Despite these efforts, a general, accepted definition of any of these phrases was not found in the reviewed theory, as “*to different people, the term ‘social media’ means different things*” (Lanier 2012, p.5). Some authors use them as synonyms; however, some of them distinguish between them.

For the purpose of understanding the content of this research a number of definitions will now be given.

Social media is a “*web-based site*” that provide virtual platform for individuals and groups – regardless of where they physically are – to get connected based on mutual interest to share information, to discuss news, issues; to quickly send and receive messages, pictures or any kind of files (Andrews 2012). Lanier (2012) added that social media is nothing but a big opportunity for people to use technology to publicly express their referrals, opinion and recommendations, in the same way they have always done: through word-of-mouth. Only the platform shifted from the real to a virtual world.

Social network on the other hand was defined by Clapperton (2009) as “*an internet based tool that allows the reader to engage with the writer or with a community online and in public*”.

The below figure of Social computing from Wynn & Detofsky (2009) provides further understanding of the difference between social media, which is the ‘*content*’ and social networks, which are the ‘*connections*’.

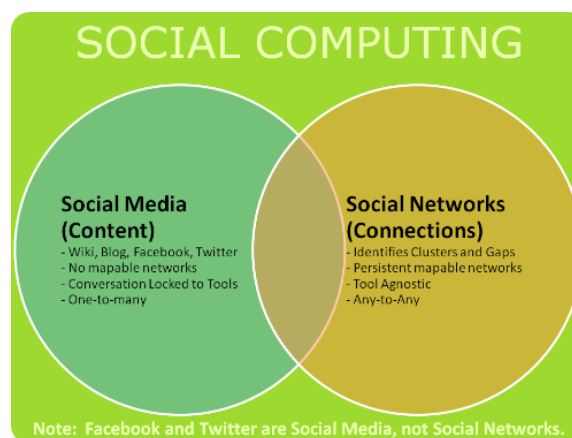


Figure 1-1

Social computing

Wynn & Detofsky (2009)

Social networking was also described by Crompton & Sautter (2011) as course of actions in order to find and connect with people on any of the ‘*Web-based tools*’ (such as social media networks) in order to attain both personal and business goals of the partners. They claim that the emphasis should be on who are in your network (quality) rather than how many people are in your network (quantity).

Social recruiting was defined by Meister & Willyerd (2010) as “*a practice that leverages social and professional networks, both online and offline, from both a candidate’s perspective and the hiring side, to connect to, communicate with, engage, inform, and attract future talent.*”

II.2.2.3 Introduction of Social Media

Social media as a general topic has been very popular in the last few years. Even social recruitment has gained territory as conference after conference, web-seminar after web-seminar are being organised and promoted worldwide in this area.

Social media, as a communication tool, has undergone huge transformation over the years; from its earlier form of forums and blogs to a more dynamic and interactive platform.

Today, groups and networks have been created for virtually every business, hobby and institution based on either geography, profession or interest, which was tempting for many researchers to attempt to group, define and describe the different social media sites.

Joos (2008) described five different types of social media such as ‘Blogs’, ‘Wikis’, ‘Podcasting’, ‘Employer Marketing Videos’ and ‘Text Messaging’. As to why ‘Text Messaging’ is in this list could be argued since sending a text message requires telephone connection rather than online access to the internet.

Twentyman (2010) simplified it and put social media sites into three big groups: the first is the ‘*Social networking sites*’ such as Facebook, MySpace and Bebo, the second is ‘*The professional networking sites*’ such as LinkedIn, Plaxo and Xing, and the third category is the ‘*Other online media communities*’ like Twitter, YouTube and Blogs.

Three years later Dehestani (2013) doubled the number of categories, and released the following six groups of social media: (1) '*Collaborative projects*' such as Wikipedia, (2) '*Blogs and micro-blogs*' like Twitter, (3) '*Content communities*' like – YouTube, (4) '*Social networking sites*' like Facebook, (5) '*Virtual game worlds*' – such as World of Warcraft, and (6) '*Virtual social worlds*' like Second Life.

It looks like Dehestani (2013) only divided Twentyman's (2010) category of '*Other online media communities*' into five distinctive groups, kept the group of '*Social networking sites*' as it was and simply forgot about the '*The professional networking sites*' as this group is missing from his list. And although he clearly puts Twitter into the category of '*Blogs and micro-blogs*' on page thirteen in his research, on page sixteen he lists Twitter under a subtitle of "*Top Social Networking sites*" (Dehestani 2013).

These attempts clearly suggest that it is very difficult to categorise these sites since there is no clear, existing definition and these sites can carry features of more than one social media platform.

This statement is supported by Solis' – whose first attempt of categorising social media in 2008 consisted of only thirty-one various social media sites in twelve different classes – and Jesse's view who released the most up-to-date classification of the social media sites, called '*The conversation prism*' in 2012, which lists twenty-eight different social media categories, in which LinkedIn for example is included into both '*Business networking*' and '*Questions and Answers*' groups.

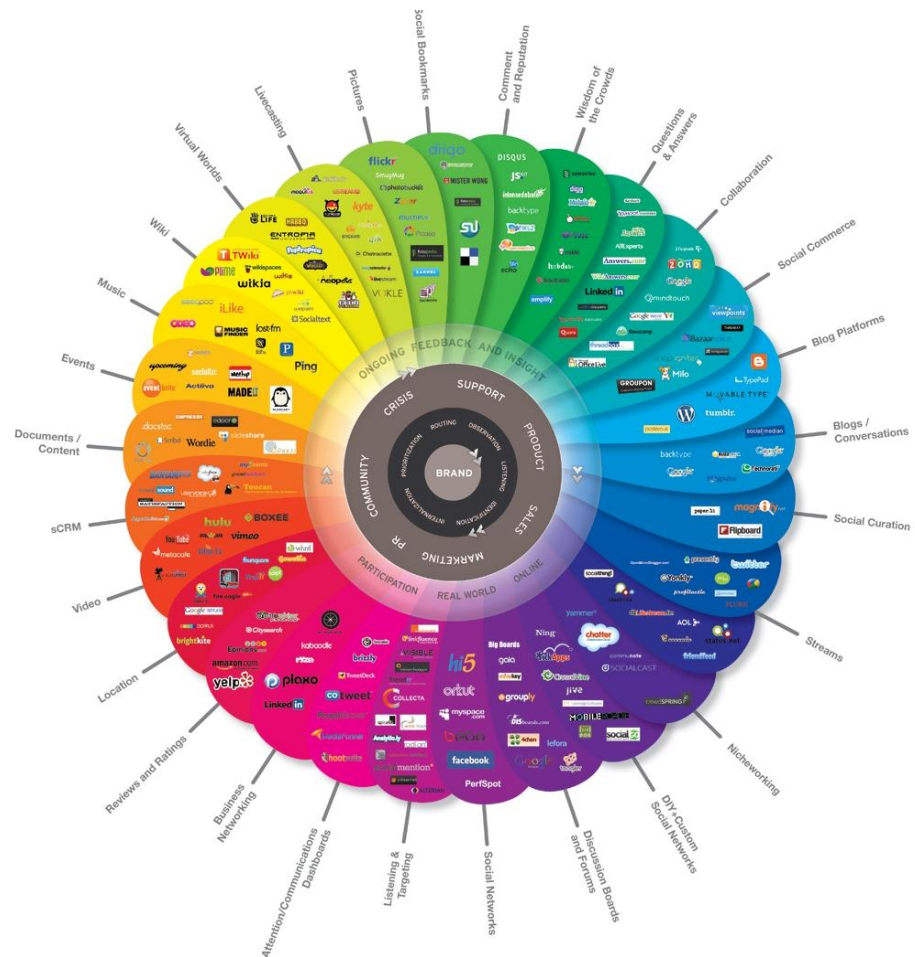


Figure 1-2
 The conversation prism
 Solis & Jesse (2012)

Researchers were also trying to rate and rank Social Networking Sites (SNS). Doherty (2010) for example claimed that the most popular social networking sites were LinkedIn, Twitter and Facebook. This list was complemented by Sherrie (2011) who also included YouTube as an essential social recruitment tool to engage with as wide demographic as possible.

However, Andrews (2012) disregarded previous researches and surprisingly left the largest professional site, LinkedIn out from a list of recommended social sites that could be used for recruitment. Interestingly, the same fact was discovered in Lanier's book of *'Recruiting with social media'* (2012). As this book is about how to recruit college students, he understandably provides breadth and depth on how to use Facebook, Twitter, Blogs and YouTube to attract young people who are mainly present on these sites. However, it raises the question whether the largest business

networking site, LinkedIn should have been at least mentioned in this piece of work as an existing social recruitment site.

II.2.2.4 Social recruiting

Social recruiting is the latest attribute of social media; as its functions in a business context were utilised first by sales and marketing professionals and just recently has been taken into consideration as a recruitment tool.

Social media is powerful in any business area. Its secret lies in its complexity – it is not just about networking, or sales, or marketing, or recruitment; it is everything added together with a little twist of ‘word-of-mouth’ which builds and coheres the community automatically, twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, three-hundred and sixty-five days a year. People can enjoy it without commitment, as they can decide when to join or leave these sites either temporarily or permanently.

This freedom might be the key to attract so many ‘Millennials’ who are creating a profile on these SNS, including business networking site, LinkedIn, without any particular intention. This attitude was then taken up by other generations too, which resulted in the biggest pool of ‘*passive*’ jobseekers whose profile is available for those companies that are looking for unexploited professionals to entice them with a job offer (Gupta 2008; Pruitt 2008; Ruiz 2008; King 2007; Wolk 2004 in DeKay 2009).

But in order for a company to be able to make use of the advantages of this opportunity, their recruitment strategy needs to be redefined. Social recruiting, as a new recruitment method must be included in it, in order to reach future employees in the virtual platform of social media sites, where these people spend most of their time. Therefore, by going online an organisation is suggesting that ‘*it is a new, genuine and special company to work for*’ (Meister & Willyerd 2010) which will help them in developing not just the company brand but numerous new relationships with potential future candidates as well.

This view is shared by Sherrie (2011) who also highlighted that organisations that would like to attract and hire top quality candidates and remain competitive, cannot avoid engaging with the services of social networking sites and ignore the opportunities that social media offers. In the economically challenging years, organizations need to be even more effective, efficient and cost-conscious regarding

their recruitment strategy, in which – the mainly free – social networking sites must be included.

Joos (2008) found in the USA that an organisation's recruitment strategy should include the way and method of how to approach the talented group of '*passive jobseekers*' in order to achieve its overall aim: by attracting their attention to the company's brand and vacancies, convert them into '*active candidates*'.

This finding was in agreement with a survey completed in the UK too, which highlighted that the aim of social recruiting is "*turning passive into active*" (Doherty 2010). This research outlined that the pool of highly talented candidates has not yet been fully leveraged, which creates a brand new objective of social recruitment which must affect the organisation's talent acquisition strategy.

"The best way to win in the ongoing search for talent is to entice those already employed elsewhere. Social media provides a means of attracting that pool of high-quality candidates" (Joos 2008).

II.2.2.4.1 The advantages and disadvantages of social recruiting

This sub-section examines both sides of social media – its advantages and disadvantages – to gain more understanding about this recent phenomenon.

Advantages

Matthew Jeffery, head of global talent brand at computer games firm Electronic Arts, said (Twentyman 2010) that social media comes with lots of advantages and companies that are ignoring them and choosing not to incorporate it into their recruitment strategy will lose in the war of talent which ultimately will jeopardize the successfulness of the whole business.

This view corresponds with a survey conducted by Williams (2009) which highlighted the following three advantages of using social media as recruitment method: (1) a large pool of talented people, including '*passive jobseekers*', are using these sites, who are potential candidates; (2) they are members of the newest generation of workforce, Gen Y; (3) the war for talent will be impossible to win without this method.

DeKay (2009) explored another two benefits of targeting the pool of '*passive jobseeker*'. He added that they are advantageous as (1) they are not in contact with any head hunters or recruitment agencies; (2) they are viewed as stable, reliable, high-quality employees.

This list was extended by Sullivan (2010) who identified the following ten key advantages of social media.

The first is its '*Broad capability*', which was also supported by Andrews (2012) who said that "*A tremendous advantage of incorporating social media into a recruitment strategy is the ability to instantly reach anyone around the globe who has access to the Internet.*"

The second is that it reaches '*a large audience of ideal prospects*' which concurs with Williams' (2009) above findings.

The third is '*Leveraging employees*', which means using existing colleagues' help to find new talents.

The fourth is '*Relationship building*', which is a process that builds on trust.

The fifth is '*Authentic messages*', as they are sent by a trusted source: the current employees.

The sixth is '*Mobile access*', which means that these sites can now be accessed non-stop since the use of smart phones and different phone applications have emerged. "*Mobil social networking turns otherwise useless time – travelling on the train, waiting for a bus – into productive time*" (Clapperton 2009). Based on the Global System for Mobile Communications' (GSM) prediction, by 2020 mobile phones will be the main tool for people to access the Internet (Meister & Willyerd 2010).

The seventh is '*Multimedia messaging*', which means that social media is a flexible tool as messages can be sent and received in many different forms like text, photos, audio recordings or video.

The eighth is '*Low cost*' which was also highlighted by other researchers; Doherty (2010) contended that joining these sites are mainly free, and if cost was involved, that would be "*reasonable*" (Crompton & Sautter 2011). Andrews (2012) on the other hand reached the same consequences based on the increased speed of the online recruitment process in comparison with traditional methods, which saves significant cost for the organisation while the successfulness and the standard of the selection process increases.

The ninth is *'Prioritized applications'* which means that social media is more user-friendly for passive jobseekers.

The last listed advantage was *'It produces quality hires'* which supports DeKay's (2009) above findings.

This exhaustive list was extended by Andrews (2012) who emphasised how important is to be a part of a community. As we can see above in the *'Generations'* part under point II.1.2, different age groups have at least one thing in common for sure: the desire for their basic needs to be satisfied. Since we have learnt that one of the basic human needs is *'belonging'* (Maslow 1943), we understand why social media sites have become so popular: it provides a place in a commune – even online – which enables individuals and groups to feel important and valued member of a group or fellowship.

Disadvantages

Doherty (2010) outlined five threads that organisations could face when they sign up for social media. The first is that although he agrees with Hooley et al. (2010) on the fact that the public's general accessibility to personal computer and the Internet has increased, he warns that people, who do not have connection to online services, should not be forgotten; hence social media should not be used as an exclusive recruitment tool. The second is that recruitment teams need to be aware that with the use of social media they are under threat of being discriminative, as on these sites the boundaries between private and business content can be blurred which could result in moral and ethical consequences. They need to make sure that any decision on someone's employability is purely based on professional grounds. The third is that organisations must have a clear recruitment strategy to find the targeted population. The fourth is that this recruitment strategy must include *'Best practices guidelines'* to inform employees on how to use social media at work. And the last one is that a consistent recruitment process – in terms of responding time, feedback and interview schedules – must be guaranteed to all candidates regardless of the recruitment channel.

Andrews (2012) added that relying on technology too extensively during the recruitment process could cause problems, for example essential data can be lost in a

blackout or it can be at risk of hacking. Therefore she suggests that installing the most up-to-date anti-virus software onto the recruiters' computers is vital while extra care should be taken to ensure data protection, and developing and obtaining appropriate company policies regarding social media is a must.

Breitbarth (2011) argued that the biggest disadvantage of social media sites is giving too much power into the employees' hand since the communication on these sites is instant, concise and in real-time which could be outside of the employers' control.

For this problem, Lanier (2012) suggested that companies should create an '*Online Reputation Management*' policy as part of their overall strategy, which details how to monitor and find out what is being posted online about the organisation and by whom in order to be able to regard these comments (even if they are not positive) as opportunities for engagement.

However, Breitbarth (2011), similarly to Clapperton's (2009) analysis and Andrews' (2012) above scrutiny, suggested that companies upon deciding to embrace with this evolving phenomenon should develop a set of appropriate social media policies and procedures aligned with the existing rules, to keep the staff under control by determining the excepted behaviours, the accepted actions and the consequences of the misuse of social media at work.

Meister & Willyerd (2010) also agreed that clear guidelines should be given to workers instead of completely forbidding them from using these sites. Banning social media at work is a sign of mistrust between management and employees which could be improved by introducing such policies.

They also identified that employees' productivity has increased at those workplaces where social media was granted as employees typically do not abuse the system. It was suggested that in addition to the social media policies, appropriate training could also be developed and delivered to increase the workforce's social media literacy to ensure clear knowledge and understanding on the usage of social media in the workplace (Meister & Willyerd 2010).

II.3 LinkedIn

Although, there are number of SNSs which can be used for recruitment, for the purpose of this paper, the focus will be on the biggest, best known business networking site LinkedIn, which will be presented and examined closely in this chapter.

II.3.1 Introduction

LinkedIn was launched in 2003 from California in the USA. It had more than seventy million members in its first seven years. Today, LinkedIn has become the world's biggest, best known, well-recognised business-only networking site with over two-hundred million users from all over the world. Over two hundred countries and more than one-hundred and seventy industries are represented on this site. This is the fastest growing business network; as more than two million new members join each month, nobody knows when – if ever – this phenomenon will stop growing (www.linkedin.com).

According to a USA survey of Jobvite (2012, www.jobvite.com) LinkedIn is the most popular networking site when it comes to recruitment, as it was used by 93% of those one thousand – mainly Northern-American – HR professionals and recruitment specialists, who took part in a survey in 2012. This is an increase of six per cent on the previous year and fifteen per cent on 2010.

The second most popular recruitment site, Facebook was far behind LinkedIn by twenty-nine per cent, and the third, Twitter following them with only fifty-four per cent.

This result corresponds with O'Raghallaigh's (2010) result which was completed in the Republic of Ireland. These findings justify Clapperton's (2009) statement that 'everyone in the *'business-to-business sector'* must have a LinkedIn account'.

LinkedIn however, have already been scorned by calling it "*Facebook for business people*" (Breitbarth, 2011) as it works not only as a business network but also as a contact management system which helps people to find each other and to be found by others in order to expand and deepen their network.

II.3.2 The LinkedIn Solutions

As there is very limited literature on LinkedIn's Talent solutions, but in order to gain better understanding on LinkedIn services regarding recruitment, data needed to be found out inductively for which one of the Relationship Managers at LinkedIn was interviewed together with the review of their marketing material on www.linkedin.com.

Although LinkedIn offers different services for companies to maximise their market competitiveness through their three distinguished divisions such as 'Sales', 'Marketing' and 'Talent', their message for organisations in all areas is the same: be more successful by building sales, marketing and/or talent pipeline and by developing a long-term relationship with future business partners, customers or candidates through the provided access to an enormous worldwide, online database.

LinkedIn promotes its 'Talent product' by highlighting the value of the 'passive jobseekers' and offers its services to their partner companies in order to enable them in finding talents by accessing this pool.

Their 'Talent Solutions' department claims that the secret of their recognition has three aspects; (1) they provide identity to people through professional business profiles; (2) they offer insight to different professions to support the growth of their members' expertise; and (3) ensures flexibility by making their services available from wherever their members work.

People, who would like to learn and develop their skills and knowledge on their areas while considering online networking as an evolving phenomenon to do it through, join LinkedIn to create an online, professional CV with which they automatically become a member of the pool of 'passive candidates'. By doing this, most of the people with LinkedIn profiles would constitute a passive jobseeker, which opens a whole new way to approach recruitment these days. By utilising LinkedIn Talent Solutions, companies can target not just those, around twenty per cent of the LinkedIn members who are actively searching for jobs, but those remaining over one hundred and sixty million members as well, who are not actively looking for a career move (www.linkedin.com).

LinkedIn have developed its *'Four components of Hiring Strategy'* to help organisations to entice this massive pool of passive candidates.

The first is *'Company'*, the second is *'Employee'*, the third is *'Jobs'* and the last is *'Search'*.

Although companies can pick from these as they wish to create the best solution for themselves, based on the particular company's recruitment strategy, talent acquisition managers at LinkedIn recommend the following:

1. Companies, that did not use recruitment agencies to fill their positions in the past or have a very low budget or a very small number of positions to fill, should choose the *'Seats and limited jobs'* package.
2. Companies, that used recruitment agencies on a regular basis to fill medium volume of positions each year, should choose *'LinkedIn Solution'*.
3. Companies, that spent significant money on recruitment agency cost or pay a fortune to head hunters to provide candidates, in order to save the vast majority of this cost while achieving incredible results by filling all arising positions, should sign up for the highest package of *'LinkedIn Solution and All jobs'*.

LinkedIn are convinced that those of their clients that have the highest package of *'LinkedIn Solution and All jobs'* influence nearly twice as many hires than the others.

LinkedIn recommends organisations to start using *'LinkedIn Talent Solutions'* in stages.

The first stage would be building their company brand by creating a percussion business profile on LinkedIn. They developed a so-called *'Talent Brand Index'* (TBI) which is used to measure client companies' ability to find and engage the potential top applicants and be available for them. Once the particular company's TBI is calculated, this number is benchmarked and compared to peers, over time, across functions and geographies. The stronger the company brand (i.e. the higher the TBI) is, the easier it becomes to entice the right candidates to apply for the available vacancies.

The second would be utilising the current employees by first of all encouraging them to create a profile on LinkedIn and by working together with the company to help promote company brand as well as promoting the organisation's sales, marketing and recruitment efforts to their own network connections.

LinkedIn encourages employers to note that future candidates and employees are already in the network of the current employees. So that organisations, by engaging top talents, need to make sure that they learn about the company and the available career opportunities on an ongoing basis.

The third step would be posting jobs on LinkedIn job boards which links would also be shared with the employees and their connections to ensure bigger publicity.

And direct searching would be recommended to be used only as a last step in this process. Any member in the company could complete a search in the LinkedIn database to find people who match the job description and person specification. The list of individuals who have been shortlisted by the search can be saved, screened, sorted and then contacted via 'In-mail'. 'In-mail' is like an e-mail, but can only be sent within LinkedIn from one member to another either if they are connected on first degree ("*who has agreed to connect with you, or who has sent you an invitation to connect, and you've accepted*" [Alba 2011]) or if a member subscribes for an 'In-mail' package, in which case such piece of writing can also be sent to 'strangers'.

LinkedIn members can also search for employers, which is also a great opportunity to start developing a long-term relationship with top talents once they have visited the company's LinkedIn page and either browse among the available vacancies and/or follow the company. Having a career page on LinkedIn gives an excellent opportunity to step out from the crowd of employers by introducing the company brand to passive job seekers and emphasising the features and facts that make the employer unique and special to work for. A '*Work with us*' advertisement further supports the development of the company brand, which could be the way to fill future vacancies without any difficulties and become an '*Employer of choice*'.

As we can see in '*The conversation prism*', Solis & Jesse (2012) put LinkedIn into the '*Business networking*' as well as into the '*Questions and Answers*' group. As LinkedIn claims, companies should consider the business networking site as an opportunity for providing an extra service for their customers and clients by answering their questions. To show that they are there to help them – not just aggressively trying to recruit them – will lead to a more successful recruitment strategy as people will be more inclined to take a job opportunity into consideration based on a good online experience and relationship with the organisation. It can be

argued that this is a tiny segment of the LinkedIn members who would actively participate in Questions and Answers forums. However, in this way, the vast majority of LinkedIn members can be reached as well, who are called ‘*listeners*’ as although they do not make comments they read other people’s conversations, updates and notes (Lanier 2012) which also influences their opinion and perception about a particular organisation.

II.3.3 Limitations

In addition to the above general description of weaknesses of social media, LinkedIn have its own weaknesses (Alba 2011).

First of all people’s expectation from LinkedIn is very high. They assume that the result, reaction and achievement come immediately. This is not true, as it is about building a long-term relationship and instant growth of any kind would be unrealistic to expect. Although it has introduced features of social networking sites such as video and photo sharing, it still remains professional, clear and “*noise-free*” (Alba 2011).

Alba (2011) also claims that the LinkedIn network is not just an incomplete net of individuals but users have only partial control over their connections. A member can be disconnected at any time without getting permission from the other party. Members are not allowed to edit each other’s profile, they cannot store personal information from each other, privacy is at risk and it only offers a closed communication system, i.e. some In-mails can only be answered from a LinkedIn page rather than from an e-mail box.

II.3.4 Outlook

According to Alba (2011) LinkedIn’s profile is changing over time. It started off as a business networking site, however it is becoming more like a fancy, new-generation job board, which will eventually become a simple Web 2.0 job portal. Reason being, people are informed straight away on the main board if anyone in their network updated their profile for example. This makes people think, that if a person works on their online profile he/she must be looking for a job opportunity not just for networking with other professionals. This perception might question their own LinkedIn presence and they might remove themselves from it if they feel like being

on a wrong site for networking only. This could potentially lead to a big online database of active jobseekers on LinkedIn - like Monster.com.

Deutsch (2012) on the other hand argued that LinkedIn's power lies in its networking feature, which is leveraged by recruiters as well as sales and marketing professionals who wish to create and develop a business relationship with someone using "*warm-to-hot referrals instead of cold calls*" (Deutsch 2012).

II.4 Future trends – Web 3.0?

It is difficult to predict what the future will bring, as speculation in 2009 such as Web 3.0 would provide on-demand television and video through the internet in high definition or even in three dimensions (Clapperton 2009) have become reality just under four years' time.

Working remotely has spread incredibly over the last few years due to the rapid development of technological equipments; first the use of laptops spread then smart phones and table PC's and then cloud computing.

Social media sites also constitute to be in the 'clouds' as people can log in to them from wherever they want – from home, work, or on the go – using one or all of the available technological tools. It also can be done twenty-four-seven and remotely, as the main computer, where these sites are on, is somewhere else, so people are no longer tied to a desk in order to be online.

And since the tendency is that people are becoming more and more impatient in the fast paced world, the information is expected to be received instantly while it also must be accurate and geographically relevant too. The technological development allows smart phones to locate their physical position which permit the owner to find nearby services - like restaurants, shops, hairdressers, cinemas – together with professional and amateur reviews (Clapperton 2009).

Chapter III. – Methodology

In this chapter after determining the research questions, aims and objectives; the purpose, the methodology, the approach, the strategy, the research choices and the time horizon of the survey is discussed. The chapter is closed with the presentation of the data collection and data analysis techniques.

III.1 Research questions, aims and objectives

III.1.1 Overall research question and objective

‘What is the impact of the business networking site, LinkedIn on private, large, MNCs’ recruitment process in Ireland?’

According to the previous Irish survey of O’Raghallaigh (2010) and an annual global Jobvite survey (2012), LinkedIn is the organisations’ first choice when it comes to social recruiting. The aim of my dissertation is to explore why a private, large, MNC would choose LinkedIn over other social media sites for recruitment purposes and what these companies’ perception is on LinkedIn’s affect on their recruitment process.

III.1.2 First research sub-objective

To discover via which recruitment method were more vacancies filled more successfully in the last twelve months - traditional or social?

“The best way to win in the ongoing search for talent is to entice those already employed elsewhere. Social media provides a means of attracting that pool of high-quality candidates” (Joos 2008).

The aim was to find out – as part of semi-structured interviews and a survey – which recruitment method was more successful in the last six to twelve months: traditional or social? Successfulness was measured by the length and the cost of the recruitment process as well as by the retention of the new recruits for at least six months.

III.1.3 Second research sub-objective

To investigate how the different components of the LinkedIn hiring strategy (such as *'Company'*, *'Employee'*, *'Jobs'* and *'Search'*) relate to the successfulness of the social recruiting in private, large, MNCs in Ireland. Successfulness was measured by the length and the cost of the recruitment process as well as by the retention of the new recruits for at least six months.

The company LinkedIn (2013, www.linkedin.com) claim that companies that use all components of their hiring strategy will gain bigger competitive advantage and become more satisfied with LinkedIn services than companies that only using *'Jobs'* and/or *'Search'* functions. The aim was to find out – as part of the semi-structured interviews and a survey – how satisfied companies are with their LinkedIn subscription and to explore if there was any connection between their satisfaction and the level of their LinkedIn subscription.

III.1.4 Third research sub-objective

To ascertain which recruitment methods are being used and planned to be used in private, large MNCs in Ireland. Is social media only supplementing or rather replacing the traditional recruitment tools in private, large MNCs in Ireland?

Doherty (2010) claims that social media should not be used as an exclusive recruitment tool.

The aim is to find out what the private, large, MNCs' HR or Recruitment professionals think of this tendency and what these companies' action anticipate.

III.2 The methods

This section follows Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill's (2009) 'research onion' model, which provides the theoretical background for presenting first of all the available options and then the selected purpose, methodology, approach, strategy, research choices, time horizon together with the data collection and analysis techniques.

III.2.1 The purpose

Saunders et al. (2009) distinguish three different purposes that a research may have: explanatory, descriptive and exploratory. However, they highlight that studies could take up characteristics of more than one purpose.

Taking into account all of the above mentioned research aims and objectives and the applied data collection methods, the overall reason of the research included hybrid purposes. In order to gain confidence in the ‘Descripto-explanatory’ type of questionnaire (which was used to collect descriptive and explanatory data about the behaviour of companies regarding social recruitment and to determine the casual relationship between dependent and independent variables), in addition to reviewing the literature, semi-structured interviews were conducted at the start with a purpose of exploring the key and unique issues within the studied context.

III.2.2 The methodology or Research philosophy

The outermost layer in Saunders et al.’s (2009) onion describes four research philosophies – such as ‘*Positivism*’, ‘*Realism*’, ‘*Interpretivism*’, and ‘*Pragmatism*’ –, that a research could be built upon.

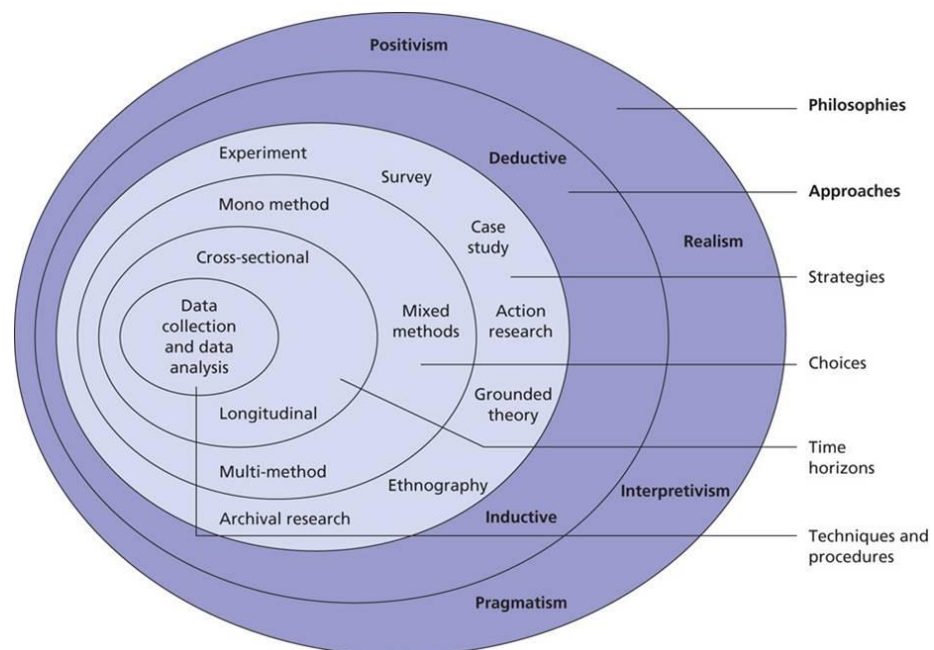


Figure 3-1

The research ‘onion’
Saunders et al. (2009)

III.2.2.1 Pragmatism

The pragmatist viewpoint argues that the most important component of a study is the research question. It also emphasises that it is absolutely acceptable to use more than one research method, hence it promotes the ‘mixed-methods’ approach.

III.2.2.2 Positivism

Positivists consider themselves ‘outsiders’ as they treat the collected data like pure facts rather than a result of their own interpretation. They are using the current theory to examine the reality which then enables them to select the appropriate research strategy and to develop new hypotheses from their findings.

Although there are ways to maximise the objectivity of a research (Gill & Johnson 2002 in Saunders et al. 2009), it is argued whether it is possible to reach entirely (Saunders et al. 2009).

III.2.2.3 Realism

Realism – as opposed to idealism – suggests that there is a universal reality which exists irrespective of the state of mind or knowledge of the people. It has two types. The first is ‘direct realism’ which suggests that the world is relatively stagnant and everything seems as it is. They believe in a saying of ‘what you see is what you get’. The critical realists on the other hand outline that ‘what you see is what you sense or understand from the things, not the things themselves’. As the latter group also acknowledges that the world is constantly changing, Saunders et al. (2009) outlines that this philosophy “*is much more in line with the purpose of business and management research.*”

III.2.2.4 Interpretivism

Interpretivists suggest that people in real life are constantly playing some sort of character – like actors in the theatre – depending on the situation they are in, which provides a framework within they interpret their own as well as others’ social role using their own sense. They emphasise that researchers must be able to see beyond the person’s particular social role, hence they must be empathetic when conducting such studies.

None of these four philosophies is better than the other – to decide which one should be used depends on the particular study, its practical issues and on the actual research aims and objectives – as each of these research philosophies has their own unique viewpoint and fundamental beliefs about the world which has an influence on the manner and attitude of the actual researcher as well as on the approach, the strategy and the applied methods of the study (Saunders et al. 2009). Understandably it is very rare, if possible, that a research clearly falls into one of these categories (Saunders et al. 2009).

Elements of all viewpoints can be discovered in this research to enhance the likelihood of meeting the research objectives more successfully.

It could be called ‘*Positivist*’ theory as both applied research methods followed a pre-defined set of questions. It falls into ‘*Interpretivism*’ as subjectivism can be spotted in the participants’ responses during the semi-structured interviews and in the questionnaire as well, which were unavoidably influenced by the person, and even his or her actual social character’s opinion. It also has some features of the ‘Critical realism’ as things can be seen or interpreted differently depending on how individuals perceive them; for example the usefulness of LinkedIn services. And it also can be ‘Pragmatist’ as the research was built on the research questions and a ‘mixed-method’ approach was used to find the answer to them.

III.2.3 The approach

According to Saunders et al. (2009) researchers decide which of the available two approaches they build their research design on, depends on their level of knowledge of the existing theory in their field of study. Although those studies that represent ‘Positivist’ philosophy most likely will apply a deductive approach while the ‘Interpretivists’ are expected to conduct their research inductively; there is no good evidence in the literature that such categorising would have any benefit, therefore should not be forcibly followed (Saunders et al. 2009).

In the case of this paper, the research questions were based on the existing literature to attempt to bridge the gap that might be in it by either confirming or refuting the created assumptions. In order to do it, the hypotheses were tested using a ‘survey

method' which approach constitutes 'deductive'. However, in order to make the research questions relevant to the scope of the study, an inductive approach also needed to be used prior to the main method so that semi-structured interviews were conducted and analysed inductively to find out if there was any specific issue pertaining to the population of this research that should be included into the main test.

Even though an inductive action was necessary to use in the beginning of the research process as well as some of the findings rejected the hypothesis which raised the need to revise the original theory (Bryman & Bell 2011), since the accomplished data collection process was linear and the dominant data collection technique was quantitative and because a survey strategy is usually associated with the deductive approach, the main direction of the research was indeed deductive in terms of the nature of the relationship between the theory and research.

III.2.4 The strategy

According to Saunders et al. (2009) there are seven research strategies to choose from: experiment, survey, case study, action research, grounded theory, ethnography and archival research. Although in practice some supports the particular function of the study better than other, Yin (2003) claims that any can be used regardless of the research purpose.

Still, to meet the exploratory and descriptive purposes of this study, survey strategy deemed to be the most accurate strategy to apply; not just because it has been popular amongst predecessor researchers studying social recruiting, but also because it appeared to be the most efficient way to find sufficient data to answer all open research questions (i.e. questions that start with an interrogative pronoun).

Survey also provides an opportunity for the researcher to attain quantitative data (through questionnaire) and – if needed –, analyse them with the help of 'descriptive' and 'inferential' statistics.

As determining casual relationship between variables was also necessary to complete in order to be able to answer the second sub-objective adequately; so using survey strategy was not just reasonable but also inevitable in order to meet this objective.

III.2.5 Research choices

There are number of research choices that a researcher could choose from to collect and analyse data.

Saunders et al. (2009) distinguish between Mono (which is collecting and analysing data in a same, single way) and Multiple (which is using more than one method to collect and analyse data) methods.

There are two types of ‘Mono method’: ‘Quantitative’, which can be “*used as a synonym for any data collection technique (such as questionnaire) or data analysis procedure (such as graphs or statistics) that generates or uses numerical data*” (Saunders et al. 2009) and ‘Qualitative’ which is using everything else (like words, pictures, photos) but numbers. In this latter case, the purpose is to explore new information through such data collection techniques like interviews, focus groups or observations and analyse the data with summarising, categorising or ranking which generate non-numerical data for the findings (Saunders et al. 2009).

There are four different kinds of ‘Multiple methods’: ‘Multi-method quantitative study’ (i.e. more than one quantitative method is used during data collection and analysis), ‘Multi-method qualitative study’ (i.e. more than one qualitative method is used during the research), ‘Mixed-method research’ (when both qualitative and quantitative data are used to gather data and quantitative data analysed quantitatively, qualitative data analysed qualitatively), and ‘Mixed-model research’ (when both types of data analysed quantitatively).

None of these choices are any better than the other; it is the researcher’s choice – based on the objectives – which method is the best to use.

In previous studies completed in this field, researchers typically used either qualitative, like Lingen (2012) and Kelly (2012) or quantitative, like Dehestani (2013), Navan (2010) and O’Raghallaigh (2010), methods. However, similarly to one of the recent researchers Nalkesen (2012), the author used mixed research methods, as the author’s intention was to find valid and reliable method to collect appropriate data which would be sufficient enough to answer the research questions effectively, for which ‘*Mixed-method research*’ appeared to be the most useful. This

strategy enabled the researcher to discover the key issues at the exploratory stage (using the qualitative method of semi-structured interviews) and analyse them qualitatively before applying the quantitative questionnaire to collect expressive data from a wider audience (Tashakkori and Teddlie (eds) 2003 in Saunders et al. 2009) and analyse them quantitatively.

Another advantage of using ‘Mixed-method’ was that they compensated the weaknesses of each other with their strengths, and together, they were able to offer an insight that neither of the methods could have provided on its own. By utilising both approaches, too much reliance on one single method could be eluded which enhanced the level of confidence in the findings (Saunders et al. 2009).

The scope of the research or the sample frame (which can be defined as “*a complete list of all cases in the population from which your sample will be drawn*” [Saunders et al. 2009]) included those private, large, MNCs, that have their Head Quarters in Ireland and an active company page together with a subscription on LinkedIn. According to a search result on LinkedIn, as of the 14th of March 2013, there are fifty companies that match these criteria.

III.2.6 Research time horizon

In terms of the time horizon; as the primary research was completed during a particular time (within seven weeks between April and June 2013), due to time constraints, it took up the cross-sectional – rather than longitudinal – design which enabled the researcher to collect enhanced amount of data using both quantitative and qualitative research methods (semi-structured interviews and a questionnaire) regarding various variables (Bryman & Bell 2011). Independent variable was the LinkedIn subscription level of the companies participating, and dependent variables were the length and cost of the recruitment process and the retention of the new recruits for at least six months. This approach also allowed the researcher to obtain increased control over the process.

III.3 Data collection and Data analysis techniques

The researcher's original intention was to obtain a representative sample (which is "*a sample that reflects the population accurately so that it is a microcosm of the population*" [Bryman & Bell 2011]) in order to be able to make generalisations from the findings valid to the whole population from which the sample was taken (Bryman & Bell 2011). 'The whole population' was defined by Saunders et al. (2009) as "*the full set of cases from which a sample is taken*" and by Bryman & Bell (2011) as "*...the universe of units from which the sample is to be selected*". The word 'sample' can be understood as "*the segment of the population that is selected for investigation*" (Bryman & Bell 2011).

This could have been done by either undertaking a census, by asking every single member of the population (which according to Saunders et al. [2009] would not necessarily have been given more helpful data to answer the research questions of a business study) or by getting an efficient response rate from the representative sample of the whole population.

Unfortunately neither of these options were achieved, so generalisation from the findings could only be made to the theory rather than to the whole population. Therefore, the research describes the impact of LinkedIn on companies' recruitment process that have participated in the survey and shows whether the theory is confirmed or rejected.

But in order to reduce the chance of making wrong conclusions about these companies, the applied data collection and analysis techniques still had to be credible, hence consistent, reliable and valid.

The aim was to collect and analyse as much data as possible under the existing conditions: the available time, resources and the granted level of access to the required information.

III.3.1 Sampling techniques

According to Saunders et al. (2009) there are two main sampling techniques: probability and non-probability selection methods.

Although there are a wide range of sampling methods to choose from (like probability samplings such as ‘*Simple random*’, ‘*Systematic*’, ‘*Stratified random*’, ‘*Cluster*’ and ‘*Multi-stage*’ and non-probability sampling like ‘*Purposive*’, ‘*Quota*’, ‘*Snowball*’, ‘*Convenience*’ and ‘*Self-selection*’), and for the survey, the statistical based probability sample of ‘*Simple random sampling*’ appeared to be the most useful technique to apply in order to ensure that the received data is representative as well as accurate for statistical analysis which would have allowed the researcher to make generalisations from the findings to the whole population; taking into consideration the research objectives together with given circumstances (time constraints, access barriers, practical and ethical issues), in case of this type and level of business study, the non-probability, self-selection sampling method found to be sufficient enough to apply for not just the qualitative but also for the quantitative method of data collection.

III.3.1.1 Practical and ethical issues during data collection

Ethics is defined as correctness of the researcher’s attitude and behaviour with regards to the population that is affected by the research (Saunders, et al. 2009).

Saunders et al. (2009) suggest that the researcher while designing a research should think through the following areas: the way the topic is formulated and clarified, how the access to the required data is attained, collected, stored and analysed and morally how responsible the research findings are.

There are two approaches concerning ethical issues (Saunders et al. 2009): deontological and teleological view. As the researcher aimed to obtain ethical behaviour throughout the whole process, and could not accept the teleological argument of ‘*the end result justifies the way of getting there*’ since none of the research objectives would require this approach to be able to find the answer to. So only the deontological viewpoint was possible to adopt which highlighted the importance of acting honestly and fairly throughout the whole process.

The research was also guided by the National College of Ireland’s code of ethics.

In order to avoid causing any negative affects for any participants’ or the researcher’s well-being, the following precautions were taken: the researcher was introduced to

participants by a common connection, through LinkedIn, during working hours. Only those were contacted by the researcher, who freely gave permission.

A template e-mail (see Appendix I.) was sent out to the sample frame and data was collected from three companies that expressed their willingness to take part in the research. They were reassured that the shared information would be used for academic purposes only. If someone would have changed her/his mind at any stage of the research, the work with that person would have been discontinued immediately and the data obtained from that person, would have been disregarded. Fortunately there was no need to do any of these.

In order to avoid putting any of the participants into the slightest risk or danger during the research, they were informed about their rights in the introductory mail (using Saunders et al.'s [2009] Checklist), and they were also reassured verbally that their privacy would be respected while confidentiality and anonymity is upheld throughout the whole, objective process. Creating rapport was also vital to maintain an appropriate environment which was free of embarrassment, pain, harm, stress or discomfort. With this approach, the researcher was able to obtain an '*Informed consent*' from the participants.

In these circumstances, all of the interviewed three HR/Recruitment professionals could talk freely about their experience and concerns which provided an excellent ground to create an appropriate and focused survey. Luckily, these three companies represented the three different LinkedIn subscription-levels plus they had been using LinkedIn for three different periods of time which increased the likelihood of a representative finding, which by the way, was not planned to achieve through these interviews.

III.3.2 Sample size

Saunders et al. (2009) argued that the size of the sample depends on various factors such as the sampling technique, the expected confidence rate in the data, the margin of error that is tolerated, type of the analyses and the size of the total population from which the sample is being taken.

Saunders et al. (2009) suggest that while probability sampling technique expects the researcher to attain certain sample size and to work with a ninety-five per cent level of certainty whereas the range of the error stays between three to five per cent, when

non-probability sampling applied – like in the case of this study – there are no such rules as long as there is a logical connection between the purpose and the focus of the research and the selected sample technique.

The population of this research consisted of only fifty organisations, which –if probability sampling technique would have applied – would have required a minimum sample size of forty-four (Saunders, et al. 2009) with a one hundred per cent response rate in order to get a representative result; or, as the population was going to be less than ten thousand, ‘*adjusted sample size*’ could have been used without affecting the accuracy (Saunders et al. 2009), which would have been a sample size of twenty-three. However, studies showed (Saunders et al. 2009) that the expected response rate of a study is only thirty per cent, which would have required the participation of the entire population, which was not attainable.

So this gave another reason why non-probability sampling technique was used to collect data through semi-structured interviews and a questionnaire.

As opposed to the probability sampling, Saunders et al. (2009) highlight that in case of the application of a non-probability sampling technique, data collection should be performed until data saturation is reached, which is between twelve to thirty resources depending on the level of homogeneity of the particular group.

The researcher understands that a higher response rate increases the level of confidence and the validity of a research which in the case of this study, unfortunately was not entirely achieved. In addition to the available short period of time and limitation in resources, the researcher felt that – despite the clear, written declaration of using all materials for academic purposes only – her work title might have hindered her from getting higher response rates from other recruitment professionals who are also working for large, private MNCs in Ireland, as they might have thought that sharing confidential, strategic information regarding recruitment with a competitor recruitment professional was against their policy. Although the researcher’s title could have been removed from her LinkedIn page or changed it to something else, this solution, just to generate higher response rate for the survey, appeared to be unethical for the researcher, hence it was dismissed. However, if time and financial sources allowed, in order to increase the likelihood of getting higher response rates it would be recommended for future researches first of all to develop as large pool of first degree contacts on LinkedIn as possible and secondly to get in

touch with these professionals initially either by phone or in person before sending the questionnaire over to them via e-mail.

Still, despite the flaw of the response rate, since the source of this research entailed a reasonably homogenous group of thirteen HR or Recruitment professionals (who work for one of those fifty Irish, private, large MNCs that have a LinkedIn account) from where the data was collected for this study, over twenty per cent response rate (three interviews plus ten questionnaire responses) seemed to be sufficient enough to complete the research and to get a general idea about the Irish, private, large MNCs' HR professionals' opinion and behaviour as well as these organisations' future plan regarding social recruiting and LinkedIn in particular.

III.3.3 Research instruments

III.3.3.1 Semi-structured interviews

Due to the available time, three semi-structured interviews were conducted within two weeks (in April 2013) to explore any unique issues in relation to the research subject.

The interviewees were those in-house HR or Recruitment professionals who are in charge of recruitment in their organisation and had some sort of experience and/or future plans about using social media (LinkedIn in particular) as a recruitment tool.

Although the researcher had a list of questions to cover with the respondents during the interview, the order of them was changed if needed, and if the interviewer felt that something needed to be explained in more detail, additional questions were added on the spot. Or in some cases, questions needed to be omitted, repeated and rephrased which enabled the interviewer to obtain more accurate information.

The interviews were conducted face-to-face, either in the interviewee's office, home or in a quiet public place; and lasted between seventeen and thirty-two minutes in length. They were audio recorded of which transcripts were prepared afterwards (see Appendix II, III and IV).

The semi-structured interview method allowed the researcher to ask a couple of open-ended questions which enabled interviewees to speak freely about their experience and perception on the subject area especially since anonymity and confidentiality was assured by the researcher.

Based on the research objectives and previous studies of Dehestani (2013), Lingen (2012), the Jobvite survey (2012), Navan (2010) and O'Raghallaigh (2010) the following questions were developed and asked during the interviews:

1. Why did the organisation decide to use Social Media for recruitment?
2. What options were taken into consideration?
3. Why was LinkedIn chosen?
4. What do you use LinkedIn for?
5. Are you familiar with LinkedIn Talent Solution/Hiring Strategy?
(Company, Employees, Jobs, Search)
6. What do you think of these?
7. Why did you choose this subscription level?
8. To what extent does LinkedIn meet the company's need?
9. What is missing?
10. What was the management's and the employees' perception about LinkedIn in the beginning?
11. How has the management's and the employees' perception changed about LinkedIn over the last twelve months?
12. How did it affect the recruitment strategy?
13. If you started using social media for a first time now, what would you do differently?

III.3.3.2 Questionnaire

The purpose of using a questionnaire was to describe and explain the impact of LinkedIn on the large, private MNCs in Ireland.

The self-administered, Internet-mediated questionnaire (see Appendix V) was developed based on the theory, the above (under III.3.3.1. point) mentioned previous studies and the conducted, transcribed and analysed three semi-structured interviews. Due to a poor response rate after the first round, it was sent out as part of a template e-mail (see Appendix VI and VII) twice, which included an introduction and a link to the online survey (kwiksurveys.com). The list of addressees of the first round of e-mails entailed those seventy-five HR/Recruitment professionals who work for any of the fifty large, private, MNCs that have a live company page on LinkedIn and their Head Quarters in Ireland. The repeated e-mail was sent out to fifty-two individuals of

whom three were new. All of these experts also had to have a live LinkedIn account and – in order to meet the ethical objectives – they all had to accept to be a first degree connection with the researcher.

The questionnaire, which consisted of seventeen multiple-choice questions, was designed to be user-friendly but effective enough to find out all relevant data which was necessary to answer the research questions.

The focus was more on the ‘opinion’ and ‘behaviour’ variables as the research was based on the respondents’ views and actions rather than the differences in their characteristic. The connection between their judgement and the company’s LinkedIn subscription level was also aimed to be explained and described.

So the analysis of the interviews and the questionnaire will be presented in the next chapter as well as the findings are explained by objectives.

Chapter IV. – Analysis and Findings

In this chapter first the analysis of the three semi-structured interviews will be presented as it was necessary to complete this task prior to the development of the survey. Therefore the analysis of the questionnaire comes second and the findings will enable the researcher to meet the research sub-objectives and ultimately, find the answer to the overall research question.

IV.1 Analysis

In this sub-chapter the analysis of the semi-structured interviews and the survey is completed before the findings are presented in the following sub-section.

IV.1.1 Semi-structured interviews

The use of semi-structured interviews ensured that the special problems and/or unique issues were explored and analysed that were relevant to the scope of this study.

Although the framework of the research is descriptive which represents a deductive approach, information collected during the exploratory stage of semi-structured interviews were analysed qualitatively, from an inductive perspective.

According to Saunders et al. (2009) there is no universal method for analysing qualitative data. However, they highlighted that there are three different approaches to process such data such as '*summarising*', '*grouping*' and '*structuring through comments*' which could be used either on their own or together.

For the purpose of this research, a summary of the identified key points from each of the interviews is given.

IV.1.1.1 Summary of Interview I.

The first interview, which took place in the interviewee's home, after working hours, lasted for thirty-one minutes and eleven seconds. The interviewee looked very confident and was indeed extremely cooperative.

Company I. had been using LinkedIn for recruitment purposes for a year. They looked at social media as a potential recruitment tool due to their cost-saving business strategy. Using cheap social media for recruitment seemed to be an obvious step to take in order to support the organisation's main strategy. First they trialled

Facebook, as this is the biggest social networking site, but it did not work out since people seemed to like to keep their private life separate from their professional career. Then they signed up for an account on the largest professional networking site, LinkedIn. Although the interviewee was clear about the LinkedIn hiring strategy and the options they offer, due to cost issues, the company uses LinkedIn mainly for direct search and to advertise specific, functional positions that deemed to be challenging to fill in the past and they would have gone to an agency to fill previously. So they carefully select which position gets one of the four slots that the company has on LinkedIn. So far, this basic subscription level has been satisfactory in meeting the need of the company. The recruitment team welcomed if engineers' and pilots' profile could also be found on LinkedIn; in other words if LinkedIn could incorporate other professional networking sites (like pprune.org) into their services. However, they would not want to rely on this tool too heavily as if they did, the price could go up significantly. It was difficult for them to convince management about the advantages of LinkedIn, and even after a year of using it, still lots of managers are reluctant to apply it as they do not have the time to invest in it. As a consequence, they do not experience much return from using it which keeps them defiant to use LinkedIn.

Although LinkedIn have not changed the company's recruitment strategy radically, it did save some money for the company, as they have used recruitment agencies less over the last year and they could downgrade their subscription level with the job board 'irishjobs.ie'. The overall impact of LinkedIn on their recruitment process has been positive.

IV.1.1.2 Summary of Interview II.

The second interview, which took place in a quiet corner of a public place just after lunchtime, lasted for twenty-eight minutes thirty-two seconds. The interviewee was very friendly and amiably excited.

As there was remaining recruitment budget to spend, Company II. started using social media for recruitment three years ago to expand company awareness as well as to find and entice passive job-seekers to go to work with them rather than their competitors despite the lower basic salary that the company offers. They started using Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn more or less at the same time. It turned out,

that although Twitter and Facebook could be a good medium to build company awareness, they were not working well as a recruitment tool. LinkedIn on the other hand provided higher level professionals' profile that are out there and could be contacted using LinkedIn's direct search tool. So they are using LinkedIn mainly for direct source and they have unlimited job slots as well to advertise their vacancies. They also pay great attention to build company awareness through LinkedIn and they promote their vacancies as well as the company's brand through the employees too. Therefore, they have a top subscription level. They consider themselves very good at using different sourcing techniques on LinkedIn which is claimed by them to be the most valuable function of LinkedIn.

Although they are entirely happy with LinkedIn's service and with the value they are getting from them, as the number of vacancies filled via LinkedIn has been constantly growing, they would welcome if LinkedIn was able to merge a couple of search boards such as 'jobs.ie' and 'monster.ie' together. They would also like if there was a database on LinkedIn in the 'cloud' rather than them saving all the CVs on their computers and creating their own candidate database. Although initially they had their doubts about the usefulness of LinkedIn, their expectations were not too high, which were then easily met. Even though some of the managers might have been a little bit resistant in the beginning, everyone came on board once they saw that more and more new recruits were coming in through LinkedIn. Even some managers started searching for candidates themselves. LinkedIn have had an impact on their recruitment strategy as they needed to stop using the less effective job boards (like lodzajobs.ie) in order to be able to invest more into the more successful recruitment tool of LinkedIn. The interviewee believed that although it would be great if LinkedIn could merge some of the job boards together, it should never replace all of the other channels one hundred per cent, as it would be too risky relying on only one recruitment channel without any backup tool.

IV.1.1.3 Summary of Interview III.

The last interview, which took place in one of the meeting rooms at the company's head office just after lunchtime, lasted for seventeen minutes and fifty-six seconds. The interviewee seemed a little bit apprehensive as she thought she might not be able to give me any useful information, but was very approachable and helpful.

Company III. was only at the infant stage of using social media for recruitment as they had had a LinkedIn subscription for a week. They decided to use social media for recruitment to reduce their recruitment cost, the cost that they are paying for agencies, and to broaden their talent pool. They had considered using Twitter and Facebook in addition to LinkedIn, however they decided to trial LinkedIn only, as this is the professional network; the other two are more social. Although they were well familiar with LinkedIn's talent solution and hiring strategy, they signed up for LinkedIn primarily to do direct search and secondly to advertise their positions on any of the available eight job slots; which means that they have middle subscription with LinkedIn. They do not know what to expect from LinkedIn and if their belief that the Irish recruitment culture is 'to use recruitment agencies' confirmed and the success won't come in the next six-to-twelve months, it might not be the right tool for them to use at all. However, at this stage, they are very hopeful; they expect between seventy and eighty per cent success. They are also prepared that LinkedIn will not be appropriate for all types of vacancies; they will use it to find candidates for more specialised roles. All line managers welcomed the idea of using LinkedIn for recruitment and they all seem to be onboard to make it a success. They expect LinkedIn to have a positive impact on the recruitment budget which would be aligned with the company's overall cost reduction strategy. The interviewee believed that although social media already plays a significant role in the up-coming generation the current teenagers' everyday lives, and this will be the first place where they will go when they are looking for a job, social media and LinkedIn in particular will not ever entirely replace traditional recruitment methods; it will only complement them as there will always be valuable talents to be reached, who do not use this medium.

IV.1.1.4 Summary of the three interviews

In summary the author notes that these companies either trialled or considered trying out different social media sites, but only LinkedIn appeared to be useful for recruitment. Irrespective of the length or the level of the LinkedIn subscription what these companies have, the main reason they all signed up for LinkedIn was firstly to perform direct searches in order to find passive candidates to fill challenging, specialised roles and secondly to advertise positions where the talent pool is limited.

They all would welcome if LinkedIn could provide an extended service by incorporating other job boards' data base however, this at the same time contravenes their opinion that social media (LinkedIn in particular) should and will not demolish traditional methods. LinkedIn have had positive impacts on these companies' recruitment strategy, especially budget-wise.

However two differences were spotted; the lowest subscription level company was the least satisfied with the result that they were getting from LinkedIn, and the managers' involvement is more determining in those companies that have middle or top subscription.

These findings enabled the researcher to revise the pre-planned questionnaire and develop a final version of it to be sent to a wider audience.

IV.1.2 Questionnaire

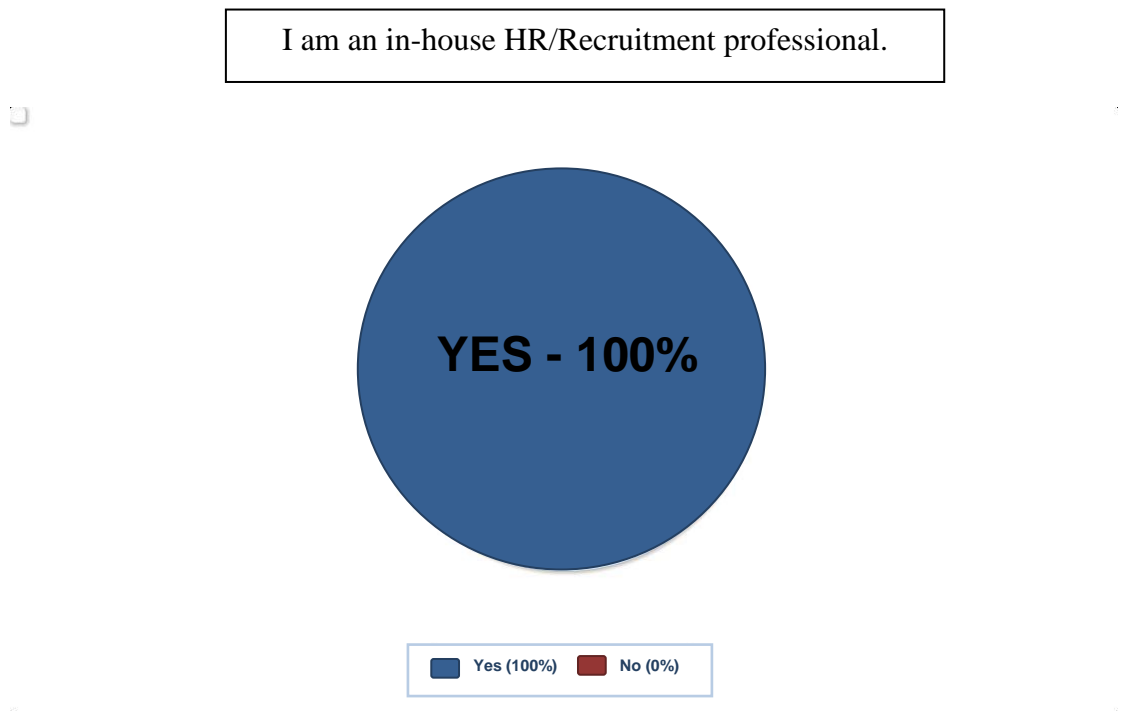
After completing, transcribing and analysing the semi-structured interviews, the questionnaire went under a fairly big makeover. Not just the number, the type, the style and the content of the questions changed but due to restrictions and limitations, so did the online site, on which the final questionnaire was developed and analysed. Originally the questionnaire was created on www.surveymonkey.com, however an alternative online survey site needed to be found whose free version was not limited to ten questions, as it seemed insufficient after the questionnaire was finalised.

So the final survey was developed and analysed on www.kwiksurveys.com. The data will now be first of all interpreted and presented using appropriate quantitative analysis techniques such as graphs or charts with narrative explanation and secondly linked to the appropriate theory from the literature review in the order that they appeared on the questionnaire. Where justified (in case of numerical data), descriptive statistics will also be used to be able to describe and explain any trends and/or correlations between variations that might have been found. According to Saunders et al. (2009) "*Statistics to describe a variable focus on two aspects: the central tendency and the dispersion*". So the middle value (median), the most

frequent value (mode) and the average of all values (mean) can be calculated if appropriate.

The first three questions on the questionnaire (see Appendix V.) were asked to make sure that the respondents belong to the scope of the research. Questions 4-11, 13 and 15-17 concentrate on the behaviour, experience, attitude and opinion of the HR professionals and their companies. Question 12 finds out the company's LinkedIn subscription level. Question 14 refers to the length of the companies' LinkedIn subscription to be able to describe the possible connection between variables more accurately.

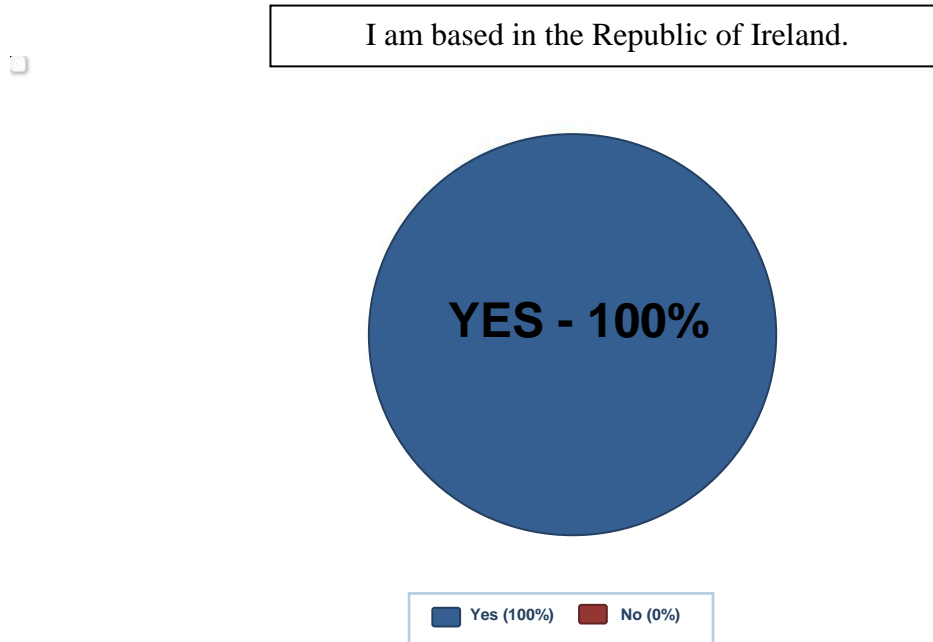
Figure 4-1 – Question number 1



Respondents were asked to confirm if they were an in-house HR/Recruitment professionals. 100% of them indicated to be part of this group.

The previous studies (Dehestani 2013, Kelly 2012, Lingen 2012, Nalkesen 2012, Navan 2010, O’Raghallaigh 2010) and the Jobvite survey (2012) covered this subject area more generally, as they included recruitment agencies and/or job-seekers as well. This research on the other hand concentrated on the in-house HR/Recruitment professionals’ experience and opinion, which increased the homogenous level of the answers. However, if a MNC using recruitment agencies on top of their in-house recruitment efforts, the reliability of the results could be flawed.

Figure 4-2 – Question number 2

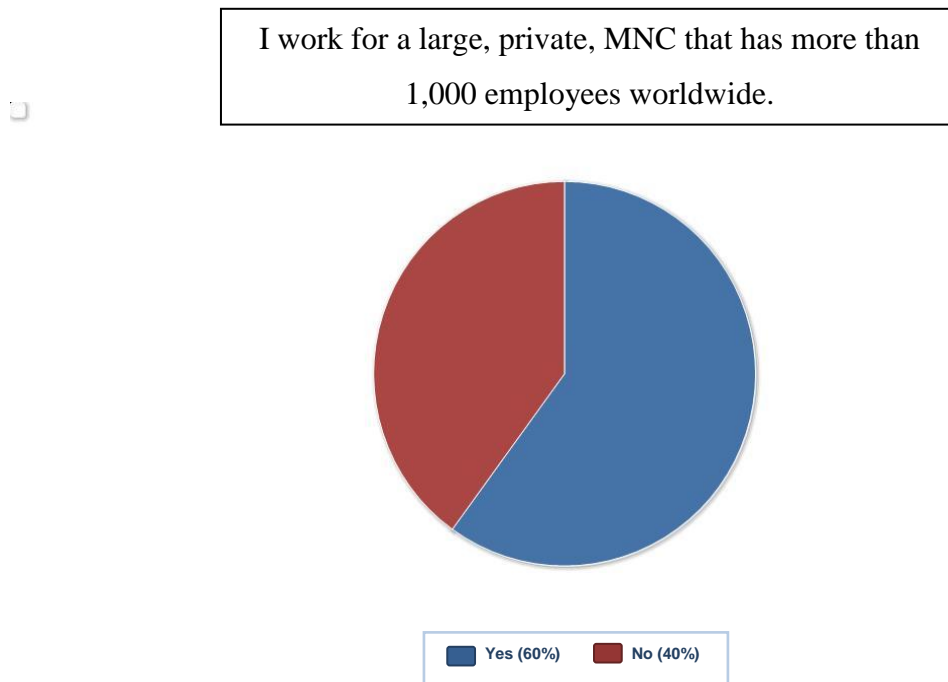


Respondents were asked to confirm if they were based in the Republic of Ireland.

100% of them confirmed that they are based in the Republic of Ireland.

Only three out of the studied seven previous researches (Kelly 2012, Navan 2010, O’Raghallaigh 2010) concentrated on the Republic of Ireland, others covered either another country like Holland (Lingen 2012) or the USA (Jobvite 2012) or took the sample from the whole world (Dehestani 2013, Nalkesen 2012).

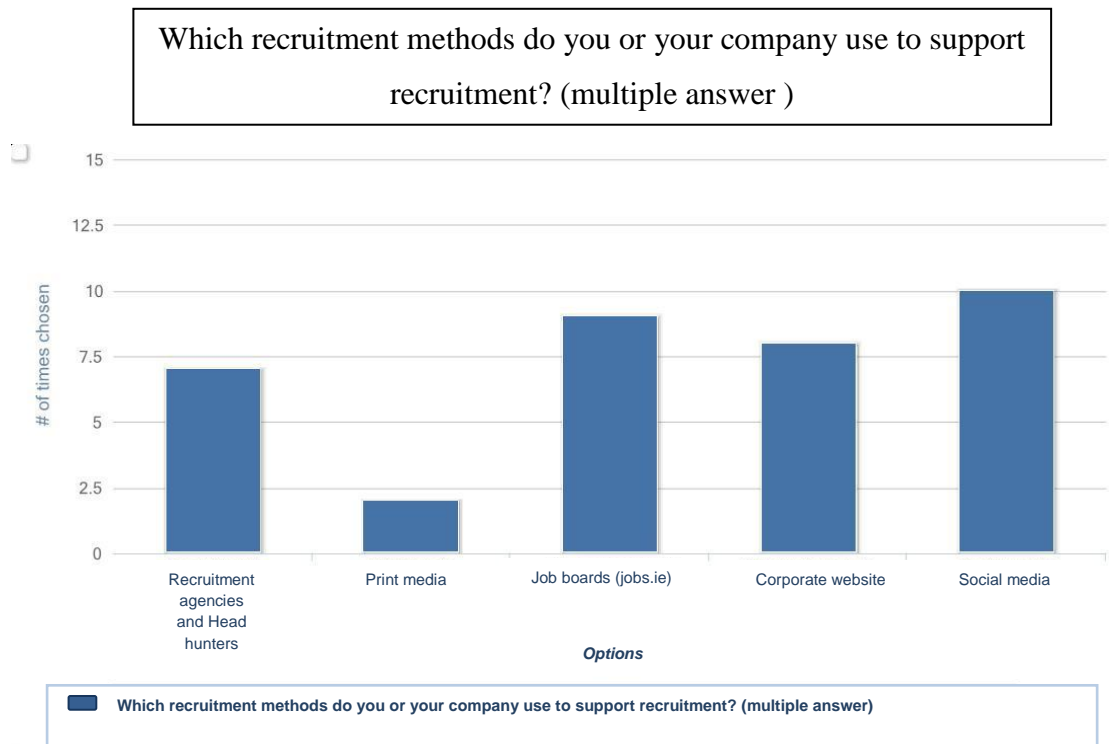
Figure 4-3 – Question number 3



Respondents were asked to confirm that they work for a large, private, MNC that has more than 1,000 employees worldwide.

60% of them indicated that they work for this group, and 40% pointed out that they work for a smaller-size of MNC. However, as all of the respondents work for a private MNC in Ireland, for the purpose of this survey, the further figures will include the answers from all of these participants.

Figure 4-4 – Question number 4



Although Sherrie (2011) suggested that traditional recruitment methods are becoming less popular and less common with the breakthrough of the Internet, in addition to the new social recruitment channels, e-recruitment, such as job boards (which constitute traditional rather than social method), seems to still be a popular recruitment method despite it not being interactive, but being able to offer anybody (including job seekers and employees too) an opportunity to browse among the job vacancies to see what would be available if they were interested (Joos 2008).

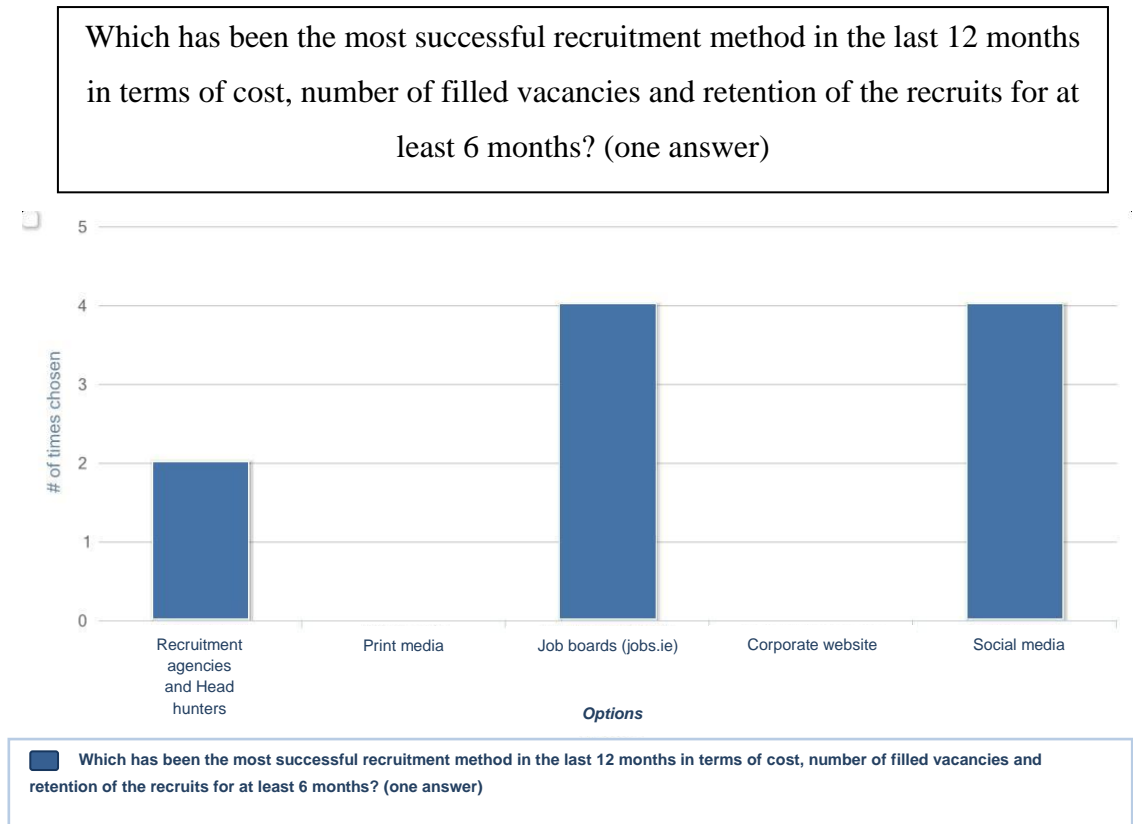
The fourth question asked the respondents to state which recruitment methods they or their company use to support recruitment. They could choose any of the following four traditional channels: (1) Recruitment agencies and Head hunters, (2) Print media, (3) Job boards, (4) Corporate website and the social recruitment method (5). As expected, the most popular channel used was Social media, as 100% of them indicated using it. This result supports Sherrie's (2011) claim that if an organisation would like to attract and hire top quality candidates and remain competitive, they

cannot avoid engaging with the services of social networking sites and ignore the opportunities that social media offers; therefore the use of social networking sites must be included in their recruitment strategy.

It was followed by Job boards, as 90% of them indicated utilising this channel for recruitment. Corporate website was also in the top three recruitment channels, as 80% of the respondents are also exploiting the company's website for staffing together with the first two techniques. While seven out of the ten respondents (70%) are still utilising the services of the recruitment agencies or head hunters, one of the typical traditional recruitment methods, Print media is far behind the rest of the channels, as only 20% of the respondents claimed to use it.

Therefore, the above statement of Sherrie's (2011) that traditional recruitment methods are becoming less popular and less common is not confirmed, as those channels that are still used by 90%, 80% or 70% of the respondents, should not be completely written off. The only traditional channel that seems to be disappearing, as it was far behind the rest of the channels and it looks clearly the least popular among the respondents, is the Print media.

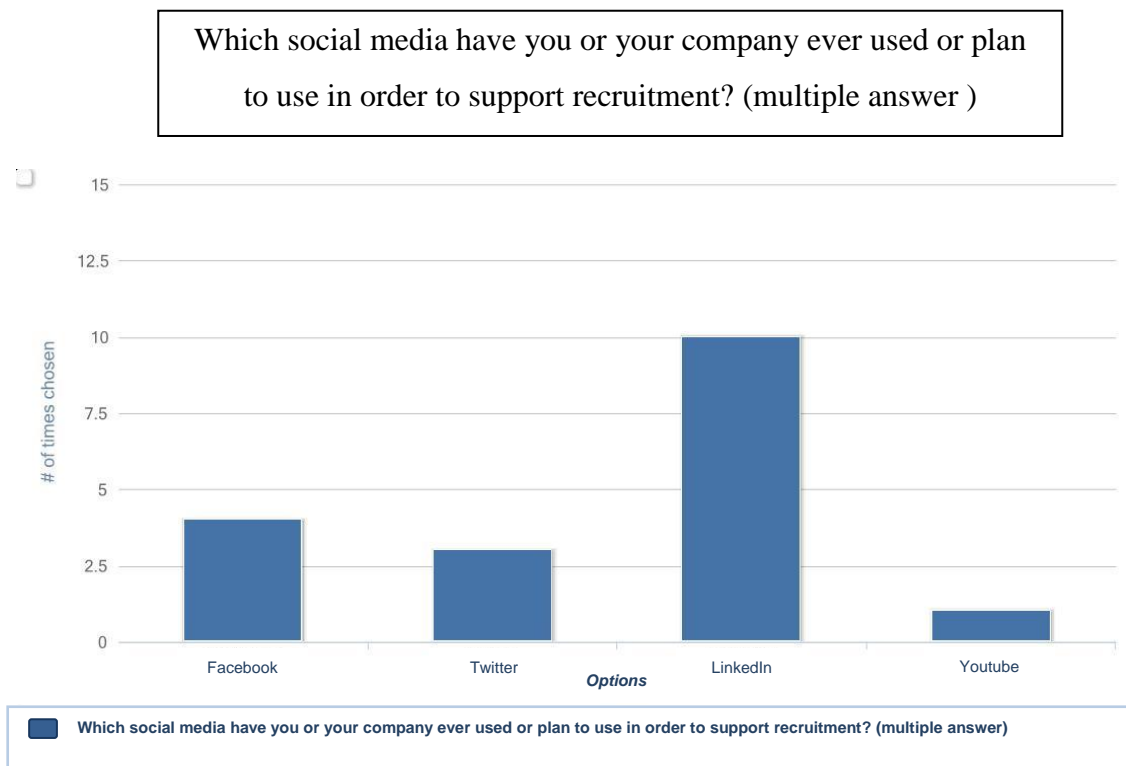
Figure 4-5 – Question number 5



So in connection with the previous questions, this time the respondents were asked to choose only one recruitment method from the options, which has been the most successful way of recruiting employees in the last twelve months in terms of cost, number of filled vacancies and retention of the recruits for at least six months. Social media and Job boards appeared to be equally successful methods as 40-40% of the respondents picked them. Although in the previous question 80% of the respondents claimed to be using corporate website for recruitment, none of them stated that it would be the most successful for them. While recruitment agencies were used by only 70% of the respondents, 30% of these respondents claimed that this has been the most successful channel under the given conditions. Print media was not considered to be the best recruitment way by either of the respondents.

So in the participated companies, traditional recruitment methods are not fading, but there still seems to be more successful ways of finding talents than through social media sites.

Figure 4-6 – Question number 6



As Doherty (2010) claimed that most popular social networking sites are LinkedIn, Twitter and Facebook which was then complemented by Sherrie (2011) who also included YouTube as an essential social recruitment tool to engage with as wide demographic as possible, these channels were listed in the sixth question, which asked the respondents to mark any of the options to indicate which social media they have or their company has ever used or plan to use in order to support recruitment.

All of the respondents (100%) stated that either they have used LinkedIn or they plan to use it to support their recruitment activity. The second most popular method, Facebook was marked by only 40% of the respondents as a past, current or possible future recruitment channel. Twitter came in third, as 30% of the respondents said that they have tried it or will try it. Youtube was also selected by 10% of the participants either as potential or as a trialled recruitment channel.

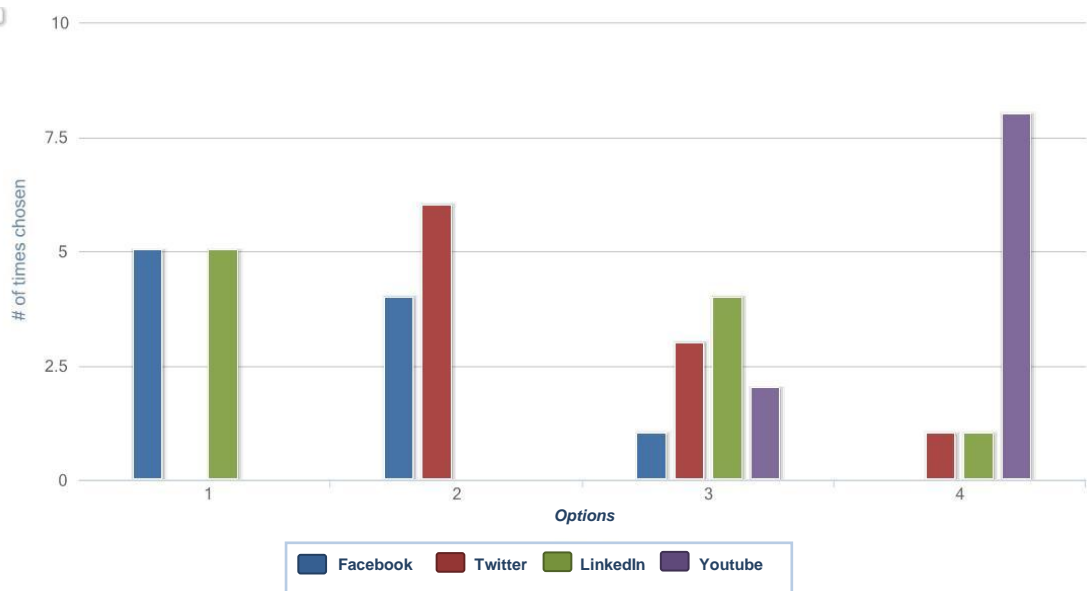
This finding is in agreement with the last three years' Jobvite survey in the USA (2012) which also found that LinkedIn is the recruiters' first choice when it comes to social recruitment, followed by Facebook and Twitter. This finding also corresponds with the outcome of another survey that was completed by O'Raghallaigh (2010) in

the context of the Republic of Ireland which also highlighted that the most frequently used social media site among the participated one hundred and seven Irish, HR professionals in 2010 was LinkedIn by seventy per cent, followed by Facebook and Twitter.

Although neither of the predecessors' survey contained Youtube, it can be reasonably assumed that it would have been the fourth in both cases.

Figure 4-7 – Question number 7

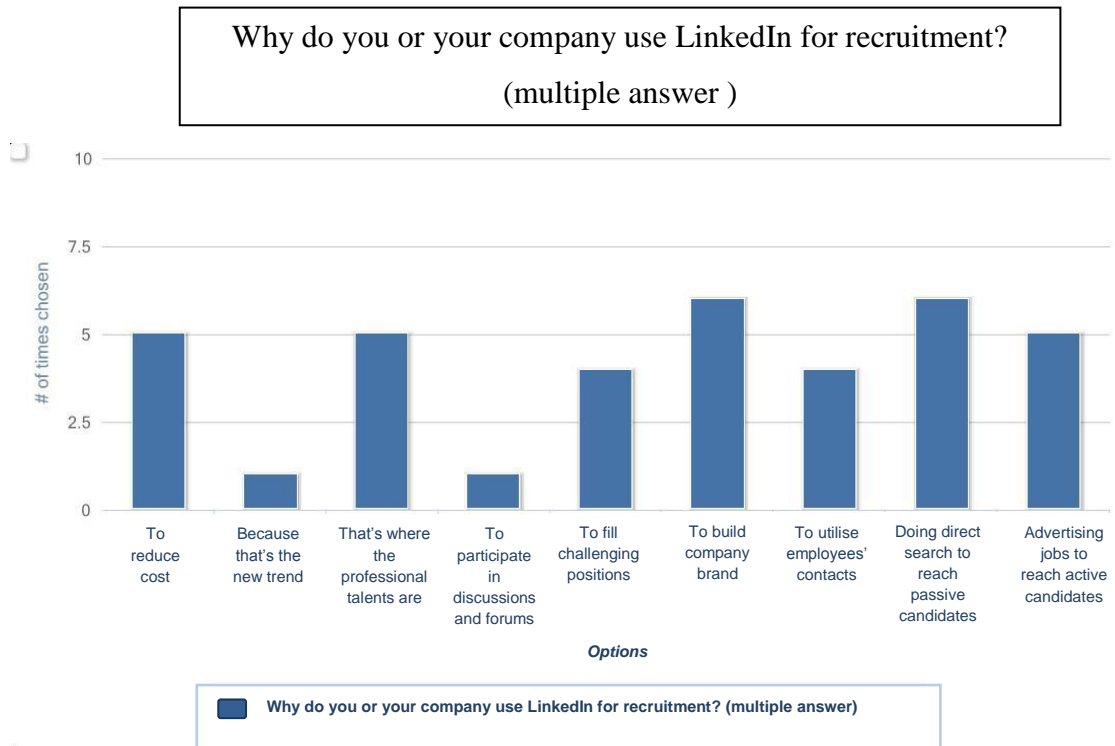
Rank the following social media channels based on their successfulness in the last 12 months in terms of cost, number of filled vacancies and retention of the recruits for at least 6 months? (1 being the most successful, 4 being the least successful.)



The seventh question asked the participants to rank the listed social media channels (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Youtube) based on their successfulness in the last twelve months in terms of cost, number of filled vacancies and retention of the recruits for at least six months. '1' was given to the most successful, while '4' to the least successful social recruitment channel.

The respondents' opinion was divided; as 50% of them claimed Facebook was the most successful social recruitment channel, and the other 50% said the same about LinkedIn. 60% of them stated that Twitter was the second best; while for 40% of them Facebook came in to second. The third place is divided among all of the given four social recruitment tools; 40% of them looked at LinkedIn as the third most useful social media tool, 30% thought the same about Twitter, 20% gave Youtube the third place, while only 10% believed that Facebook should be on this place. Whilst nobody experienced that Facebook was the least successful, 10% of the respondents claimed Twitter and LinkedIn to be the least useful, and the vast majority of the participants (80%) agreed that Youtube was the least valuable social recruitment channel.

Figure 4-8 – Question number 8



Doherty (2010) claimed that creating a company profile on SNS is vital in order to interact with potential, enthusiastic candidates who would fill future vacancies.

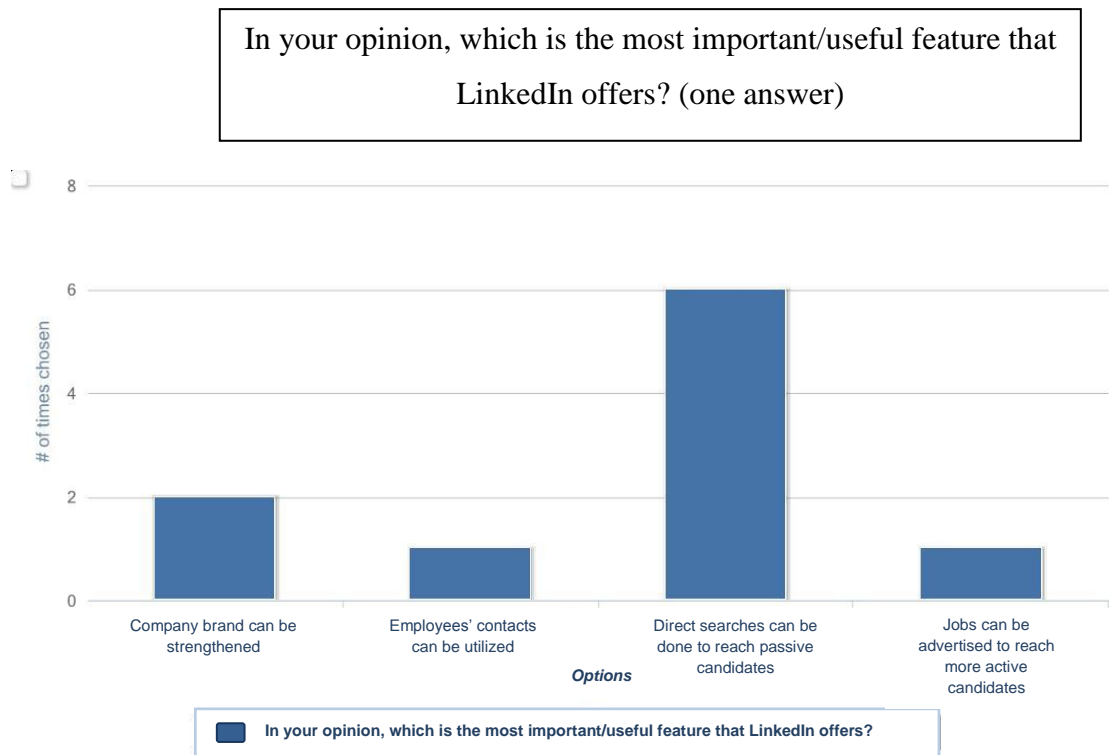
This was also supported by Lanier (2012) who highlighted that Questions and Answers forums are great to reach the vast majority of LinkedIn members, who are called ‘listeners’ as although they do not make comments but read other people’s conversations, updates and notes which also influences their opinion and perception about a particular organisation.

In question eight the reason of why do the respondents or their company use LinkedIn for recruitment was found out. The following options were given: ‘To reduce cost’, ‘Because that’s the new trend’, ‘That’s where the professional talents are’, ‘To participate in discussions and forums’, ‘To fill challenging positions’, ‘To build company brand’, ‘To utilise employees’ contacts’, ‘ Doing direct search to reach passive candidates’, ‘Advertising jobs to reach active candidates’.

Although 60% of the respondents indicated using LinkedIn to build company brand, only 10% of the respondents confirmed that they participate in discussion or in

forums. Direct search is also used by 60% of the participants, which together with the brand building is the most common feature of LinkedIn. 50% of the respondents stated that they use LinkedIn to reduce cost, to advertise their vacancies and because that's where the professional talents are. 40% of them use LinkedIn to fill challenging positions and to utilise employees' contacts, and only 10% of the respondents – same proportion who participates in discussions – stated using LinkedIn just because that's the new trend.

Figure 4-9 – Question number 9



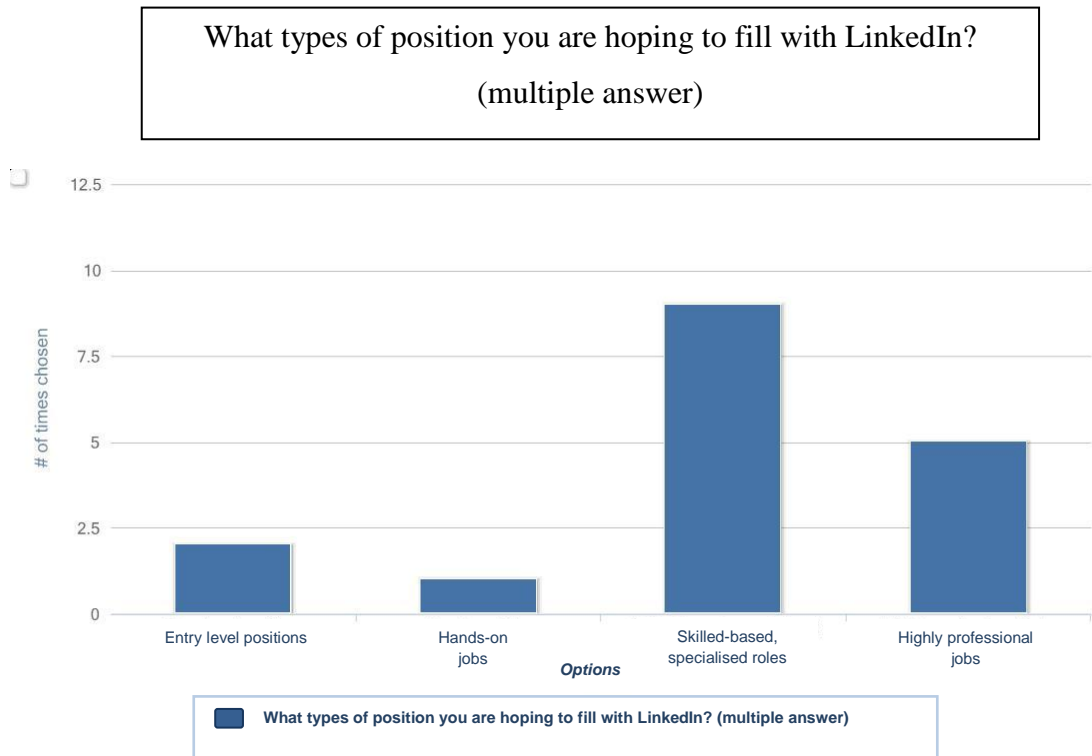
Meister & Willyerd (2010) contended that companies should concentrate on building their employer brand as a first step in the route of targeting the young generations. This recommendation was also supported by Doherty (2010) who added that by creating a company profile on SNS proves that the firm is a learning organisation which aims to stay young, fresh, up-to-date and relevant; so a place where everybody wants to work at.

So in the ninth questions the respondents were asked to select one option from the given four answers which they believe is the most important or useful feature of LinkedIn to see if they agree with the theory that building a strong company brand is the most valuable step to do for which they use LinkedIn. The four answers were: 'Company brand can be strengthened', 'Employees' contacts can be utilized', 'Direct searches can be done to reach passive candidates' and 'Jobs can be advertised to reach more active candidates'. The majority of the respondents (60%) stated that based on their opinion, performing 'Direct searches' in order to reach passive job-seekers is the most valuable LinkedIn feature. Only 20% thought that to build and

strength company brand is the most essential action for which LinkedIn should be used, while only 10% indicated that LinkedIn is a good channel to advertise jobs on or to utilize employees' contacts.

Therefore, the theory that says building a strong company brand should be the companies' most urgent task to do is not confirmed by this finding.

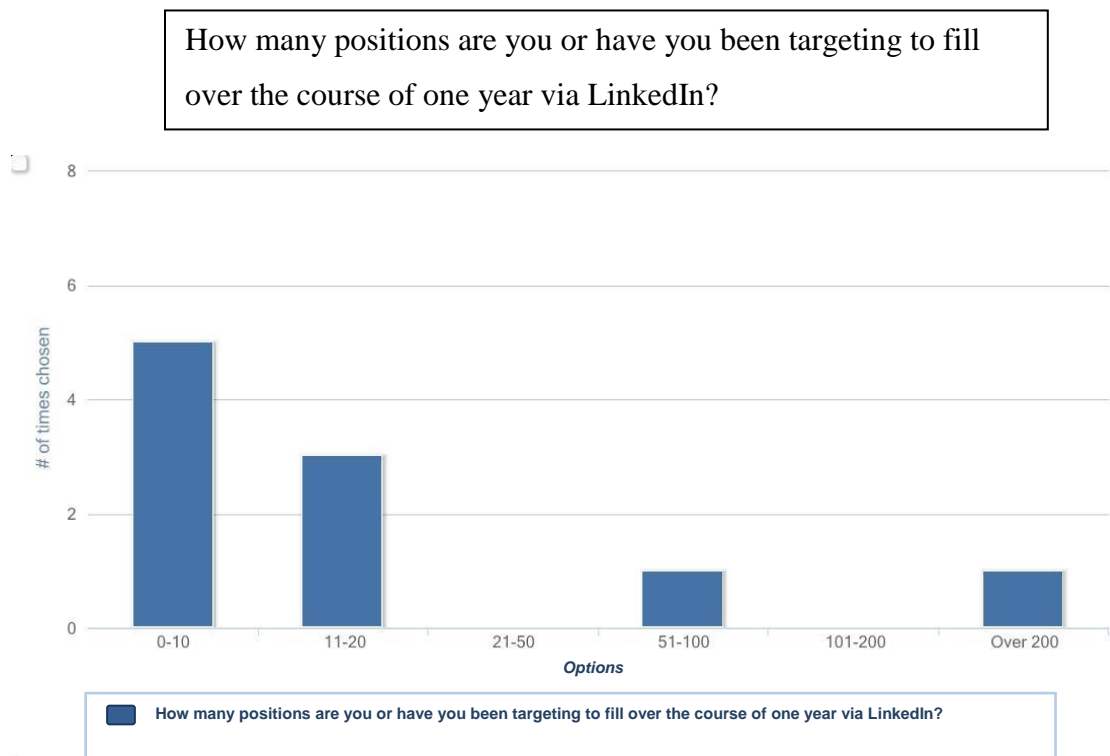
Figure 4-10 – Question number 10



The tenth question asked the respondents to indicate what types of position they are hoping to fill with LinkedIn. 90% of them agreed that they use LinkedIn to fill skilled-based, specialised roles; 50% of them are also hoping to recruit for highly professional jobs too via LinkedIn, while only 20% plan to use it for entry level positions, and 10% see to fill hands-on jobs with LinkedIn.

This result suggests that LinkedIn is mainly used by the participated companies to fill highly professional, skilled-based jobs which is justifying Lanier’s decision (2012) to leave LinkedIn completely out from his book of *‘Recruiting with social media’*, which is about how to target and recruit college students using Facebook, Twitter, Blogs and YouTube.

Figure 4-11 – Question number 11



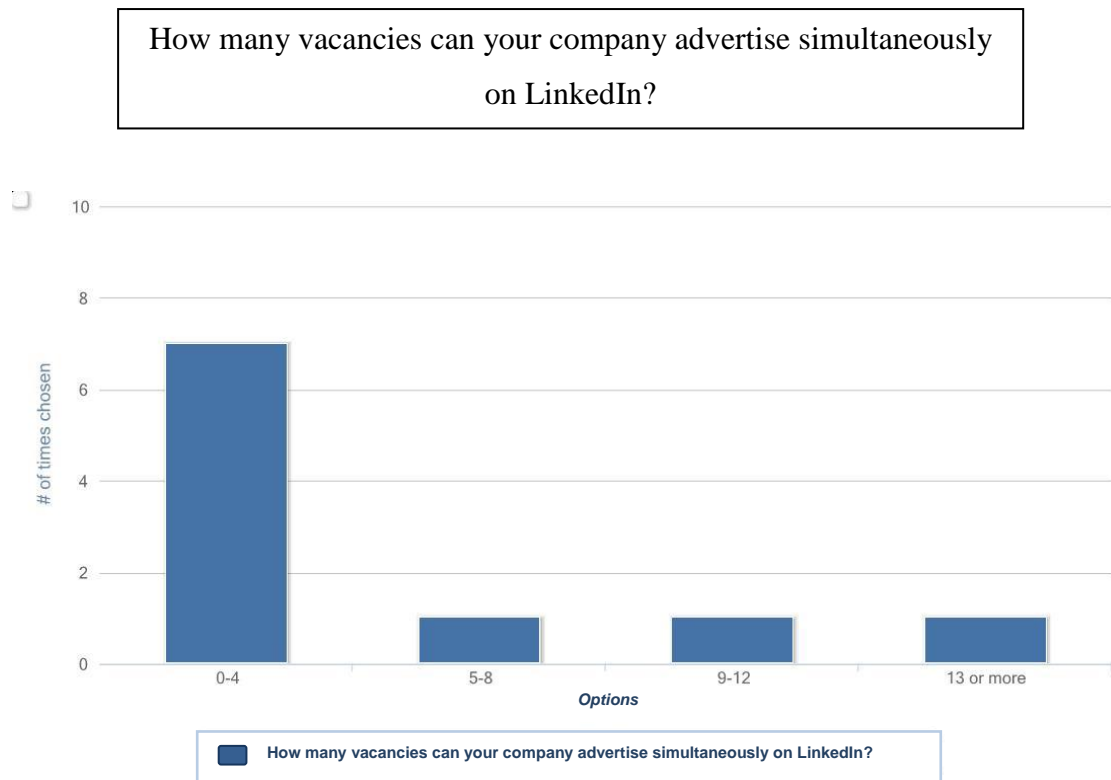
The eleventh question asked the participants to indicate the number of positions that they are or have been targeting to fill over the course of one year via LinkedIn.

80% of the respondents are planning to fill twenty or less positions per annum via Linked, 10% of them have between fifty-one and one hundred positions to be filled with LinkedIn, and 10% of the respondents plan to use LinkedIn to recruit for over two-hundred positions per year.

The most frequent (the mode) volume of positions among these companies was between zero and ten.

Instead of starting the first range of positions with 'zero', using number 'one' would have been more valid, as only those companies were involved in this survey that have already started using LinkedIn for recruitment to fill their positions.

Figure 4-12 – Question number 12



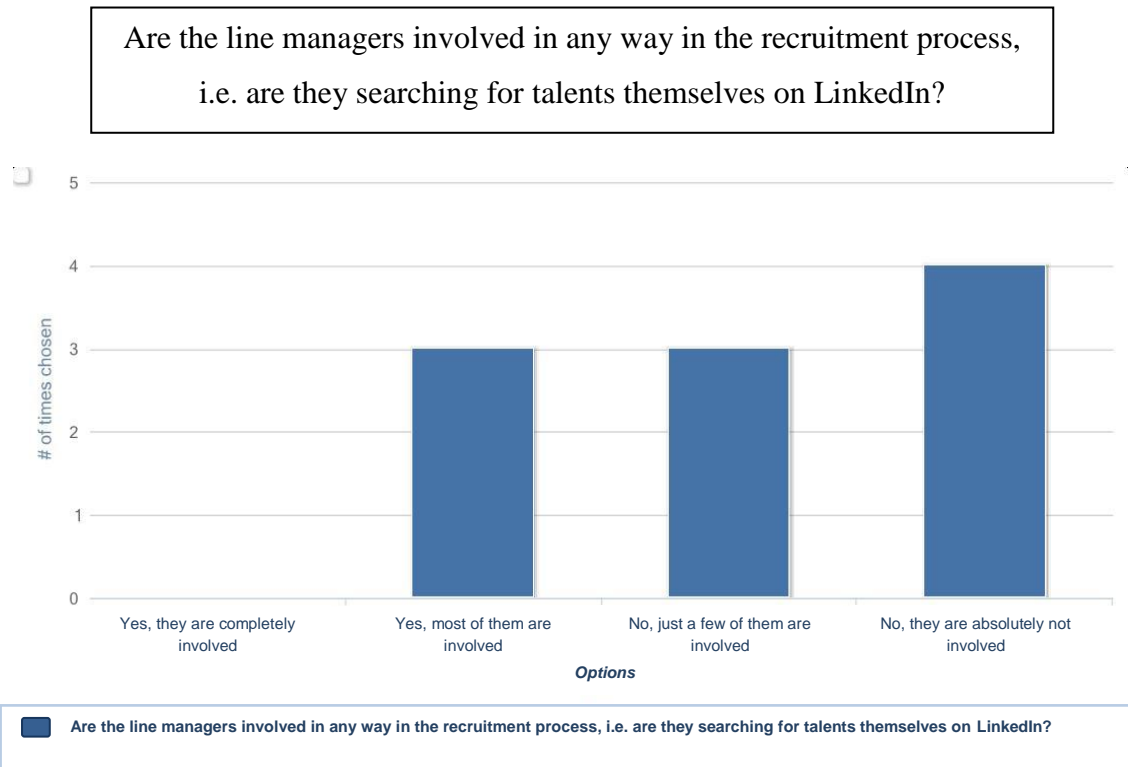
The twelfth question of ‘how many vacancies can your company advertise simultaneously on LinkedIn?’ was asked to determine the respondents’ subscription level with LinkedIn.

70% of the respondents indicated to have between 0-4 job slots on LinkedIn, which indicates that they have a basic subscription level. 20% of the participants confirmed that they can advertise between five and twelve positions simultaneously, which means that they have middle-subscription level. Only 10% of the participants belong to the top LinkedIn users that can advertise thirteen or more vacancies at one point in time.

So the most frequent (the mode) job slots among the respondents was between zero and four.

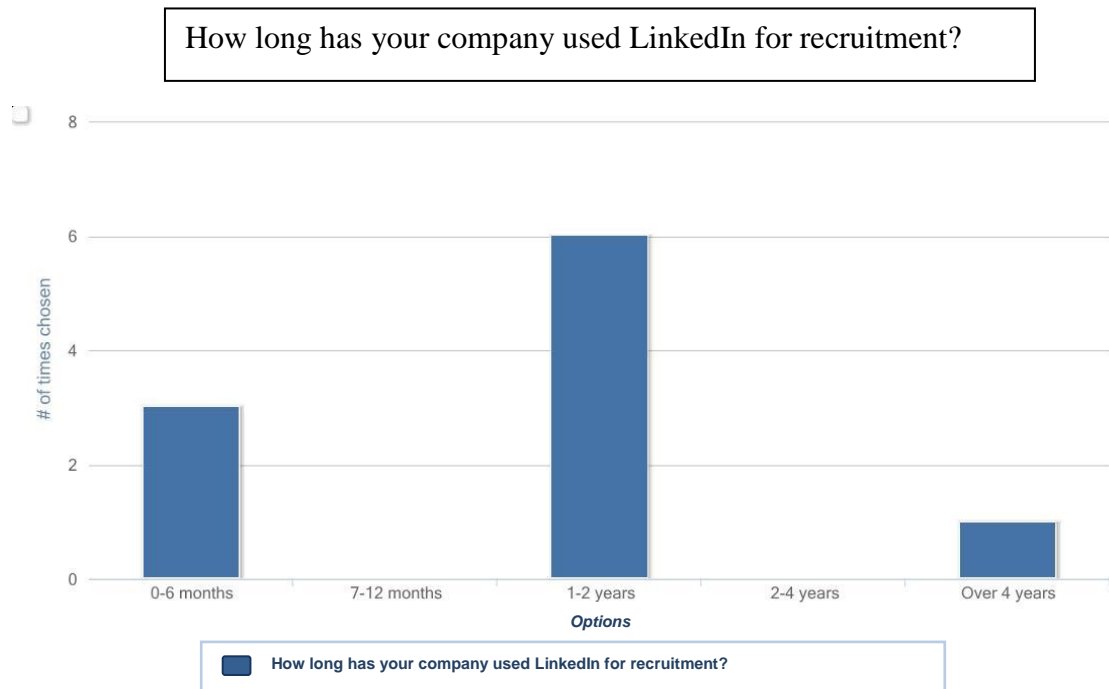
‘Zero’ was important to be included, as companies that are using LinkedIn for building company brand and/or to utilise employees’ contacts and/or direct search (therefore would not use the opportunity to advertise their positions on LinkedIn) should not have been left out.

Figure 4-13 – Question number 13



The thirteenth question is concerned about the level of the line managers' involvement in the recruitment process. While the line managers are not fully involved in the recruitment process in any of the respondents' company, to some degree they are involved in 60% of them, while in only 40% of the respondents stated that line managers are not at all taking part in any of the recruitment stages. As 30% of the companies in which the managers are not involved at all have basic subscription level while only 10% of them have top subscription level; it can be stated that the managers' participation in the recruitment process is more in the higher level account companies than in the lower subscription level companies; which does correspond with the findings from the semi-structured interviews.

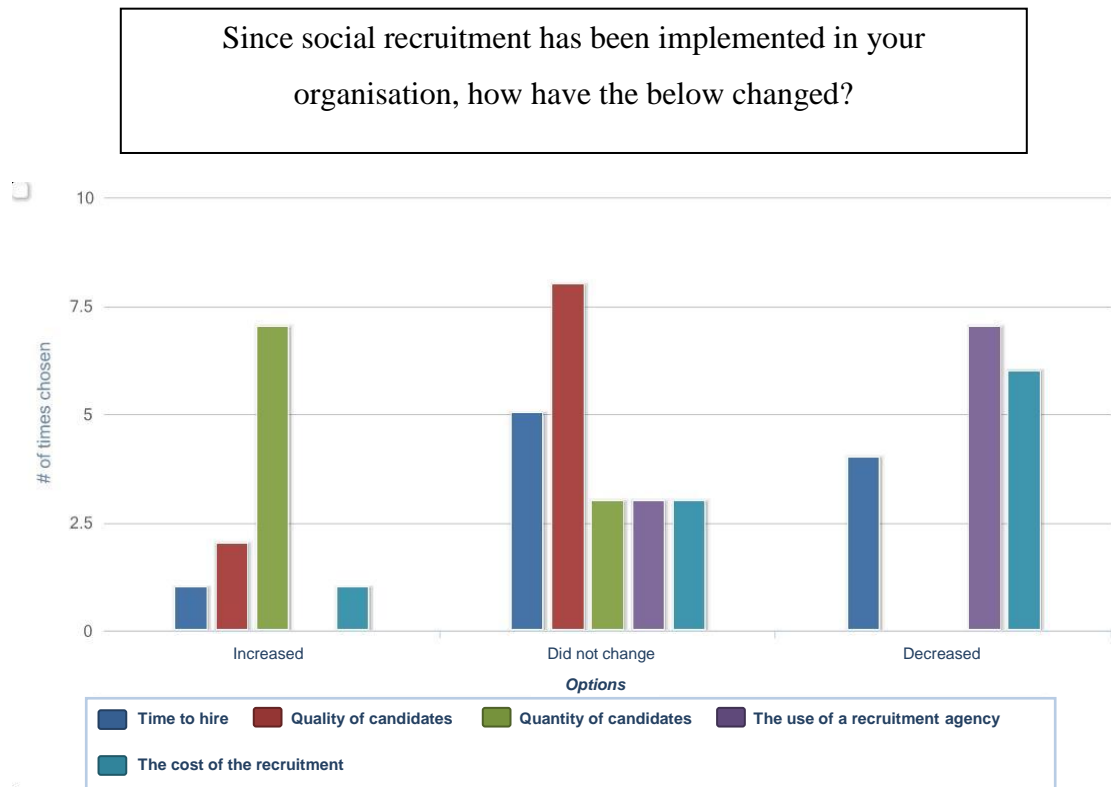
Figure 4-14 – Question number 14



The fourteenth question intends to establish how long the respondents have been using LinkedIn for. The majority of the respondents (60%) have used LinkedIn between one and two years; 30% of them have just started using in the last six months, while 10% of them have been using it for over four years.

So the most frequent (the mode) length for how long the participated companies have been using LinkedIn for was between one and two years.

Figure 4-15 – Question number 15



In question fifteen, respondents were asked to state how the following factors have changed since social recruitment has been implemented in their organisation: ‘time to hire’, ‘quality of candidates’, ‘quantity of candidates’, ‘the use of a recruitment agency’ and ‘the cost of the recruitment’.

70% of the respondents agreed that the quantity of the candidates increased since the company has started using social recruitment, which is more significant than the results of an American Jobvite research (2012) that found the same in only 49% of companies where social recruiting has been implemented.

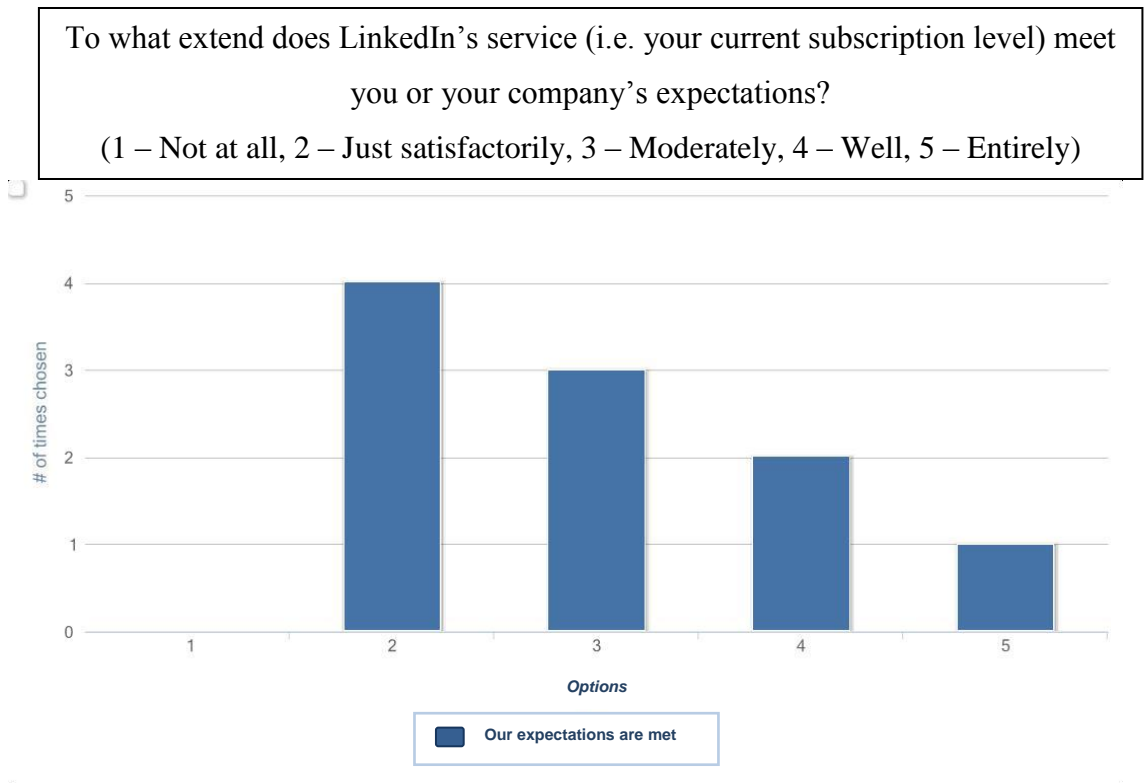
However, the quality of the candidates remained at the same level at most (80%) of the respondent companies, and it increased in 20% of them which is just half of the Jobvite (2012) result that found an increase in the candidate quality in 43% of the participated companies. One thing can be seen for sure, neither the quantity nor the quality decreased in any of the surveyed companies.

Although the extent of using recruitment agencies did not change in 30% of the respondents, 70% indicated that it decreased, leaving no respondent where it would

have increased. The cost of the recruitment process decreased in 60% of the companies, while in 30% of them the cost did not change, and it increased in 10% of them. The length of the recruitment process did not change in half of the companies (50%), it decreased in 40% of them (which is double the figure in the American Jobvite survey), and it increased in only 10% of them.

So these results seem to be in line with Andrews' (2012) findings that since the hiring process utilising the advantages of technology, the speed of the online recruitment increased in comparison with the traditional methods, which saves significant cost for the organisation while the successfulness and the standard of the selection process also increases.

Figure 4-16 – Question number 16



The sixteenth question intended to establish to what extent does LinkedIn's service (i.e. the surveyed company's current subscription level) meet the respondents' or the companies' expectations? Number '1' means 'Not at all', number '2' is 'Just satisfactorily', number '3' equals 'Moderately', number '4' means 'Well' and number '5' same with 'Entirely'.

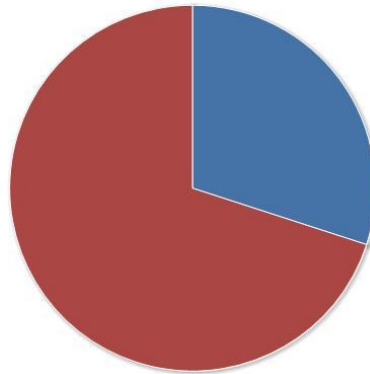
All of the respondents agreed that LinkedIn meets their expectations at least satisfactorily.

30% of them rated the LinkedIn service as 'moderate', 20% as 'well' and 10% of them were entirely happy with the result of what they get out of LinkedIn.

Based on the summary table of the questionnaire in Appendix VIII, as 60% of the basic LinkedIn subscription level companies claimed that LinkedIn meet their expectations either moderately or well, and 100% of the top LinkedIn account holders were just satisfied with the result that they are getting out of LinkedIn, stating that higher LinkedIn subscription level results in an enhanced level of satisfaction for the company is incorrect.

Figure 4-17 – Question number 17

Do you think LinkedIn will ever replace recruitment agencies?



■ Yes, the age of the recruitment agencies is getting over (30%)
■ No, it will never replace them; it will only complement them (70%)

Doherty (2010) warns that those people, who might not have connection to online services, should not be forgotten; hence social media should not to be used as an exclusive recruitment tool.

This statement was supported by the findings of the last question which intended to find out the respondents' opinion as to whether LinkedIn will ever replace recruitment agencies or not. 70% of the respondents agreed that it will never replace them, it will only complement them.

IV.2 Findings

In this section, first the three research sub-questions will be answered by explaining and describing the findings from the questionnaire in comparison with the literature review.

This will be followed by the answer to the overall research question, which will be formed based on the findings to the sub-questions.

IV.2.1 Findings of the first sub-objective

The aim of the first research sub-objective was to discover via which recruitment method were more vacancies filled more successfully in the last twelve months - traditional or social.

Successfulness was measured by the length and the cost of the recruitment process as well as by the retention of the new recruits for at least six months.

Although both traditional and social recruitment methods are equally being used by the respondents, in terms of the successfulness in the last twelve months, surprisingly still traditional methods were claimed to be more effective by 60% of the respondents, as 40% indicated that they filled the most vacancies successfully via job boards, and 20% found that recruitment agencies were the most efficient way to find talents in the last twelve months. Only 40% of the participants found social media to be the most sufficient recruitment tool.

And despite the fact that neither 'Print media' nor 'corporate website' has been proven to be a useful recruitment tool, based on these findings Joos' (2008) statement of "*The best way to win in the ongoing search for talent is to entice those already employed elsewhere. Social media provides a means of attracting that pool of high-quality candidates*" cannot be confirmed, as in the last twelve months traditional recruitment methods were still more successful than social recruitment in the companies that participated in the survey.

IV.2.2 Findings of the second sub-objective

To investigate how the different components of the LinkedIn hiring strategy (such as ‘Company’, ‘Employee’, ‘Jobs’ and ‘Search’) relate to the successfulness of the social recruiting in the private, large, MNCs in Ireland. Successfulness was measured by the length and the cost of the recruitment process as well as by the retention of the new recruits for at least six months.

The company LinkedIn (2013 www.linkedin.com) claim that companies that use all components of their hiring strategy will gain bigger competitive advantage and become more satisfied with LinkedIn services than those that only using ‘Jobs’ and/or ‘Search’ functions. The aim was to find out how satisfied the scope companies are with their LinkedIn subscription and to explore if there was any connection between their satisfaction and the level of their LinkedIn subscription.

In order to describe a comprehensive answer to this sub-question, the answers to survey questions number seven, eight, nine, twelve and sixteen were used together with the summary table of the survey which can be found in Appendix VIII.

As question number seven shows, only 50% of the participated companies considered LinkedIn to be the most effective social recruitment tool in the last twelve months. By using the survey summary table in Appendix VIII, the first aim was to determine how the experienced successfulness of LinkedIn relates to the company’s subscription level. The author notes that 80% of companies that found LinkedIn to be the most successful social recruitment tool have only basic subscription, and only 20% of them have the higher subscription. While 40% of companies that considered Facebook to be more successful than LinkedIn have the middle or the top subscription account with LinkedIn. Therefore, based on these findings, the statement of ‘*higher the company’s subscription level, more successful the recruitment is via LinkedIn*’ is not confirmed.

The second aim was to determine how the companies’ contentment with LinkedIn services correlates to the subscription level. As question number sixteen shows that only 10% of the respondents were entirely happy with LinkedIn’s services of which all of them had the middle-subscription level. 20% of them stated the LinkedIn met their expectations well, of which all of them had basic subscription level. 30% of

them rated LinkedIn service as ‘moderate’, of which 67% had basic, and 33% had middle-level account. And surprisingly the company, which had the top LinkedIn account, was one of those 40% organisations, which were just satisfied with LinkedIn services. Therefore, based on these findings, the statement that ‘*higher the company’s subscription level, more satisfied the company is with LinkedIn’s service*’ is not confirmed.

In summary, LinkedIn’s claim as to ‘those companies that use all components of their hiring strategy will gain bigger competitive advantage than those that only using ‘Jobs’ and/or ‘Search’ functions’ could not be confirmed based on the findings of this research. Companies with the lower subscription level can also be at least as satisfied with the results that they are getting out of LinkedIn as those that have middle or top subscription levels. Or those companies that have the higher subscription account with LinkedIn can be as dissatisfied with LinkedIn services as those that have only the basic package.

IV.2.3 Findings of the third sub-objective

To ascertain which recruitment methods are being used and planned to be used in private, large MNCs in Ireland. Is social media only supplementing or rather replacing the traditional recruitment tools in private, large multinational companies in Ireland?

The aim was to find out what the private, large, MNCs’ HR or Recruitment professionals think of this tendency and what these companies’ action anticipate.

As the answers to the survey question number four presented, 90% of the respondents indicated using the traditional method of job boards and also 90% of them stated utilising social media for recruitment. Corporate website was also used by 80% of the respondents, while seven out of the ten respondents (70%) are still utilising the services of the recruitment agencies or head hunters. Even though perhaps the most typical traditional recruitment methods ‘Print media’ is far behind the rest of the channels (having only 20% share in terms of its usage), it has not yet disappeared completely from the spectrum of recruitment methods in the participated companies.

And since 60% of the respondents stated in questions number seventeen that recruitment agencies will never be replaced completely by any of the social recruitment channels, Doherty's (2009) claim that 'social media should and will not be used as an exclusive recruitment tool' has been supported by this finding.

IV.2.4 Findings of the overall research question and objective

According to the previous Irish survey of O'Raghallaigh (2010) and an annual global Jobvite survey (2012), LinkedIn is the organisations' first choice when it comes to social recruiting. The aim of my dissertation was to explore why a private, large, MNC would choose LinkedIn over other social media sites to use for recruitment and what these companies' perception is on LinkedIn's affect on their recruitment process. So to find the answer to the overall research question of 'What is the impact of the business networking site, LinkedIn on private, large, MNCs' recruitment process in Ireland?'

Although companies tend to consider various social media sites to use for recruitment when planning to start using this new, innovative channel to support their recruitment strategy, only 40% of the respondents had a go with Facebook, 30% of them trialled Twitter and only 10% of them considered Youtube for staffing, while all of them (100%) have started using LinkedIn. This finding entirely supports the American Jobvite survey (2012) and the Irish survey of O'Raghallaigh (2010).

The answer to the question of 'why LinkedIn was chosen over other social media sites', was found out inductively during the semi-structured interviews, when all of the interviewees confirmed that they selected LinkedIn as this is the biggest business networking site that offers a big pool of passive candidates that can be enticed in order to fill positions that appeared to be challenging to recruit for due to lack of available talent for skill-based, highly professional jobs.

Companies' expectations from LinkedIn vary; some of them have higher and some of them have lower hopes. Based on the findings of the survey, the most common objectives of having a LinkedIn account were for 60% of the participants (1) to find passive talent through direct searches and (2) to build company brand. 50% of the respondents indicated that they also aim to reduce cost, together with advertising

their jobs in this new channel where they understand to be a pool of professional talents. Only 40% of them believed that it is a good way to fill challenging positions for which even current employees' contacts can also be used. And finally only 10% of the respondents confirmed using LinkedIn to actively participate in discussions or just because that it is the new trend from where everybody else is also benefiting.

The majority of the respondents (60%) agreed that the most useful LinkedIn tool is 'performing direct search to find passive talents', while 'building company brand', 'utilising employees' contacts' and 'putting up job advertisement' were the most favourable features in only 20%, 10% and 10% (in this order) of the organisations.

The companies that participated in the survey indicated that LinkedIn in general have had a positive effect on their recruitment strategy and process, however not significantly. The length of the recruitment process (such as the time to hire a new employee) and the quality of the candidates did not change in 50% and 80% of the respondents (in this order); 70% of the participants felt it decreased the need to employ recruitment agencies to help them find the right fit for the job and 60% of the companies even saved cost since started using social media for recruitment.

As to the quantity of candidates increased in 70% of the organisations meant a positive or a negative effect for them cannot be commented on without exploring more details from these organisations, which unfortunately could not be completed in the frame of this research.

These findings cannot confirm Joos' (2008) statement that an organisation's recruitment strategy should include the way and method of how to approach the talented group of '*passive jobseekers*' in order to achieve its overall aim: by attracting their attention to the company's brand and vacancies, turning them into '*active candidates*'.

None of the interviewed companies stated that they felt the need to revise their recruitment strategy and to develop a new Internet usage policy at work. They are using this innovative tool, like any other traditional tool, with sometimes less and sometimes more success, which contravenes with Doherty's (2010) theory as well, as he claimed that the online pool of highly talented candidates can only be fully leveraged if a brand new objective of social recruitment is created which must affect the organisations' talent acquisition strategy.

Since the recruitment strategy has not been revised and changed in any of the companies, unlike Breitbarth (2011) and Clapperton (2009) recommended, the development of a set of appropriate social media policies and procedures that are aligned with the existing rules in order to keep the staff's online activities under control and to highlight the consequences of the misuse of social media at work is still missing from these companies' best practise, which may be one of the reasons why they are not able to fully exploit the benefits of this huge phenomena of social recruiting and LinkedIn.

Chapter V. - Conclusions, recommendation

This chapter starts with the presentation of the conclusions first about the research questions, aims and objectives followed by the methodology and then about the findings in comparison with the literature review. The section is closed by a list of recommendations that the researcher feels would be worth further examination in future researches.

V.1 Conclusions about the Methodology

V.1.1 Conclusion about the research questions, aims and objectives

Based on the reviewed literature, the researcher developed three sub research questions in order to be able to find the answer to the overall subject matter of ‘What is the impact of the business networking site, LinkedIn, on private, large, MNCs’ recruitment process in Ireland?’

Although the three secondary objectives were met and the collected data was sufficient enough to answer the overall question accurately, there could have been a fourth sub-question which could have had a focus on the MNCs’ policies and procedures regarding internet usage at work and how it relates to the successfulness of the social recruitment to be able to give extra value to the answer to the main question.

V.1.2 Conclusions about the Methods

- There were three purposes of the research: explanatory, descriptive and exploratory, which worked perfectly well in exploring the key issues at the start which enabled the researcher to develop a ‘Descripto-explanatory’ type of questionnaire afterwards to collect accurate data to answer the research questions.
- The applied research philosophy, approach, strategy and time horizon appeared to be the right choice for this research as they well supported the data collection methods to meet the aim and objectives of the study.
- In terms of the research choice, the researcher is convinced that using a ‘Multi-method’ research enhanced the level of confidence in findings. The only comment is that in future researches if the semi-structured interviews contain more questions to which quantitative answers are given, ‘Mixed-model research’

should be used instead of the ‘Mixed-method research’ in order to analyse the qualitative data quantitatively. In the case of this study it was not necessary, but could have been done that way too.

- In terms of data collection and analysis, the researcher’s original intention was to obtain a representative sample – through the statistical based probability sample of ‘*Simple random sampling*’ – in order to be able to make generalisations from the findings valid to the whole population. However, under the given circumstances, the non-probability, self-selection sampling method was found to be sufficient enough to apply for this multi-method research especially as – together with the analysis technique – it appeared to be fairly consistent, reliable and valid. So generalisation from the findings was made to the theory instead of the whole population.

- The researcher is aware, that although the required data was aimed to be collected from in-house HR or Recruitment professionals who work for a large, private MNC in Ireland while both the company and the person has a live page on LinkedIn and the person needed to be the researcher’s first degree connection on LinkedIn, data could flaw during data collection if for example a particular MNC utilizes the services of recruitment agencies and the given answer contained data from that source too. So in other words, if the in-house professional’s opinion was influenced by the experience of recruitment agents rather than simply relying on his/her own understanding.

However, this could not have been avoided, unless the research had had different scope which would have included recruitment agencies too; but in that case no conclusion could have been made separately on the large, private MNCs.

- With regards to the sample size, the researcher understands that a higher response rate would have increased the level of confidence and the validity of the research. Despite the researcher’s effort, due to the available short period of time and limitation in resources, the researcher felt that their work title might have hindered them from getting a higher response rate from fellow recruitment professionals who are also working for large, private MNCs in Ireland, as they might have thought that sharing confidential, strategic information regarding recruitment with a competitor recruitment professional was against their policy. Although the researcher’s work title could have been removed from their LinkedIn page or changed it to something else, these solutions, just to generate a

higher response rate for the survey, appeared to be unethical for the researcher, therefore it was dismissed.

However, despite the flaw of the response rate, since the source of this research entailed a reasonably homogenous group of thirteen HR/ Recruitment professionals (who work for one of those fifty Irish, private, large MNCs that have a LinkedIn account) from where the data was collected for this study, over twenty per cent response rate (three interviews plus ten questionnaire responses) seemed to be sufficient enough to complete the research and to get a general idea about the Irish, private, large MNCs' HR/Recruitment professionals' opinion and behaviour as well as these organisations' future plans regarding social recruiting and LinkedIn in particular. So based on these facts, the researcher believed that the reliability of the research is medium.

- About the research instruments; the use of both semi-structured interviews and a questionnaire seemed to be adequately serving the aim and the objectives of the research. As above mentioned, more questions should have been asked about the recruitment strategy to explore if there was any connection between the company's internet usage policy and the successfulness of their social recruitment, however apart from this, the length, the style, the context, the content, the form and the structure of both the semi-structure interviews and the questionnaire worked perfectly well to find the relevant data for the answers to the research objectives.

The only recommendation would be to change in question eleven in the questionnaire the starting point of the first interval from 'zero' to 'one', as only companies who have already started using LinkedIn for recruitment to fill their positions were involved in this survey; so having an option for 'zero' is meaningless.

Despite this small flaw, the researcher is convinced that the validity of this study is high as the chosen sub- and overall objectives together with the selected methodology and methods seemed to be adequately justified by the achieved result.

V.2 Conclusions about the Findings

Conclusions of the findings will be presented by objectives, starting with the sub-questions and finishing with the exclusive conclusion of the main finding.

V.2.1 Conclusion about the findings of the first sub-objective

The first research sub-objective was going to discover via which recruitment method were more vacancies filled more successfully in the last twelve months - traditional or social.

The successfulness was measured by the length and the cost of the recruitment process as well as by the retention of the new recruits for at least six months.

Although Joos (2008) claims that *“The best way to win in the ongoing search for talent is to entice those already employed elsewhere. Social media provides a means of attracting that pool of high-quality candidates”*, based on the findings of this research question it can be concluded that the majority (60%) of participants still find traditional methods to be more effective channels to locate and attract talents than social media (LinkedIn in particular). Job boards and social media seem to be equally (40% - 40%) important channels for these companies to use for recruitment however, since it has been a cultural ‘habit’ in Ireland to use recruitment agencies to find best talents, this method is still represented at some level (20%) in the asked, large, private MNCs’ every day routine.

But, it can be seen clearly that two forms of the traditional recruitment methods are disappearing from the spectrum: ‘Print media’ and ‘corporate website’ as neither of them was chosen by any of the respondents to be the most successful method for recruitment in the last twelve months.

V.2.2 Conclusion about the findings of second sub-objective

The second sub-objective was to investigate how the different components of the LinkedIn hiring strategy (such as ‘Company’, ‘Employee’, ‘Jobs’ and ‘Search’) relate to the successfulness of the social recruiting in the private, large, MNCs in Ireland. Successfulness was measured by the length and the cost of the recruitment process as well as by the retention of the new recruits for at least six months.

Although the company LinkedIn (2013 www.linkedin.com) claim that companies that use all components of their hiring strategy will gain bigger competitive

advantage and become more satisfied with LinkedIn services than those that are only using ‘Jobs’ and/or ‘Search’ functions, based on the findings it can be concluded that there is not clear correlation between the participated large, private, MNCs’ satisfaction level with LinkedIn services and their subscription type.

As 80% of the companies that participated found LinkedIn to be the most successful social recruitment tool have only basic subscription with LinkedIn, and 40% of those companies that considered Facebook to be more successful over LinkedIn have middle or the top subscription account with LinkedIn, the conclusion is that there is not clear evidence in the participated MNCs that higher LinkedIn subscription levels automatically results in enhanced success in recruitment via LinkedIn.

Regarding the contentment with LinkedIn services – as 60% of the basic LinkedIn subscription level companies claimed that LinkedIn meet their expectations either moderately or well and 100% of the top LinkedIn account holders were just satisfied with the result that they are getting out of LinkedIn, it can be concluded that a LinkedIn subscription level has no particular effect of the respondent MNCs’ satisfaction level with LinkedIn.

Therefore the large, private MNCs that use all components of the LinkedIn hiring strategy do not seem to gain bigger competitive advantage or be happier with LinkedIn services than those that only using ‘Jobs’ and/or ‘Search’ functions’. MNCs with lower subscription level can also be at least as satisfied with LinkedIn as those that have middle or top subscription levels. Or those MNCs that have the higher subscription account with LinkedIn can be as dissatisfied with LinkedIn as those that have only the basic package.

V.2.3 Conclusion about the findings of third sub-objective

The last sub-objective was to ascertain which recruitment methods are being used and planned to be used in private, large MNCs in Ireland: social media or traditional methods? The aim was to find out what the private, large, MNCs’ HR or Recruitment professionals think; social recruitment is only supplementing or rather replacing the traditional recruitment tools in private, large MNCs in Ireland?

Despite the significant setback of 'Print media' in the large, private, MNCs that participated, the majority (70%) of the respondents indicated actively using various traditional recruitment tools such as job boards, corporate website and recruitment agencies. And since 60% of the participants agreed with Doherty (2009) who claimed that 'social media should and will not be used as an exclusive recruitment tool', it can be concluded that these MNCs believe that recruitment agencies will never be replaced completely by any of the social recruitment channels.

V.2.4 Conclusion about the findings of the overall research question and objective

The overall aim and objective of this study was to explore why a private, large, MNC would choose LinkedIn over other social media sites to use for recruitment and what these MNCs' perception is on LinkedIn's affect on their recruitment process. Therefore to find the answer to the overall research question of 'What is the impact of the business networking site, LinkedIn on private, large, MNCs' recruitment process in Ireland?'

In agreement with the previous Irish survey of O'Raghallaigh (2010) and the annual, global Jobvite survey (2012), it can be concluded from the findings of this research that LinkedIn is the first choice of the private, large, MNCs' in Ireland when it comes to social recruiting as this is the biggest business networking site that offers a big pool of passive candidates that can be enticed in order to fill positions that appeared to be challenging to recruit for due to lack of available talent of that skill-based, highly professional job.

Although the overall impact of LinkedIn on the participated MNCs' recruitment strategy and process was considered to be positive due to being able to save cost on recruitment agencies' fees by using cheap social media for recruitment, since the length of the recruitment process and the quality of the candidates did not change in the majority of the respondents, drastic change was not experienced in any of the MNCs' recruitment approach.

In summary, LinkedIn just limitedly impacted the large, private, MNCs' recruitment process in Ireland. It had a good effect on the recruitment budget, as the costly services of the recruitment agencies were utilized less; however it did not have any impact of the quality of the candidates or on the length of the recruitment process. The quantity of the candidates increased, which was not established either as a good or as a bad effect.

Therefore, the participated MNCs' recruitment strategy was just slightly affected since they have started using the largest business networking site LinkedIn, and interestingly none of the interviewed organisations reported transforming their Internet/social media usage policy, which – according to the literature review – is believed to be one of the key steps to be taken in order to increase the successfulness of social recruiting.

V.3 Recommendations for future researches

1. Bigger sample size is recommended to be used in order to increase the validity and the reliability of the research.
2. If resources allow, in order to increase the likelihood of a higher response rate, it is recommended to build as large pool of first degree contacts on LinkedIn as possible and contact them either by phone or in person before sending out template e-mails and the link to the questionnaire.
3. It is recommended to find out what exactly the MNC's recruitment strategy entails and explore what changes they are planning to make to it and why with regards to social recruiting.
4. Breitbarth (2011) suggested that companies upon deciding to embrace social recruitment should develop a set of appropriate social media policies and procedures aligned with the existing rules. So future research could explore whether MNCs that have already introduced such policies are experiencing higher success rate with social recruitment than those that have not reviewed their Internet/social media usage policy and just simply ban their employees – who will mostly consist of the hyperconnected GenY in two years' time – from using it at work.

5. It would be worth looking at social recruiting from a change management point of view, as it impacts the organisations' recruitment as well as the overall business strategy in the long run the same way as any other organisational change. Managements' initial resistance and gradual cooperation once success comes are the factors that would be interesting to focus on in future studies.

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Appendices

Appendix I.

Example letter regarding the semi-structure interviews

Hi [NAME],

Thank you very much for accepting my invitation on LinkedIn to connect.

The main reason I wanted to get in touch with you is that I am on maternity leave at the moment and working on my MA dissertation.

I am researching how the usage of LinkedIn have impacted large, private MNCs' recruitment process in the last 12 months.

As part of this work, I am planning to conduct unstructured interviews with three, carefully selected companies.

I would be grateful if I could meet with you and discuss your experience in [NAME of the COMPANY] regarding LinkedIn. The interview is envisaged to last around 30 minutes and can take place anywhere and anytime that suits you.

Data collected during this interview will strictly be used for academic purposes only and won't be given to third party to use for business. I am aware of the need to treat all findings with the utmost confidentiality. No source, individual or organisational, will be identified or comment attributed without written permission of the originator.

If you wish, I will send you a copy of my finalised dissertation once it is complete.

I hope that you are able to help me and will be available to participate in my study.

If you have any questions or to arrange a suitable time and venue at your convenience, please either reply to this email or if you prefer to talk to me, please call me on 0872840277.

Thank you very much for your time reading this e-mail and taking into consideration to take part in my project.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Best Regards,

Andrea Reger

Appendix II.
Transcript of Interview I.

The Company is using LinkedIn as a recruitment channel for 1 year.

The date of the interview: 17.04.2013

Duration: 31 min 11 sec

I = Interviewer

C = The Company's Deputy Director of Personnel

I: Thank you very much for making a time to meet with me; I really appreciate your help.

C: That's no problem.

I: As I mentioned to you over the phone, I'm writing my MA dissertation on Social Media, particularly on the impact what the professional Social Media, LinkedIn has had on large, Irish multinational companies' recruitment process. As a part of this research, I'd like to go through couple of questions with you, and I'd appreciate your honest answer.

C: Sure.

I: And, as requested, yours and your company's identity will remain anonymous, that's no problem.

C: Thanks that would be great.

I: So, if you are ready, we could start.

C: Sure, go ahead.

I: So my first question would be "*Why did the organisation decide using Social Media for recruitment?*"

C: Well, we're always on the look at for new ways to recruit and we have a particular problem that we have to do things in a low cost way. So traditionally we would have very rarely used you know print, what would be considered traditional forms of recruitment advertisement, particularly print advertising, because we found

the cost prohibited and you're spending a lot of money to reach an of lot of people a very tiny fraction of whom are probably interested in jobs, in moving jobs first of all, then in your particular job. So when we started to hear about the use of social media in recruitment we realised that this was potentially the tool where you could, ermmm, be much more specific about how you spending money on targeting people with advertising or with getting touch with them about your jobs. So, it was very, the concept was very attractive to us for that reason.

I: Ok, social media altogether, or...

C: Yes, soc..., social media altogether.

I: Altogether. Ehm.

C: Altogether, yeah. Because, emm, you know, even..., hmm, because, both, well I mean the only one we looked at were LinkedIn and Facebook right,

I: Ok.

C: ... and both of those give you the opportunity to be specific about who you are targeting.

I: Ehm, ehm.

C: Eee, you know LinkedIn through specific searches and Facebook through targeted display advertising.

I: Okay, very good. And what options, eee, were taken into considerations; you mentioned now, that you looked into LinkedIn and Facebook.

C: Yeah, we looked into LinkedIn and Facebook, there, you know there wasn't any particular reason why we narrowed it down to those two, I mean LinkedIn is the obvious choice because it is the professional network, ehm, and then Facebook is, in some respect, is also an obvious choice to look at because, just because of sheer scale because it's the biggest..., social media site. Ehm, outside it we haven't looked at anything specifically. Now, we have always advertised on internet forums like 'pprune.org', ehm, which in some respects you could, you know, is an early form of social media. But not as participative, and it's more, ehm, know you it's, it's not as interactive for the users, but it's a place where, effectively a place for people to gather online.

I: Aham.

C: And that have been successful for us for recruiting pilots for many years.

I: Okay. That's for pilots. Okay. So why was LinkedIn chosen at the end over Facebook?

C: Well, we trialled Facebook before we went to LinkedIn and we had, eee, no success with it. At the time we had a problem recruiting for very specific roles which were qualified aircraft engineers in ehm, Italy, so we run a trial where we placed a recruitment ad specifically targeted, targeted at people in Italy who had, ehm, who liked aviation or liked Boeing 737. There were thousands of those people and ehm, because of the, it was, it was a low risk strategy because, because of Facebook's payment module. You're only paying when people click into the ads.

I: Aham.

C: So we knew that unless they were clicking in, we weren't going to be paying, and if they are clicking in, we'd have a good chance that eh, you know that they might come on. But in the end, we ended up with zero applicants. Right?

I: Okay.

C: But, it was very cost effective, because very few people clicked in. So that trial didn't work out for us. Ehm, and the lesson we learnt from that was probably that we expected too much from Facebook. We thought that the ability to drill down so specifically would mean that because it was so targeted, you'd have a much higher return rate from, from your ads. Like a conversion rate from people look at it to people actually apply. But I think, ehm, personally, I think the problem with Facebook is that is more social than professional.

I: Aham.

C: And I think it's, ehm, I think people like to keep those worlds separate.

I: Okay.

C: And... ehm, I think the display advertising on Facebook probably works well for things that people like to do in their spare time, like for example if they are browsing to see what their friends are doing and they get an ad up for a new film coming out they might click in to look at the trailer; ehm, but if they get an ad for, you know, for a job or work, you know I think it's less effective for that. You know?

I: Okay. Very good. And...

C: And sorry, just to add one another limitation we found with Facebook is that, ehm, we were targeting people based on things they had liked; which is not very ehm, scientific in the sense that, you know people can like anything.

I: Aha.

C: And they can put anything down. And you know, the..., it doesn't give you the ability you have on LinkedIn where you can actually look for somebody who is a Boeing 737 engineer, because that would be in their job title, in their qualifications.

In Facebook you can get somebody who's a fifteen year old student who likes aviation and likes Boeing.

I: Aham.

C: Ehm, and you could have thousands upon thousands of qualified engineers who don't, who don't like aviation on Facebook or don't like the, the Boeing. And your problem in identifying those people is almost the same as your problem in putting a newspaper ad in the national paper in Italy. You're paying on these money to reach all of these people, ehm, for whom your job ad just isn't relevant.

I: Aha. Okay. Understand. And...

C: So sorry, that's, I was getting onto why LinkedIn was specifically chosen. So, then, we had a good long look at LinkedIn and LinkedIn overcome some of those limitations, specifically because, you know the company where people work, you know their job history and you have a good idea of their qualifications.

I: Aham.

C: Ehm, in terms of what we've used LinkedIn for, ehm, sorry I should have brought the statistics with me, we have hired about ehm, nine people through LinkedIn since it started, ehm, some of those are probably people we would have come across anyway, okay, or, or, or at least come across people of the same standard, but there are definitely a few who are hired into positions that we have traditionally had a lot of difficulty recruiting for. So specialist IT positions. Principally Web development.

I: Okay.

C: Ehm, and role, role of that nature.

I: Okay.

C: And, their role traditionally we would have had to go to recruitment agencies. Yeah, now we despise the use of recruitment agencies because it doesn't fit with our business model, we're paying somebody else to do a job, that we should be well able, well able to do, but we have been forced to do it for some of those roles in recent years.

I: So, you don't use it to advertise all of your vacancies, you just use it not to go to agencies with those positions you might have difficulties with...

C: Yeah, we don't use it for every single vacancy we have as we only have a limited number of job slots, so we keep those for the ones that are most difficult to fill, and are those where we've got the best chance of getting someone from LinkedIn.

I: Okay. Okay, and it actually leads us to the next question. Are you familiar with LinkedIn talent solution and hiring strategy, what they are offering for companies?

C: Wait, that's a specific way you drill down, is that what you mean?

I: Well, that they are claiming or saying that they, there are four components of their hiring strategy; is company, employees, jobs and search.

C: Oh, sorry, I see what you mean. Yeah.

I: And you have already mentioned, sorry, in the beginning, that you wanted to use or you looked into social media to target people.

C: Yeah, yeah.

I: So you have kinda already said that that you are using it to search for people.

C: Yeah. So, we, we, we use search, ehm, and we use jobs in the sense that we have specific jobs advertised. We don't use employees and we don't do, ehm, anything significant in the way of company branding on LinkedIn.

I: Okay, and why is that?

C: Principally because it costs us more money. So it took quite a bit of convincing for us to get senior management to agree to sign off on paying for LinkedIn.

I: Okay.

C: We managed to get them do it for a basic subscription, but if I need to increase that to pay for those other elements, other components, then, ehm, I'll need to make a case for it. And in order for me to succeed in that I'm probably going to have to show that the, ehm, initial expenditure that we've made on the basic license is producing fantastic results.

I: Aham.

C: And, at the moment it's producing satisfactory results.

I: Okay.

C: Ehm...

I: And why is that, sorry?

C: Ehm, well, I'll, I'll get onto that in, in the second, but, you know we're little bit in a catch 22 situation, because LinkedIn are telling us that you would be, you know, considerable more successful if you spent more money on these things, but I have difficulty just with the nature of the company that we are, ehm, on spending that money until I see more results from what we have already. But also, behind that, ehm, you know, one of the components being 'company', they want, you know,

LinkedIn want you to spend more money on having a company page, which they say it's very important for your employer brand, which is a very trendy topic in a recruitment and in HR generally at the moment, but for us, we have a very strong employer brand, ehm, in the sense that we're very well known. So we're not a company that has to go and tell people who they are. People know who we are. Now, we a positive and a negative employer brand; in some field it's negative, in some it's very positive. So, we're finding that particularly erhm, with business professionals, we have a strong brand, brand. We're considered as a company that runs its business well, that you know, promotes from within, that ehm, and we give people good opportunities. So for things like graduates, for commercial, for HR, ehm, people will generally come to find us. We have a bit more of a difficulty with amongst I would say pilots and ehm, you know some other ehm, fields where we've had, you know unions or people in opposing airlines, you know, making lot of negative comments about us, and some of them has stock. But I'm not convinced at this stage that spending more money on LinkedIn is going to do anything significant to solve that problem. Because, you know, if you are a professional pilot, you know all about our company, and there are lots of places you can get information; from peers, you know, from, from, from other websites. And me spending money on putting a, you know, beautifully designed company page on LinkedIn that explains a number of routes we have, and how our business, you know, works, is not going to change that in any significant way, you know?

Now, the other one is advertising on the employees. And like, that, that's something that may well be scope for us to do. Eee, this is where our job ads would appear on our, the employee pages, because as LinkedIn are quick to tell you, the most common activity on LinkedIn is people viewing other people's profiles, you know? And maybe that's something we will look at in future, you know?

I: Okay, very good. Okay, you've actually answered to the next few questions.

C: Okay.

I: Erhmmm, yeah.

C: Oh, yeah.

I: Yeah, do you want to say more about what extend LinkedIn meets the company's need?

C: Yes, so...

I: Because you have just said that it is 'satisfactory'.

C: Yes, it's just been satisfactory. What I mean by that is the subscription has paid for itself, because we've had definitely recruited, erm, people, ehm, who we would've had to pay an agency to hire previously before we have LinkedIn. We worked it out that we probably saved a few thousand euro I would say, erm, but I

was hoping to achieve a bit more from LinkedIn than that. You know, we have, we have roles that are, erhm, that are difficult to fill, you know, Web developers in, in particular and it's still very hard to get those people even through LinkedIn. Ehm, so I suppose LinkedIn, yes, LinkedIn's meeting our company's need but I don't think it's fully meeting the promise or the potential of social media as a recruitment tool.

I: And why is that? What's missing?

C: Erhm.....hmmmm..... It's very hard to say. I know if it were, if LinkedIn were here they would be saying that erh, you need to invest more in it in terms of improving your company profile, and in terms of your own time. Erm, so we've, you know, internally, it's been a difficult sell in some areas and an easier sell in others. So we've had some managers who worked with us, erm, really proactively to go identifying people even without having a job advertised and some made some contact to meet people for a coffee and see, and see how they are. And then we've had other managers at the very opposite end of the spectrum who erm, who won't really participate at all. So they won't sit and do a search with you, they just think it doesn't work and it's a waste of time. So we've a bit of job to do to convince that second group, but the problem we've had is that the first group has been really proactive have only had limited results. So at the moment it's taking an of lot of time to get a limited results, and a problem we have as an organisation is that because of our lean structure and erm, a general high productivity of all of our people, there is very little time to do anything in the company. There're never enough people to do, erm, all of the work, so we have to work really hard, and we have to work really smart. And the problem is that something like proactively going and identifying candidates and seeking them out before you have a job, it's difficult to make that fit in that kind of a working environment. You know? Erm, so that's where we're having the biggest difficulty at the moment.

I: Yeah. So you've mentioned the financial situation of the company...

C: Yeah, yeah.

I: That it isn't willing to pay more money, the time that you don't have, and the human resources that you don't have enough people to do it.

C: Yeah, the time resource; it does take some time, and you know, another thing that LinkedIn have tried to convince us to do but it doesn't; we are never going to do is to participate in discussions. Eee, so you're, you're, you're building your employer brand and you're getting with touch in people by actively anticipating and making a erm, positive contributions to discussion that are not about 'we have a job in this area'. But, you know, that are, are, are sharing something with those people, but the problem with that is that we just don't have the resources to have somebody sitting there and spending a few hours or even a couple of their day reading through discussions on their areas and also erm, structurally, internally, you know, line managers will tend to see recruitment as something that the recruitment department

does, and you know, they, they, you know, they'll want to be 'spoonfed' everything. And LinkedIn really require you to flip that to the head a little bit because it actually requires them to sit down and go through the profiles to pick the people and spend time communication with them. Like for example when I talk about you know, LinkedIn saying that they'd like you participating on boards and discussions; I can't, I can't send a recruitment person to sit in and talk to, you know engineers about a fan blades in 737-800s. It would be meaningless. It would be a waste of time and a, a, the candidates would see through in a flash. You know? So that means an engineering manager would have to go there and do that. But like those people are focused on the operation and they don't see the value in, and frankly neither do I really see the value in getting them to sit there and do that, you know?

I: Okay. But actually it's against one of the main principles what LinkedIn claiming that it takes time to build up a good relationship with people who are out there.

C: Yes. Yes.

I: And that's what you don't do and you don't see that you would be doing anytime soon in the future.

C: Yeah. Correct. I think if, if I was, we were Google, erm, where, you know, you are really rely on your human talent, cause its really all your business is, I would be much more inclined to get people to spend time reaching out to the best candidates. A lot of the jobs we, I mean we, we obviously want the best people, okay, erm, but the lot of the jobs we recruit for are specific functional roles where people will either have the skills or they don't. And we need to be careful when we are recruiting that there are cultural match and that sort of thing. But that's a bit different to a company that is entirely knowledge based, like the lights of Google, even LinkedIn itself, you know. Particularly internet companies that are not producing physical products or delivering actual services to consumers, you know?

I: Okay, okay. And do you think it's gonna ever like chance or...

C: Well, I think, erm, you know, LinkedIn is massive and the biggest professional network, but I think that erm, you know there's still some areas that needs reach into, in terms of people that are out there. Erm, you know, I mean, at the moment there aren't that many pilots on it, you know, that aren't that many engineers on it, and there are lots of pilot websites where pilots go onto to have discussions or there is you know, pilot salary (...excuse me...) websites and so on and if LinkedIn could catch to all of that, then erm, you know, that might me more attractive for us or make our recruitment easier.

I: Okay.

C: So at the moment it's very professionally focused, as in erm, you know like erm, erm, particularly on the, you know, on the commercial side profession services

and so on... But erm, it's not as good on, on, you know sort of trades or manual roles like there aren't as many engineers on it and there aren't are many pilots on it, erm, also I find that personally I get a lot of contact from people who I don't know, erm, and you know, sometimes I don't mind, I might get somebody contacting me about a conference and so on, but I get a huge amount of requests from people who I have no idea who they are and even, you know I used to accept most of them and then I never heard anything from the person, so it's completely meaningless. And I think, a LinkedIn is a very difficult job to do, because it needs to find a balance between getting enough people and having them involved, and not allowing people to annoy other people, you know?

I: Yeah.

C: Because feedback actually, feedback I've got from some people and there's a correlation if you like between a manager who's negative about LinkedIn from the recruitment point of view and those who are negative about having a profile like people said that I had one but I had to delete it, or I had one but I was just getting contacted constantly, and you know, I know they can switch off the message as they get, but they don't want to put the time into that either, you know? So that's one of the flaws what LinkedIn has, that I'd like to see fixed, you know?

I: Yes, okay. Good. You have already touched this, but if you could go into a little bit more details on what was the management's and employees' perception about LinkedIn a year ago when you started?

C: Well, ehm, I mean we had to convince everybody, you know? On the employee side, we haven't really done anything with people internally, we've let it sort of grow it organically. So those who have joined, have joined and people have connected each other, but we've let, we haven't done anything to push that onto employees internally. Because we are not using the employee search, we're not paying for the job ads on the employees' pages, there is no real incentive for us to do that. So, on the management's side, all of the line managers took convincing. And we've had better results with some than others. But, I suppose it in principles has been a time issue. But just to give you an example. You know, in web developer roles in our IT department we've recently had to go to a recruitment agency to fill two roles. Ehh, because we couldn't get people, okay, we couldn't get them on LinkedIn. Now, we've tried to contacting them on LinkedIn, the recruitment department tried, and had no real success; but we couldn't get the IT department to spend any time going through profiles, erm, to contact people, because they believe it's a waste of time because they hadn't had success in the previous time.

I: Sorry, when did it happen? Just recently? Or the year ago when you started?

C: Yeah, recently, errr, both. Well, both, both really.

I: Okay, so there was no real change in terms of their attitude...

C: ... of their attitude in particular. But in others' there has been.

I: Okay.

C: But the two people that we've recently hired from an agency, we went and asked the candidates, the agency has contacted them on LinkedIn. So we're now going and paying an agency to do what, if we had spent a little bit of time doing, we could have done it ourselves, you know?

I: Aham.

C: And this goes back to people not having enough time, you know? Now LinkedIn had been reasonable helpful; like we've had a meeting with LinkedIn where they gave a presentation to some managers but we can call it a little bit heated to be honest with you, because of the level of scepticism amongst some of them, you know? Erm, so we're working hard on resolving that, but the problem we have is that we can only resolve it with results and getting results is taking a phenomenal amount of work at the moment, you know? So that's why like LinkedIn is, is just satisfactory I would say, because it's paying for itself, but not much...

I: And am I right saying that obviously those managers' attitude has changed who would, who were willing to look into this and do this on the voluntary bases?

C: Yeah, yeah. The people, who understand that are...

I: Who wanted to understand that, look into it and see and just have a go with it...

C: Yeah, yeah... You're never, you're never, I mean another problem we have is that the numbers are quite small, the volume is quite small for this company, because, because our cabin crew recruitment is all outsourced, our pilot recruitment is effectively outsourced but it is never going to be run on LinkedIn; there aren't really enough engineers, erm, on LinkedIn to meet our recruitment needs, so that's just leaves us with our head office positions. And like, we've about two hundred-fifty head office staff, so it's actually a quite small number. And that means that any individual line manager, you know, erm, we've individual line managers who could go a year or two without having to recruit anybody. So then, when they do, erm, you know, we're never going to recruit a hundred per cent of those people through LinkedIn. So they think if they spend hours on LinkedIn then end up recruiting somebody who they go through an ad on another website, then LinkedIn was a complete waste of time. But, the way we see it is, if we increasing the chances, you're never going to get everybody through that channel, but if you are increasing you chances sufficiently, it should, it should be worthwhile, you know?

I: Aham.

C: So, we still have a problem convincing those people, but those who put time into, and understand it are generally quite perceptive, you know?

I: Okay, but if I can go back what you've said that there are particular departments and jobs that you've had a problem or difficulties to fill, so my understanding is that we're talking about couple of managers who have been the same...when wanted to recruit people, so how they, what's their attitude actually been like...

C: It hasn't, it hasn't improved.

I: It hasn't improved.

C: It hasn't improved.

I: It hasn't improved at all. Okay. And is there any chance or do you see that it would improve?

C: The only way I can get it, and, ee, erm, it's one of the thing as well, like there, ...their, that..., sorry. The IT department have web developer working for them, but also the marketing department have web developers working for them, so I think the only I'm going to convince the IT department is to making work for the marketing department. They are effectively recruiting for the same roles, you know? Erm, in fairness, the head of the marketing department has put in a lot of work with us in terms of contacting candidates and, and so on, you know? But, again, because the numbers are small, it takes a while for me to get enough examples, you know? So, they've got some recruitment coming up and we're hoping that LinkedIn is going to work for that.

I: Okay. Very good, at least it's a promising situation.

C: Yeah, yeah.

I: So has LinkedIn have any effect and if yes, what kind of effect on the recruitment strategy?

C: Errrrm, well, I don't think it's changed our recruitment strategy in terms of, you know, what we want from people...,or..., it's just given us another channel to go on and find people, you know? Now, what we're well able to do is, we're spending money on 'Irishjobs', we've been able to save some money on 'Irishjobs', by getting a lower value subscription, because there are jobs we know we'll get through LinkedIn instead, you know?

I: Okay.

C: So, erm, I think it's definitely got more potential, I mean we've just renewed our subscription for another twelve months with LinkedIn, I'm happy with it; I'd like to get more out of it, erm, but it's going to take a lot of work from, from my people, you know?

I: Yeah. Okay, very good; and is there anything what you would do differently in terms of starting using social media for the first time, now?

C: Erm..., I think, I... maybe I was a little bit naive in erm..., in expecting people to be receptive to the idea. Erm... , I should have put more effort into, erm..., I suppose convincing people before, you know, before we've gotten to the stage where, where they were recruiting. So we arranged, for example, we arranged LinkedIn to come in to do a briefing to the managers, but that was only after some of the managers had had a..., you know, a very medi-awkward experience with LinkedIn, and... a..., they got off on the wrong foot with it, and now, they won't give it a chance. And one of the reasons they got off on the wrong foot with it, is because we jumped into using it without really understanding the tool properly, so for example, we were contacting lots of web developers saying, 'we have a job, are you interested?'. Okay, it was a little bit more detailed than that, but along those lines; where is, erm..., we've now learned that we need to be saying 'hi, I see you have these skills, like this could be really interesting for us; we're working on this project at the moment, we think it would be something you'd like to get your teeth into, you know, if fancy, give us a call for a quick discussion', you know? So we've learned as we progressed but the problem we have is that people have saw it in the very beginning, you know, had negative experiences and now are reluctant to devote the time to using it.

I: Okay, so there are two factors; the way how you would approach potential candidates, as now you have learned better ways, then you did it in the beginning, and the second, if I understand correctly, is that you should have had a bought-in, buy-in from the managers, so just sit down and discuss it with them before jump into signing the contract.

C: Yes, yes. ...Before..., yeah..., ... before started to use LinkedIn.

I: As a channel.

C: Yeah.

I: As a recruitment channel.

C: Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

I: Okay, very good. So overall just to summarize it, what kind of overall impact, in your opinion, aaa ..., LinkedIn has had over the last twelve months?

C: I, I, I think it's been positive on the whole, yeah, even in cases where we haven't recruited somebody through LinkedIn. You know, we've made contact with people, like in the very beginning of the, erm, contract, you know, I was doing some of the sending of Inmails, and like you do, people say to you, 'look, I'm not interested moving now, but might be in six months', and, you know if we were doing

enough with that, we build up relationships with those people, so I think it can only get better as time progresses.

I: Aham.

C: But, erm, a concern I have is erm..., erm..., you know, the more..., the better it gets, the more they are going to be able to charge.... and I'm just a bit worried that we end up relying on very heavily on their tool..., and we'll have no place to go when the jack up the price...

I: Aham.

C: Okay? You know, there is an element of the sort of network effects here where LinkedIn has become the largest professional website in the world, and it's going to, erm..., you know, it's probably going to hold that title for quite a long time, just by, because it's a default where everyone goes to... So, erm... you know, so I would be worried how much is going to cost in, in future, you know? And how, particularly for organisations like us, where, as I said, the numbers we need to, the actual volume of people we need to recruit through LinkedIn is small. Erm..., but we've got lots of employees on LinkedIn so it costs us a lot to run the employee searches, and I'm worried about spending more money on it and not getting the value out of it.

I: Although you have said many times that you have small volume of vacancies to fill, but what about the turnover? How has been the turnover?

C: Do you think...; in terms of does LinkedIn have any effect on turnover, that's what you mean?

I: No, like... you mentioned that there are 250 positions in the head office that you've had a need to recruit for, but like, what was the turnover rate, like..., like how many positions did you need to fill?

C: Well, it varies a lot by department and within that, you know, but it's somewhere around..... ten per cent...?.

I: Okay. A year?

C: Yes, a year. But some of those are jobs that you know, that where our problem is actually we've got too many candidates coming in..., you know? So like entry level positions at customer services, or even graduate positions in the HR department, like we always fill those without LinkedIn, you know? So you're probably talking about 15 to 20 jobs over the course of a year, you know?

I: Aham. Okay, great. Is there anything I didn't ask and you would like to add?

C: Erm..., no, I don't think so. I think that's it.

I: Okay. Great. Thank you very much for you time and help.

Appendix III.

Transcript of Interview II.

The Company is using LinkedIn as a recruitment channel for 3 years.

The date of the interview: 27.04.2013

Duration: 28 min 32 sec

I = Interviewer

C = The Company`s Recruitment Manager

I: Thank you very much for making a time to meet with me; I really appreciate your help.

C: No problem.

I: As I mentioned to you over the phone, I`m writing my MA dissertation on Social Media, particularly on the impact what the professional Social Media, LinkedIn has had on large, Irish multinational companies` recruitment process. As a part of this research, I`d like to go through couple of questions with you, and I`d appreciate your honest answer. And, as requested, yours and your company`s identity will remain anonymous, that`s no problem. So, if you are ready, we could start.

C: Sure.

I: So *“Why did the organisation decide using Social Media for recruitment?”*

C: Well mainly..., for the first reason would be aaa maintain brand awareness, to ensure that the company is represented in social media sites like Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn. And LinkedIn like has gonna go wider kinda like range so like, like more and more are using it specially in Ireland, aaa and then a number two ...

I: Sorry, and why social media? Because I guess that the organisation used traditional recruitment methods before and why did they decide that they should use social media for recruitment? Because, I understand that they wanted to improve the company brand and awareness; but why for recruitment?

C: Yeah, yeah. For recruitment it's more like.... you know, for like IT, sales, highly professional people, multilingual roles, and most of them wouldn't apply to job applications. So let's say if I post an ad, a job on jobs.ie, I probably get like one application a week, which is absolute nothing, but more and more people would be using LinkedIn for..., to look for a job basically and our main focus is direct sourcing and the searching area, so that's the main reason that like these professional, who we are targeting, would be present on LinkedIn but they wouldn't necessarily be actively looking for a work, so our focus is on approaching passive candidates rather than actively, active candidates....

I: Okay. So if I may just summarise what you have just said, that you started using social media because you believed that you would be able to reach those people who wouldn't necessarily apply themselves for positions that you advertised in the print, traditional methods. And you thought that that's a great opportunity to find them.

C: Yes, yes, exactly. And also to reach out for professionals that not are actively seeking employment really; so to get passive candidates. It's easier for us as well, because if someone is actively looking, will be interviewing, and like with all of our competitors, and we know what our weaknesses and strengths are, one of our weaknesses we are facing that our basic salary might not be as high as our competitors, so we often lose actively seeking candidates, while if it's a passive candidate, we can like, you know, we can sell the company based on development, training, and so on...

I: Okay, very good, and when first social media came into the picture that you could use as one of the recruitment methods, what options were taken into consideration?

C: What do you mean, sorry?

I: Like social media, obviously consists of different channels, if I may say that, like LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter....

C: So why LinkedIn basically?

I: No, what options were taken into consideration?

C: Okay, okay. Well, social media we were thinking about, well obviously we were thinking all website like the corporate website, but Twitter wasn't really an option to be honest because Twitter is more about, Twitter is more kinda like a personal use, a bit more like aaaa Facebook, where people tweet, it's good for a HR, recruitment team to be on Twitter and actively use it, but again, it's more about brand awareness, we've never found Twitter good sourcing technique, and purely because you can search for people but anybody can say anything on Twitter, so it's not really professional.

I: Have you tried that?

C: We have, but we haven't really got like any... like we got a few people in but we actually never made any replacement out of Twitter, so it's not a real good...

I: Okay.

C: Facebook, it's a bit more like aaa... it's good to have a Facebook page, but again, there is absolutely no candidates, and those candidates who would like a Facebook page, would be again actively seeking work and they will be interviewing absolutely everywhere, so it's difficult for us to reach out for them... And, or some of them would be totally desperate...

I: Have you trialled it?

C: Yes, we have, we have. But it wasn't so successful to be honest with you, and some people were just like literally desperate to find a job and even though they don't have any qualification, just get many phone calls, just really not professional candidates who we wanted...

I: So had a quantity but not the quality...

C: Not the quality, yeah, yeah exactly... Erm... so Twitter, Facebook, weren't really, we've tried them but weren't big successes, erm... LinkedIn, we've found it kinda the only professional networking website that's really used everywhere. Erm..., and also we were advised by agencies, 'cause like obviously we opened some of our job with recruitment agencies, and I always asked them what channels they use for recruitment and most of them just say 'LinkedIn' for direct sourcing and for the higher professional also... While for example like a junior IT sales person can apply on Facebook or Twitter, like I would never be able to find a third level sales manager on Facebook, because I just wouldn't; most of them are so like hired in a positions that wouldn't even be on those channels, so they are only like available on LinkedIn. So that's why it came up. I don't, I can't remember like any other websites, I think, there is like 'chambers.com', we also use 'Xing', but Xing is only for Germans really, erm...

I: 'Plaxo'? I think that is for France...

C: Not really used that to be honest, French candidates all came through via LinkedIn or direct applications.

I: Okay. And was there any particular order in which you've tried these channels or you tried them at once and you just actually left Facebook and Twitter behind?

C: It's a good question, I can't remember ... I think what happened was, our recruitment/HR team got together for a little bit of a brainstorming about all of the social media channels, and then some people, it kinda divided upto tasks, there was one person looking after Twitter, the other one Facebook, and LinkedIn kinda

everybody did; ...aaa LinkedIn is huge, it's really widely used in Ireland for resourcing, so those people that reported back, who looked after LinkedIn, sorry, Twitter, and the other social media channels, they just didn't have any results really, so like we had a weekly meeting, and like does all the matrix, and just like their submittals were pretty much zero; or even when there was any like CV they weren't much use, so...

I: Okay, very good. And, what do you use LinkedIn for? Sorry, before this, why was LinkedIn chosen as a new recruitment channel?

C: For the same reasons really, so because like we've had tried other social media channels, and that didn't really work for us, so we've just found for our roles..., like maybe for like, I don't know, maybe for retail or... Facebook could be a great option, because a lot of young would go or even like I don't know, a small, a small, like a Sky would hire young professionals telesales people, maybe, yeah, perfect, but not for, not for our roles really. So, the same reasons what I said why we've tried other channels but didn't seem to work, so we've just decided to go with LinkedIn.

I: LinkedIn left basically.

C: Yeah, pretty much, yes.

I: So what do you use LinkedIn for then?

C: What do we use LinkedIn for? Mainly for direct sourcing but like there is obviously like I'd be on its presents and we have like regular information like we have a company set up there's a like all the event stuff we have on, like acquisitions, or if there is any news or anything new that I'd be tried on like so we constantly updated, so the company's on it, our employees are on it as well but they are not forced to be on it, it's their choice if they want to be on it or not, to be honest like 99% of them would be on it.

I: Alright.

C: Number one, because most of them are in sales so it helps their job as well, erm... to be on LinkedIn so they can reach out to different clients; and number two, for their own development as well, so if they want to be contacted by another..., obviously it's not good for us, but for their own reasons as well. So most of them would be on it.

I: Aham. And may I ask that whether their profile page is regulated by any way by the company, or uniformized?

C: No, it's not.

I: Okay, so it's completely up to them. And is the company controlling the content of the employees' page by any way?

C: No, there's no monitoring system at the moment, no.

I: Okay, okay. Are you planning to introduce one, or you think it's necessary at all?

C: Maybe, yeah, yeah... but to honest it has never come up before as it hasn't been like any issues, plus like on LinkedIn you cannot really lie too much... although we do random checks but it's definitely something we should improve on...

I: Sorry, just in brackets, do you have any policy by the way in relation to the usage of LinkedIn?

C: LinkedIn? No, actually we haven't got any.

I: Okay, that's fine, thank you. So what about the 'jobs'? Are you advertising your jobs on LinkedIn?

C: Obviously are advertising our jobs on LinkedIn as well, so people can apply directly, but our roles are on the corporate website as well, so if a person decides to apply for a job with us, most of them would to our website directly, so the 'jobs' section for us on LinkedIn is not really useful for us. But we still use it because we are getting candidates but not high volume and the main one would be direct sourcing so searches, x-ray searches, Boolean searches and Google, direct sourcing...

I: Okay. And just completely subjectively, what do you think of these components..., like these four different hiring strategy elements? What do you think, which is the most valuable?

C: Within LinkedIn?

I: Yes.

C: Out of these four?

I: Yes.

C: Direct sourcing.

I: Okay, and you happy with that as it's working for you.

C: Yes, hundred per cent, definitely. There is a couple of applications; there is a guys in LinkedIn who looks after social talent in LinkedIn; actually I got my in-house recruiters to sign up; there is a couple of really, really good searching techniques on their website, LinkedIn, but it's not just about LinkedIn, but like in general as well as on LinkedIn, I've found that really, really useful, so for us, direct sourcing would be the biggest.

I: Okay, okay. Well, are you happy with the result what you are getting from LinkedIn? Would you agree that the money is well spent and you get the expected return for the investment?

C: Definitely, definitely, hundred per cent. We get the budget at the beginning of the month that includes all recruitment channels, sourcing companies, job boards...; as per LinkedIn definitely, because, as according to our matrix and the track of our replacements, not only for us, but we have a very good relationship with our like external recruiters, the agencies, and we keep a track of their placements as well, where those candidates were sourced from, and the amount of people that were found on LinkedIn and the amount of hires, the actual hires via LinkedIn is actually growing.

I: Very good. If there was a way to pay more and get higher level service out from, out of LinkedIn, would you go for it?

C: I would, definitely. I'd like to see what benefits it would bring, because currently we have upgraded the level where our recruiters working really well, but if there is any new techniques that maybe LinkedIn was able to merge couple of searches together, so let's say merge jobs.is candidates together with monster.ie; since we have an account with these all, if there was an option for that, yes, definitely, 'cause it would just make our life easier.

I: Okay, okay, very good. And actually you have kind of partially answered to my next question, to what extent LinkedIn meets the company's needs?

C: No, yeah, really well, absolutely hundred per cent. Initially, like we had our doubts, so you know, as every single new technique and method, you just kinda, you can't really just come in and have a big, huge expectations.., so we did have our doubts as well in the first couple of weeks, it was a little bit kinda slow, because a lot of people even though they are on LinkedIn, they wouldn't be too responsive, so some of them only looked at their LinkedIn profile once a week or every second day or so, as oppose to an active candidate who's constantly on their phones and e-mails, for like checking those companies that have rang them, but, no, definitely, I must say the last couple of years have definitely improved, and I can definitely say, it meets our needs.

I: Very good. Although you have mentioned that you would welcome if LinkedIn had a search engine that would include all data from other job boards too, is there anything else, that you think is missing from LinkedIn's service and you want them to improve on?

C: Yeah, I think, what I have already mentioned there are different searches which would be great to merge, but I am sure it would have some legal aspects of it as well; but as we use different job boards' services; if we could get all these candidates on a same place, that would be absolutely brilliant. Or if there would be a way, for

example when we post our jobs, like we just get an e-mail from them directly, but if there was a way to keep them in a kinda like of database, like monster.ie for example or jobs.ie, there is a way to keep them in one particular way and just have them on the cloud rather than us having to save all these CVs and manage heavy... erm, keep a track of our candidates...; if LinkedIn was able to do that under their internal database, that would be huge help. And keep a track of, like people's mobile number, email-addresses; the problem is like that all the passive candidates we keep a track of, like we save on our files is that they get new mobile numbers, contact details, so if there was a way that LinkedIn had like a database of them, that would constantly update their contact details, so it would make life easier as well, I think. But I am really happy with their services as it is, at the moment.

I: Okay, very good. For how long actually the company has been using LinkedIn?

C: In the last three years.

I: Three years, alright.

C: Erm... over..., just about, over three years. Initially it was more about us, like you know just to be present you know, if somebody wants to see details about us, but obviously we started using it for direct sourcing... yeah, over three years.

I: Okay, very good. And if you can remember what was the initial reaction of the management and the employees when LinkedIn was first introduced?

C: Hmm, well most of our employees would have used LinkedIn before, the managers, the hiring managers..., to be honest like we were quite lucky, because like our team really gets like free hands, so we, if we decide to get into something, than it's really up to us, so like they are quite flexible, which is really good, but initially they didn't really, I didn't really know too much about it so didn't know whether it would work or not, but it's like with everything, every single thing else as well; obviously like initially like monster.ie wasn't a big thing either, but over a couple of years like it grew big, erm... so there wasn't much expectations at the beginning, and they didn't know too much about LinkedIn either, erm... but to be honest as I said like we basically just got our budget and we did whatever we wanted to do with it, that's it.

I: Erm.. and I don't know whether you remember because as you said it was three years ago when you started using it, but how long did it take to..., for them to change their perception and maybe get a little bit less resistant and more open about it?

C: When we started making placements... So yeah, a couple of months, because obviously like the recruitment process for our company is like quite long, so it could be anywhere is between three weeks to even three months by the time the hire is done, but like obviously we have updated our sales managers and all the hiring managers about the replacements and where they were sourced from, and once they saw the amount of people sourced from LinkedIn was growing, obviously they

were... started like, they actually started looking themselves, some the hiring managers after like a year or so, came down to us and with a list of people they have found on LinkedIn with our competitor and they wanted us to reach them, to contact them, so it's definitely changed and we see a big improvement as well.

I: Okay. Do you actually still have anybody who is still resistant a little bit or sceptical about it? Or everybody is onboard now.?.

C: Hm...Everybody should be on board, yeah, yeah, yeah. Most hiring managers don't really.., to be honest, more hiring managers don't really care where we get the people from as long as we get them and they start in time, and they stay for couple of years as well...

I: But what you have said that they are also helping you by actively doing the search themselves...

C: Absolutely, hundred per cent. Yes, exactly, exactly. Erm... the only thing though is for example, I give you an example okay?

I: Sure.

C: Two weeks ago one of the hiring managers came over to me with a list of people who works for our competitor, well, everybody know that this competitor of ours would be paying the IT sales professionals much higher salary so their benefits and package is much bigger than ours, what we can offer, the only kinda selling point we are trying to push is training and development because that's a big strength what's what our company said, but so like hiring managers have an expectations that if they give us a name of the person on LinkedIn, we can hire them, but it doesn't work that way, you know, so we still need to contact those, and sell us to them and to make sure that they are interested and also whether they would be happy with the money as well. You know yourself, if you're, if you're on forty k at the moment, you not gonna choose a job that pays 35 just because the training is better, you know? So it's, this is the only kinda difficulty we see at the moment that their expectations is a little bit higher around LinkedIn and around us as well and the candidates are tricked in; whatever they give us should be just hired straight away because they are coming from our competitors, but it doesn't work that way, so that's the only challenge with our hiring managers that we are facing at the moment.

I: Okay, very good. Erm...how did LinkedIn affect the recruitment strategy or how it has been affecting the recruitment strategy over the last three years?

C: Erm.. obviously there is like budgetary elements of it, so we like had to make sure that we have enough budget to use LinkedIn, and have an upgraded site for all the recruiters, erm.. that amount we need to take off from smaller job boards, so for example, erm... I think, I don't know if you remember, there was a website called 'lodzajobs', erm.. like five-ten years ago they were brilliant, but we just didn't get

much out of them in the last couple of years, so we just had to cut, cut them out, erm... what else...?...

I: In terms of the recruitment strategy, which is very good what you have just said, but for example, erm... have you changed anything over the last three years; have you learnt from initial mistakes, what I mean by this is, that do you get in touch with people differently now than you did three years ago when you started off? Or has anything changed like how you contact them?

C: Yeah, actually, that's a good point, that's a really good point; because like most of the hires that would have done still on the LinkedIn contact or connections, erm... like for example like in the past like five years ago when we just found somebody over monster.ie or something, we wouldn't keep in touch with them. Replacement done, sorted, thank you. Now, at the moment, it's a bit more, kinda like networking. As per the recruitment strategy is more kinda a bit like kinda online and more about social media and more about thinking outside the box... erm.. the strategy kinda changed about like getting more searches, as I said I signed all those guys up to socialtalent.com, to learn all those different resourcing techniques...

I: Okay. And for example has the initial introduction letter's wording, the content changed over the last three years, so you still use the same initial "hi" template letter what you used three years ago?

C: Oh, letters... well, we are constantly changing it to be honest with you, and I kinda give free hands to the guys as well, so like what we do is we have a couple of templates but we can't be just sending the same thing because if you think about a lot of the professionals would be colleagues, friend or they know each other and people talk, let's say for example if I approached you on LinkedIn and I happen to approach your partner on LinkedIn for the same thing, and then you go home and have a chat about it and have a look at your emails 'oh, it's exactly the same word by word', it's just be like, it's not really professional; sooo, like we do have a couple of templates, but we tend... we use the main points of it but we always keep it and trying to be more creative...so, couple of years ago we would have had like 'are you interested in moving jobs...' or something like this, really generic, but at the moment like I see some of the guys just sent something like literally just one line there 'Can I tempt you away from your current employer?' and just 'Thanks' and signature, whatever the recruiter's name is... Which I find really good, because it's literally quick, there's not much of a waffling, so if somebody is interested then they do reply, so really like, hm... there's not too much template what used to be, so it's more kinda like flexible...

I: Okay, interesting...very good. And if you started using social media for a first time just now, what would you do differently?

C: Erm... I would be probably doing a little bit more research, I would be speaking to different companies or maybe kinda a little bit more like with recruitment agencies as well as they are a bit more like upto date with the different techniques and social

media channels and because, as we said when we were talking about Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, we literally had no idea, like no background, research on how effective they could be; we just happened to be lucky with LinkedIn that directly works, but we didn't talk to any other HR professionals or any other companies that are hiring, not just with our competitors because obviously they wouldn't talk to us, but like, you know I could have easily approach any other like banks that were hiring, or any companies that were hiring and just chat with their HR professional or recruiters what they found useful; or maybe would have gone to couple of more erm... business events around that, 'cause there is constantly stuff about social media, so, erm... we would probably reach out a little bit more to professionals who have been using..., and they are kinda social media experts, let's put it that way...

I: And do you think recruitment agencies would be willing to talk to you and tell you their experience? Do you think that they would treat you as their competitors because now you're able to do it yourself...?

C: Yeah... I know what you mean; I know what you mean... but the thing is, that we have ten agencies in our PSL, Tier I and Tier II; and Tier I there is 4 agencies and Tier II, there is 6, so their competition with each other is so huge, so that they literally is willing to do pretty much everything just to... no seriously, like... I know it sounds a little bit funny, and sometimes we feel a little bit cheeky asking them, how they've found candidates, but under Tier one recruitment agencies we have 3 big ones, we have a really like strong relationship with them, we meet like in a regular basis, and they are more than willing to help us as well. So it's more like a kind of partnership, as opposed to just a vendor... so they are willing to help us...

I: Okay, and... in your personal opinion, do you think social media or LinkedIn itself will ever replace agencies or more like complement it?

C: No, I think, it will be just a part of it, because there'll be still kinda like type of people who wouldn't be necessarily on LinkedIn; I don't think I could replace the, the normal, normal..., kinda like the general, traditional way of recruitment... I really don't think so, because still like, we do that with a lot of direct applications, because there a lot of people that want to work for our company, and just kinda like looking for 'A' job, but 'THE' job, erm... job.is, monster.ie, are still getting a lot of applications and still making a lot of replacements as well, so I don't think it's replacing the traditional methods, and I don't think it will be based on 100 per cent on that area and I don't think, recruitment should be based any, just one particular area, because you can easily fall down, it let's say server goes down, or LinkedIn goes out of business and you left with nothing, so you can't just totally..., you need to stand on more than one leg..., if you know what I mean, so I think it's important to use other channels as well, but this stuff is growing and it's been really helpful for us...

I: Very good, very good, thank you. Just one more question; how many positions can your company advertise at the same time on LinkedIn?

C: We're subscribed for the unlimited job slots with LinkedIn. We had the budget for it and we decided to go for this level, because we have numerous positions on all different languages with all different number of years' experience we are looking for and we also tend to change our job specs as well, so it's important to have like different things...

I: That's great, thank you. Is there anything I haven't asked and you'd like to tell me?

C: Erm... about LinkedIn... no, I think we've pretty much covered everything, but as I said like, I think, it depends on the company as well, so for us, it really works well, because we're reaching out to passive candidates; highly professional people wouldn't be necessarily active candidates, who are actively seeking employment... whatever, but it wouldn't necessarily work for every single company...so like if I was a retailer, and I would just kinda like looking for a sales assistant, it would not help me, if I was looking to hire nurses, probably wouldn't help me either, there is different channels to reach out to them, so it really depends on the company itself, but for us it's been very useful, and as I said before, like our highlight would be the direct sourcing and the x-ray searches. And also we just need to make sure that like you're always kept up to date, because LinkedIn keep changing their profile as well, there's lot of new things, and you know sometimes, we go into work on a Monday, and 'oh god, what's on that up again?' so you just need to make sure that you keep yourself constantly about it... that's really it...

I: Thank you very much for your time and help, much appreciated.

C: No problem.

Appendix IV.
Transcript of Interview III.

The Company is using LinkedIn as a recruitment channel for 1 week.

The date of the interview: 30.04.2013

Duration: 17 min 56 sec

I = Interviewer

C = The Company`s Head of Recruitment

I: Thank you very much for making a time to meet with me; I really appreciate your help.

C: That`s okay.

I: As I mentioned to you over the phone, I`m writing my MA dissertation on Social Media, particularly on the impact what the professional Social Media, LinkedIn has had on large, Irish multinational companies` recruitment process. As a part of this research, I`d like to go through couple of questions with you, and I`d appreciate your honest answer. And, as requested, yours and your company`s identity will remain anonymous, that`s no problem. So, if you are ready, we could start.

C: Okay, no problem.

I: So *“Why did the organisation decide using Social Media for recruitment?”*

C: We are, as I mentioned earlier, we`re at the infant stage of recruitment, sorry, no, err..., we have recruited and recruiting all of the time, but we`re at the infant stage of using social media mediums for recruitment. Erm... my main reason to use social media would be to reduce our recruitment agency or search firm costs.

I: Aham. Ok, so that was the main reason why you have started look into it. Okay. Err, what kind of options was taken into considerations when first social media came into the picture as an opportunity?

C: Well, hmmm, LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook I guess, but LinkedIn seems to be the main opportunity, because that`s where business people want to connect with each other, whereas the other two mediums are used more socially.

I: Okay. Have you tried any other social media like Twitter and Facebook, or just went straight to LinkedIn.

C: No. Straight to LinkedIn.

I: Okay. So you have considered, but you haven't had a go with it.

C: Exactly.

I: Perfect. Erhm..., so what do you use LinkedIn for?

C: So as I mentioned briefly, we're only at the initial stages; our intention would be using LinkedIn to allow us to broaden our talent pool.

I: Aham. Okay. How long have you been using LinkedIn now, at this stage? Few months?

C: We've, no, we've only started; as mentioned, a number of the number have gone on a training last week, so we're really at the infant stage.

I: Okay. So a few weeks, really.

C: That's all.

I: That's all. Okay. Erm, I don't know whether you could share this information with me, that what kind of subscription level you have with LinkedIn, which I mean by that, how many positions for example you can advertise at the same time on LinkedIn?

C: Erm..., we haven't used, we've used, we have subscription with jobs.ie...

I: Okay,

C: We haven't gone to a corporate membership on LinkedIn yet, because we're only understanding the technology...

I: Okay.

C: So we haven't purchased anything beyond what we know we can access.

I: Okay.

C: But I do understand that there are different levels of subscriptions. And I would expect the cost to be the main drive when in deciding which level of subscription we decide to take... erm, taken into account everything else.

I: Okay. As you mentioned, you are well familiar with LinkedIn talent solution and hiring strategy. Just very briefly, these are the 'company', 'employees', 'job' and 'search'. 'Company' is the company website, or, or site or profile page on LinkedIn. 'Employees' is obviously all the employees who should or would have their own

personal profile on the, on LinkedIn; 'Jobs' would be obviously advertising jobs on LinkedIn; and 'Search' is doing direct search yourself when you'd like to headhunt someone, you're using this technique.

C: Yes.

I: So if you could just summarise to me please what do you use, or what you are planning to use?

C: We're planning and using it for job search. So actually use it as a search engine to recruit talent from other organisations. Now, that's a cultural shift from us, erm, we don't even know what the candidate base would be like, because they may resist being contacted direct from a company, a mean the culture in Ireland is to use search firms or agencies. So again, we're very much at the infant stage, we're at the research stage, we made..., LinkedIn may not be for us, if we don't actually get some results where people maybe perhaps don't like us being, us contacting them directly.

I: Okay.

C: So we're still..., very much at the, at the initial stages.

I: Aham. May I just please summarise what I understood what you were or have been doing here in the company, so you have been using recruitment agencies to fill you positions...

C: Yes, yes.

I: And now, you have started looking into other channels,..

C: Other solutions, yes.

I: ...to maybe replace recruitment agencies in order to reduce your recruitment cost? Or what was the main reason?

C: That's exactly it.

I: Okay.

C: That's exactly it.

I: That's exactly. Okay. And at the moment, if I understand you correctly, you are not convinced whether or not that's going to be erm... working for you in terms of reducing the cost and still getting the talent, the right talent for you.

C: That's a hundred per cent right, yes.

I: Okay. Very good, very good. And if I may ask that obviously what was the timeline, did you get yourself any, you know any time or, or what did LinkedIn suggest you that you should do?

C: I think maybe six to twelve months.

I: Six to twelve months.

C: Depending on the different recruitment campaigns that we have and that's depending on the activity because I don't think that you can do this on the short space of time, erm, I do think it links to the specialisms, some areas where we recruit for may very well, erm, we may very well get good erm... candidates through LinkedIn, but other areas we may not. So that's still to be tested. I mean we recruit, because we are financial institution, we recruit all financial services roles from IT, HR, marketing, banking, erm... front line staff, call centre staff, er... customer service advisor staff in Blanchardstown and Swords, right across the board, erm..., so as I suggest, LinkedIn maybe a tool for some areas, but it may not be for all roles. And our, maybe our current medium, I mean we don't use searching firms or search agencies for particular roles for example customer service advisors in the Blanchard's call centres because we find, when we put an advertisement up on jobs.ie, and on our own website, we can actually get a good number of applications. So I would expect that we would use LinkedIn for more specialised role.

I: Okay. Like IT roles?

C: Like IT, marketing, credit, risk analyst, financial roles, just the areas that need specialism.

I: And how many positions you think that you should or you could fill like a year via LinkedIn? In the next year...

C: Via LinkedIn, I would be expected; we would be targeting to fill all of our positions that are specialising, those specialised areas, so not the lower level customer service advisors, but the others.

I: How many positions we are talking about roughly like, twenty, fifty?

C: We've gone through a full restructure, so we have over two hundred vacancies at the moment, which is huge numbers of which at least half of them are specialised.

I: Okay.

C: So for example, we are currently recruiting thirty risk analysts, aaa...we have a number of, we have to recruit about twenty IT staff, so the numbers are reasonable size, for the, for our organisation, so circa a hundred I would suggest each year, but to get a hundred you know yourself, you multiply that by five to get the candidate pool, so you probably talking about looking, searching about five hundred, if not more.

I: Aham. Understand.

C: Depending on the job.

I: Okay, okay, good. Aaa... if I may just go back here and I would be interested in your personal opinion...

C: Okay.

I: Erm... I assume that LinkedIn explained to you these four different elements of their hiring strategy. What's your personal opinion that which one you think that would be the most beneficial or useful for a company or any organisation really who is using LinkedIn services?

C: Which, which service?

I: Yeah, like 'company', 'employees', 'jobs' and 'direct search'.

C: Erm... I'm not sure with the level of use of the 'company' and the 'employee', because it's a personal thing to be, to be part of LinkedIn and definitely all or our colleagues, all of our staff are not on LinkedIn. And it's a personal choice and none of us would be in the position where we would actually advocate that all our staff should be on LinkedIn, so therefore I don't think, it's gonna be a choice for us; erm..., so it's really how we best use it, and the tools that I think we would use would be the 'jobs'.

I: Aham, aham, aham. Direct search?

C: Direct search.

I: So searching for people? Because 'jobs' is putting an advertisement on LinkedIn like you did on job boards...

C: Yes, yes...

I: So both really.... advertising a job and doing direct search...

C: Yes, because the advertising maybe easier, it's kinda using pull as oppose to push, whereas if we go out to direct call almost into an organisation that's a complete cultural shift for us because we are not a search agency, we are not a recruitment agency, you know, so I think the easier option will be to advertise, but if we don't get any kind of appetite around that, we may have go direct search.

I: Are you advertising any positions at the moment?

C: Not through LinkedIn.

I: Not through LinkedIn.

C: Yeah. Yes, we have vacancies advertised at the moment, but not through LinkedIn.

I: Not through LinkedIn.

C: Because we've only went onboard last week.

I: And you are not planning to do it just yet?

C: If we think..., we will in the next couple of months, if we think it's a good tool, yeah.

I: Okay. And how many positions you think you, you will be or should be able to advertise at the same time like if you have around hundred positions that you need to fill...

C: Well, erm..., we can advertise, the subscription we have on the jobsite, it would be eight jobs at the time, so I would imagine it won't be any more than that, eight to ten I would suggest. Erm..., that's probably gonna be it.

I: Okay, very good. Erm..., okay, I understood and you have mentioned that in the very beginning but what is your personal feel, to what extend will LinkedIn meet this company's expectations in terms of recruitment?

C: I'd be very hopeful; I would suggest seventy-eighty per cent successful. I would be very hopeful.

I: Okay, okay. Erm... as long as you can tell at this stage, what do you think is missing from LinkedIn service, what you would welcome if they offered to you?

C: It's too early yet, really, erm.. I don't know what the search tool is like, and if are they good at matching skill sets too, erm.. jobs, so I mean we probably will have to do a lot of work, so my recruitment team will have to do a lot of the work, whereas if LinkedIn was, if there was an added piece of technology that match to our job match based on us providing a role profile and LinkedIn is taking particular skills and matching them, that might be, but maybe it has that; I don't know because as I was saying, we are very much at the infant stage, so we need to know, but we don't know, what we don't know as of yet.

I: Sure, understood. Okay. Have you done by the way any benchmarking before you signed up with LinkedIn that just asking around what other companies are doing or what they are experiencing with LinkedIn?

C: Erm... no, we are in number of networks, we have a new person, who's just joined the team, who's used LinkedIn previously, so it's really hearsay at this stage.

I: Okay, okay, very good, thank you. Erm... again, back to the main point that you are at the early stage, but I don't know whether, erm... okay, let's start from the..., here..., that... could you please tell me what was the management's and the employees' initial reaction when they first heard about LinkedIn and that the company's plan that you would use LinkedIn for recruitment.

C: I think they would actually say ‘well done, you are getting them at the times’, because it is the future, using social media is the future, so I think yeah, cause any other initiatives that we have seemed to be progressive they have welcomed.

I: Okay. So are you expecting the managers to be a partner in this new project?....

C: Yes, yes.

I: ...in which they would fully incorporate with you? Okay, very good. Erm.. by the way, did you get this feedback after the training as well, were they positive after the training or what...

C: Very positive.

I: ...what feedback did you receive from them?

C: Very positive. Erm... so, they can see the opportunity, we just need to give it a time, I guess...

I: Okay, any criticism you might received from them?

C: Er..., no, not yet.

I: Not yet, okay, okay, very good. Has anybody actually found..., or filled any positions via LinkedIn in any department or any managers?

C: Er... no, but my experience with the new person to the team who has used LinkedIn previously in her previous role, so that’s why my expectation within this company, at this point of time, no, because we’ve only, we’re only at the beginning.

I: Okay, okay, very good. Erm... How do you think it would affect your recruitment strategy?

C: Hmmmm, phhhh..., it should reduce our overall costs, ahm... and that at the end of the day will aligning us to the business, because the business agenda is to reduce costs across the board, so we would be aligned and if we can use LinkedIn and we can prove that we can reduce our recruitment costs by using LinkedIn, than it will be successful.

I: Okay, very good. Alright, is there anything I haven’t asked and you would like to tell me about LinkedIn and Social media in general?

C: No, I think it would be very interesting to re-visit it in about six to twelve months time and to see how successful it has been, erm... and see how successful we have been,...erm, because if we find that we are spending a lot of time and no results, than I have to re-evaluate the situation and, and, and perhaps it won’t be a solution for us. So at this stage, it’s very early stage... I would imagine a lot of organisations are like us, but maybe not...

I: Well, I have spoken with LinkedIn, one of the representatives and he was trying to convince me or actually that was obviously LinkedIn's opinion that company's must go for the 'company' brand-building point first, so they are convinced that they try to pursue everybody that unless you have a strong company brand, errr, it's gonna be very difficult to fill the positions via direct search and job advertisement only, and what they were explaining to me was that the steps they would suggest any company to take would be first to build a company page, encouraging employees to have a professional page on LinkedIn which could or could not be overlooked by the company and once these two steps are done then go for direct search or a job advertisement. What... like so far as long as I, you know, I am aware or I have spoken with companies or people, that's not really happening this way... People tend to go first to do direct search or put up job advertisements.

C: Yes.

I: So, I don't know whether you have heard LinkedIn's opinion about it, what do you think of it? Would you agree or disagree with it?

C: I would imagine that they share that with the members of the team that went to the training last week. Erm, and I would suggest that the jury is out for us because we don't, we haven't used it yet, and I just think to get the buy-in, I do see merit in using the company brand, the company name, erhm...and having a page...; I don't know about the middle piece where you have all staff encouraging all of your staff to, and certainly not forcing; it wouldn't work for us. The easy one I suppose is the direct search.

I: Okay, okay. And just one last question if you don't mind, in the future, erm... what would you anticipate; do you think social media will replace or just complement traditional recruitment methods?

C: It won't replace it.

I: Ok, it won't replace it.

C: It should complement it, the search part of it. It can't replace the actual competency based interview, the aptitude testing; that part of selection...

I: Not the selection, the recruitment part, finding talents...

C: So the searching part.?

I: The searching part, yeah.

C: It will support it and I think it going back to my earlier point about the different roles; one size won't necessarily fit all...

I: Okay.

C: And until such time as every as, as the candidate base are all on social media and I would expect, that's not that far away, because the up and coming generations are the current teenagers, who are going to be the future, people, the future candidates and this is what they would expect to get the job. But at the moment, when people are moving around they expect to get a job through a search firm.

I: Aham.

C: So, through a search agency... that's why we're using agencies at the moment, that's where the mindset is, and I know myself personally if I was moving, I would go to a search agency and get them and sit down with them and look for jobs I wouldn't myself put myself up on LinkedIn and I wouldn't chase jobs on LinkedIn, so I would imagine..., and if I was approached by LinkedIn another company, I think I would handle it with precautions, but that's me personally, but I do expect that the next generations, so as I said, the current teenagers, erm, are current sort of seventeen, college going people I think that they would expect that social..., if it works with them... and if does, but it would need to have a positive impact, I mean it must have some results, and I would expect that if people have been successful for the first time, than they will be open to it, but if they have a bad experience; it's all about candidate experience at the end of the day...if it's a bad experience, than they won't, they won't use it, and the other thing is that can't lose side on that that not everybody uses social media, not everybody signed up to LinkedIn, not everybody is on Facebook or Twitter or whatever, so therefore you are reducing your candidate pool if you don't consider that there are people outside of that...

I: Okay, okay, thank you. Very good. Thank you very much, I appreciate it.

Appendix V.

Questionnaire

Dear Respondent,

Thank you very much for taking the time to complete this survey.

I would appreciate if you could answer all questions without leaving any unanswered.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me on andreareger@gmail.com

Once again thank you and have a nice day.

Kind Regards,

Andrea

1) I am an in-house HR/recruitment professional.

- Yes
- No

2) I am based in the Republic of Ireland.

- Yes
- No

3) I work for a large, private, MNC that has more than 1,000 employees worldwide.

- Yes
- No

4) Which recruitment methods do you or your company use to support recruitment?
(multiple answer)

- Recruitment agencies or head hunters
- Print media (newspaper ad, leaflet, etc.)
- Job boards (jobs.ie, irishjobs.ie, monster.ie, etc.)
- Corporate website
- Social media (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Youtube, etc.)

5) Which has been the most successful recruitment method in the last 12 months in terms of cost, number of filled vacancies and retention of the recruits for at least 6 months? (one answer)

- Recruitment agency or head hunters
- Print media (newspaper ad, leaflet, etc)
- Job boards (jobs.ie, irishjobs.ie, monster.ie, etc.)
- Corporate website
- Social media (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Youtube, etc.)

6) Which social media have you or your company ever used or plan to use in order to support recruitment? (multiple answer)

- Facebook
- Twitter
- LinkedIn
- Youtube

7) Rank the following social media channels based on their successfulness in the last 12 months in terms of cost, number of filled vacancies and retention of the recruits for at least 6 months? (1 being the most successful, 4 being the least successful.)

- | | |
|----------|--------------------------|
| Facebook | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Twitter | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| LinkedIn | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Youtube | <input type="checkbox"/> |

8) Why do you or your company use LinkedIn for recruitment? (multiple answer)

- To replace agencies
- To reduce cost
- Because that's the new trend
- That's where the professional talents are
- To participate in discussions, forums
- To fill challenging positions
- To build company brand
- To utilise employees' contacts
- Doing direct search to reach passive candidates
- Advertising jobs to reach active candidates

9) In your opinion, which is the most important/useful feature that LinkedIn offers?
(one answer)

- Company brand can be strengthened
- Employees' contacts can be utilized
- Direct searches can be done to reach passive candidates
- Jobs can be advertised to reach more active candidates

10) What types of position you are hoping to fill with LinkedIn? (multiple answer)

- Entry level positions
- Hands-on jobs
- Skilled-based, specialised jobs
- Highly professional jobs

11) How many positions are you or have you been targeting to fill over the course of one year via LinkedIn?

- 0-10
- 11-20
- 21-50
- 51-100
- 101-200
- Over 200

12) How many vacancies can your company advertise simultaneously on LinkedIn?

- 0-4
- 5-8
- 9-12
- 13-unlimited

13) Are the line managers involved in any way in the recruitment process, i.e. are they searching for talents themselves on LinkedIn?

- Yes, they are completely involved in the searching process.
- Yes, most of them are involved in the searching process.
- No, just a few of them involved
- No, they are absolutely not involved in the searching process.

14) How long has your company used LinkedIn for recruitment?

- 0-6 months
- 7-12 months
- 1-2 years
- 2-4 years
- Over 4 years

15) Since social recruitment has been implemented in your organisation, how have the below changed?

	Increased	Did not change	Decreased
Time to hire			
Quality of candidates			
Quantity of candidates			
The use of a recruitment agency			
The cost of recruitment			

16) To what extent does LinkedIn's service (i.e. your current subscription level) meet you or your company's expectations? (5 is entirely, 1 is not at all)

1 – Not at all

2 – Just satisfactorily

3 – Moderately

4 – Well

5 – Entirely

17) Do you think LinkedIn will ever replace recruitment agencies?

Yes, the age of the recruitment agencies is getting over

No, it will never replace them; it will only complement them

Appendix VI.

First template e-mail with a link to the online questionnaire

Dear HR/Recruitment professional,

My name is Andrea Reger and I am currently working on my MA dissertation which investigates how LinkedIn have impacted large, private multinational companies' recruitment process in Ireland.

I would be extremely grateful, if you had 2 minutes to participate in my survey and answer 17 simple, multiple-choice questions by clicking onto this link:

<http://kwiksurveys.com/s.asp?sid=t3ig7kd6ddbko8m167911>

Also, if you could circulate the link to those of your friends, relations and connections who also work in the field of HR or Recruitment in Ireland, I would be much obliged.

Please be advised, that I treat all collected data with the utmost confidentiality which will be used for academic purposes only. To support confidentiality and to ensure anonymity, no identifying questions regarding the organisation's name or the individual's names is asked in the survey.

I appreciate your time and kind attempt to share your experience with me which would greatly contribute to the successfulness of this project.

Thank you and have a nice day!

Kind Regards,
Andrea Reger

Appendix VII.

Second template e-mail with a link to the online questionnaire

Dear [firstname],

Thank you very much for taking 2 minutes from your busy day to participate in my survey, which greatly enhances my chances of successfully completing an MA course.

Please click the link below or copy it into your web browser to answer 17 simple, multiple choice questions about your opinion on Social recruiting and LinkedIn.

[survey]

[surveyurl]

If you are unsure about any of the answers, I would appreciate if you could ask your company's Head of Recruitment to help you completing the survey.

Please be advised, that all collected data are processed with the utmost confidentiality and they will be used for academic purposes only. To support confidentiality and to ensure anonymity, no identifying questions regarding the organisation's name or the individual's names are asked in the survey.

Thank you for your time!

Kind regards,

Andrea

Appendix VIII.

The summary table of the questionnaire

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4-1	Q4-2	Q4-3	Q4-4	Q4-5	
No	I am an in-house HR/ Recruitment professional.	I am based in the Republic of Ireland.	I work for a large, private, multinational company that has more than 1,000 employees worldwide.	Which recruitment methods do you or your company use to support recruitment? (multiple answer)					
1	No	Yes	Yes			Job boards (jobs.ie, irishjobs.ie, monster.ie, etc.)	Corporate website	Social media (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Youtube, etc.)	
2	Yes	Yes	Yes	Recruitment agencies or head hunters	Print media (newspaper ad, leaflet, etc.)	Job boards (jobs.ie, irishjobs.ie, monster.ie, etc.)	Corporate website	Social media (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Youtube, etc.)	
3	Yes	Yes	Yes	Recruitment agencies or head hunters		Job boards (jobs.ie, irishjobs.ie, monster.ie, etc.)	Corporate website	Social media (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Youtube, etc.)	
4	Yes	Yes	No	Recruitment agencies or head hunters		Job boards (jobs.ie, irishjobs.ie, monster.ie, etc.)	Corporate website	Social media (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Youtube, etc.)	
5	Yes	Yes	No			Job boards (jobs.ie, irishjobs.ie, monster.ie, etc.)	Corporate website	Social media (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Youtube, etc.)	
6	Yes	Yes	No	Recruitment agencies or head hunters		Job boards (jobs.ie, irishjobs.ie, monster.ie, etc.)	Corporate website	Social media (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Youtube, etc.)	
7	Yes	Yes	Yes	Recruitment agencies or head hunters				Social media (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Youtube, etc.)	
8	Yes	Yes	No	Recruitment agencies or head hunters	Print media (newspaper ad, leaflet, etc.)	Job boards (jobs.ie, irishjobs.ie, monster.ie, etc.)	Corporate website	Social media (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Youtube, etc.)	
9	Yes	Yes	Yes	Recruitment agencies or head hunters		Job boards (jobs.ie, irishjobs.ie, monster.ie, etc.)	Corporate website	Social media (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Youtube, etc.)	
10	Yes	Yes	Yes			Job boards (jobs.ie, irishjobs.ie, monster.ie, etc.)		Social media (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Youtube, etc.)	

Q5	Q6-1	Q6-2	Q6-3	Q6-4	Q7-1	Q7-2	Q7-3	Q7-4
Which has been the most successful recruitment method in the last 12 months in terms of cost, number of filled vacancies and retention of the recruits for at least 6 months?	Which social media have you or your company ever used or plan to use in order to support recruitment? (multiple answer)				Rank the following social media channels based on their successfulness in the last 12 months in terms of cost, number of filled vacancies and retention of the recruits for at least 6 months? (The first being the most successful, the last being the least successful. Facebook Twitter LinkedIn Youtube			
Social media (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Youtube, etc.)	Facebook		LinkedIn		2	3	1	4
Job boards (jobs.ie, irishjobs.ie, monster.ie, etc.)			LinkedIn		2	4	1	3
Social media (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Youtube, etc.)			LinkedIn		1	2	3	4
Recruitment agencies or head hunters			LinkedIn		1	2	3	4
Job boards (jobs.ie, irishjobs.ie, monster.ie, etc.)		Twitter	LinkedIn		3	2	1	4
Job boards (jobs.ie, irishjobs.ie, monster.ie, etc.)			LinkedIn		2	3	1	4
Recruitment agencies or head hunters			LinkedIn		1	2	3	4
Social media (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Youtube, etc.)	Facebook	Twitter	LinkedIn	Youtube	1	2	4	3
Social media (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Youtube, etc.)	Facebook		LinkedIn		2	3	1	4
Job boards (jobs.ie, irishjobs.ie, monster.ie, etc.)	Facebook	Twitter	LinkedIn		1	2	3	4

Q8-1	Q8-2	Q8-3	Q8-4	Q8-5	Q8-6	Q8-7	Q8-8	Q8-9
Why do you or your company use LinkedIn for recruitment? (multiple answer)								
To reduce cost		That's where the professional talents are		To fill challenging positions			Doing direct search to reach passive candidates	Advertising jobs to reach active candidates
To reduce cost				To fill challenging positions	To build company brand		Doing direct search to reach passive candidates	
To reduce cost		That's where the professional talents are			To build company brand			
To reduce cost					To build company brand		Doing direct search to reach passive candidates	Advertising jobs to reach active candidates
		That's where the professional talents are			To build company brand	To utilise employees' contacts	Doing direct search to reach passive candidates	Advertising jobs to reach active candidates
				To fill challenging positions		To utilise employees' contacts	Doing direct search to reach passive candidates	Advertising jobs to reach active candidates
	Because that's the new trend	That's where the professional talents are						
To reduce cost			To participate in discussions, forums		To build company brand			
		That's where the professional talents are		To fill challenging positions	To build company brand	To utilise employees' contacts	Doing direct search to reach passive candidates	
						To utilise employees' contacts		Advertising jobs to reach active candidates

Q9	Q10-1	Q10-2	Q10-3	Q10-4	Q11	Q12	Q13	Q14
In your opinion, which is the most important/useful feature that LinkedIn offers?	What types of position you are hoping to fill with LinkedIn? (multiple answer)				How many positions are you or have you been targeting to fill over the course of one year via LinkedIn?	How many vacancies can your company advertise simultaneously on LinkedIn?	Are the line managers involved in any way in the recruitment process, i.e. are they searching for talents themselves on LinkedIn?	How long has your company used LinkedIn for recruitment?
Direct searches can be done to reach passive candidates			Skilled-based, specialised jobs	Highly professional jobs	11-20	0-4	No, just a few of them involved	1-2 years
Direct searches can be done to reach passive candidates			Skilled-based, specialised jobs		11-20	0-4	Yes, most of them are involved in the searching process.	1-2 years
Jobs can be advertised to reach more active candidates				Highly professional jobs	0-10	9-12	Yes, most of them are involved in the searching process.	0-6 months
Direct searches can be done to reach passive candidates			Skilled-based, specialised jobs		0-10	0-4	No, just a few of them involved	1-2 years
Direct searches can be done to reach passive candidates			Skilled-based, specialised jobs	Highly professional jobs	51-100	0-4	No, they are absolutely not involved in the searching process.	1-2 years
Direct searches can be done to reach passive candidates			Skilled-based, specialised jobs		0-10	0-4	No, they are absolutely not involved in the searching process.	1-2 years
Company brand can be strengthened			Skilled-based, specialised jobs	Highly professional jobs	0-10	0-4	No, just a few of them involved	0-6 months
Company brand can be strengthened	Entry level positions	Hands-on jobs	Skilled-based, specialised jobs	Highly professional jobs	Over 200	13 or more	No, they are absolutely not involved in the searching process.	Over 4 years
Direct searches can be done to reach passive candidates			Skilled-based, specialised jobs		11-20	5-8	Yes, most of them are involved in the searching process.	1-2 years
Employees' contacts can be utilized	Entry level positions		Skilled-based, specialised jobs		0-10	0-4	No, they are absolutely not involved in the searching process.	0-6 months

15-1	Q15-2	Q15-3	Q15-4	Q15-5	Q16-1	Q17	
Since social recruitment has been implemented in your organisation, how have the below changed? TIME TO HIRE	QUALITY OF CANDIDATES	QUANTITY OF CANDIDATES	THE USE OF RECRUITMENT AGENCY	THE COST OF RECRUITMENT	To what extent does LinkedIn's service (i.e. your current subscription level) meet your or your company's expectations?	Do you think LinkedIn will ever replace recruitment agencies?	Date taken
Decreased	Didn't change	Increased	Decreased	Decreased	2 Just satisfactorily	No, it will never replace them; it will only complement them	11/06/2013 16:39
Decreased	Didn't change	Increased	Decreased	Decreased	2 Just satisfactorily	Yes, the age of the recruitment agencies is getting over	12/06/2013 17:32
Decreased	Increased	Increased	Decreased	Decreased	5 Entirely	Yes, the age of the recruitment agencies is getting over	12/06/2013 17:43
Didn't change	Didn't change	Didn't change	Didn't change	Didn't change	3 Moderately	No, it will never replace them; it will only complement them	13/06/2013 09:34
Decreased	Increased	Increased	Didn't change	Decreased	4 Well	No, it will never replace them; it will only complement them	13/06/2013 09:55
Didn't change	Didn't change	Didn't change	Didn't change	Didn't change	2 Just satisfactorily	No, it will never replace them; it will only complement them	13/06/2013 13:25
Increased	Didn't change	Didn't change	Decreased	Decreased	3 Moderately	No, it will never replace them; it will only complement them	13/06/2013 22:01
Didn't change	Didn't change	Increased	Decreased	Didn't change	2 Just satisfactorily	No, it will never replace them; it will only complement them	13/06/2013 22:01
Didn't change	Didn't change	Increased	Decreased	Increased	3 Moderately	No, it will never replace them; it will only complement them	14/06/2013 13:38
Didn't change	Didn't change	Increased	Decreased	Decreased	4 Well	Yes, the age of the recruitment agencies is getting over	14/06/2013 17:15