

**The Impact of Social Networks  
on the Selection Phase of Recruitment**

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### **Abstract**

The Internet is the biggest invention of the 20th century. The existence and the immense usage of the Internet gave rise to social networks. Today, social networks are an important engagement tool between people all around the world. These online websites have an important impact on every aspect of peoples' lives from social life to businesses to even politics. In the recent years, the effects of social networks have touched the recruitment process. Recruiting through social networks is very popular today and it is called "*social recruiting*". It is practiced since the mid-1990s however social recruiting only has become a common practice since the past few years. This research is aimed to explore the impact of social networks have on the selection phase of the recruitment process. The objectives of this study cover the actions of recruiters and jobseekers take in social recruiting. It is common now to search and reach to candidates or to new job opportunities on the internet, however, is having your profile viewed during the recruitment process ethical? Do recruiters really rely on social networks, and do companies have online presence? What are the good and bad sides of using social networks? All these facts and actions taken by HR professionals and candidates will be researched and explored in this study.

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This thesis is a dedication to my mother

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## **Introduction**

In the twentieth century, the world has faced enormous innovations in technology. Today, we are living a world where we cannot resist or escape the changes in technology advances around us. We are living in a time period where everyone has to keep up with technology and its trends and we all must be innovative to be successful in life. The new century forced people to become closer with technologies and information systems. As a result, people have become attached to their computers and smart phones more than ever before. These tools have entered into all aspects of our lives. Everything now could be done by just touching the screen of our phones or clicking on our computers. As a result, the process of recruitment has moved to Internet as well. Traditional recruitment process is not effective enough in this new age of connectivity and technology (Sullivan 2011).

With the help of social media today, recruiters have found a new way of searching and hiring employees and job seekers have found a fresh way to search and apply for jobs. In the modern job market, no tool is more capable of shortening the job search and helping employees to move on to their careers than social media (Waldman 2011).

The Oxford Dictionary Online defines social networks, sometimes can be called social media, as “a dedicated website or application which enables users to communicate with each other by posting information, comments, messages, images, etc.” (Oxford Dictionaries 2012). The rise of the social networks has first begun in the late 1990s. Back then, these sites were mainly used by teenagers to have online profiles to represent themselves and to share information. Today, the situation is a lot more different. The social networks are now used by all age groups and not only by individuals but also by companies too. As a result, the popularity of social networks has bounded over the past few years. Recently, social networks have started to have a big effect on the business world as well. These tools have become the



key sources for organisations to hire employees with smaller budgets (Waldman 2011)

The usage and the interaction between the recruitment world and social networking have increased enormously. A report done by Taleo states that “in just a few short years, online social networks have grown from a novelty to one of the most powerful recruiting tools available to HR professionals” (Taleo 2010). As a result of this interaction between the recruiting world and social networking, many researches have been done on the effects of social networks on the recruitment process.

Social networks have become a well-known tool to use for organisations, recruiters and individuals. Now it is considered as the best way to find the right employee or the best way to proceed in career. Since the rise of these networks, many organisations have treated them with suspicion and left it to HR department to deal with (Doherty 2010). Now, both job seekers and the organisations have become attached to using social networks to attract and hire employees. As a result of this, organisations have made online presences on Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn and YouTube to find and engage with potential candidates and for them to be in touch with the organisations (Doherty 2010).

However, the usage of social networks might not be as helpful as thought. The risk of using them must be considered (Doherty 2010). Before using these social networks, both the individuals and the organisations must optimise them, the outcomes of using these sites must be evaluated and some mandatory tests must be applied. If these steps are omitted, then it is possible for both organisations and individuals to go through some challenges. The recruiting process would slow down or even get its public image affected negatively.

“Technology can be a great friend to you, or a terrible impediment. If you’re relying on it completely for communication, it only goes so far” says Mark Stelzner, the principal of Inflexion (Jackson, 2010). Resolving the issues above might seem intuitive but being unsuccessful in it can cause permanent negative effects on both individuals and the

organisations. Therefore, self-training and training within companies is crucial to mitigate these challenges.

In the research, firstly, the recruitment process will be explained and later on the rise of the Internet and how it gave existence to social networks will be explored and covered in the literature from secondary data. The primary data needed will be gathered in the form of a questionnaire. The questionnaire will be aimed to explore the usage and attitudes towards social networks in job searching and applying. The target market for the questionnaire will be jobseekers. An interview will be conducted with three recruiting professionals from three different companies to gather facts from a HR perspective.

The goal of this paper is to discover and show the changes that social networks have brought to the recruitment world. This research will explore the dynamics of social networking in recruitment both from company and individuals' perspectives. It will also explore and show the impact of social networks on the recruitment process. It will be complemented by searching and gathering data from recent researches done on this subject. Consideration of the new trends in the recruitment area, analysing the effects of social networks on recruitment process in organisations and a comparison of conventional and new style of social recruiting will be covered in this research.

## **Literature Review**

“People are the lifeblood of organisations” (Gunnigle, et al 2006) It is for sure that employees are the most valuable resources for any organisation. They are the most potent resource who will bring success and drive the company. Organisations will be only successful if they will value their employees because they are the ones that manage and control the company. Managing a workforce in an organisation is a big challenge. Managing a workforce includes dealing with employees who differ completely in physical and psychological ways and it's the heart of Human Resource Management (Gunnigle, et al 2006)

### **Recruitment**

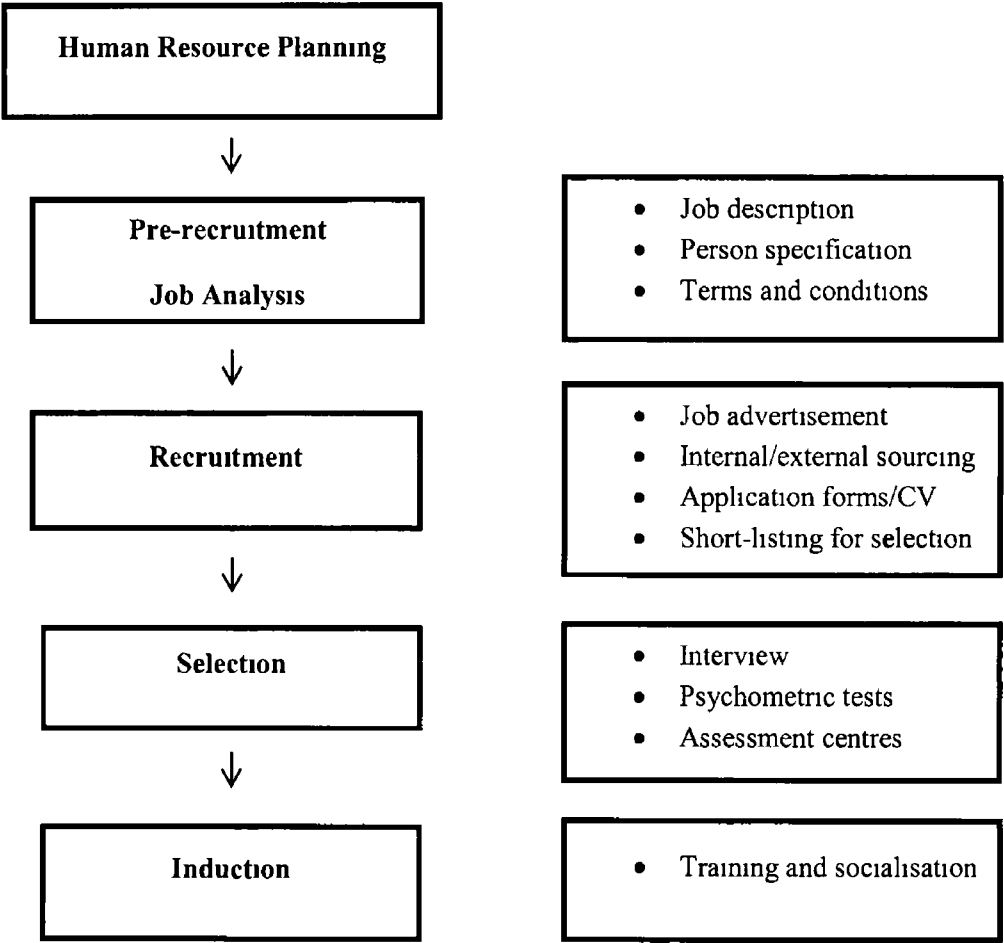
In the last past recent years, recruitment has definitely become the biggest challenge that Human Resource faces (Price 2007). Recruitment can be defined as “the activity that generates a pool of applicants, who have the desire to be employed by the organisation, from which those suitable can be selected” (Lewis, 1985). According to Taylor (2010) today, selecting and hiring the best fit for the positions is the key concern for the human resources. As McMahon and O'Carroll (1999) have stated that the outlook will be bleak for the employers who are failing to change their ways and look to new sources and methods of recruitment. However, the recruitment and selection process is not easy.

### **Recruitment and selection process**

The recruitment and selection process is the process of finding, viewing, evaluating and finally hiring new employees. Its main focus is on matching the capabilities and inclinations of prospective candidates against the demands and rewards inherent in a given job (Gunnigle, et al 2011). Gunnigle, Heraty & Morley (2011) has stated that the matching process has two different parts. Recruitment is concerned with attracting a number of candidates to apply for a

given position, continued by selection, is the process of choosing the best fit from a pool of candidates

**The recruitment and selection process (Gunnigle, Heraty & Morley 2011)**



**Recruitment Process**

*The job analysis phase* is the first step of the recruitment process when the organisation wants to hire a new employee. Job analysis is where the skills, knowledge, ability, attitude and behaviour which are required are identified for the existing vacancy. *The job description* is where the elements such as tasks, purpose, responsibilities of a job are outlined. *Person specification* comes after job description is developed. It demonstrates the perfect fit for the position. For example, it includes the skills, knowledge, experience the candidate must have

for the specific role he/she is willing to apply for

Once the job analysis phase is done, the next step for the human resources is to start the *recruitment process*. According to Curnow (1989) there are several different types of strategies adopted in an effort to facilitate the recruitment process. For example, some Irish owned companies are investing in retraining their recruitment departments, while some companies have improved their remuneration package (McMahon & O'Carroll 1999).

Lievens et al (2002) has noted that the 'war for talent' has increased the importance on attracting the potential candidates in the new competitive recruitment market. To be successful in the 'war for talent', recruitment must pay attention to the three main areas. These three important functions are: to attract a pool of suitable applicants for the position, to deter unsuitable candidates from applying for the specific role and to create a positive image of the organisation (Gunnigle, et al 2011). Having defined the type of job which is trying to be filled in and the type of person who will be the best fit for the role, the next step is to attract the potential candidates. The process of attracting the candidates is done by *job advertisements*. Job advertisement is another area where the company must spend both attention and money to. It is the images of the organisation, its products and its overall philosophy (McMahon & O'Carroll 1999). According to the Industrial Relations Services (1994) has defined recruitment advertisements as sending out messages to potential employees, candidates, clients, customers, partners and shareholders. If the advertisement is done properly, then it will attract the right people, deter the unsuitable candidates and create a positive image of the organisation. There are numerous of recruitment methods that are available. The most well-known ones are internal advertisements, using existing or external contacts and the media. It is then organisation's choice to choose from the types of recruitments methods. The choice of recruitment method is determined by the nature of the job vacancy being advertised (Gunnigle, et al 2011).

## **Selection process**

Selection process is about getting the right person, the best fit for the job Townley (1994) has described selection as a decision making activity As mentioned above, the recruitment process helps to attract and identify the candidates who are suitable for the organisation The big challenge for the selection is to predict who will be the best match for the role

Before talking about the selection techniques, it is fundamental to cover three key terms used in this phase These are suitability, validity and reliability *Suitability* is considering the how well the candidate's knowledge, skills and abilities will match the job requirements

(Gunnigle, et al 2011) *Validity* refers to the extent to which the selection method used measures what it is aimed to measure and *reliability* refers to whether the same selection decision reached would again be reached if other candidates made it (Gunnigle, et al 2011)

Organisations prefer to use different selection methods for different reasons Guion (1998) states that many people use specific selection methods simply because they prefer them, or have always used them

The first stage of selection phase is pre-selection With pre-selection, the number of the candidates is reduced to a lower amount It is then easier to manage and go on to next steps Today, pre-selection involves telephone screening interviews, and these interviews are to check the basic information supplied about the candidates (Price 2007) Only after passing the pre-selection phase, the candidates who have made it can continue with the process

Nowadays, employers are getting a big help from social networks in the selection process

The types of information available on social networks may be particularly effective in predicting the personality traits (Kluemper and Rosen 2009) Today, the social networks contain different types of information about the candidates For example, the types of interest groups the user has joined in, comments that have been made, tagged photos, places which

the user has checked in, status messages, the overall profile presence and all of these give employer some information about the candidate's personality (Kluemper and Rosen 2009)

### **Psychometric tests**

Psychometric tests basically measure the mind of the candidates. These tests measure psychological characteristics of the candidates including *personality, motivation, career interests, competencies and intellectual abilities* (Price 2007). Jenkins (2001) considers that large organisations are more likely to utilise tests because they have a bigger number of open job positions across

### **Interviews**

In the selection phase, organisations usually utilise series of interviews. The number of the interviews can range compare to the job requirements. Many organisations prefer to start with *informal interviews* where the information about the company, nature of the job, the working environment and promotion are discussed (Price 2007). Informal interviews help candidates to see the company and the nature of the job, so he/she can decide whether the position is suitable for them or not. The organisation or the candidate can chose not to go continue any further with the process. On the other hand, *formal interviews* are conversations with a purpose (Price 2007).

## **The Internet and Recruitment**

### **The Internet**

The Oxford Dictionary has defined the Internet as "a global computer network providing a variety of information and communication facilities, consisting of interconnected networks using standardized communication protocols" (Oxford Dictionaries, 2012). The Internet is an information resource which can be accessed by anyone globally. The easy access to the world and information has changed the lives of people tremendously. A quarter of a century ago,

the Internet was only used by a small number of researchers and today it is the centre of attention for governments, businesses and individuals all around the globe (Gates 2000) The Internet has removed all the barriers and made the world smaller It provided simple ways of communication between people and this brought everyone stay in touch easier than ever before Not only individuals but also businesses can communicate quicker, cheaper and easier within themselves or with other businesses, search for employees, find their customers and connect with their partners all around the world Bill Gates (2000) believes that the Internet will have the same revolutionary impact on people as automobiles, electricity and telephone had In his article from 2000, he states that “individuals and businesses can overcome geographical, cultural and logistical barriers and improve the way they live and work with the Internet” (Gates 2000)

The Internet has become an important recruitment tool for the organisations in the recent years It has become a common way for jobseekers to search and apply for jobs Companies as well now use this medium to attract and search for candidates In 1990s the jobs advertised on the Internet were only targeting the IT people or the new graduates (Taylor 2010) The reason behind that was, in 1990s only a small amount of people had the access to Internet and the people who were using it were mainly young or IT people However, this changed later in the following years In the first years of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the recruitment activities on the Internet have expanded and companies started to search for people not only from IT sector, but from all sectors 80 per cent of employers were advertising jobs via Internet in 2009 (CIPD 2009) According to a research done in America, as of July 2002, over 52 million Americans have conducted online searches for information about jobs, with more than 4 million Americans doing so on a typical day, representing a 60 per cent increase from 2000 (Boyce and Raimie 2002)

The internet has become common for the early stages of the selection process, such as



collecting CVs, application forms, personal tests and so on (Price 2007) Since the recruitment is well combined with the Internet, it is important then to realise the effect of the trends on the Internet The trends on the Internet impact and change the way people conduct the daily business of their lives (Jansen et al 2005) The Internet is now a very popular tool for recruitment In 1994, there were only 25,000 CVs posted and by 1999, this number went up to 5 million (McMahon 2002) Today, in 2012, the numbers of CVs on the Internet are expected to be more than 1 billion but there is no research done about the actual numbers yet According to many researches and practitioners, it has not become a dominant recruitment method yet (Parry & Wilson 2009) The print media or other methods of recruitment are still used by recruiters and jobseekers, and the online recruitment is just another new method which is used significantly

Since the businesses have realised the increasing traffic on the Internet, they have started to advertise new job opportunities online Leonard (2000) reported that 75 per cent of Fortune 500 companies are posting jobs to their corporate sites, and less than a year later, Capelli (2001) reported that 90 per cent of large US companies are using the web for recruiting Most organisations advertise the available roles to the candidates from their own websites (Taylor 2008) This method of advertising is very inexpensive and it provides candidates information about the role and the company (Taylor 2010) The second method of online recruiting is done by *recruitment sites* These online recruitment sites are websites where companies can post jobs advertisements and search for potential candidates (Taylor 2008) These two methods, using online recruitment sites and using organisations' own webpages are practiced in recruitment, however another new method have come to existence recently in the past 10 years

## **The Rise of Social Networks**

The Internet and social media have become the source for entertainment and information for the world. It can be reached at home, at school or anywhere you are by only using your smart phones. With technology's fast growth, the access to Internet has become easier than ever before. The invention of smart phones, tablets and portable laptops made Internet to be used widely. The widespread usage of the Internet has made peoples' lives a lot easier. Today, the rapid growth of the Internet and the technology influence the lives of people. People started to pay bills, shop, get informed, find, search, connect to friends and email through the Internet.

A social networking service is an online website that focuses on to build social relations among people who share the same interests, activities or background (Mashable 2012). A social network website, every person has a profile which represents each user online. Most social networks provide its users to connect each other with instant messaging or email. Social networking sites allow users to share ideas, activities, events, and interests within their individual networks (Mashable 2012).

Users using social networks have online profiles where they post and share pictures, videos and information of anything with their families and friends. With the help of these social networking sites, people find and connect their old or current friends, join groups, play games, chat, find out about upcoming events and so much more. Now social networks have become a part of peoples' lives. Millions of people signed up to these sites. Social networks have changed a lot since the 1990s and their changes have influenced the way people communicate and connect with each other. Social media influences, persuades and informs targeted audience. Social networking websites focus on building online communities of people who share interests and activities, or who are interested in exploring the interests and

activities of others (Kluemper & Rosen 2009)

The Internet has given people opportunity to stay in touch with friends and family all around the world, but the social networks brought a different way of online communicating to peoples' lives. The social networks were born in the early 1990s. The first social networking site was Geocities and was launched in 1994. Later in 1995 TheGlobe.com was launched, and two years later, in 1997 AOL and SixDegrees.com were launched on the Internet. It was the first time Internet users were able to create a profile and friend each other (Walker, 2011). In 2002, Friendster was launched and had three million users in only three months. Friendster is called as the 'pioneer' of social networking sites, because it made the world realise that social networks can be popular and they have the potential to take peoples' attention on the Internet (Walker 2011). Later in the following years, the number of the social networks started to increase. Many social networking sites were launched in 2003 including LinkedIn, Classmates and Netlog.

### **Characteristics of Social Networks**

Before talking about the specific social networks that have important roles in people's lives today, it is important to understand the characteristics of these tools first. According to an article which has been written recently in October 2011 by Daniel Adams, points out the characteristics of social networks. He says "social media is relatively economical and accessible for individuals who wish to publish or access digital content. The main characteristic of social media is the ability to reach audiences of all sizes, but it also boasts other traits" (Adams, 2011). He outlines these characteristics in five points.

All social networks are *approachable*. With the help of Internet, these websites are capable of reaching the whole world. Adams explains this characteristic as "by their very nature they are decentralized, and they are distinguished by multiple features that facilitate productivity and utility" (Adams, 2011).

These websites are *accessible* These social networks are open to everyone and generally free to sign up and use

The social networks are all *usable*, they do not require people to be skilled or well trained to use them Anyone who has Internet and a computer or a smart phone can access these websites

They are *timely* tools Social networks provide instant communications to their users If there are delays in communications, then the only responsible ones are the users for replying late

It is *eternal, yet changing* Before the rise of these tools, when news or information was written on the web, it was only read by the people However, now, when something is written in social networks, they can be edited, commented, liked by people, and the topic could go in other directions

The characteristics of social networks have brought advantages and disadvantages to recruitment and will be covered later in the literature In this research, four social networks will be discussed and these are LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter and YouTube

## **LinkedIn**

Different from all the social networks, LinkedIn's aim is to connect professionals to exchange ideas, opportunities and information (LinkedIn 2012) It was found by Reid Hoffman in 2002 and was launched on May, 2003 It has now more than 161 million users all around the world and it is available in seventeen different languages (LinkedIn 2012) More than 2 million companies have LinkedIn Company pages LinkedIn advertises itself with three slogans These are 'stay informed about your contacts and industry', 'find the people and knowledge you need to achieve your goals' and 'control your professional identity online' (LinkedIn 2012) LinkedIn is the leader of all the social networks when it comes to recruitment According to the 2012 February Social Recruiting Activity Report,

recruiters that post jobs on LinkedIn are going to receive more applications than the other social networks. LinkedIn drives almost 9 times more applications than Facebook and 3 times more applications than Twitter (Bullhorn 2012)

## **Facebook**

Facebook, the most popular social network in the world, was started in 2004. It was first made to connect Harvard students, but when it got very popular, Facebook then became available to all the college students in USA. It was accepted well enough among students in USA and later in that year Facebook was opened to the world. Facebook's mission is to make the world more open and connected (Facebook 2012). As of today, March 2012, Facebook has more than 901 million users. People use Facebook to keep in touch with friends and family anywhere in the world, to be updated about the news and to share their ideas and thoughts with other users. Today, organisations use Facebook to search for the great fit and also to advertise themselves and their products. The Facebook directory allows companies or individuals to search for users, groups, pages, and applications, and organisations can post jobs free of charge in the Facebook Marketplace (Sheehan 2010). Organisations can also target a specific group of people with Facebook ads or they can post job opportunities on their company's page. Since Facebook now has a very important role in people's lives. As a result of its strong user base among college students, Facebook appears to be the most logical social networking website to be used by HR departments for graduate recruitment (Dickson & Holley 2010).

## **YouTube**

As it can be recognised from its name, YouTube is a social network where billions of people discover, watch and share videos online. Most of the videos on YouTube are originally created and posted by its users. First video was uploaded to YouTube in April 2005, and it

was officially launched in December 2005 with the slogan ‘Broadcast Yourself’ Today, YouTube gets more than two billion views a day In the recruitment process today, recruiters or hiring managers are going to want to know more about the candidates they think are good fit Having an online video resume is a great way to demonstrate personality and communication skills to recruiters Video resumes are ideal for demonstrating professional presence, presentation skills and creativity (Waldman 2011) Organisations can show how great it is to work in their company, share employee experiences and testimonials and keep candidates up to date on their company (O’Neill 2012)

## **Twitter**

In 2006, different from the rest of the social networks, Twitter was launched Like any other social network, Twitter’s purpose is to connect people However, different from others, Twitter’s aim is to connect people to latest news, ideas, opinions and stories which they found interesting by Tweets Tweets are 140 characters long and they are small real time information about subject As well as writing, people can share photos and videos in Tweets Twitter connects businesses to customers in real time and businesses use Twitter to quickly share information with people interested in their products and services (Twitter 2012) As of today March 2012, Twitter has more than 150 million users, it is available in twenty different languages and 340 millions of Tweets are posted per day (Twitter 2012) The 2012 Social Recruiting Activity Report has found that recruiters use Twitter more often than they use Facebook Hiring agents, internal Human Resource staffers, head hunters, large human resource firms and private recruiting professionals all use Twitter to actively fill open positions (Waldman 2011) The reason behind using this network in the recruitment process is that it is not only free to its users but also it is an effective tool to advertise job positions

## **Recruitment gets help from social networks**

Online recruitment, or also can be called social recruitment is the use of the internet to identify and attract potential employees (Parry & Wilson 2009) The use of social networks as a recruitment tool has risen since the new millennium The Internet first emerged as a recruiting tool in the mid-1990s and was hailed by the popular media as the driver behind a “recruiting revolution” due to the benefits it could bring to recruiters (Boydell, 2002) It was predicted that the recruitment industry’s “future is on the net” (Edgley 1995) and that the Internet had brought “radical change to corporate recruiting” (Cappelli 2001)

In the past few years, both job seekers and the companies have started to use social networking sites to find jobs or right employees In year 2009, 82% of organisations were using social networks to support recruitment efforts, and this number went up to 92% in 2012 (Jobvite 2012) According to survey done by Jobvite, the most popular and used social networks in recruitment are LinkedIn with 93% usage, Facebook 66%, Twitter 54% and YouTube 19% (Jobvite 2012) LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter are the top three sites that used by recruiters Since the usage of these social networks have increased over the years, the percentage of successful hires via social networks have also increased In year 2010, 58% of recruiters who responded to survey stated that they have made successful hires and this number went up to 73% in 2012 (Jobvite 2012) These results show an evidence of how social networks help recruitment

“Recruiting has become increasingly tied to technology For job candidates, the standard practice of mailing in a resume and waiting on a phone call for an interview has been trumped by the ease of electronic communication” (Jackson, 2010) Recruiters get a big help from social networks like Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and YouTube Social networks have great amount of information about the people who use them, and this is a great opportunity for employers’ to check these profiles Kluemper and Rosen (2009) have stated that social

networking sites have a large volume of information available to the viewer and the employers have begun to use these sites to assist in the selection process for new employees. About 50 per cent of the employers attending college career fairs use online technology, including both search engines and SNWs to screen candidates (Shea and Wesley, 2006). According to Framingham (2009) 25 per cent of managers use social networking sites to screen candidates, and this percentage is expected to increase to 50 by the next year. The employers and managers feel justified in electronic screening using social networking sites (Kluemper & Rosen 2009). These sites made the process of finding and hiring an employee with the right abilities, knowledge and skills easier and faster for recruiters. For example, according to the SHRM Human Capital Benchmarking Database, the time spent on finding the right person for the right job was 30 days in 2008, however, with the help of technology and social networks, this process decreased to 23 days in 2009. Also, the money recruitment departments have spent has decreased since they have started to benefit from social networks. “According to a SHRM poll from March 2009, 74% of large companies made cuts to recruitment-related advertising and use of paid recruiters in the previous six months” (Jackson, 2010).

### **Ethical issues with viewing online profiles of candidates**

Social networks, such as LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter and YouTube have considerable amount of personal information. The fact that personal data of candidates are now on the Internet, anybody who has an access to the Internet can reach to other peoples' personal information freely, without any permission. Screening candidates' online profiles before or after the interviews can be seen as a common practice by the recruiters however it is argued that this may not be legal. The Director of Career Development at Stanford University, Lance Chou noted that “some employers might try and learn something about the candidate's personality and whether it would be appropriate for the job. However, there is information on



Facebook that is not relevant to the job, but may be used inappropriately by employers to assess a candidate” (Fuller 2006) Employers now can access to unnecessary or irrelevant information about the candidates easily and the information accessed can lead to discrimination in the recruitment process The Employment Equality Acts 1998 – 2004 define discrimination as “the treatment of a person in a less favourable way than another person is, has been or would be treated in a comparable situation on any of the nine grounds” These nine grounds are gender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religious belief, age, disability, race and membership of the Travelling Community Discrimination on these nine grounds are strictly prohibited by the law and checking a person’s social network profile gives information on all of the nine grounds listed above Frauenheim (2006) has found that employers can learn about matters such as candidate’s age, marital status and other private matters which will not be necessary in job interviews, and organisations can be sued for discrimination if these candidates are not hired For example an interviewer cannot ask about candidate’s religion, sexual orientation and so on, but however all of this information can be easily accessed by using social networks (Kowske & Southwell 2006) Screening the candidates through social networks has now become a common practice by many recruiters However, the ethics and legality behind the screening through social networks has become an important issue for human resources (Zeidner 2007) Parker (2008) believes that recruiters should be up-to-date knowledge of data protection laws to make sure that they constantly have all of the correct policies and procedures in place

### **Transparency with online profiles**

Since no academic studies have been done whether using social networks in recruitment process are reliable and valid, the social networks’ value in employment screening is unknown (Kluemper and Rosen 2009) For this reason, employers must be cautious when screening the candidates and using the information about them from social networks before

making any hiring decisions. The information reached about the candidate may not be reliable, or the recruiter may have found information about another person under the same name. Employers can easily make mistakes through using social networks in the recruitment process. Transparency is a concept many companies are uncomfortable with because of the risks involved (Sullivan 2011). The candidates now have become more aware that their profiles are being evaluated by the potential recruiters, the information provided on their profiles are more likely to be skewed in an effort to be viewed more favourably (Kluemper and Rosen 2009). On the other hand, some aspects of social networks make it difficult for its users to change the information. For example, extraversion may be tied to the number of friends a user has in the social network (Kluemper and Rosen 2009). However, sometimes candidates do not put the correct information about themselves on social networks for other purposes. The Nigel Wright Company (2011) shared that some candidates in the marketplace are concerned about the security issues (identity theft etc.) associated with having personal information online. It is wise for businesses to be careful when using public, non-professional information to support a hiring decision (Doherty 2010).

### **Social Networks can no longer be ignored by organisations or job seekers**

Several years ago, when the social networks were not as effective as they were today in people's lives, it was acceptable for organisations and job seekers to not work together with them. However, today organisations and candidates can no longer resist using the Internet and the social networks. The business reasons for connecting with social networks have been clearly proved through success stories across industries, signalling to organisations that if they choose not to engage, they risk becoming less competitive at best, and irrelevant at worst (McCann 2010).

Social media is still a new tool for recruiters and companies to utilise and it can be

compelling Social media is also still in the stages of being formulated, being adapted and being adopted (Madia 2011) The economic crisis and the competitive economy of today's world have pushed companies to get the right and the best fit employees for the job vacancies They have a need to get it right in a way that is cost-effective and efficient (Madia 2011) Before the rise of the Internet and the social networks, organisations were getting help from job boards and employment fairs, but these tactics are not powerful anymore in the new millennium Companies who still have not engaged with the social networks for advertising and recruiting, it is for sure that its competitors are engaged and they are already ahead in the process of recruiting

Social networks speak directly of a company's relevance, for this reason companies must start by ensuring that their own online presence is strong to attract the best talent (Madia 2011) According to Jobvite's 2010 survey of social media use by corporations, 83 percent of respondents said that they are currently or will be using social networks as means of recruiting LinkedIn is the most preferred network with a 86 percent usage Respondents to the survey have stated that LinkedIn is the best network for recruitment and the leading source for successful hires and Facebook and Twitter are the following networks after LinkedIn (Jobvite 2010)

Since social networks help organisations to source top talent in more efficient ways, they have become the most used tool for recruiters For example, today, a job vacancy can be posted right away through Twitter in few seconds, and the message can reach to millions in that instant This helps to cut down on budget and time Rather than hosting expensive job fairs in top markets, many organisations today are opting to focus their energies on their online presence in social networking sites (Madia 2011)

For organisations to have healthy and strong online presence, they must pay attention to their employers The more active and engaged an employer is in the social networks, the more

appealing its brand will be to the talent it want to attract and retain This method will give organisations the edge in the competitive and changing recruitment market place (Sullivan 2011)

It is also important for candidates to make their own online presence on social networks as well as organisations According to the 2012 Eurocom Worldwide survey, 40 percent of respondents' companies check out potential employees' profiles on social media sites (Eurocom Worldwide 2012) For this reason, it is crucial for candidates to make their personal brands online Candidates can be a step ahead from other job seekers if they can manage to take attention of recruiters when they Google them

### **Advantages and disadvantages of social recruiting**

Today, social networks are a powerful and cost effective tool for recruitment and building an employer/employee brand (Sullivan 2011) Social recruiting has countless advantages as well disadvantages Using social networks as a recruitment tool is fast, cost effective and efficient On the other hand, social networks can give too much of an information, it can be time consuming and will not always work These advantages and disadvantages are obvious However, they must be explored more deeply

One of the main reasons why social recruiting is adopted and being utilised by recruiters is that it is mostly free Social media hiring is low cost and often free (The Nigel Wright Company 2011) Recruiters can use Twitter, Facebook, YouTube or LinkedIn freely to search and look for candidates Many HR departments have started using social networking sites as part of a new cost-conscious approach to recruitment (Doherty 2010) Another advantage which social networks have brought recruiters is to stay in touch with their potential employees Now with the invention of the Internet and social networks, organisations are able to reach and contact the candidates all across the globe It's the same for candidates as well, they have the opportunity to find and apply to jobs which suit them

anywhere in the world. Before the invention of social networks and the Internet, recruiters were only limited to search and hire the candidates living in the same city or area.

However, today, any employee can apply to a job, or a recruiter can find an employee regardless of where they are. Reaching to millions is a big advantage that social networks provide to its users and recruiters and job seekers do not miss it.

As mentioned earlier, the rise of LinkedIn, YouTube, Facebook and Twitter completely changed the way recruiters search, find and hire employees. These social networks also help recruiters to check and overview the candidate before or after the interviews. This is another advantage for recruiters to view potential employee's social online profile and have some image of the person. SHRM Poll from November 2009 proved that the advantage of checking candidate's online presence is practiced commonly by recruiters. "In 2009, one out of four HR professionals said their organization used social networking sites like Facebook and Twitter to look up candidates before inviting them for an interview."

(Jackson 2010). SHRM's another poll from the same date also shows unprofessional profiles on social networks affect and change the views of recruiters towards candidates in a negative way. 86% of recruiters state that they are less likely to hire an employee if they face an inappropriate profile by their candidates. Recruiters today make a good use of the viewing advantage of social networks have.

As well as the advantages of these social networks, there are few disadvantages of using and relying on them. The Internet and the social networks are very helpful to the process of recruitment but they should not be considered as the only way of recruitment, because the Internet and the social networks are only new technologies and the real advantages and the disadvantages are going to be seen in the future.

Even though the social recruiting have made the recruitment process faster and cheaper, it does not show that getting into a job or finding the right candidate has become easy.

Candidates still need to be educated, trained, skilled and experienced and they will still have to go through the stages of interviews and pass them to be employed

Social recruitment is believed to be time consuming. Reaching out to millions can be an advantage but a disadvantage on the other hand. There is too much information for companies who want to conduct a detailed and robust search (The Nigel Wright Company 2011). When the candidate is found, transparency of the profiles is another issue. It is a great advantage to view potential candidate's online presence, but the profiles are not always showing the right information about the candidate (The Nigel Wright Company 2011). When recruiters check the online profiles of employees, discrimination rises. Personal information could lead to employers being influenced by factors like race, religious views or age (The Nigel Wright Company 2011). Even though social networks are very popular, Doherty (2010) believes that social networks should not be used as a sole means for recruitment, because there are still a lot of people who do not use them. For this reason, organisations may be missing out on right candidates.

Lastly, the information found on the social networks about the candidate is only limited to what the recruiter is seeing. Ultimately the candidate can decide what information they are willing to share (The Nigel Wright Company 2011).

There is no doubt that social networks have improved the recruitment process by making it more open, accessible to a talent pool where jobseekers and recruiters can engage.

As Erica Swallow's article on Mashable Business shows that 89% of companies have used social media networks for recruiting in 2011. She also wrote in her article that 80% of companies use LinkedIn, 50% use Facebook and 45% use Twitter to find talent (Swallow, 2011). Social networking tools are and will be crucial tools to find qualified candidates. However, HR professionals should not see social networks as free online tools where

candidates can be found and hired but rather consider these websites as tools for building pools of talent and employer brand (Parker, 2008)

## **Methodology**

### **Research Objectives**

The aim of this research is to explore and find out the effects of social networks in the recruitment world. The research is more concerned on the selection phase of the recruitment process. Its main purpose is to discover how recruiters are utilising these social networks while selecting an employee. The objectives of the research are to find out more on the effects of having online presence for organisations, whether it's ethical for recruiters to check candidates' online profiles, the transparency issue with online presence of the candidates and the advantages and some disadvantages the social networks have brought to the recruitment industry.

### **Research methodology**

A method is a technique for collecting and/or analysing data and for this reason, a methodology is an approach to the process of the research, encompassing a body of methods (Collis & Hussey 2009). Research method can be defined as "simply a technique for collecting data, it can involve a specific instrument, such as questionnaires, or interviews" (Bryman 2008). Research methodology changes accordingly to the topic and the value of contents. The research philosophy contains important assumptions about the way in which the researcher sees the world (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2007). In this research, both positivism and interpretivism will be taken as philosophical assumptions. Positivism simply can be defined as working with observable social reality and the end product of research is scientific (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2007). In a positivist research, a survey should be applied to collect quantitative data, which is a data in a numerical form (Collis & Hussey 2009).

In an interpretivist research, an interview should be applied to collect needed qualitative



data. However, this research will have a hybrid approach, utilising both positivism and interpretivism.

The purpose of this thesis is to explore the effects of social networks on the selection phase of recruitment process. For this research to be completed, both primary and secondary sources are needed. Utilizing and mixing these two methods, quantitative and qualitative, the information needed to complete the research will be gained. The result of this research will show the effect and usage of social networks in the recruitment process. The outcomes of the interviews and the surveys will be interesting to look at if social networks are effective and if they have managed to change the minds of recruiters and jobseekers.

### **Primary research**

Conducting a survey will be helpful and suitable for this research because with the descriptive survey, observable data will be collected. For example, the percentage of the people getting jobs successfully through using social networks can be found and the results will be observable. The results can be generalised after analysing them statistically.

Internet survey will be applied for collecting data for this positivist research. The population for this survey will be large, approximately more than 50, therefore Internet questionnaire will be the most suitable survey to apply. This method of collecting data will be time saving and cheap. There will be closed questions in the Internet questionnaire, where people will answer the questions from choosing one of the prepared answers.

A semi-structured method is the most suitable interview for this research. Interpretivism is a humanist approach and believes that people should take parts in researches as social actors. Unlike positivism, instead of having law-like, scientific results at the end, interpretivism says that it is more important give value to social actors' views and opinions. "Interpretivists attempt to minimize the distance between the researcher and that which is researched" (Collis & Hussey, 2009). Semi-structured interview is suitable for this

research, because it is important to go with prepared questions. As the interview continues, according to the answers of interviewee, different questions might be needed to be asked. Probe questions will be asked to gain more information and understanding of the topic. For example, in the interview, a question “do you check candidate’s online profile before the interview” will be asked to a recruiter in Google. According to her answer, if she says “yes”, then probe question will be asked as a reply “what happened next” to find out more about if checking the candidate’s profile has changed the recruiter’s views about the candidate.

Having both interviews and surveys are important and suitable for this research, because this research has two sides to it. The process of recruiting has two sides, the candidates and the recruiters, so it is crucial to collect data from both sides. With interviews, social actors, in this case they are the recruiters, point of views will be collected, and with the survey, quantitative data will be gained from a large population, in this case the population is candidates, about the effects of social networks on recruitment. In positivist approach, researcher will be objective, she will stay out of the issue and interpret the results without the distraction of the social actors. However, in interpretivist approach, the researcher will be subjective and write from a point of view.

This research will have deductive and inductive methods. Inductive method is important because using this method, the researcher will have a feeling of what is going on in the HR department and will know about their point of views towards social recruiting. Deductive method is described as going from general to particular (Collis & Hussey, 2009). Applying surveys will be a scientific research and the data collected will be generalised.

As social networks are only in people’s lives since the last decade, there is a lack of secondary data on social networks which are available. For this reason, primary research is fundamental to conduct for this research. Collis and & Hussey (2009) have defined primary

data as the data generated from an original source, such as your own experiments, questionnaire survey, interviews or focus groups. To explore the objectives of this research and find out more about them a short survey is developed. The survey is made to conduct on the Internet through SurveyMonkey to get as many replies as possible in a short period of time. Getting help from the Internet is going to help the survey to reach as many participants as possible all across the world.

The survey's focus is on jobseekers. It is mainly focusing on whether or not they are using social networks to search and get jobs, and mainly which social networks they prefer for this process and if they were successful or not in getting into a job. The survey was passed around through the help of few social networks such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and personal e-mail. The link to the survey was posted on Facebook and tweeted on Twitter. For the people who do not use social networks, the survey was sent through using e-mail. The aim of the survey was to reach 50 people at the very least, and it reached to 85 people at the end of two weeks. The majority of the respondents were jobseekers who were aged between early twenties to mid-thirties. Below is the survey which was posted online on social networks like Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn.

1 Have you ever used social networks such as Facebook, LinkedIn or Twitter to search or apply for jobs?

a Yes      b No

2 If yes, when was the first time that you used these social networks for job searching?

a 0 - 1 year ago   b 1 - 3 years ago   c 4 - 6 years ago   d 6 - 8 years ago

3 Why do you prefer to use social networks to search and apply for jobs? Please rate them based on their importance (1 - most important, 4 - least important)

- It is fast and easy to search and apply
- To increase the chance of getting a job
- To reach a larger audience (more companies)
- Others

4 Which social network do you use for searching and applying for jobs? You can choose more than one

a Facebook   b LinkedIn   c YouTube   d Twitter

Others (Please specify)

5 Have you ever been contacted through a social network about a job opportunity?

a Yes   b No

6 Have you ever successfully got a job through using a social network?

a Yes   b No

7 Do you give attention to your online profile before applying for a job?

a Yes, I make changes like deleting inappropriate pictures, comments etc

b No, I leave it the way it is

8 Are your social network accounts open to public?

a Yes   b No   c Only some general information like sex or profile picture

9 Do you find it ethical for recruiters to check your online presence?

a Yes      b No

10 Do you follow or subscribe to companies you wish to work for?

a Yes      b No

Interviews are a method for collecting data in which selected participants are asked questions to find out what they do, think or feel (Collis & Hussey 2009). To reach and collect recruiters' opinions on how the social networks have changed the way they do recruiting, interviews were made with three recruiters from Google, Oracle and an Irish recruiting company. Recruiters who were interviewed face to face for this research were both from international and local companies. Since it was more important to explore what recruiters are doing or thinking about the new method of social recruiting, interviews were the best method because with interviews further information can be obtained by the researcher. There were a total of twelve questions in the interview and each interview approximately took thirty minutes.

Observation can be rewarding and enlightening to pursue and add considerably richness of your research data (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill 2009). Since this dissertation's research questions and objectives are more concerned with what recruiters do and think, watching them do is the best way to discover and find out more about the topic. In research methods, this method is called observation. Observation can involve recording and while interviewing three recruiters from different companies, recording was used. The use of interviews can help to gather valid and reliable data that are relevant to dissertation's research questions and objectives (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill 2009). As mentioned

above, three recruiters were asked the same twelve questions, however according to their answers, unwritten questions were asked as well. In semi-structured interviews the researcher will have a list of prepared questions and themes to be covered, although these may vary from interview to interview (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill 2009). The interviewees were e-mailed ahead to get appointments and to let them know about the topic, and before the interview they were asked if they could be recorded. The first question and the followings are listed below.

1 The recent explosion in social media has resulted in growing numbers of recruiters using it as advertising and sourcing tool. But why would a recruiter use social media to recruit? And how would they do it? Can you please explain in detail?

2 Online recruitment is now a standard part of the recruitment process for many companies and organisations. Is it worth it? In other words, what are the advantages and disadvantages of online recruitment?

(Some of the advantages can be: It's quick, gives a better chance of success, gives and reaches to a bigger audience and it's easy.)

(Some of the disadvantages can be: Too many candidates, it will not always work.)

3 Which social networks do you use the most? LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook or YouTube? And why do you prefer to use that specific social network the most? What advantages does it have on the recruitment process?

4 For how long have you been using this social network for recruiting? How did you decide to change to social recruiting? Did you find this new method easier or harder? How? Can you provide examples?

5 Do you check a candidate's online profile on social networks? If yes, do you tend to check the profile before or after the interview? Does the profile change your decisions about the candidate? How?

6 Would you cancel an interview after screening a candidate's online presence? Why? What kind of things would make you cancel the interview?

7 If an online profile of a candidate looks attractive and suitable for the role, would you hire him/her in a shorter amount of time?

8 When you are screening a candidate's online profile, how do you know it is the right person? Was there a time when you screened another person under the same name? If yes, can you please provide an example?

9 What do you think about the transparency of online profiles? Do you find online profiles of candidates reliable? Can you please explain in detail?

10 Do you find checking the online profile of a candidate's ethical? Why or why not? Can you please provide an example?

11 Does the company you work for have online presence on social networks? If yes, on which social networks? And does this help in the recruitment process? Why and how?

12 Lastly, do you think social media has improved the recruitment process? Why or why not?

### **Secondary research**

Unlike primary data, secondary data are data collected from an existing source, such as publications, databases and internal records (Collis & Hussey 2009). Qualitative research was necessary to have to complete the literature review of the thesis. For many research questions and objectives the main advantage of using secondary data is the enormous saving in resources like time and money (Ghauri & Gronhaug 2005). There are three main types of secondary data and these are documentary, survey and those from multiple sources (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill 2009). To complete this research, all three main types of secondary data were used. To explore the advantages and disadvantages of using social networks in the recruitment process, the effects of having online presence for organisations, ethical issues with viewing other people's profiles and the transparency of these profiles are explored and tried to be explained by researching through journal articles, academic papers, academic books and the Internet. In other words, data which have been collected and published by someone else was used to discover more about the social networks and its effects. College's online library access was a big benefit to search, read and use books and thousands of academic journals and papers. On the other hand, internet was useful as well to gather some basic information about the social networks. Any secondary data which will be used will have been collected for a specific purpose and this purpose may not match the purpose of others'. In addition, the secondary data are likely to be less current than any data the researcher will collect him/herself (Saunders, Lewis &



Thornhill 2009) For this reason, it was harder to find recent secondary data on the social networks topic

The results from the interviews and the questionnaire will show the attitudes and usage of social networks from different groups and it will be interesting to see the differences in opinions and the differences in the usage of these networks among recruiters and jobseekers

## **Findings**

### **Respondent groups**

To successfully explore and see the effects of the social networks on the recruitment process, it is important to look at both groups which are involved in the process. These two groups are recruiters and the jobseekers.

First of all, this thesis will show the usage of social networks among jobseekers all around the world. It will examine whether they are getting jobs successfully, which networks they use the most, if they find it ethical for recruiters to check their profiles and if they play around with their profiles before the recruiters check it. In this section of the thesis, the responses from the online questionnaire will be evaluated. The evaluated responses will be analysed in much detail later.

Secondly, this research will look at the usage of social networks from recruiters' point of views. It will discover how the Internet and the rise of social networks have changed the way recruitment process is done and what recruiters' opinions are on this topic.

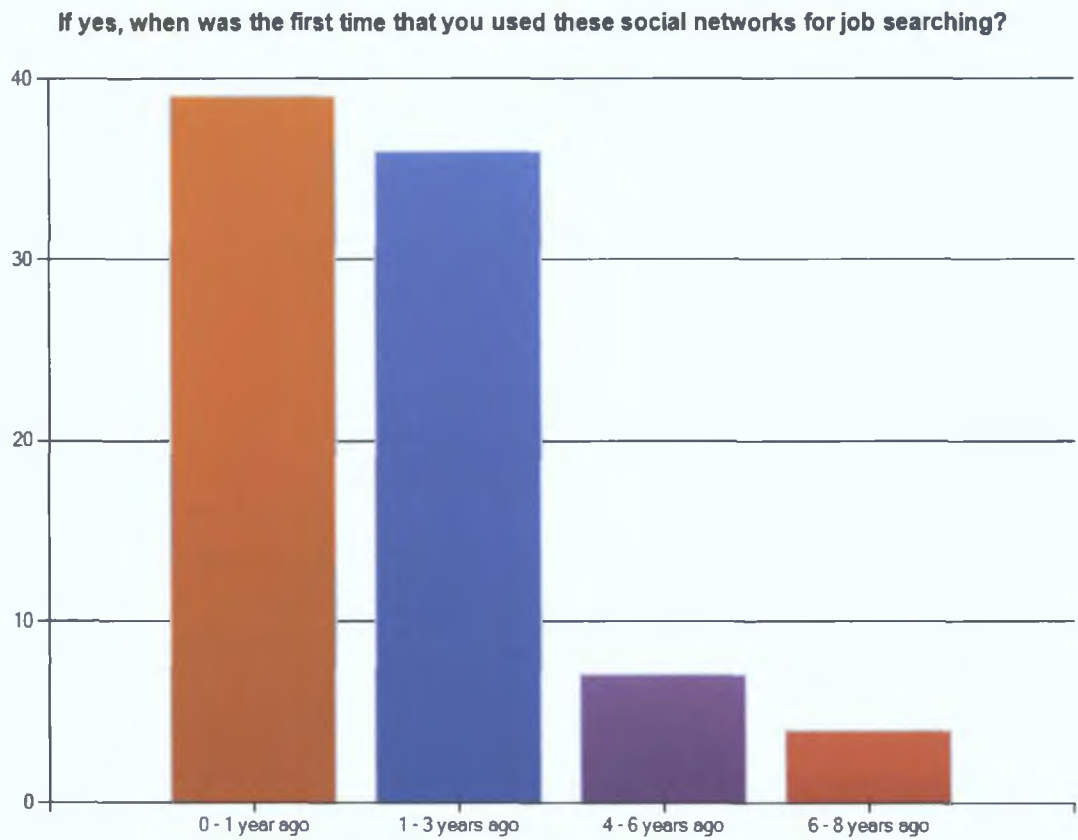
### **Questionnaire results**

With the help of the Internet and social networks, the questionnaire for the thesis has reached to a total number of 86 people in June - July 2012. There was a 100% of completion rate because the questionnaire was made with an online site called Survey Monkey and it was selected from settings that each responded must complete to survey in order to submit it.

*First question* The first question of the survey was asking if the jobseekers ever used social networks to search or apply for jobs. The respondents who have answered *no* to first question were excluded from the analysis. Out of 86 people who have filled out the survey, 16 of them have said they have never used social networks to search or apply for jobs. Only the people

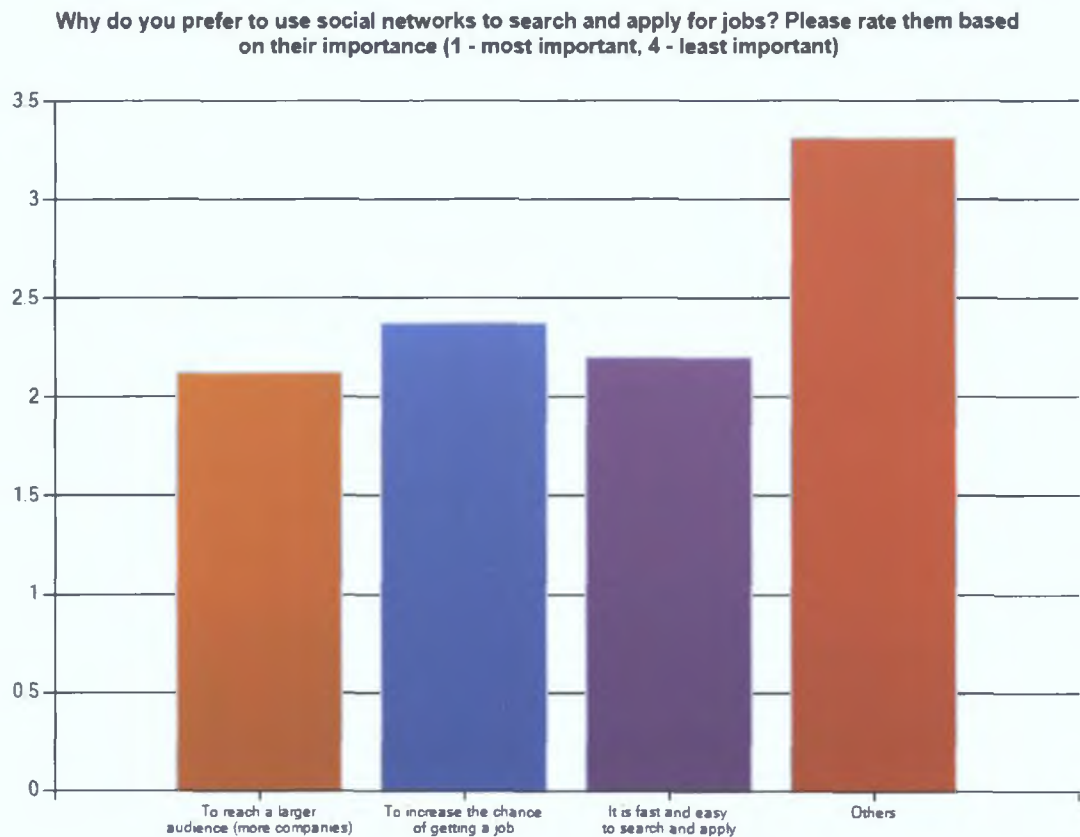
who have said *yes* to the first question continued the survey. For this reason, the analysis sections only include 70 people in total.

*Second question:*



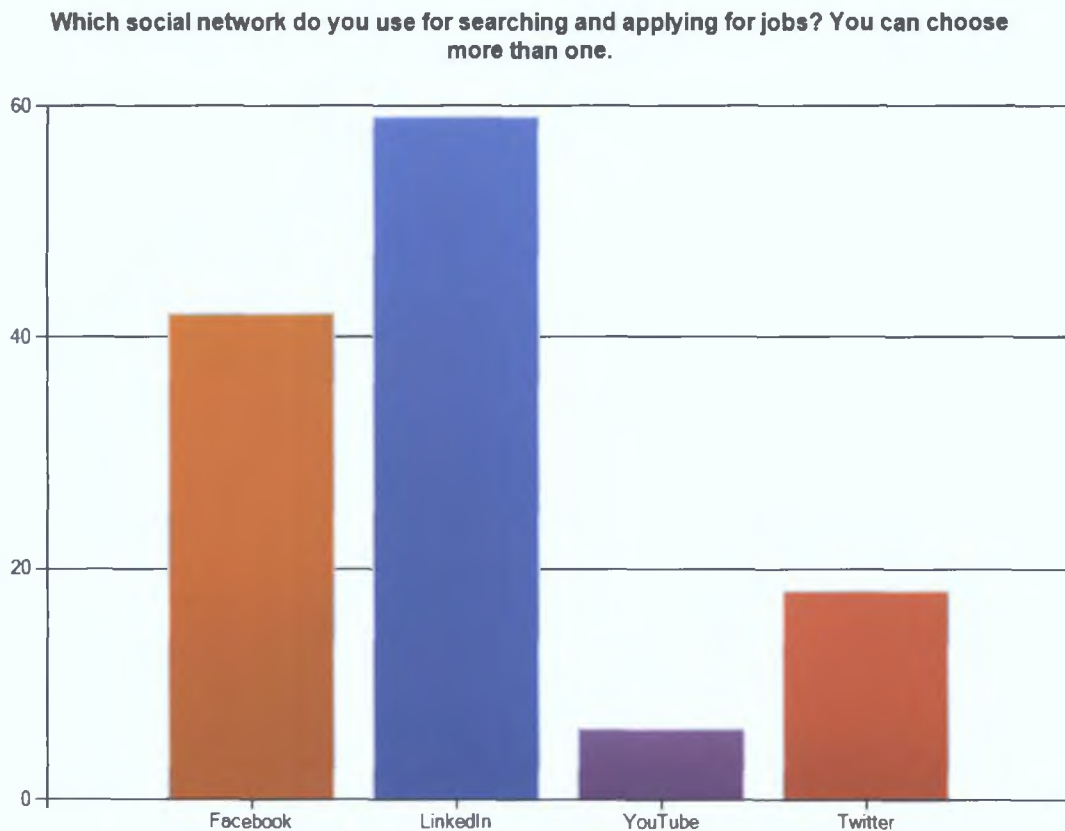
The social networks are in people’s lives for more than eight years, but according to the survey, people have only started to use them as a tool to search and apply for jobs for the past 3 year. 45.3% of the poeple who have completed the survey have said that they are using these sites for the past 0 – 1 year and 42% of them have said they are using the sites for the past 3 years. This means that majority of the people have only realised to utilise the social networks to search and apply for jobs recently.

Third question:



The third question on the survey was asking about the reasons why they prefer to use social networks for the purposes of finding or searching for a job. The question asked respondents to rate these four reasons according to their importance. From the four reasons that were given, respondents seemed to value the three options the same. It can be evaluated as they use social networks to reach a larger audience, to increase the chance of getting a job and because it is fast and easy to use. The answers gained from this question supported the literature review of this research, because it was said by many authors that there are three main reasons why jobseekers tend to use social networks to search and find jobs.

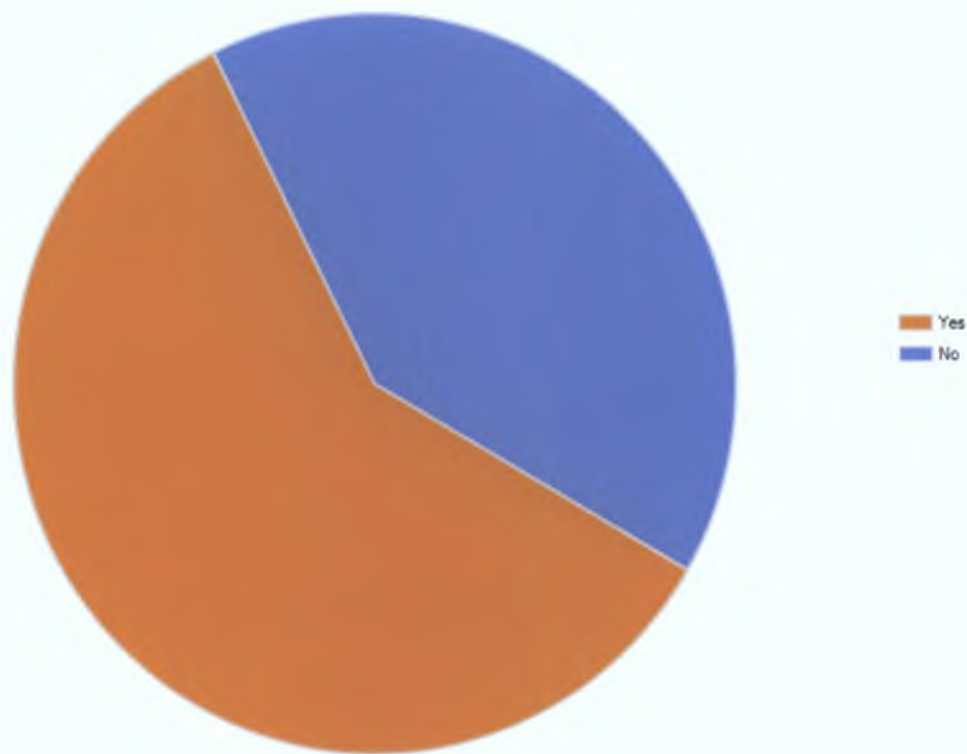
*Fourth question:*



The forth question was concerned with which social networks they prefer to use the most when looking and applying for jobs. As the chart above shows, respondents said they use LinkedIn the most the process of searching and applying for a job. Since LinkedIn is a professional networking site, it is reasonable to see that it is used the most for his purpose. Facebook follows LinkedIn and 42 respondents have said they use Facebook to apply for jobs. However, Twitter was not very preferred to be used in the process of searching and finding a job. Only 18 respondents said that they use Twitter and 6 respondents use YouTube.

Fifth question:

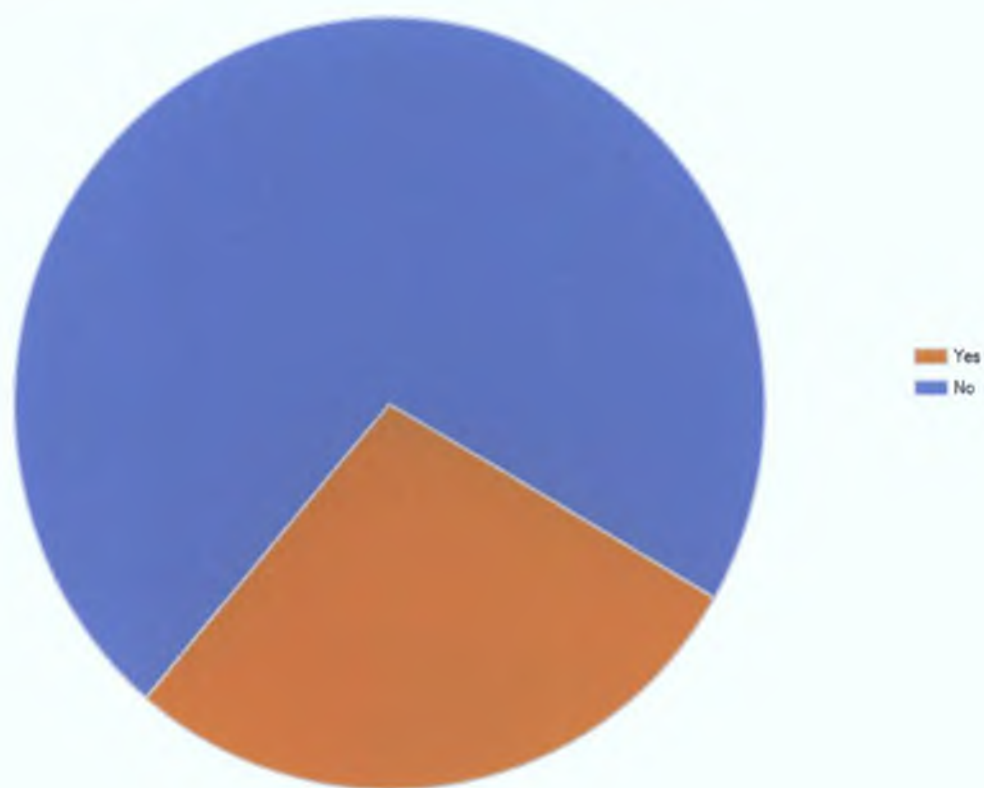
Have you ever been contacted through a social network about a job opportunity?



In fifth question, the respondents were asked to indicate whether or not they have been in contact through a social network for a job opportunity. This question was asked to find out if social networks were using for the purposes of recruiting. 60% of the respondents have stated that they have been contacted for a job opportunity.

Sixth question:

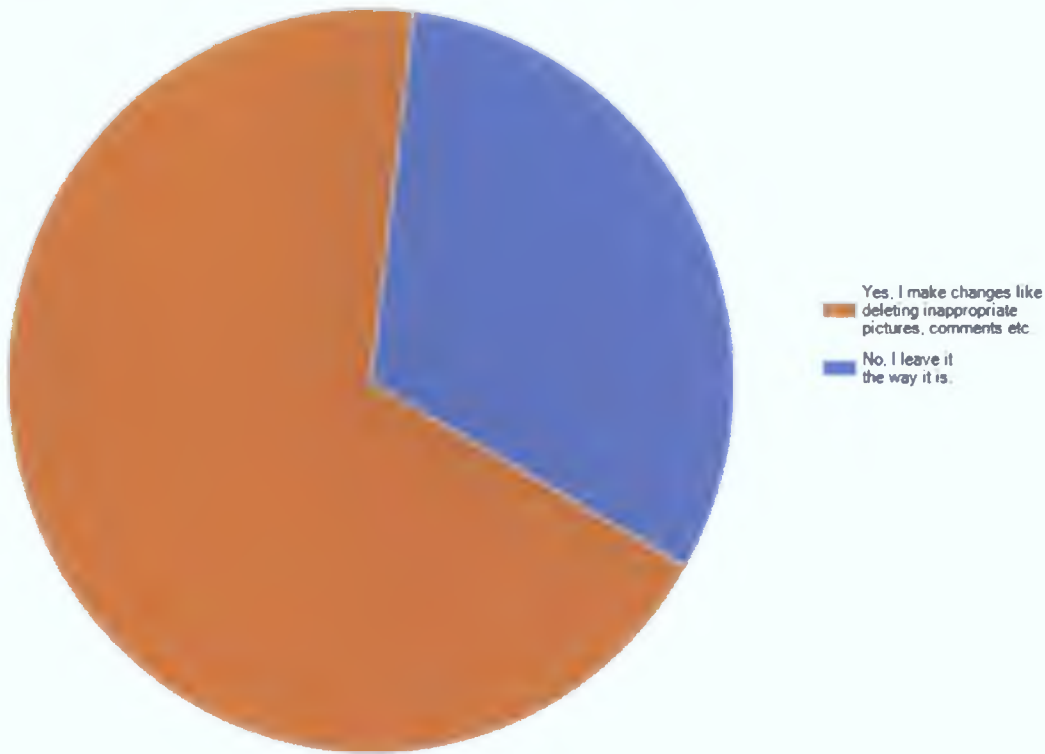
Have you ever successfully got a job through using a social network?



This question is asked to see if the people who have been contacted for a job opportunity got into the job successfully through the help of social networks. 72% of the respondents have said that they have got into jobs successfully, and 28% of them stated they haven't selected for the role they have been contacted for through the social networks.

Seventh question:

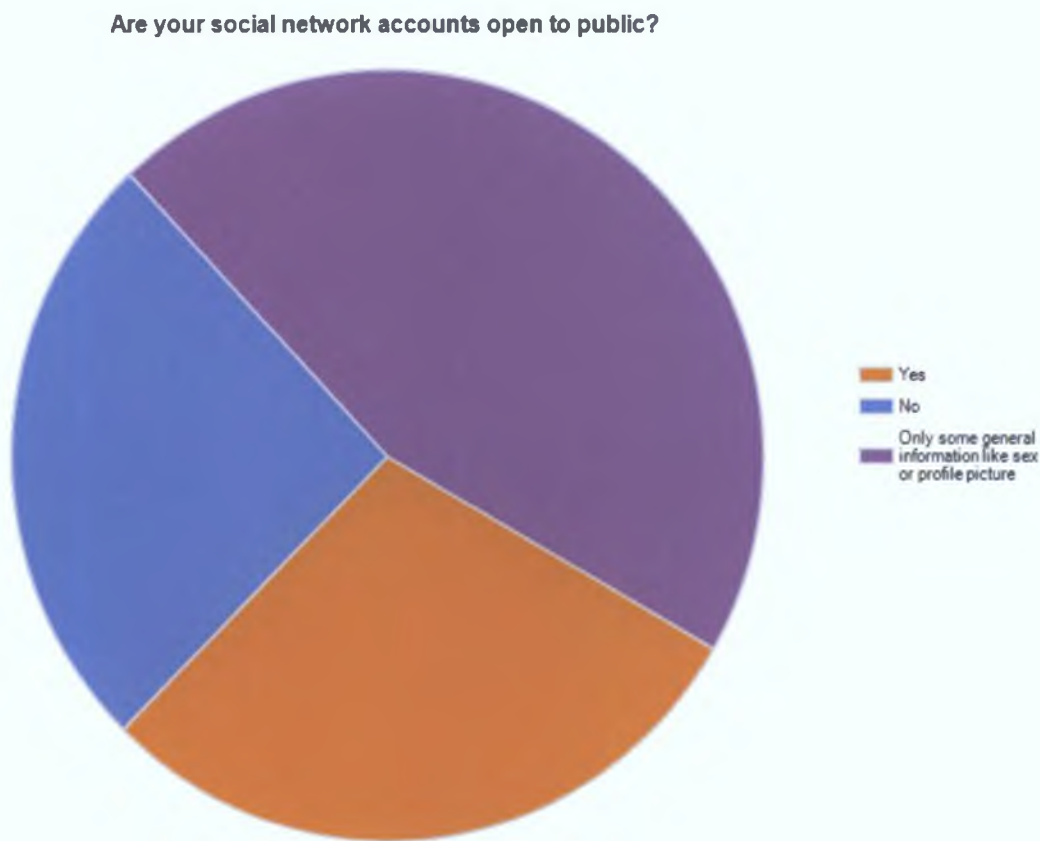
**Do you give attention to your online profile before applying for a job?**



Changing profiles and making them relevant to the specific roles which the jobseekers have applied for is a big concern for recruiters today. As mentioned in the literature review of the thesis, jobseekers have started to play around with their online profiles before recruiters check on their profiles. To find out more about this, whether or not they change their profiles was asked in the survey. Not surprisingly, 69% of the respondents have stated that they make changes like deleting inappropriate pictures, comments etc. and 31% of them have said they just leave their profiles the way it is.



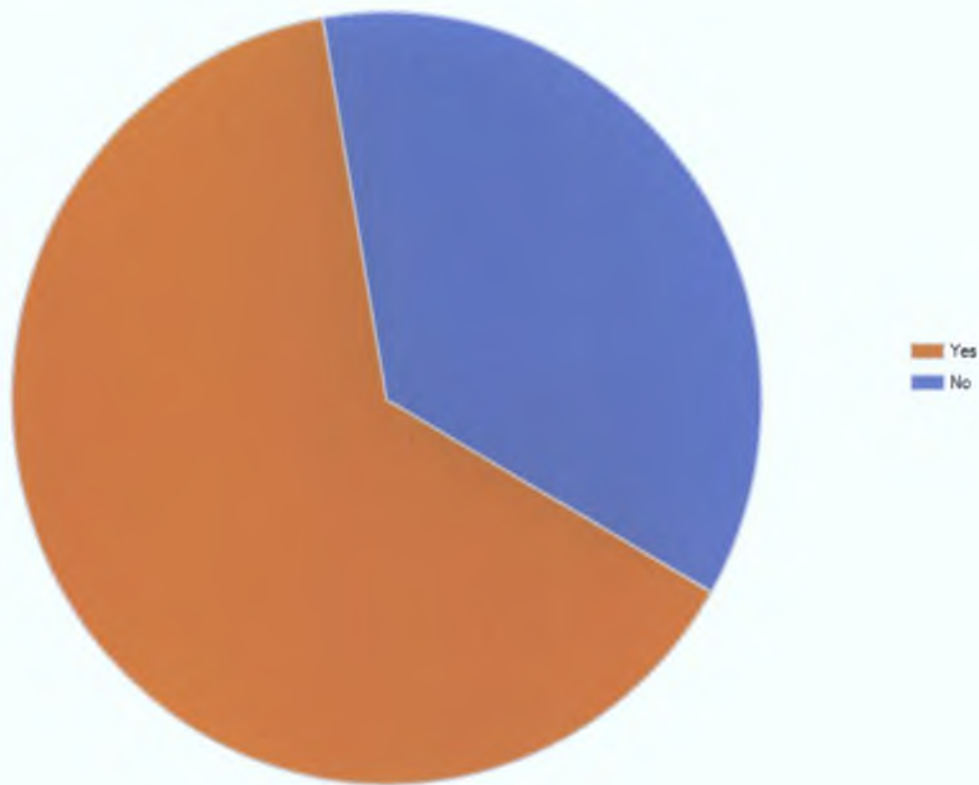
Eighth question:



Today, almost all recruiters check on candidates' profiles on social networks in some stage of the recruitment process. Sometimes people leave their profiles open to public and sometimes people like to keep them private. To find out more about this, the question on profiles being open to public was asked. Surprisingly, 30% of the respondents have said that their profiles are open to public. This means when recruiters try to find out more about a candidate, they can reach to 1/3 of every candidate's profile they search for. On the other hand, 45% of the respondents have said that their profiles are only open to some degree, like profile pictures or general information. Lastly, 25% of the respondents have stated that their profiles are closed to public. This means when recruiters search to check for a candidate, they cannot reach to 1/4 of the candidates.

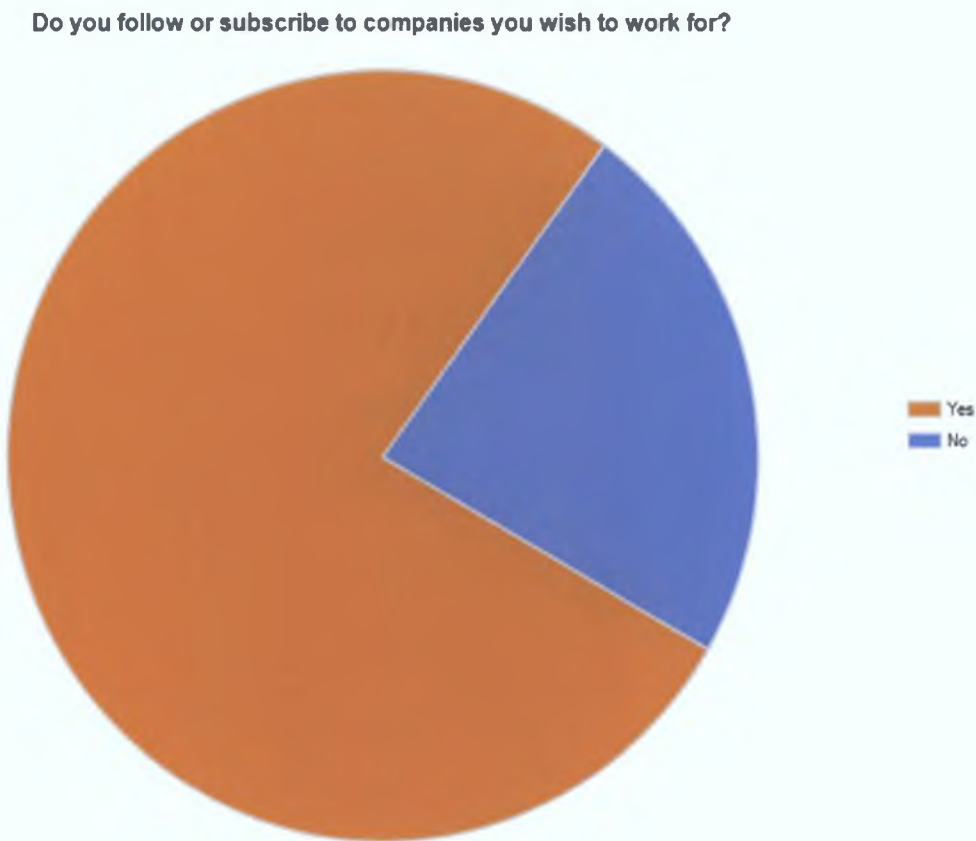
Ninth question:

**Do you find it ethical for recruiters to check your online presence?**



Checking online profiles of candidates is an ethical issue. This was discussed earlier in the literature review of the thesis. To find out more about jobseekers' opinions on their profiles being checked during the recruitment process, the question whether or not finding the method of checking the profiles ethical was asked. Interestingly, 64% of the respondents have said they find it ethical for recruiters to check their online profiles. On the other hand, 36% of the respondents have said they find it unethical for recruiters to check their profiles.

Tenth question:



The last question was concerned with the last topic covered in the literature review. The effects of having online presence for organisations was discussed earlier. To find more information about whether or not jobseekers follow or subscribe to organisations on social networks was asked. 77% of the repondents have stated that they follow or subscribe to the companies they wish to work for and 23% of the repondents have said they do not follow or subscribe to them. The results of this question shows it clearly that organisations must pay attention to their profiles on social networks, because a big percentage of jobseekers follow or subscribe to them.

## Interview results

For the qualitative research of this thesis three semi structured interviews have been done with three professionals from three different international companies. All the interviews approximately took thirty minutes each. The interviews were recorded and decoded for the analysis. The interview form can be found in the app.

The first interview was done with Susan Brady, who works in Google in Dublin since 2007 as a recruiter. The second interviewee was Aysen Doyle. She has been working in Oracle in Dublin for the past two years as a human resource manager. The last interview was done with Sean Fitzgerald, who has been working in an Irish recruiting company for a long time. There were 12 questions asked but since the interview was semi structured, some questions off the paper were asked as well.

*Question 1: The recent explosion in social media has resulted in growing numbers of recruiters using it as advertising and sourcing tool. But why would a recruiter use social media to recruit? And how would they do it?*

Susan Brady stated that the main reason why a recruiter uses social media is to try to identify passive candidates. She believes that a recruiter always tries to find the best candidate for the role and by using online methods of recruitment the recruiters are able to reach a wider audience, therefore there is a greater chance that the recruiters will find the person with the right skills.

Aysen says that recruiters today don't have much choice but to use social networks in recruiting. She says that social networks help recruiters more than agencies and she states if you are not doing the process of recruiting online, you are not doing it right.

Sean says that social networks such as LinkedIn, Twitter and Facebook allow recruiters to specifically target specific groups of people who are going to be suitable for the roles that they are recruiting for. The other reason he says is that using social networks as a tool to recruit cuts down on advertising budget. These two reasons are the main reasons why recruiters have started to use social networks as a tool in the recruitment process.

*Question 2 Online recruitment is now a standard part of the recruitment process for many companies and organisations. Is it worth it? In other words, what are the advantages and disadvantages of online recruitment?*

Susan Brady states that online recruitment by using social networks is definitely worth it. She says that the advantages of using this method are being able to target an infinite number of candidates, it is fast, it is very effective and also it is quick and easy. It is very easy for recruiters to use. On the other hand, she argues that there are disadvantages as well. She says recruiters can't control the number of applications that come through. In some cases a job description can be too generic and it can result in hundreds of applications but not all of those applications can be right for the role. She highlights that for some specialised roles, it can be really difficult to really call out exactly what you are looking for. However, she emphasises that social recruitment is fast, effective and it identifies passive candidates.

Aysen Doyle says that there are many advantages including reaching to a very broad spectrum of people and recruiters can reach to people all over the world. However, she agrees that there are disadvantages as well. She says when jobseekers make their cvs and put them online on sites like LinkedIn, they don't make their cvs good enough, and when recruiters search for specific keywords that they are looking for in a cv, they miss those people. Another disadvantage that Aysen highlights is that recruiters receive too many cvs online when they post a job online, and it is impossible to go through all of them.

Sean believes online recruitment is now a standart part of the recruitment process for many organisations. He says it is defimtly worth using social networks. He states the biggest advantage is the audiance factor. Social networks allow easy access to bigger audince. For the disadvantages, he says that sometimes candidates do not have accounts on social networks, and not reachmg to them can be a disadvantage.

*Question 3 Which social networks do you use the most? LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook or YouTube? And why do you prefer to use that specific social network the most? What advantages does it have on the recruitment process?*

Susan says she prefers to use LinedIn the most and sometimes Facebook but she says she finds LinedIn the most effective. The reason why she uses LinkedIn is for a number of different reasons. She states that by using LinkedIn she can find candidates who are not actively looking for a job. LinkedIn groups are very helpful to find candidates. Universities alumni groups are very helpful as well to, basically LinkedIn gives so many chances for recruiters to find who they want. On the other hand, Susan says she did not use Facebook and Twitter as much as LinkedIn. She highlights she is a big fan of LinkedIn.

Aysen says that she usually goes on to LmkedIn because she says she wants to have a professinal idea of the candidate. She believes that people have more than one role in life, they can be a mother, wife, sister and a collection analyst at the same time, but she says she only needs to know collection analist side of that person. For this reason she says she prefers to use LinkedIn the most. She says with using LinkedIn she can see the candidate's preveious job experiences and who he/she is lnked to, and this gives a bit of an idea of what to expect when you are interviewing the person. Aysen believes that the advantage that LinkedIn brings to recruiters is that, recruiters can check if a cv of a candidate is polished or tailored.

Sean states that he uses LinkedIn the most and Twitter follows it the next. He says he posts jobs on Twitter and on LinkedIn. Sometimes, depending on the role, he says he can post roles on Facebook. Sean highlights that he has enjoyed better success rates with LinkedIn than any other medium. He states that they are using YouTube only for employer branding and not for the recruitment process.

*Question 4 For how long have you been using this social network for recruiting? How did you decide to change to social recruiting? Did you find this new method easier or harder? How? Can you provide examples?*

Susan states that she has been using LinkedIn for the past six years fully. The reason why she has started to use LinkedIn is that she has seen other recruiters successfully hire candidates to roles. She says that she has found a candidate through LinkedIn and now he is working in Google as a manager. In the first stage she says she had to figure out how to use it, but now she is advanced in using LinkedIn as a tool for recruiting.

Aysen says that she has been using LinkedIn for the past two years, and the reason why she started to use LinkedIn in the recruitment process is because candidates who were coming to interviews had the information about her professional past. She states that LinkedIn helps a lot if a recruiter is looking for someone with specific skills.

Sean says he has been using social networks in recruitment for the past three years. LinkedIn was the initial introduction for Sean in social recruiting. He states that he has started to use social networks in recruitment when he heard about success stories from his recruiter friends. Sean says he cannot remember if he found using the new method easier or harder but he says he definitely found social recruiting a different method and a different approach. He said he became more proactive with social recruitment.

*Question 5 Do you check a candidate's online profile on social networks? If yes, do you tend to check the profile before or after the interview? Does the profile change your decisions about the candidate? How?*

Susan Brady says it really depends but usually she states that she would not check the profiles of the candidates. The only reason she would check is to see whether or not the CV of the candidate is matching to his/her online profile.

Aysen says she does not check the profiles of candidates because she doesn't want any perception of the candidates. She says viewing the CV gives an enough information before the interview. However, she says she tends to check the online profiles after the interview to have more information of the candidate, but still she says this does not change her decision about the candidate because she is well aware of the nine grounds of discrimination that apply in Ireland.

Sean says he checks the profiles of candidates always after the interviews because he believes it would not be fair to check it before the interview and have an opinion of the candidate.

*Question 6 Would you cancel an interview after screening a candidate's online presence? Why? What kind of things would make you cancel the interview?*

Susan says she would not cancel an interview according to the online presence of a candidate. However, she says if she sees a difference in dates or about the places the candidate has worked for, she says it would make her feel uneasy but she says she would contact the candidate and ask about the unmatching information she has found between the CV and the online profile.

Aysen believes it would not be fair to eliminate a candidate according to his/her online profile on social networks. She believes that just looking at someone's online profile,



someone's picture, a recruiter must not discriminate, must not change decisions just basing on an online presence. She says it would not be fair and she would not cancel any interviews or change her opinions. However, finding something illegal on a candidate's profile like pictures of using drugs, or holding a gun would make her cancel an interview.

Sean says he never checks a candidate's online profile before the interview and for this reason he says he would never be in a situation where he needs to cancel an interview. However, he says if he is recruiting for his own company, then he would check the profile after the interview.

*Question 7 If an online profile of a candidate looks attractive and suitable for the role, would you hire him/her in a shorter amount of time?*

Susan responds to this question by saying that she would be keen to get the process moving as quickly as possible with a good candidate, however she states that a profile on its own would not be enough, she says she would want to see the CV of the candidate as well to move forward.

Aysen thinks the attractiveness of an online profile does not make any difference in the recruitment process. She says if she has a dead line for closing a role, she has to plan her interviews very quickly. She says she needs to make her decision very quickly because it's unfair to keep candidates waiting. Aysen believes the more she waits the more she loses good candidates.

Sean says that he would not make the process faster intentionally but if he says yes it would result in hiring a candidate in a shorter amount of time. He explains that if the online profile is attractive then he would contact the person immediately and this would make the process faster.

*Question 8: When you are screening a candidate's online profile, how do you know it is the right person? Was there a time when you screened another person under the same name? If yes, can you please provide an example?*

Susan says she tries to verify all the details of a candidate as much as possible to make sure she is viewing the right person on the Internet. She states that she becomes only sure when she contacts the candidate on the phone. For the second part of the question, she says that its unlikely to screen a different candidate under the same name on LinkedIn because she says that once she has the CV, she can always check if it is right person or not by viewing the details. For Facebook and Twitter, Susan says that she cannot be sure if she is reaching the right candidate because those two social Networks do not show the professional sides of a person unlike LinkedIn. Susan states that for recruiters to be safe that they are reaching to right candidates, LinkedIn is the best choice.

Aysen says she can't know for sure if it's the right person she is checking. She tells that once she had to check a candidate's profile to find out if he is living in Ireland, and when she searched for his name, there were six people under the same name. Also, she says that sometimes people use fake or partial names on social networks. For this reason, she says it is very difficult to be sure if it is the right person unless their names are very specific or original.

Sean says he always cross checks a number of different factors, such as the photograph, education or previous employer details of the candidate. He underlines that it is always a good idea for people to put as much information on their profiles as they are comfortable with to make sure they are not mistaken for another person.

*Question 9 What do you think about the transparency of online profiles? Do you find online profiles of candidates reliable? Can you please explain in detail?*

Susan thinks that people are more inclined to exaggerate their profiles, skills and experiences on a social media profile while they would not be the same on a CV. For this reason, Susan says that she never trusts online profiles fully and she always needs a CV to have the accurate information. She states that online profiles are not reliable but they are good for an initial start.

Aysen believes that the online profiles of candidates are not reliable because she says people only share good bits of their lives on social networks. She believes people do not share their real selves, the profiles are altered and fake on social networks and for this reason, she says she does not find the profiles reliable.

Sean believes that people are quite honest about the information that they put up and he finds them reliable. He says obviously it's down to good recruiter to make sure the information on the profiles and on the CVs are matching and accurate.

*Question 10 Do you find checking the online profile of a candidate's ethical? Why or why not? Can you please provide an example?*

Susan says she personally only checks LinkedIn profiles of candidates. She believes that any team or hiring manager must not be influenced by the profiles of candidates online. She states that the information on those profiles is outside the work and studies. For this reason she does not find it ethical for recruiters or any hiring manager to check these profiles deeply.

Aysen says she does not find it ethical to check profiles of candidates before the interview. She believes it is not right to have a preconception of someone before the interview. If an

interviewer does check the profile, she believes that must be considered as breaking the nine grounds of discrimination. She says candidates can surprise her a lot during the interview. She believes if she is happy with the CV, she would have an interview and always check the online profile after the interview. She believes checking it before is discriminating and for this reason it is unethical.

Sean believes that it is quite ethical to check a candidate's online presence because he says if a candidate makes his/her profile open to public, then that means they don't have any problem anyone viewing it.

*Question 11 Does the company you work for have online presence on social networks? If yes, on which social networks? And does this help in the recruitment process? Why and how?*

Susan replies that Google has online presence on LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter. However, Facebook is only used for branding in this case. On the other hand, jobs are posted through LinkedIn mostly. Twitter is the least used. Susan states:

Aysen says that the company she works for only has an online presence on LinkedIn. She believes having online presence for organisations is a great help for the human resource department because they post a position on LinkedIn. Aysen says it's unbelievable the amount of people that reply to that post. She says it helps to reach people and branding.

Sean states that the company he works for does have an online presence on LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter to advertise, to put up open job positions, for branding and to reach and to be in contact with people.

*Question 12 Lastly, do you think social media has improved the recruitment process? Why or why not?*

Susan thinks that social media has definitely improved the recruitment process. It helps recruiters to find candidates easier. It allows them to reach out to anywhere in the world without picking up the phone. Susan says that social media has given organisations a bigger opportunity to find the right people. Lastly, she says that they are not tied to external recruitment agencies anymore after the rise of the social networks.

Aysen believes that the social networks have improved the recruitment process as well. She says now recruiters can reach to unlimited number of people and post positions online and let the whole world see it.

Sean certainly thinks it has improved the process greatly. From his perspective, he says that being able to advertise online and to search and contact to candidates in a very cost effective way has improved the process of recruiting.

## **Analysis of Findings**

### **Introduction of the survey analysis**

In this chapter, the researcher outlines the matching and conflicting facts between the findings of the interviews and the survey to the literature review of the thesis. In the literature review the author researched to explore and explain the opinions and facts about the recruitment process, social networks and how they connected in the recent years. In this section of the thesis, the comparison of the primary and secondary research will be shown. The objective of the research is to explore the effects that social networks have brought to the selection phase of the recruitment process. It will become clearer with the analysis section to see how social networks have affected the recruitment process. Throughout the analysis section, the author will try to bring out the similarities and contrasts between the primary data and the literature review. At the end of this section, it will be clearer whether or not jobseekers are getting help from social networks to get jobs, if recruiters check online profiles of the candidates and etc. It is aimed that at the end of the analysis section, the future of social networks role in the recruitment process can be predicted.

### **Analysis of the survey**

*Question 1: Have you ever used social networks such as Facebook, LinkedIn or Twitter to search or apply for jobs?*

This question was asked to explore if jobseekers really have started to use online tools to search or apply for jobs. The answers were proving the facts in the literature review. Out of 86 people who have completed the survey, 70 of them have replied “yes” to this question. It shows that 82% of the jobseekers now are using social networks as a tool for searching and applying for new job opportunities. This high usage of social networks by jobseekers supports the opinions of the authors in the literature review. It can be seen from the literature review that it was predicted that the recruitment industry’s “future is on the net”

(Edgley 1995) and that the Internet has brought “radical change to corporate recruiting” (Cappelli 2001)

*Question 2 If yes, when was the first time that you used these social networks for job searching?*

The Internet has been playing an active role in people’s lives since the mid-1990s and the social networks are only being utilised to connect with friends and family since the new millennium. This question was asked to explore since when jobseekers are actively using them as a tool to search and apply for new job opportunities. Even though the social networks are in people’s lives since the beginning of 2000, 88% of the respondents only started to use them actively as a tool to find jobs for the past 0-3 years. This result shows that social networks have been started to use as means to find and apply for a job since 2009. In the literature review, according to Parry & Wilson (2009) social networks was not the dominant recruitment method yet, however, the results of this question indicates that social networks have become the primary tool for jobseekers to search and apply for new job opportunities.

*Question 3 Why do you prefer to use social networks to search and apply for jobs?*

In this question, there were 4 facts given to be rated based on their importance. 33.7% of the respondents prefer to use social networks to search and apply for jobs because they are fast and easy tools. 30.2% of the respondents have been using social networks because they want to reach a larger audience (more companies). 22.1% of the respondents have stated that they use social networks to increase the chance of getting a job. The rest (14%) of the respondent have rated the option “others” as the most important. The results above follow the opinions of Adams. In the literature review, Adams (2011) outlined the characteristics of social networks and why people prefer to use them. The results from this question support Adams’s findings. He stated in his article that the social networks help people to

reach the whole world, they are timely tools and easy to use, and for these characteristics, using them increases the chance of finding or getting a new job

*Question 4 Which social network do you use for searching and applying for jobs?*

In this question, respondents were given the choices of Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube and Others. They were given the option to choose more than one social network if they wanted. According to the results, 69% of the people prefer to use LinkedIn. This was not surprising at all, because unlike other social networks, LinkedIn was established only for the professional purposes. The 2012 Social Activity Report has found that 50% of recruiters use only LinkedIn, and this shows why jobseekers prefer to use LinkedIn the most. Second most used social networks is Facebook. 49% of the respondents have chosen Facebook. This result is an expected result because there are almost 1 billion users of Facebook today, and it is the most popular social networks in the world. Dickson & Holley (2010) have stated that Facebook is the most logical social networking website to be used by HR departments. This result from the question supports this opinion. The third most used (21%) social networks is Twitter according to respondents of this survey, and YouTube is the least used (7%). Again, the results show that the first three preferred social networks are LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter. According to the 2012 Social Recruiting Activity Report, people use LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter the most. The data collected by Social Recruiting Activity Report in 2012 is matching with the results of this survey.

*Question 5 Have you ever been contacted through a social network about a job opportunity?*

60% of the respondents have replied “yes” and 40% of them have stated that they have never been contacted through a social network for a job opportunity. In the literature review, according to Jobvite’s 2012 survey of social media use by recruiters, 73% of respondent recruiters said that they have successfully contacted and hired candidates



through social networks. In this questionnaire, the percentage of jobseekers who have been contacted through a social network about a job opportunity shows similarities with the literature. The reason why the result from primary research is lower than Jobsurvey's result could be that the respondents to research's questionnaire were all around world. It could be that in some parts of the world social networks are not as popular as they are to some other parts.

*Question 6 Have you ever successfully got a job through using a social network?*

72% of the respondents in this survey have said that they have got a job through using a social network and only 23% have stated that they have not. These results certify the importance of social networks in the recruitment process. In the literature review, it was covered that the recruitment industry's future is on the Internet (Edgley 1995). This trend changed the way people conduct the daily businesses of their lives (Jansen et al 2005). The findings from this question show the opinions of the authors, because today, recruitment industry is using social networks heavily and social networks have changed the way people do recruiting (Jansen et al 2005).

*Question 7 Do you give attention to your online profile before applying for a job?*

A majority of the respondents (69%) have said that yes, they make changes like deleting inappropriate pictures, comments etc. and 31% have stated that they leave their profiles the way it is. Kluemper & Rosen (2009) have stated that no academic studies have been done whether using social networks in recruitment process is reliable or valid, for this reason the social networks' value in employment screening is unknown. However, the result from this question shows that almost 70% of candidates change their online profiles before they apply for jobs. This high percentage shows support for Kluemper & Rosen (2009) statement in the literature review. They have stated that the candidates now have become more aware that their profiles are being evaluated by the potential recruiters, the information provided on their

profiles are more likely to be skewed in an effort to be viewed more favourably (Kluemper & Rosen 2009).

*Question 8: Are your social network accounts open to public?*

29% of the jobseekers said that their online profiles are open to public and 25% of the respondents said their profiles are closed and only be seen if a request was sent. However, 45% of jobseekers tend to leave some information about them open to public, like their profile pictures or their gender. The ethical issue with viewing online profiles of candidates was covered in the literature review. Zeidner (2007) have outlined that screening candidates through social networks has now become a common practice by recruiters but the results of this question show that now 70% of jobseekers protect their profiles to be seen by unknown people and this percentage makes it difficult for recruiters to reach candidates' profiles. However, in the literature, it is not clarified by researchers if the recruiters who check candidates' online profiles succeed in reaching to their personal information. It is just mentioned in the literature that the recruiters today do search for the candidates' profiles online but it is not known how many of the recruiters succeed to reach to personal information of candidates.

*Question 9: Do you find it ethical for recruiters to check your online presence?*

Interestingly, 64% of the respondents have said they do find it ethical for recruiters to check their online profiles on social networks and 36% of them have said they do not find it ethical. Unlike the respondents answers to this question, Frauenheim (2006) believes that employers can learn about matters such as candidate's age, marital status and other private matters which will not be necessary in the job interview and organisations can be sued for discrimination if these candidates are not hired.

*Question 10: Do you follow or subscribe to companies you wish to work for?*

As was to be expected, the majority of the respondents (77%) have said that they follow or

subscribe to companies they wish to work for on social networks, and 23% of them have said no. This high percentage of number demonstrates the importance of having online presence for organisations. In the literature review, McCann (2010) have stated that the business reasons for connecting with social networks have been clearly proved through success stories across industries, signalling to organisations that if they choose not to engage, they risk becoming less competitive at best, and irrelevant at worst.

The results from this question match with McCann's statement above. Today, jobseekers follow organisations on social networks and if companies are still not engaged with social networks for advertising or for recruiting, it is for sure that its competitors are engaged and they are already ahead in the process of recruiting and hiring the best talent (Madia 2011).

### **Introduction of the survey analysis**

There are several ways for analysing the data and in this section categorization method will be used to analyse the primary and secondary data. The themes which have been used in the literature review will be the categories in this section. It is important for the analysis of the data to successfully identify and show the similarities and contrasts between what is stated in the literature review and the findings from the interviews. However, if in some place in the analysis, and the relationship between the two data cannot be found or explained, then a logical explanation for the uncharacteristic finding will be discussed. Quinlan (2011) states that there are four main stages of the data analysis and these are describing data, interpreting data, drawing conclusions and theorization. For the nature of this research, narrative analysis will also be used in this section. As Saunders et al (2007) have explained that this approach to qualitative research are based on individuals' accounts of their experiences and the ways in which they explain these through their subjective interpretations and relate them to constructions of the social world in which they live.

## **Analysis of the interviews**

### **The rise of the internet and social networks**

In the literature review of this research, the author have covered the rise and importance of the Internet today in peoples' lives and how it gave a rise to social networks' existence.

Taylor (2010) have outlined that in the first years of the 21st century, the recruitment activities on the internet have expanded and companies started to search for people from all sectors on the internet. Aysen, who works as an HR in Accenture, matches with Taylor's opinion by saying that "recruiters today don't have much choice but to use social networks in recruiting. The internet and social networks help recruiters more than agencies and if you are not doing the process of recruiting online, you are not doing it right". The recruitment activities on the internet have moved to social networks today and it is practiced as the main source of tool by recruiters. It is clear that the findings from the primary data correspond with the literature.

### **Ethical issues with viewing online profiles of candidates**

The findings from the primary and the secondary data were identical. Two HR professionals from two different companies had the same opinions on ethics. Susan from Google has said "I personally only check LinkedIn profiles of candidates. I believe that any team or hiring manager must not be influenced by the profiles of candidates online. The information on personal online profiles are outside the work and studies. For this reason I do not find it ethical for recruiters or any hiring manager to check these profiles". Aysen stated very similar ideas compared to Susan, however, she included nine grounds of discrimination in her answer. Aysen said "I do not find it ethical to check profiles of candidates before the interview. I believe it is not right to have a preconception of someone before the interview. If an interviewer does check the profile, I believe that must be considered as breaking the nine grounds of discrimination". The answers from Aysen and Susan are very similar and their

opinions on ethics correspond with Frauenheim's statement in the literature. Frauenheim (2006) has found that employers can learn about matters such as candidate's age, marital status and other private matters which will not be necessary in job interviews, and organisations can be sued for discrimination if these candidates are not hired.

On the other hand, Sean's opinions are in contradiction with the literature. He has said that "I believe that it is quite ethical to check a candidate's online presence because if a candidate makes his/her profile open to public, then that means they don't have any problem anyone viewing it". There was no research found on supporting Sean's idea however question 9 in the questionnaire is supporting his view very much. 63% of candidates said that they do find it ethical for recruiters to check their profiles. Much more research is needed on this area to evaluate the ethics on viewing profiles.

### **Transparency with online profiles**

Transparency of online profiles has now become an issue for recruiters. Kluemper & Rosen (2009) have highlighted that employers must be cautious when screening the candidates and using the information about them from social networks before making any hiring decisions. The information reached about the candidate may not be reliable, or the recruiter may have found information about another person under the same name. The primary data collected for this topic shows similarities with the literature. Aysen said "I believe that the online profiles of candidates are not reliable because people only share good bits of their lives on social networks. I believe people do not share their real selves, the profiles are altered and fake on social networks and for this reason, I do not find the profiles reliable". Susan have explained it very similarly and said "people are more inclined to exaggerate their profiles, skills and experiences on a social media profile for this reason I do not find online profiles reliable but they are good for initial starts". Both recruiters' views on relying on profiles on social networks and the accuracy of these profiles are the same and strengthen the opinions in the

literature. However, Sean has put out different opinions about this topic. He has said “I believe that people are quite honest about the information that they put up and I find them reliable.” No literature was found supporting his views for this reason, more research must be conducted on this area.

### **Social networks and organisations**

Several years ago, when the social networks were not as effective as they were today in people's lives, it was acceptable for organisations not to work together with them. However, today organisations can no longer resist using the internet and the social networks (McCann 2010). Three of the recruiters' opinions are parallel to McCann's statement above. Susan, Aysen and Sean have said the companies they work for have online presences on LinkedIn. Susan said “Google has online presence on LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter. However Facebook is only used for branding. Jobs are posted through LinkedIn mostly and Twitter is the least used.” Aysen said “Accenture only have an online presence on LinkedIn” and Sean stated “the company I work for have an online presence on LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter.” From the findings of the primary data, it can be easily seen that LinkedIn is the most preferred choice in social networks by the HR departments. This data collected supports the literature. According to Jobvite's 2010 survey of social media use by corporations, LinkedIn is the most preferred network with a 86 percent usage. Respondents to the survey have stated that LinkedIn is the most proper network for recruitment and the leading source for successful hires and Facebook and Twitter are the following networks after LinkedIn (Jobvite 2010). At the end it is clear that primary and secondary data are identical. Organisations prefer to use LinkedIn the most and Facebook and Twitter are preferred as second choices. It is known now that social networks are in the process of recruiting and LinkedIn is the most preferred network, however for how long they have been practicing by recruiters is another question. In the literature, it was outlined by Parry & Wilson (2009) that social networks have

not become a dominant recruitment method yet Sean and Aysen support Parry & Wilson's findings Aysen said "I have been using LinkedIn for the past two years" and Sean have said "I have been using social networks in recruitment for the past three years" It can be concluded that social networks was not the dominant recruitment method till 2009, however, it is now clear that recruiters have started to use it as a tool since the past three years As mentioned earlier, Susan stated that Google uses LinkedIn to post jobs and to search for candidates, and they use Facebook for branding Aysen on the other hand said they only use LinkedIn as a company and they only do searching and posting open job positions The findings from primary and secondary data are not enough to make any conclusions More research must be done on this topic

### **Advantages and disadvantages of social recruiting**

The recent explosion of social networks have affected people's lives It touched in every aspect of life from businesses to social life As a result, HR practices got affected as well and changed This change has brought many advantages as well as some disadvantages along The findings gathered from three recruiters are identical to the findings in the secondary research Susan said the followings about advantages and disadvantages she believes she comes across while using social networks as a tool in recruiting "For me the advantages of using this method are being able to target an infinite number of candidates, it is fast, it is very effective and also its quick and easy It is very easy for recruiters to use As well as the advantages, I believe there are disadvantages as well Recruiters can't control the number of applications that come through In some cases a job description can be too generic and it can result in hundreds of applications but not all of those applications can be right for the role For some specialized roles, it can be really difficult to really call out exactly what you are looking for However, I believe that social recruitment is fast, effective and it identifies passive candidates" Aysen from Accenture talked about facts that are really similar to

Susan's statement above Aysen said "there are many advantages including reaching to a very broad spectrum of people and recruiters can reach to people all over the world However, I agree that there are disadvantages as well When jobseekers make their CVs and put them online on sites like LinkedIn, they don't make their CVs good enough, and when recruiters search for specific keywords that they are looking for in a CV, they miss those candidates Another disadvantage is that recruiters receive too many CVs online when they post a job online, and it is impossible to go through all of them" Different from Aysen and Susan's opinions, Sean said "the biggest advantage is the audience factor Social networks allow easy access to bigger audience For the disadvantages, sometimes candidates do not have accounts on social networks and not reaching to them can be a disadvantage" Sean's statement about the disadvantage shows similarities with Doherty's (2010) opinions Doherty (2010) believes that social networks should not be used as a sole means for recruitment, because there are still a lot of people who do not use them In the literature, it was stated by Sullivan (2011) that social networks are a powerful and cost effective tool for recruitment and building an employer/employee brand This statement matches with Aysen's and Susan's views about advantages of the new method Susan believes that Facebook is a great tool for branding and Google uses Facebook for branding reasons mainly It is evident from primary and secondary data that social networks are preferred to use because they are free and powerful On the other hand, recruiters argue that having too many applicants can be a disadvantage This opinion from recruiters matches exactly the findings in the literature It was said stated by The Nigel Wright Company (2011) that social recruitment is believed to be time consuming Reaching out to millions can be an advantage but a disadvantage on the other hand There are too much information for companies who want to conduct a detailed and robust search Even though the data from the primary and secondary agree, more research is needed on the



advantages and disadvantages of social networks in recruitment process Since they are in existence for a decade, the effects of it are still not discovered

## Conclusion

The aim of this research was to discover how social networks blended in with the recruitment process, the effects it brought to Human Resources. In the beginning of the research it was hoped that there would be a high usage of social networks both from recruiters and jobseekers in order to find out more relevant facts about the effects it has on recruitment.

In the literature review, firstly the recruitment process was covered. Recruitment was defined in the literature as “the activity that generates a pool of applicants, who have the desire to be employed by the organisation, from which those suitable can be selected” (Lewis 1985).

Recently Gunnigle et al. (2011) have outlined that the recruitment and selection process is the process of finding, viewing, evaluating and finally hiring new employees. In this research, the social networks’ effect on the selection process of the recruitment was looked in deeply.

Selection process is about getting the right person, the best fit for the role and how social networks’ helped this process was tried to be discovered.

Later in the literature review, the rise of the Internet in the 1990s and how it started to take place in peoples’ lives was covered. Internet has removed all the barriers and made the world smaller. It provided simple ways of communication between people and this brought everyone stay in touch easier than ever before. Later in the mid-1990s, the first social networks were launched, however, they only became popular tools when Facebook was launched in 2004. Today, Facebook’s users are close to 1 billion and it is the most used social network in the world. Facebook’s mission is to make the world more open and connected (Facebook 2012). LinkedIn on the other hand, is the most preferred *professional* social networks, launched in 2003. It has now more than 161 million users all over the world, and more than 2 million companies use LinkedIn for hiring and marketing. Twitter was launched on 2006, different from the two, its aim is to connect people to the latest news, ideas, opinions and stories by small message postings called tweets. Twitter connects businesses to

customers in real time and businesses use Twitter to quickly share information with people interested in their products and services (Twitter 2012) Twitter connects businesses to customers in real time and businesses use Twitter to quickly share information with people interested in their products and services (Twitter 2012) YouTube was discovered and launched in 2005 and today billions of people discover, watch and share videos online through this social network

When social networks became an important part of peoples' lives, and the number of its users reached to billions, recruitment started to blend in with these tools like LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter and YouTube In the literature, it was covered by Kluemper and Rosen (2009) that social networking sites have a large volume of information available to the viewer and the employers have begun to use these sites to assist in the selection process for new employees The main objectives of this research were to cover the overlapping issues of using social networks in the selection part of the recruitment These were ethical issues with viewing candidates' online profiles during the selection phase, the transparency and liability of these profiles, the importance of having online presence for organisations and lastly the advantages and disadvantages of social networks have on the selection part of recruitment In order to achieve information on the objectives and aims of the study, the author gathered data from books, academic articles, the Internet, interviews and questionnaires To explore these objectives deeply, a primary and secondary data were collected There was a lack of secondary data due to the new existence of the subject For this reason, primary data was crucial to collect for this research A questionnaire was done with 85 jobseekers, and three interviews were conducted with three recruiters from three different companies The results from the primary and secondary data were matching most of the time Findings from one of the interviewee were usually contrary with the literature, however this may be because Sean is working as a recruiter in an agency, where other two recruiters were working in HR

departments in organisations. Generally the findings from the primary data were not surprising. They were very similar to the literature.

#### *Primary Findings, Questionnaires:*

- With the questionnaires which were distributed to 85 jobseekers, the researcher noted that a very high percentage of people now have use social networks to look and apply for new job opportunities.
- The author witnessed that the majority of the jobseekers prefer to use LinkedIn the most and Facebook follows it after. The author also confirmed that a very high number of jobseekers have contacted through social networks for job opportunities. It was concluded that jobseekers tend to play around and change their profiles when they know it will be viewed from a recruiter.
- Due to a high usage of social networks in recruitment, organisations today have online presence and the author have noted that jobseekers follow online presence of the companies they wish to work for. However, the author found an evidence that jobseekers prefer to keep their online profiles private due to ethical reasons.

#### *Primary Findings, Interviews:*

- From the interviews that were conducted and the secondary research, the author witnessed that social networks do take a role in the recruitment process for the past 3 years effectively however the selection process is not solely depended on these tools. There is evidence from secondary and primary data that recruiters do use them to search for a talent or a specific candidate with skills but when it is time to decide whether or not to hire a candidate, these tools are not relied on by recruiters.

- The author has found that recruiters tend to use LinkedIn the most like jobseekers do. They do not use Facebook or other social networks for recruiting, however those sites are mostly used for branding.
- The author have found matching evidence from both recruiters and the literature that there are advantages and disadvantages of using social networks in recruitment. The advantages that are found are that social networks are free. They are simple to use, search and stay in touch with candidates and these tools gives the chance of reaching out to a bigger audience. On the other hand, the disadvantages are that with these tools, too many applicants can apply for the role and using them would not always bring success.

With the discovery of the Internet and explosion in social networks, now the recruitment process is changed for good. Based on the research and the findings of the research, the author of this thesis have found that social networks are practiced widely by both jobseekers and recruiters and social networks do have an effect on the recruitment process, however the effects it has depends on how it is utilised by people. For this reason, social recruiting is not for everyone. As witnessed on this research, using social networks as recruiters or jobseekers can have some positive effects, however, using social networks as the only tool for recruiting and relying on them exclusively can cause dissatisfaction in the process.

Some of the findings from interviewees were not matching with any of the material in the literature and some parts in the literature needed to be explored more. The author recommends for further research on the ethical side of checking online profiles of people and the transparency of these profiles. Also, a further research is recommended on the usage of social networks by recruiters from agencies.

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